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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 13, 2015, at 11 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2015

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, most high, thank You for being light in our darkness, food for our hunger, peace for our pressures, joy for our sorrow, forgiveness for our failures, strength for our weakness, guidance for our confusion, and health for our sickness.

May our Senators labor today with the knowledge that You are everything they need. When they feel uncertain about the next step to take, supply their needs from Your bountiful riches. Lord, keep them from stumbling or slipping as they strive to live lives that honor You. May they ever do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act is one of the most bipartisan pieces of legislation one could possibly imagine. Ever since this bipartisan human rights bill was introduced by a Democrat and a Republican in January and made publicly available for any person to read, Members of both parties have sung its praises repeatedly. This bipartisan bill has gained the support of 13 Democratic cosponsors.

Recently, Democrats voted unanimously to approve it in committee. This week Democrats consented unanimously to advance it on the floor. Even the Democratic leader himself said he ''underscore[d], appreciate[d], and agree[d]'' with my call to pass this bipartisan legislation overwhelmingly. ''I doubt there will be problems on my side,'' he said. ''If there are, I will work to clear them.''

That was Monday.

By Tuesday, Democrats seemed to be threatening to filibuster human rights legislation for abused and neglected victims and children. Let me repeat that. Democrats are now threatening to filibuster human rights legislation for abused and neglected victims and children. So why?

Democrats now say they don't like language that has been in the bill since it was introduced months ago that does nothing more than reaffirm the bipartisan law of the land. That is all that language does. This bipartisan provision was on page 4 of this modest-sized bill, so Democrats obviously knew it was there to begin with. Democrats obviously wouldn't have cosponsored the bill or voted for it in committee or called for passage on the floor if they hadn't read the bill first.

These Democrats surely don't want to see more quotes such as this one from an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. She said: ''Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.''

So if these Democrats keep their word to the victims of human trafficking, then a partisan filibuster attempt will fail overwhelmingly. If these Democrats keep their word to the vulnerable and the oppressed, then the Senate will pass a bipartisan human rights bill.

But if these Democrats truly are having second thoughts about supporting such important human rights legislation, they are free to offer an amendment. But let's not filibuster bipartisan help for vulnerable victims just to make a point for leftwing special interest groups.

Our Democratic friends have to resist the siren song of their pollsters who tell them that the path to victory lies in turning bipartisan bills into manufactured fights over cultural issues. Americans are looking for statesmen and stateswomen on the Democratic side to stand up—stand up—and help us emancipate the victims of modern slavery, not score another empty political point.

So I am calling on these Democrats to help us do that. Help is almost there for the vulnerable victims of these awful crimes. Surely no leftwing special interest group is more important than fighting modern-day slavery. So

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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the Democratic cosponsors and declared supporters of this bill need to keep working with us in a bipartisan way to ensure that help comes.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, McClatchy News has a story that I think is worth talking about, a part of it at least, this morning. It says:

> Newspaper editorial pages around the country have not been kind to Senate Republicans this week. A collective ''Seriously?'' has emerged in reaction to the open letter that 47 Republicans penned to the Iranian leadership, which seemed designed to undercut nuclear talks with the Obama administration.

Here are some of the things they said:

''A blot on 114th U.S. Senate,'' from the Detroit Free Press.

''The Senators who signed the letter should be ashamed,'' said the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Some sounded embarrassed.

''Cringe-worthy buffoonery on the global stage,'' says the Salt Lake Tribune.

Others seemed just weary of Capitol Hill's continuing dysfunction.

''Has Congress gone crazy?'' wondered the Courier-Journal in Louisville, KY.

Senator MARK KIRK of Illinois ''has not been among the crazies in Congress, particularly on foreign policy matters. But he joined them here,'' wrote the Peoria Journal Star.

Noting her signature endorsing the letter, the Concord Monitor said of New Hampshire Republican Senator KELLY AYOTTE:

''It's not every day that a United States senator attempts to undermine U.S. foreign policy and weaken the nation in one cursive swoop.''

In Phoenix, AZ, the Arizona Republic editorial board concluded that the Republican Senators ''are effectively declaring a congressional right to conduct subversive foreign policy proxy wars with the president, with threats to blow up agreement negotiations as their weapon of choice.''

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the last Congress legislation to combat human trafficking was a bipartisan matter. Senators KLOBUCHAR and LEAHY have long been leaders on this issue. But this year—and we could talk about how it got in the bill, many believe it was sleight of hand—there is an abortion provision in this bill that is now before this body.

For well more than 25 years I had the pleasure of serving with Henry Hyde in the House of Representatives, who was famous for a number of reasons, but one is that he has penned the Hyde language which deals with abortion. In all these 25-plus years, that matter has been put over 1 year at a time. We have never chosen to make that permanent law.

This year Republicans have sought to inject into this consensus bill one of the most controversial issues of the last 40 years—a woman's right to choose.

Don't take my word for it. Leading Republicans acknowledge that abortion politics is extraneous to the bill before us.

Yesterday JOHN CORNYN said: ''This bill is being hijacked and being used to debate something that it really doesn't have very much to do about, and that is the subject of abortion.''

ORRIN HATCH said: ''I can't believe that this Senate has become so political that we would raise that issue at this time on this bill.''

The solution is so simple. Take the abortion language out of the bill.

The bill dealing with human trafficking is going to pass. If we don't do it now, we will do it. It is something that is imperative that we accomplish, but it should not be dealt with in relation to abortion. Take the abortion language out of the bill.

The Republican Senators have a choice, to legislate or to hijack the legislation. If they want to get something done, they need to take abortion politics out of this bill. If they want to leave abortion politics in the bill, then the Republicans will only continue this session's record of dysfunction.

This is the second day my friend, the Republican leader, has come to the floor and quoted something I said a few days ago. Every word he quotes is perfect—that is what I said—but here is the context in which I said it. I am an expert on motions to proceed. During the last 6 years I have had to file cloture as a leader here hundreds and hundreds of times—in the last Congress more than 200 times. Virtually all of the cloture motions were filed because Republicans wouldn't let us get on the bill. They simply wouldn't let us get on the bill—every bill—even bills they favored. We would have to spend a couple of days getting it ripe for a vote on cloture, and once that was done, then we had to wait 30 hours. What I said the other day is true, human trafficking is something that needs to get done, and we Democrats are not going to ask you, the Republican leadership, to file abortion language. Get on the bill. And we are on the bill. We could finish this bill in 20 minutes. The only thing that needs to be done is the language relating to abortion should come out of this bill. Abortion and human trafficking have nothing to do with each other.

So my friend the Republican leader can come and quote me any time he wants, and I know he will quote me correctly, but it should be put in the proper context, and that context is this: We have proven during the first few months of this Congress that on issues that we believe should be debated, we will allow the Senate to get on the bill. We are not going to be stalling, as has been done for the last 6 years, just to kill time. We are on this human trafficking legislation because it is something that needs to be completed, and the only way at this stage it is going to happen is the abortion language must come out of the bill.

Mr. President, would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, and with the majority controlling the first half.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the votes are scheduled today at 2 p.m.; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

KELSEY SMITH ACT

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about my amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking bill that would make a minor but nevertheless important commonsense update to the current telecommunications law to provide law enforcement with access to information that should and could help locate individuals in life-or-death situations. My amendment—identical to the standalone legislation I plan to reintroduce later this month—is aptly named after the young Kansan whose life and bright future was cut short by a senseless act of violence and whose case is the inspiration for why we desperately need to update this law.

Almost 8 years ago. On June 2, 2007, 18-year-old Kansan Kelsey Smith—a lovely girl—was abducted in broad daylight from an Overland Park, KS, parking lot. Kelsey's abduction was captured on the closed circuit camera, therefore leaving little doubt of the emergency situation.

Here is the tragedy. Four days after Kelsey disappeared, authorities were finally able to locate her body after her wireless provider released the ''ping'' or call location information from her cell phone. It took 4 days to get that vital information. Providing this information as fast as possible is absolutely critical to ensure law enforcement officials can rescue victims in imminent danger of death or serious physical harm and hopefully prevent future cases similar to Kelsey's.

This amendment is a culmination of years of work between legislatures at both the Federal and State level, industry stakeholders, private advocates and, most importantly, Kelsey's brave parents who spearheaded this initiative and advocated to create commonsense reforms that properly balance the needs of law enforcement with the Fourth Amendment protections of all citizens.

Through their advocacy and tireless efforts, Missey and Greg Smith have helped enact laws in 17 States, including my home State of Kansas, to provide law enforcement with the necessary tools to rescue individuals in emergency situations where the threat of death or serious bodily injury is imminent.

The impact of this law at the State level has been real and measurable. For example, in May of 2012, 1 month after the enactment of the State's version of the Kelsey Smith Act, local authorities in Tennessee were successful in saving the life of a child who had been abducted by a suspected child rapist. Because the child was believed to be in imminent danger, police were able to receive the location of the suspect's cell phone in a window of time that led to the safe recovery of the child alive and before she was assaulted.

According to the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the first 3 hours are critical to recovering a child alive. This is why it is necessary that in these few isolated instances where a person's very life is at stake, an exemption should be made to release the whereabouts of that individual. Understanding this, my amendment would provide law enforcement with the ability to recover the location of children and other missing individuals in only very specific emergency situations, namely when there is risk of death or serious bodily injury, but in order to obtain the location, law enforcement must first provide a sworn written statement to the telecommunications providers stating the facts that support probable cause to believe that disclosure of the location is required to prevent death or serious bodily injury. Furthermore, 48 hours after the location is disclosed to law enforcement, they must request a court order stating whether such agency had probable cause to believe the facts surrounding the rescue or recovery were warranted.

The privacy of every Kansan, and every American for that matter, is extremely important and that is why my amendment includes this language to put into place safeguards against possible abuses of authority by law enforcement. I believe my amendment strikes the appropriate balance between the ability for law enforcement to help individuals in grave danger while also ensuring that proper checks are in place to guard against any overreach by the government.

Kelsey was never given the opportunity to attend college or get married or have children and experience the American dream that many of us take for granted every day, but what she did do was inspire her mother and father to make it their mission in life to help educate and empower communities and children to help prevent another case like this from happening again.

Kelsey's father, Greg, a former law enforcement officer himself and a Kansas State Senator representing parts of Johnson County, said it best when he quoted Abraham Lincoln to describe what Kelsey had accomplished: ''In the end, it's not the years in your life that counts. It's the life in your years.''

I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to speak on the floor today, and I would have liked to have offered my commonsense amendment that would help prevent tragedies like Kelsey's, so I ask every colleague in this body to ask one question: If it were your child, your grandchild, your spouse, would you not want law enforcement to have immediate access to this information?

Let's honor Kelsey's memory by passing this legislation whether it is stand-alone legislation or in amendment form. I had every intention to ask for a vote on my amendment. I believe I would have had my colleagues' support on both sides of the aisle. This legislation is long overdue and so is the trafficking bill.

At this time we are grateful for those who use their abilities and skills in ways that promote justice and goodwill in our land and to promoting the good of every citizen. That is, unfortunately, not happening at this time. We have objections from the minority over a provision that has been in law for 36 years.

This is delay again for Kelsey Smith and amendments such as mine that I think have bipartisan support. In this regard I am frustrated, and I think it is shameful.

I yield the floor.

It would appear to the Senator from Kansas that there is not a quorum.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am proud to join several of my colleagues this morning in submitting a substitute amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015.

Human trafficking is a global scourge, and we should be working on a bipartisan basis and on a bicameral basis to stop it. However, I am deeply concerned to learn that our friends on the other side of the aisle have inserted a worrisome provision into this year's version of the bill. This provision would expand upon the so-called Hyde amendment which restricts funds for women's reproductive health choices. The new language, which has been offered by Senator CORNYN from Texas, would set a new, dangerous precedent by enabling Hyde restrictions to apply to nontax funding streams set forth in this bill.

This language paves the way for political leaders in the future to interfere even more with a woman's basic personal health decisions, and it sets the tone for a dramatic expansion of abortion restriction for years to come.

I am upset about this provision in that it shouldn't be in this bill. This bill is not about abortion, it is about human trafficking. Instead, this provision has now become another opportunity for political speeches and delay.

The good news is the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act can still be bipartisan, and we have high hopes it will be. Democrats are ready to work with Republicans to fix this bill and move past the partisan obstacle which literally stopped us this week from doing anything.

The substitute amendment removes the Hyde restrictions from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. It includes two important bipartisan pieces of legislation, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, originally offered by Senator LEAHY, and the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act sponsored by Senator KLOBUCHAR.

We know that colleagues can work on a bipartisan basis to effectively address this issue. I urge my colleagues, when we look at what we have done so far in this session of Congress, we have very little to show for the time we have spent here. This is an opportunity to pass a bipartisan human trafficking bill—not a grab bag for every notion or idea any Senator has on any subject, but one that addresses a very serious issue.

I also know that another Senator from Louisiana on the Republican side has an amendment which he wishes to offer on this bill which, again, has nothing to do with human trafficking.

Senator VITTER offers an amendment that would deny citizenship at birth to children born in the United States unless one of the parents of the child is a U.S. citizen, national permanent resident, or an actively serving armed services member.

As the ranking member of the constitution subcommittee on the Judiciary Committee, let me begin with the obvious for my colleagues in the Senate: Birthright citizenship is a constitutional right. Congress can't amend that amendment with a statute. I would think that every Senator knows that. To put this provision before us is merely to try to provoke a debate on a bill which has no impact on the Constitution.

The citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment states: ''All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.''

I urge my colleagues, particularly the one offering this amendment, to pick up the Constitution and read it. The 14th Amendment is as clear as can be.

The citizenship clause has been restated and established by four centuries of Anglo-American jurisprudence. The 14th Amendment raised the short-lived exception to birthright citizenship that was established by the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857. We certainly remember that. It was one of the provocations that led to a civil war in this country. We should take this issue extremely seriously.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that the 14th Amendment applies to U.S.-born children of noncitizens. What part of that does the author of this amendment not understand?

The Court rejected arguments that the son of Chinese nationals, who were forbidden under the Chinese Exclusion Act from ever becoming U.S. citizens, could be deprived of citizenship because of his parents' status.

The Supreme Court ruled that: ''Nothing is better settled at the common law than the doctrine that the children, even of aliens . . . are subjects at birth.'' Subsequent decisions have backed that up.

The famous case of Plyer v. Doe basically said—the Court reasoned that even if the Court wanted to control the conduct of adults, ''legislation directing the onus of the parent's misconduct against his children does not comport with fundamental concepts of justice.'' The law is clear.

So this amendment being offered by Senator VITTER is a provocative, unnecessary, and basically feckless effort to stall an important bill that should be passed on a bipartisan basis.

I hope my colleagues, whatever their feelings on this issue, will understand, you cannot amend the Constitution by a statute. I thought that was in basic Senate 101, but we have to get back to it to make clear that my colleagues understand this important human trafficking bill should not be bogged down or stopped with issues such as abortion—as important as it is—which should be saved for a separate debate, or this effort to amend the U.S. Constitution with an amendment on the floor to a statute. That certainly is not a good way for us to accomplish things in the Senate.

FOR-PROFIT SCHOOLS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have been coming to this floor for a long time. The Presiding Officer is new to the body so I know he has been spared my speeches on the subject talking about for-profit colleges.

This is an industry that lures students with flashy ads and misleading promises, gobbles up the Federal loan and grant money these students can bring to them and then ends up producing students—if they are lucky enough to get a diploma—who can't find good-paying jobs. To understand the for-profit college industry in America today, you only need to know three numbers—and for those who are listening, this will be on the final. Here are the three numbers: For-profit colleges enroll ten percent of college students in the United States of America. When you think of for-profit colleges, think of University of Phoenix, DeVry, Kaplan. There are a lot of them. Ten percent of college students go to these schools.

These schools, the for-profit schools, receive 20 percent of the Federal aid to education.

Why do they get so much if they only have 10 percent of the students? They charge so much. Their tuition goes through the roof. Ten percent of the students, 20 percent of the Federal aid to education. But this is the number I don't want you to forget—44.

Forty-four percent of all student loan defaults are students of for-profit schools. What does that tell us? It tells us these students are getting in over their heads. They are borrowing too much money. It tells us these students are dropping out and unable to pay their loans or end up with a worthless diploma and can't find a job.

How can the Senate stand back and say this is acceptable? For-profit colleges are the most heavily subsidized private companies in America today—the most heavily subsidized.

In the home State of the Presiding Officer and mine, we have some farmers. Our farmers get kicked around a little bit about all of the Federal money they receive. Our farmers don't hold a candle to the for-profit colleges and universities.

These folks have turned siphoning money out of the Federal Treasury into an art form. The money they pay the CEOs who engineer these arrangements is in the millions of dollars each year, all Federal dollars, virtually all, 90, 95 percent of Federal dollars. How can you call yourself a private, for-profit company, when 80 to 90 percent of your money is coming directly from the Federal Government?

As a matter of fact, this industry, the for-profit college industry, if we took the money we spent in subsidies to these schools, would be the ninth largest Federal agency in Washington.

Yet many flinty conservatives who hate subsidies and hate deficits look the other way: Oh, it is a private company—10 percent of the students, 20 percent of the aid in Federal education, 44 percent of all the student loan defaults—and they are getting 80 to 90 percent from the Federal Treasury and we are supposed to look the other way?

From time to time, students come and sit in our galleries. Many of them are soon to graduate from high school. They will be inundated by these for-profit schools.

As soon as you reach a certain age, you can't log onto your computer without these schools roaring at you about the great deals they have to offer. I took a look back in recent memory. They actually ran an ad before the Presiding Officer was elected, and it was an ad that was on local television here. It showed a very attractive young lady in her pajamas, lounging on her bed, and she had her laptop computer. She said in this ad: I am going to college in my pajamas. I am going to a for-profit college—I don't even have to get out of my pajamas, I can go to college.

That is a bad joke, and unfortunately too many people are lured into this belief: I can just log on and get a degree. Well, it turns out many times it is too darned expensive—and it is worthless, if you ever get it.

The stories that come to my office of young people who signed up for these for-profit schools and ended up with more debt than they could ever possibly imagine are horrifying. Imagine a 30-year-old woman in the suburbs of Chicago with over $100,000 in debt and a worthless degree from Westwood College, one of the for-profit colleges in the Chicagoland area.

She watched all these crime shows on television, and they told her she could go into law enforcement with this degree. She spent 5 years, over $100,000 in debt, and not a single law enforcement agency in the Chicagoland area would recognize that degree.

Was she ever told that along the way with all those fancy ads? Never. So I say to students: Think twice about these for-profit schools.

But I want to say a word about one particular instance that bothers me a lot. Corinthian was one of the largest—most people didn't know Corinthian as a for-profit school, but they knew some of the schools that were involved in it. Everest Colleges were owned by Corinthian.

Well, it turned out that Corinthian ran into a problem. Corinthian Colleges was falsifying information they gave to the Federal Government. The Federal Government asked Corinthian Colleges, as it asks all of these other for-profit colleges: How many of your students get jobs after they graduate?

Corinthian was falsifying the students getting jobs. In fact, Corinthian had this arrangement with many companies. They would give them $1,000 and say: Can you hire our graduates for a month? You can let them go, but hire

them after graduation for a month or two, and we will give you some money to do it. The companies went along with that, subsidized employees, then they let the employees go.

Then Corinthian would report to the Federal Government: our graduates are working.

Well, when we called them on it and they couldn't produce the real information, Corinthian stock started plummeting and eventually went out of business. It was more than 1 year ago that I wrote to the Department of Education asking them to investigate Corinthian Colleges about falsifying job placement rates. It was originally reported by the Huffington Post. According to the Department, they looked into it. Corinthian was, in fact, lying, falsifying placement rates and creating attendance records at several of its institutions. Corinthian would use inflated placement rates to lure other unsuspecting students into the school. After the Department of Education placed financial sanctions on the company and delayed their title IV disbursements, Corinthian reported they didn't have enough cash flow and would have to close.

That is exactly what would have happened. Unfortunately, the Department of Education kept the school afloat even after this, shoveling hundreds of millions of dollars to the failed Corinthian company, allowing it to continue advertising and signing up students. At a point when private investors were jumping ship, the Department of Education was jumping in. Now, in a transaction blessed by the Department of Education, most of the former Corinthian campuses have been sold to ECMC.

This is a corporation that has served historically as a debt collector for the Department of Education. This is one of the companies that goes after students when they are not paying their student loans. Now this debt collection agency is going to own one of these for-profit colleges, what is left of Corinthian.

We are told this new debt collection university will operate as a not-for-profit entity. That was enticing, and I thought, well, at least they are not in the for-profit world. Despite being a not-for-profit company in name at least, I am troubled that ECMC is already—just weeks into owning and operating these schools—failing to live up to the promises they made to the students and to me.

This is an example. I wrote ECMC's head, David Hawn, in December, asking him to discontinue Corinthian's use of mandatory arbitration clauses as part of the school's enrollment agreement. What are these clauses? These clauses, signed by students, take away the rights of students to bring grievances before a court. And once students end up in arbitration proceedings, they find the rules stacked against them and in favor of the corporate players.

The associations that represent not-for-profit schools have informed me that their member schools do not use these mandatory arbitration clauses. These clauses are essentially only used by companies in the for-profit college sector. I told Mr. Hawn if he was truly going to run a not-for-profit institution, he should follow the clear model of nonprofit education—no mandatory arbitration clauses for students.

In his response to me, Mr. Hawn certainly said the right thing. He told me that ECMC had ''eliminated Corinthian's policy of binding mandatory arbitration.''

The reason this is important is that if a student has been defrauded, and they signed one of these mandatory arbitration clauses, they can never get their case and their facts before an impartial jury or judge. It is going to be decided in an arbitration hearing instead.

Mr. Hawn summed up their policy and the issue as follows:

> Bottom line: We believe that students have an unquestioned right to seek redress for grievances, including the right to file a lawsuit. We will not stand in the way of any student who wants to pursue litigation based on his or her personal experience.

It couldn't have been stated more clearly and better. It meant that this debt collection company that is taking over the failing for-profit school is saying that we are truly not-for-profit and we are truly going to play this on the square. If students feel they have been treated unfairly, they have every legal right to go to court so they do not end up with tens of thousands of debt because we defrauded them.

I felt pretty good about that response. Well, then we read the fine print. We found out that ECMC uses a combination of carrots and sticks to try to keep students out of court. First, ECMC's new enrollment document requires students to irrevocably waive their right to seek a trial by jury and waive their ability to join any class action lawsuit against the school.

That isn't what Mr. Hawn told me was going to happen. In other words, students who were wronged by ECMC have to challenge the school alone. They have to stand by themselves, and they can't make a court case in front of a jury.

Then there are carrots. ECMC's enrollment agreement does everything it can to scare students into arbitration. They offer to pay half the cost of a student's filing fee for arbitration if—and only if—the student waives his or her right to appeal the arbitrator's decision to court or bring a lawsuit against the school. And if a student demonstrates hardship, for example, because the student is saddled with enormous student loan debt and no job, ECMC will offer to pay the entire arbitration filing fee but, again, only if the student will forfeit their right to bring a lawsuit, which means the arbitrator's decision becomes binding.

I see another colleague of mine on the floor, and I know she wants to make a statement, so I will wrap up here.

Meanwhile, Corinthian executives seem to be off the hook. They have faded into obscurity. They took millions of dollars in Federal subsidies, they lured students into worthless schools, and the students ended up with the debt and worthless diplomas. They falsified the results of their activities to the Federal Government. Then they basically went bankrupt, took their million dollar salaries, and faded away. What is left behind? How about all the students with all the debt for the worthless courses at the worthless school?

That is the reality of the for-profit college industry, and Corinthian is exhibit A. It doesn't appear that any prosecution of these individuals who ran Corinthian into the ditch is likely. They have literally taken their money, and they are off to some other pursuit. Maybe they are looking for some new Federal subsidy that can make them rich. But the former students are left with worthless educations and more debt than they can ever repay—students such as Dawn Thompson from my State of Illinois.

Dawn has a parallel degree from Everest—part of Corinthian—but never ever could find a job in her field. She has over $100,000 in student loan debt to become a parallel. How about that? She has Federal and private loans. After graduating, she was working a minimum-wage job now as a bank teller. She tried to file for bankruptcy a couple of years ago and—you guessed it—student loan debt is not dischargeable in bankruptcy. Dawn, it is with you for your lifetime. It is one of the few debts that are not dischargeable.

Dawn Thompson thought at that point her only option was to go back to school. She went back to Everest, the original school she went to. She thought that getting a master's degree from Everest would make a difference. It did. Her student loan debt went from $100,000 to $170,000. She is still struggling to find a job.

How can we stand by and let this happen? How can the Federal Government recognize these as real schools? How can we allow students to be misled into believing these are real colleges and universities? How can we continue to give these outrageous scandalous subsidies to these worthless companies where the CEOs are taking out millions of dollars?

It is time for us to do something about this. Shame on us if we sit here and make speeches about how bad the deficit is and how much we care about struggling students and ignore the obvious. For-profit colleges and universities as an industry are basically an industry that needs to be thoroughly investigated, carefully monitored, and most of their players need to go out of business—and not at the expense of the students.

We are talking about 10 percent of students, 20 percent of the Federal aid to education, and 44 percent of student loan defaults from for-profit colleges

and universities. It is time for the Senate, when it reauthorizes the Higher Education Act, to change this.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about what I believe may be one of the most critical pieces of legislation to address human trafficking in the United States, and that is the piece of legislation authored by Senator LEAHY—the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation and to add my name to the amendment Senator LEAHY submitted yesterday that adds this important piece of legislation to this current debate.

Senator LEAHY, as we all know, has been a tireless advocate for homeless and runaway youth and for LGBT individuals and for victims of human trafficking. His bill would provide the necessary services and additional protections for all of these young children. So I thank Senator LEAHY again for his continued work on behalf of some of our most vulnerable—our runaway and homeless youth.

As a former attorney general, I certainly believe that additional tools need to be made available to prosecutors so they can prosecute traffickers and johns and that we need to intervene and provide recovery services for victims. I think that need has never been greater. But why I am speaking today on this legislation is because it goes to that critical element of prevention. It supports those who are most susceptible to human trafficking, and that is our runaway and homeless youth.

Preventing one of the most vulnerable segments of our population from falling prey to this modern-day slavery should be one of the top priorities of this Nation. When we talk about trafficking, frequently people think these are young girls who may be coming into our country in containers or are trafficked from elsewhere. But we know that over 80 percent of the people trafficked, especially in the sex trade in this country, are citizens of our country. They are our children. They are American children. So we cannot simply put a face on this that doesn't recognize that American children are being trafficked.

Who among these children are the most vulnerable? It is runaway and homeless youth. So it is our responsibility to do everything we can to prevent those children from being in a place where they are extraordinarily vulnerable.

We have heard some people say they do not believe that homeless and runaway youth are more susceptible to being trafficked and that we shouldn't single out special services for LGBT youth. I don't believe that, and I know better, because I have been to facilities that provide services for runaway and homeless youth. I don't believe people who say this have ever spoken to the social workers and the professionals who deal with these children every day.

I don't believe people who say that understand that runaway and homeless youth, unfortunately, have been, more than likely, already sexually and physically abused or told every day they are worthless or told that because of who they are, they are no longer welcome in their home. And when you diminish the spirit of a child, you then create a vulnerability in that child to be a target for traffickers.

A lot of people also think this is just a big-city problem. Well, let me tell you some of the stories of North Dakota. Just last June, a 13-year-old runaway from Minneapolis was rescued and her traffickers were arrested in Fargo-Moorhead. Police believe the traffickers were more than likely on their way out to our oil patch with the victim, and they stopped over in Fargo-Moorhead to make a little cash by selling these children in the Fargo-Moorhead area. This is a story we hear over and over again—the vulnerability of children, the trafficking of children into the oil patch in western North Dakota.

In fact, talking to the experts who track advertising of young children, whether it is in the deep or dark Net or whether it is in things such as backpage, they will tell you the spike in trafficking and ads in western North Dakota alarms them and should alarm us. So this is not a big-city problem. We know this is a problem that affects North Dakota. If traffickers are willing to snatch up a runaway in the Twin Cities and bring them out to North Dakota, you can be sure they are trying to prey on this vulnerable population in North Dakota as well.

This is personal for me. I know a lot about this topic because my sister works in this area, and I have spent a lot of time with her staff. They are the largest agency in North Dakota serving runaway and homeless youth populations in Fargo-Moorhead. I have heard stories of how vulnerable these children are. I have heard them tell stories about how the trafficking victims, with whom they have already worked, are sometimes recruited by those bold enough to try to cycle through waiting rooms where they are waiting for these kids.

I have heard the stories of guys waiting just down the block or in parking lots of shelters to snatch up these kids. Also I have heard stories of how once a young child is involved in this, they then become recruiters of other young runaway children.

These stories are why it is so imperative to take action. And we can take action here in the Senate. We can take action by taking up the Runaway and Homeless Youth Trafficking Prevention Act. This bill reauthorizes vital programs that provide short-term shelter for youth who do not have a place to sleep—imagine that: youth, our children, do not have a place to sleep; crisis interventions and referrals to youth on the street and at drop-in centers—a hand up: we will take you and we will help you recover from whatever has happened in your life; long-term residential services; training and education; and employment support to help get these kids off the street and permanently provide a safe and secure path forward.

Importantly, this bill makes sure that LGTB runaway and homeless youth are not discriminated against when it comes to providing resources and services. We can have an opinion about this, but we all know that no human should be subjected to those kinds of conditions, and we must do everything we can to help them seek and receive the same services as any other child.

By ensuring that runaway and homeless youth have a safe place to stay and the resources they need, we can stem the tide of human trafficking in our country. By identifying vulnerable youth early and as effectively as possible, we can reduce the number of child sex trafficking victims by preventing them from becoming victims in the first place.

We can and we must do everything in our power to not only identify, prosecute, and help victims recover, we must do everything we can to prevent human trafficking. We can take a huge step forward on that by focusing attention and resources on our runaway and homeless youth population.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of ''homeless person'' under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the courtesy from the distinguished Republican leader, Senator CORNYN, in letting me go forward for a few moments.

I would like to note that the executive director of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs—a group I know well for the important work they have done—wrote to me yesterday to express the concern of the coalition and to express their support for the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act and encourage us to put aside our differences and work together to support those in need.

He wrote:

Difference of opinion and the deliberative role of the Senate is part of what makes our democracy strong, but sometimes unity of purpose should prevail, particularly in efforts involving protections for the most vulnerable among us. There should be no doubt that legislation involving the well-being of individuals who have been victimized by the most base of human behavior should be free of partisan wrangling. I . . . encourage your efforts to remove partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act in an effort to ensure that the Act and the Runaway and Homeless Youth amendment that Senator Collins and you introduced [will] move forward unimpeded.

I believe that reflects the views of Vermonters of all political stripes.

I know the distinguished Senator from Texas and I and others want to help these greatly abused and abandoned children, and I hope we can continue to work to find a way forward.

I yield the floor, and I thank the Senator for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my colleagues—the Senator from Illinois, the Senator from Ohio, and I think we are going to be joined by the Senator from South Dakota and perhaps others.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, before I turn to Senator PORTMAN, I would like to put up a quote from one of the leaders of the anti-trafficking movement, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, who expresses my sentiments exactly, my frustration over a partisan filibuster of a piece of legislation which has enjoyed broad bipartisan support and how somehow partisanship has infected what should be a bipartisan commitment to helping the victims of human trafficking. She says, ''Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.'' I think that expresses the facts and certainly my sentiment.

I want to turn to the Senator from Ohio first, who has been one of the leaders in this effort. He has offered an important piece of legislation which has already been incorporated in the bill which perhaps he will talk about but also has some additional amendments that I know he would like to get a chance to get a vote on to further improve the bill—in particular, his provision Bringing Missing Children Home Act with Senator SCHUMER, the Senator from New York, which is already in the base bill, and then with Senator FEINSTEIN, the Senator from California—they offered the Combat Human Trafficking Act, which is already included in the base bill.

So with that, I would yield to the Senator from Ohio for any remarks he would care to make, and then perhaps we could engage in a colloquy with our colleagues.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank my colleague from Texas. I thank him for his leadership on this legislation, along with Senator KLOBUCHAR and others, in bringing this to the floor. Senator GRASSLEY, the chair of the committee, is with us. I appreciate the fact that these two bills which we have worked on over the last few years are included in the legislation the Senator mentioned.

Sadly, some of the most vulnerable youth are those who are missing or are in foster care, kids who end up being, unfortunately, exposed to human trafficking, sometimes sexual trafficking. So the idea of the missing children legislation is really very simple. It says: Let's help find these children as quickly as possible by having better information on them.

I will give one example of that. In Ohio we have had 71 kids who have gone missing since January 1. These are 71 children who are out there somewhere—minors. For those 71 children, we only have 22 photographs. This is since January 1. One thing this legislation does is it says: Let's get the data, including photographs, so all of us can have an opportunity to find these young people before they become subject to human trafficking.

In Ohio we, unfortunately, have this issue in all of our regions, including in some of our smaller communities as well as our bigger urban centers where we have sex trafficking. They say the average age of children who are getting involved in this is between 11 and 13 years old.

We have talked a lot on the floor over the last several days. I have been out here talking about these issues. These are the most vulnerable among us. These are crimes against children.

This is in the bill, and if we can pass this legislation, getting this additional information and better awareness and training of child welfare agency officials and better training for law enforcement is all part of this.

The other legislation the Senator mentioned is about increasing the penalties on those who are involved in trafficking. That is important because we haven't had a major bill on this for 15 years, and we have learned a lot in this process. What we have learned is there are better ways to give prosecutors and other law enforcement the tools they need to be able to take these cases, prosecute them, and stop this heinous crime.

There are some really good provisions in this legislation that I have worked on, on a bipartisan basis. As was said, one is with Senator FEINSTEIN with regard to increasing the penalties, and the other piece of legislation is with Senator SCHUMER on bringing children home. There are also a couple of amendments we would love to offer. In fact, we offered them, but we haven't been able to get votes on them because this week we haven't moved forward on the legislation.

I would urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to allow us to move forward with the process. Let's go ahead and start having votes. There might be disagreements on some parts of the bill. I thought because it had gotten out of committee by a unanimous vote that there wouldn't be disagreements, but if there are, let's have that discussion and debate. Let's not let the most vulnerable among us wait for us to work this out. Let's move forward on this legislation in a way that allows everybody to have their views heard.

Some of the legislation I talked about comes out of meeting with folks back home on this issue and talking to victims who have been through this horrible process and gone through the very difficult process of recovering from it. Some of the amendments we are going to offer would help with regard to that issue, help to respond to these young people—often children—who are involved in this.

It also comes out of the work that has been done right here in the Senate through a caucus we formed about 2½ years ago. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I cofounded this caucus, we cochair it, and we meet every month and bring people in from around the country who are experts on this issue. Some are experts on child welfare, law enforcement, people who are involved in trying to stop this. Others are experts because, unfortunately, they found themselves in very difficult situations. Among others, some have come forward and talked about how as a young girl they were taken in by a trafficker. Increasingly—this is true in Ohio, unfortunately—drug abuse is part of this, so they become dependent on the trafficker. It is, to me, a form of bondage because these are young people who become addicted. In Ohio it is typically

heroin now. So it is keeping these young people trapped in this dependency. The drug treatment and the drug recovery are tough, but so is the recovery from having been trafficked.

This is an opportunity for us to take the information we have received through this caucus we have formed. I think the Members who are involved in that caucus, including the Members here today, would agree it has been a good experience for our staff and for us to raise the awareness and consciousness on this issue. Now we have taken some of this information and put it in this legislation. Let's get it passed. We will have plenty of time for politics around here, trust me. We will have lots of that next week and the week after and over the next couple years. That is part of the process; we understand that. But there are certain issues where we should be able to move forward on not a bipartisan basis but I would say on a nonpartisan basis, and this is one of them.

I thank my colleague from Texas for allowing me to speak briefly and my colleagues from South Dakota and Illinois who are here to talk about this issue.

My hope is that even today we can begin the process of having votes, moving forward with amendments, and getting this good work done to help the most vulnerable among us.

Mr. CORNYN. Briefly, I thank the Senator from Ohio for his leadership on these issues. He has worked hard and long to address them and to bring us to the point where we are today.

I wish to emphasize one point the Senator made at the beginning, and that is that the average age of the people who are targeted for human trafficking are girls between the ages of 12 and 14. So this is a very vulnerable part of our country. I know we get wrapped around the axle up here about procedure, about politics, about a lot of different issues, but we ought to keep our focus on them, on the victims, these children, these girls who are the hapless victims of these pimps and johns and other people who make money selling their bodies. We ought to be trying to figure out what can we do to help them. They are the ones who will be the real losers. We get so balled up around here because of all of the political maneuvers, we take our eye off the ball. That is why our friends at the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women talked about a phantom problem over real victims. The focus should be on the victims.

The phantom problem—the shiny object they are trying to hold up and relitigate—is something that has been the law of the land since 1976. It has been included in a lot of pieces of legislation they voted for. This is a phony diversion from what should be our real focus, which should be the victims.

I wish to turn to the Senator from Illinois who has also been a leader on this issue. He has been a warrior in dealing with people who run some of these Web sites, backpage.com in particular. My friend is also trying to figure out a way to integrate some of our veterans who are leaving military service to lead the investigation of these crimes.

I turn to the Senator from Illinois for any comments he cares to make.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas for moving this legislation, especially including the text of the HERO Act, S. 575, which is bipartisan, thanks to the help of Senator BLUMENTHAL, that would also have us find wounded warriors to search on the Internet to find these exploiters.

With the amendment I was trying to offer earlier this week on the SAVE Act, I intended to go after backpage.com, which is the largest provider of slavery-related services in the country. They make about $30 million a year off of slavery. We really ought to be able to charge them to clean up the mess they have created.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois. His focus is exactly where we ought to be having our focus, which is how to take the profit out of this modern-day slavery and redirect it to help the victims, and that is what this bill does. It ends some of the impunity that some of these purveyors of human flesh—the rewards they are reaping—and plows it back in to help the victims. I know the SAVE Act has been a particular focus for the Senator from Illinois.

Earlier I talked to Senator FEINSTEIN, the Senator from California, about this issue. She is very concerned about how the Internet is becoming integrated as part of the business model of some of these perpetrators of this crime.

I am also told—and the Senator from Illinois may be aware of this—that veterans will participate.

Mr. KIRK. Under the HERO Act, we have ICE hiring veterans to get on the Internet to find some of the slave dealers online.

We should thread the needle very carefully when it comes to matters such as backpage.com. Under the Communications Decency Act, freedom in America does not mean you have the freedom to enslave others.

With the victory in the Civil War—and I apologize to the Senator from Texas for mentioning it—we have established the real principle of the ever expanding rule of freedom here in the United States and that does not include human slavery empowered by the Internet.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senator from Illinois, and I take no offense for talking about the fact that the South lost the Civil War.

Mr. KIRK. I believe a recent statement by my colleague referred to it as the recent unpleasantness.

Mr. CORNYN. I hold the Senate seat that was first held by Senator Sam Houston who actually resigned his seat as Governor of Texas rather than participate in secession. He was a Union man and believed in the Union.

I know the Senator from Illinois has worked very hard on a bipartisan basis with Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the Senator from Connecticut, and others on this legislation, and that is why I find this situation so baffling. What has been a uniquely bipartisan effort has now turned into a partisan filibuster and, frankly, I am perplexed by that. Maybe some of our friends on the other side of the aisle will come out and explain why they are filibustering the bill they voted for in the Judiciary Committee. We had a unanimous vote in the Judiciary Committee. We had 10 Democratic cosponsors. Yet the Democratic leader, Senator REID, now says they will not allow a vote on any amendments and they are going to kill this bill because they don't want to vote for a bill that has a provision they have voted for time and time again, and indeed has been the law of the land for 39 years.

I thank the Senator from Illinois.

We are joined by the Senator from South Dakota who is head of our Republican conference and has been very concerned about the dysfunction in this place. We actually saw this legislation as an opportunity to start demonstrating that we can do the people's business once again after coming off of a very tough election—tougher for our Democratic friends than it was for our side of the aisle. It was an election where voter after voter said they were sick and tired of the dysfunction here. We want to show we can be responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable people in our country.

I yield to the Senator from South Dakota for any comments he cares to make.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas for his leadership on this issue, as well as the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, for moving this legislation to the floor.

As the Senator from Texas—who has authored and been involved with this legislation for a long time—knows, if there was ever an issue we have dealt with here in the Senate that goes beyond the line of partisan politics, it is this. We are talking about untold stories of thousands of American children and adults who are sold into modern-day slavery. Those stories are bone chilling and undeniably some of the most deplorable acts of humankind.

What the Senator from Texas' bill is designed to do is to start attacking this issue in a way we have not seen for a very long time. It gives law enforcement the tools in order to target these traffickers, bring them to justice, and provides the tools that are necessary to help restore the lives of the victims of these heinous crimes.

It is interesting to me that we are where we are. This is clearly a bipartisan issue. My understanding is when this bill was marked up, debated, and voted on in the Judiciary Committee, it came out unanimously. In other words, all the Democrats on the committee voted for it. Is that correct? Is that the way it proceeded from the Judiciary Committee?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will respond to my friend from South Dakota to say he is absolutely correct, which is one reason I am so perplexed we find ourselves where we are today.

We have 10 cosponsors from the Democratic side for this underlying bill which was filed on January 13. It was marked up in the Judiciary Committee a month later and got a unanimous vote. I will add to that, in response to my friend's question, we also saw something we have not seen here in a long time on the Senate floor, and that is an agreement by all 100 Senators that we would proceed to consider this bill and begin the amendment and debate process without having to jump through all of the procedural hoops we traditionally have to do on cloture motions and the like.

What happened a couple of days ago when apparently some of our friends woke up and found out about this issue—what has been called a phantom problem—is very disturbing.

Mr. THUNE. My understanding is the bill itself is approximately 68 pages long. Is that correct?

Mr. CORNYN. I will say to my friend that he is correct. That includes the strikeout provisions of the substitute, so actually the text is roughly half of that.

The provisions our friends across the aisle suddenly woke up and discovered—apparently a couple of days ago—were written in plain sight and incorporate by reference a bill they voted for, which was the last appropriations bill we voted for in the lameduck session.

Mr. THUNE. This bill was filed on what date?

Mr. CORNYN. On January 13, I say to my friend.

Mr. THUNE. When was it marked up at the committee level?

Mr. CORNYN. I say to my friend, it was marked up or passed out of the Judiciary Committee roughly a month later.

Mr. THUNE. This legislation has been here in the Senate for weeks or months.

Mr. CORNYN. Months.

Mr. THUNE. It is 68 pages long. It was introduced back in January. It was reported out unanimously. All the Democrats on the committee voted for it when it left the Judiciary Committee. When it was brought up on the floor of the Senate, all 100 Senators, including every single Democrat, voted to get on this bill.

All of a sudden, here at the 11th hour, we are being held up on a piece of legislation that clearly has unanimous support, or at least I thought should have had unanimous support. They are now objecting because of the language in this legislation. Evidently it is only 68 pages long, which is not a lot to read.

ObamaCare was obviously a story where it was argued that after it was passed, we had to figure out what was in it, but that was several thousand pages long. This is a 68-page bill.

When the bill was filed, there was an opportunity for people to look at this when the bill went to markup. Countless staffers and Members of Congress have looked at and read this legislation. Now all of a sudden—at the 11th hour—there is an objection because there is language included in this bill which was voted on by 55 Democrats as recently as December. Is that correct? Was there a spending bill that came out of the Congress in December of 2014?

Mr. CORNYN. I say to my friend that was the so-called CRomnibus. It was the continuing resolution omnibus bill that passed in November during the lameduck session and it included the same or very similar language. It was actually incorporated by reference into the Justice for Victims of Trafficking bill. It is the same language our Democratic friends voted for then, and now they are complaining about it being in this bill for no apparent reason.

Mr. THUNE. Is it correct that that particular provision, referred to as the Hyde amendment, has been a part of spending bills dating back to 1976? So for literally 40 years the Hyde amendment language has been included in bills we have passed here, particularly bills that are appropriations bills and spending and funding bills?

Mr. CORNYN. I say to my friend from South Dakota, he is exactly correct. This has been the law of the land for 39 years. This is an area that has been very controversial—that is abortion, generally—and this has been a rare area of bipartisan consensus that no tax dollars be used to fund abortion.

Again, this is a red herring and a phantom problem, as it has been referred to here, and I can't believe our friends on the other side would throw their staff under the bus who were responsible to bring this language in the legislation to their attention, and I can't believe they would throw the victims who will benefit from this bill under the bus and say they should have to pay the price for this phantom problem they discovered. To me it is not plausible. It doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

Mr. THUNE. I say to my colleague from Texas, again, who has been so instrumental in getting this to the floor, that a 68-page bill is certainly readable. They have had several months to look at and read it. When a bill is reported out of a committee, it means it has been analyzed, looked at, and open to debate and amendments, and it came out unanimously. Every Democrat voted for it. They voted for a provision that literally has been a matter of policy and law in this country dating back to 1976 and was voted on as recently as December of last year.

We had 55 Democrats in this Chamber who voted for this language—very similar language—in December of last year and now they are objecting to a piece of legislation they reported out unanimously in the Judiciary Committee which does something to stop the brutal violation of the innocent in this country, and they are objecting to it over this language.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I could interject. The Senator from South Dakota is exactly right. I will add to that that not only does this enjoy broad bipartisan support within the Senate and Congress, we have more than 200 law enforcement and victim rights organizations that have endorsed this bill and they are begging us to pass it.

One of those groups includes the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. They know we need to focus on not only taking the profit out of this crime but, just as importantly, we need to get the services to the victims to begin to let them heal and get on with their lives.

As we said earlier, these are typically young girls who are 12 to 14 years of age. Can you imagine the scars, both physical and psychological, they bear having experienced this terrible crime?

Every day we delay in getting this bill passed because of the political shenanigans here is another day these victims of this terrible crime are denied access to the services they need.

Mr. THUNE. If they survive, imagine how messed up some of these young victims are going to be for the rest of their lives. We have an opportunity to do something about it.

The Democratic leader has described this as a sleight of hand. That is not what this is. This is a clear choice. This is a clear choice by Democrats to choose partisan politics over the victims of human trafficking. It is as simple as that.

I urge my Democratic colleagues to stop—stop the partisan politics, stop derailing this important opportunity to come together in a spirit of bipartisanship to end human trafficking. Putting partisan politics over the lives of 100,000 American children who fall victim to the brutal reality of human trafficking every year is absolutely wrong.

To quote our distinguished colleague from the State of Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI: ''Let's get it done and let's get it done now.''

I would say to my colleague from Texas, life is too precious. These crimes are too serious for this issue to be caught up in the crosshairs of Washington politics. This has to stop. This has to end.

This is a piece of bipartisan legislation that will help literally hundreds of thousands—millions, I would say—of Americans across this country. It is time we begin to right the wrongs of injustice by turning the tide in law enforcement's favor to help those who are trying to combat these terrible, heinous crimes to succeed and to help the victims of these crimes restore their lives.

I appreciate the good work of the Senator from Texas and others who have been involved with this.

I urge my colleagues to end this shenanigan, this charade that is going on

before the Senate. Let's get this bill passed and on the President's desk.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, how much time remains in our time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time limit.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish to express my gratitude to the Senator from South Dakota.

We have neglected perhaps the most important person in this process; that is, the Senator from Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, who responded to a letter written by all 20 female Senators, asking him to have a hearing on this important topic and to move this bill forward.

The Senator from South Dakota mentioned Senator MIKULSKI. She came to testify, along with Senator AYOTTE from New Hampshire and Senator KLOBUCHAR, and she talked about how important this was to all 20 of our women Senators and how proud they were of the fact that it moved forward. It wouldn't have happened without the Senator from Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, willing to take that challenge up and to move the bill to the floor in such a unanimous fashion.

I wish to close by saying that all Members of the Senate presumably came here to try to do something important—not just to march in place or fill up space. Presumably, they spend the time away from their families, they go through the rigors of political campaigns, they suffer the slings and arrows of partisan politics in order to try to do something good, to try to help people who cannot help themselves.

Here is a perfect opportunity to do exactly that. We are not asking people to do anything extraordinary. We are certainly not asking them to do anything they haven't done before, which is to vote on language that is included and has been the law of the land for 39 years and that they have voted on before. We are not asking to change the status quo. We are just asking them to focus on the victims.

As Ms. Gaetan, who is with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, said: ''Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.''

Shame on us if we allow that to happen. Shame on us. We can do better. These victims deserve better. The people we work for in the 50 States around this country deserve better. Shame on us if we don't get this problem solved and if we don't pass this piece of bipartisan legislation and get it to the President's desk where he will gladly sign it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, our Republican colleagues say they are here fighting for women. If that were the case, then they wouldn't have snuck into this bill a provision that hurts women. It is not just me saying this; it is a story in the Washington Post. I ask unanimous consent to have this article printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 10, 2015]

ANTI-HUMAN-TRAFFICKING BILL GETS CAUGHT UP IN ABORTION POLITICS IN SENATE

(By Mike DeBonis)

Proving that there is virtually no issue that cannot get mired in partisan combat, an anti-human trafficking bill now under Senate consideration is in limbo after Democrats accused Republicans of sneaking anti-abortion language into the legislation before it hit the Senate floor.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, authored by Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.) and sporting a bipartisan stable of cosponsors, was supposed to be a turn toward comity after a couple of contentious weeks on Capitol Hill. What's not to like about a bill that would increase penalties for those convicted of slavery, human smuggling and sexual exploitation of children and provide for additional compensation for their victims?

On Monday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) locked arms in calling on their colleagues to support the measure. ''I doubt if there will be problems on my side,'' Reid said, according to The Hill. ''If there is, I will work to clear them.''

But by midday Tuesday, the good feelings had eroded into a bout of finger-pointing, with Senate Democrats accusing Republicans of subterfuge in slipping language into the bill that would extend the longstanding Hyde Amendment barring the use of taxpayer funds for abortions to the new Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.

The word ''abortion'' does not appear in the trafficking bill, but there is language specifying that the victims' fund ''shall be subject to the limitations on the use or expending of amounts described in sections 506 and 507 of division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 . . . to the same extent as if amounts in the Fund were funds appropriated under division H of such Act.''

That would apply the Hyde Amendment language to the new fund, which is supported by a proposed $5,000 assessment on those convicted of a wide variety of federal crimes related to sexual abuse and human trafficking.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) accused Republicans of ''trying to pull a fast one'' in inserting the abortion provision. Two Democratic leaders, Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.), both said Democrats had been advised that it was not among the changes made to the bill since it was taken up last year by a Democratic-controlled Senate. Earlier in the day, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), ranking member of the committee that unanimously forwarded the bill, said Judiciary Committee Democrats were ''assured'' the provision was not included.

In an early January e-mail reviewed by the Post, a Republican Judiciary Committee staffer sent a Democratic staffer a summary of changes to the previous version of the bill, in seven bullet points. The abortion provision was not among them.

''This bill will not be used as an opportunity for Republicans to double down on their efforts to restrict a woman's health-care choices,'' Murray said. ''It is absolutely wrong and, honestly, it is shameful. I know there are a whole lot of us who are going to fight hard against any attempt to expand the Hyde Amendment and permanently impact women's health.''

But Republican leaders—including Cornyn, the majority whip—pushed back on the notion that the abortion language represented any kind of subterfuge. A Cornyn aide suggested that Democrats knew very well about the language before the committee vote—including, the aide said, Leahy staffers—and thus were being ''disingenuous.''

''It was out in the public domain for a month before it was marked up in Judiciary Committee on Feb. 26, and all members of the Judiciary Committee voted to support it,'' Cornyn said. ''So that leads me to believe that some of the suggestions being made now that there were provisions in the legislation that people didn't know about are simply untrue. That presupposes that none of their staff briefed the senators on what was in the legislation, that nobody read a 68-page bill and that senators would vote for a bill, much less co-sponsor it, without reading it and knowing what's in it. None of that strikes me as plausible.''

Republicans and Democrats are also sparring about the impact of the abortion language. Adam Jentleson, a spokesman for Reid, called it a ''significant expansion of the scope of the Hyde amendment'' by applying it to fees and fines, not just taxpayer funds. He also said the rider in the trafficking bill would be permanent—unlike the Hyde Amendment, which must be continually attached to each year's appropriations—and thus ''could lead to a dramatic expansion of abortion restrictions in future years.''

Cornyn took to the Senate floor late Tuesday to rebut that notion, noting that the 2009 health reform law included a similar restriction. ''Democrats have supported legislation consistent with the Hyde Amendment for a long, long time,'' he said. ''My hope is this: that members of the United States Senate will rise above this—this agreement, this posturing, this attempt to try to play gotcha at the expense of these victims of human trafficking.''

Reid said debate would continue Wednesday on the bill, and a Democratic aide suggested the tiff could be overcome if McConnell allows a vote on an amendment removing the abortion language from the bill—an amendment that is likely to fail.

''You can blame it on staff, blame it on whoever you want to blame it on, but we didn't know it was in the bill,'' Reid said. ''And . . . this bill will not come off this floor as long as that language is in the bill.''

Mrs. BOXER. The article states in part:

In an early January e-mail reviewed by the Post, a Republican Judiciary Committee staffer sent a Democratic staffer a summary of changes to the previous version of the bill, in seven bullet points.

Guess what. They left out the change they made to women's reproductive health.

Now, I have been around here a long time and I thought there was trust in this body, but don't stand up and say it is a phantom problem when the Washington Post confirms it. They have the email that proves this change was made and was not told to the Democrats on the committee. If it had been told to the Democrats on the committee, we would have worked this out.

If they want to fight for women, take the provision out that harms the victims of trafficking. If they want to help women, bring up Loretta Lynch for confirmation—a fantastic woman, qualified—held up by the Republicans longer than any other Attorney General nominee ever. If they want to help women, those are two ways to do it.

Solve this problem. Don't stand up and say it is a phantom problem when the Washington Post saw the email.

We know the bill before us has an extremely worthy goal. We want to help victims of human trafficking. I wish to ask rhetorically, How does it help women who have been brutally trafficked when we don't let them access their legal right to end a pregnancy that resulted from their enslavement? A woman is enslaved. She becomes pregnant. Shouldn't she have the ability to get the same kind of health care as any other woman? But, no, in this bill, they say she can't use that victims compensation fund for that legal right.

Republicans are doing this all over the place. They attached immigration to the homeland security bill. They are threatening to attach the Keystone Pipeline to a highway bill. Now they include abortion in a human trafficking bill. And then they tell us we are seeing phantom problems? I don't think so. They have been in charge for more than 8 weeks and all we see is them taking hostage after hostage after hostage legislatively to get their way on their philosophy.

Roe v. Wade is the law of the land. If they don't like it, why don't they just propose doing away with it. Let's have that out. This bill singles out and hurts vulnerable women—women who have been the victims of a heinous crime. Women who face deplorable conditions, ripped out of their homes, taken advantage of, treated brutally, women who many times are forced into pregnancy by their captors, and in an unprecedented manner, because of sneaking this language into this bill, the bill imposes abortion restrictions on private funds—private funds that have been collected from the criminals and the perpetrators of these unspeakable acts.

Don't these women deserve better? Shouldn't these victims have access to services that are guaranteed to them by the Constitution?

My friends on the other side don't like it. They want to tell women what to do. They want to get into the most personal decisions that women and their families make. Let them do that for their families. But if they want to change the law of the land, Roe v. Wade, and tell women they are criminals—and doctors, make them criminals too—then why don't they just have the courage to bring it to the floor directly, not sneak it into a bill and have the staffers write a note to their colleagues saying, Oh, they are silent. Oh, we didn't do anything on that. Oh, no.

I will tell my colleagues there is one advantage to being around here for a long time. One has a sense of what used to be decent around here, when one's word was one's word and one's bond was one's bond. Thank goodness we have proof. We have proof that the Republicans left this out of a memo in which they told the Judiciary Committee the changes that were made. We have proof. Don't call this a phantom problem because we have it in writing.

This is a clear path of injecting these unrelated, extremely politically charged provisions into key pieces of legislation. I have not seen it. We used to have a little bit of an understanding around here that if we agreed on a piece of legislation, we would keep out the poison pills. We wouldn't put them into bills, whether they were written by Democrats or Republicans. We know at the end of the day what happens. Everybody gets hurt because nothing gets done. If this is the new way it is going to be around here, it is a bad way for the people.

We should be working on a bill that protects the victims of the most heinous crime: human trafficking. We should be protecting our society's most vulnerable people and making sure they are not denied their rights. The Republican provision that was added in secret and tried to be kept quiet would hurt every single woman we are trying to help. They inserted language that was not in the same bill last year that was supported by Democrats and Republicans. They added the new language quietly, hoping nobody would notice, and then we would all march down there—I put my name on this bill, by the way, because my staff trusted the Republican staff when they said there wasn't any change in abortion language. How awful it was for my staff that they said to me, Senator, we feel terrible. We took their word. So I got my name off this bill.

Why on Earth would anyone want to single out these victims of human trafficking and take away their constitutional rights?

At least own up to it, I say to my Republican friends. They got caught. We have the email. Don't get up here and say it is a phantom problem. Don't make these speeches about how Democrats want to hurt women, when they put a poison pill in the bill, hurt the very women they say they want to protect, did it in secret, and then call us out for it as if we are doing something wrong.

The American people were not born yesterday. They are pretty darn smart. If I stopped one of them on the street—I don't care if they are a Republican or Democrat or what their view is on abortion—and I said to them: If a friend tells you they have made no changes to a letter you asked them to write, and you took their word for it and signed the letter and later found out there was something in that letter that they knew would hurt you, would you be angry, they would probably say: I don't even want to deal with that person anymore; they can't be trusted.

One thing I have learned around here is your word is your bond, and the relationships we have with one another across the aisle are precious. They are important.

So let's not make these phony arguments. Let's fix the problem. Let's remove this offending language. Let's come together, for once. Let's pass a bill that helps these victims.

Then my colleague says: Well, all the groups want this bill anyway. Let me quote from one of them, the Polaris Project: ''The bipartisan support to address modern slavery should not be held up by a separate debate on partisan issues.''

That is a direct quote.

If ever there was a partisan issue, it is the right to choose. That is a partisan issue.

Then there is a letter from the National Network For Youth: ''This legislation is desperately needed and we cannot let this moment pass us by because of the addition of partisan and divisive provisions.''

Let me read that again: ''This legislation is desperately needed and we can't let this moment pass us by because of the addition of partisan and divisive provisions.''

Again, we are offering Republicans a simple solution: Remove the language. Go back to the same language that was in the bill last year which enjoyed broad support.

If Republicans do that today, we would pass this bill today.

I know this is the Democratic time to talk, so I am going to allow Senator HIRONO to continue. We need to end this sneak attack on women's health so we can get the victims of human trafficking the services and support they need.

We are ready, willing, and able to sit down and work with our friends on the other side to drop this provision. The Senate is not going to get things done if the Republican majority continues to insist on putting politically charged, extreme measures on bills that should pass with bipartisan support. I hope my colleagues will work with us. I certainly want to be able to trust the staffers again and trust my colleagues again, and it would start with removing this provision.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of my friend from California, Senator BOXER. I rise today to speak against attempts to turn this bill—the Justice for Trafficking Victims Act—into a political football. While there are many issues that may divide this Congress—and certainly the issue of choice for women is one of them—human trafficking should not be one of those divisive issues.

This bill started off as a bipartisan bill, but along the way a provision was added to the bill that brings me to the floor today in opposition to that provision. Not only do I oppose the substance of that provision, but I very much object to how the provision was added to the bill unbeknownst to the sponsors of this bill such as myself. Buried in this bill is a provision that allows government to dictate a woman's health care options, and this provision would limit choices for women

who have been victimized by human trafficking.

Women are often forced to endure rape and violence on a daily basis. That is what human trafficking is. This is an unprecedented and, I have to say, appalling expansion of government's role in women's health care decisions. The provision is anti-women and anti-victim. This body should be working to help these victims of trafficking violence, not playing politics with their lives. But that is not what we are seeing today.

The truth is there are some in this body who have time and again put their own ideological agenda and need to score political points ahead of consensus-driven legislation.

We have seen this before. A few weeks ago Congress came close to shutting down the Department of Homeland Security—the third largest Department in the Federal Government—because a few Members wanted to hold funding national security priorities hostage to score points against the President's immigration actions. We saw it during the shutdown. We saw it during the debate over the Shaheen-Portman energy bill. We saw it during Congress's drawn-out debate over the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, yet another issue that should be free of partisan politics.

This body shouldn't let ideological grandstanding on divisive issues stall and kill bipartisan legislation that will make a difference for people—particularly for the most vulnerable people in this country, victims of trafficking.

This bill is no exception. A bill on human trafficking should not be a method of expanding the government's powers to dictate women's personal choices, women's health care decisions.

I join my colleagues in urging the Senate to stop using this legislation and others like it to advance an ideological agenda, and help the women, men, and children who are being trafficked across this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I don't seek the floor to speak now because I think I am infringing upon some other Democrats who wanted to speak before I spoke. I assume they are on their way.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, yesterday I came to the floor with a very clear message for my Republican colleagues: A bill about combatting human trafficking is no place for partisanship. It is not an opportunity to try to get a political victory for your base, and it absolutely should not be a vehicle for policies that would roll back a woman's right to make her own choices about her own body. Instead, a bill like the Justice for Trafficking Victims Act should be focused only on protecting the rights and the safety and the health of survivors of sex trafficking, who have faced truly extraordinary violence and hardship.

I called on Republicans to work with Democrats to ensure this legislation gets back on track as the bipartisan effort it should be—by simply removing a provision that would expand the so-called Hyde amendment, allowing politicians to interfere even more with the most deeply personal health decisions a woman can make.

I am disappointed that so far my Republican colleagues have said no and continued to push for a completely unnecessary fight over women's health. So today I am back on the floor, joined by several of my Democratic colleagues, to tell the other side of the aisle that we are not taking no for an answer. We Democratic women believe a bill intended to help women should be about helping women, period.

There is no reason for a political restriction on women's health in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, just as there wasn't a reason for Republicans to threaten the government with a shutdown over Planned Parenthood funding back in 2011 or try to jam through reproductive health riders on spending bills.

The women Senators who have joined us on the floor today have seen this kind of inappropriate, disappointing political stunt geared at rolling back women's rights before. Republicans are going to get the same response they have gotten every other time: not on our watch.

Right now the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary is working on alternative legislation that would take out the divisive, harmful expansion of the Hyde amendment and keep this effort focused on survivors who need support and deserve justice. Democrats are laying out a path to keep this bill bipartisan and get it done.

I hope our Republican colleagues will reconsider the partisan approach they have taken and work with us. I hope they will think about why it doesn't make sense to choose partisanship over trying to just address a truly horrific problem in our country, especially one we all agree needs to be solved. I hope they will commit to putting the politics aside and join us to make this bill the bipartisan effort we all hoped it would be.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. 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. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we just heard Members of the minority party complaining there are things in this bill nobody knew anything about. On our side, I think we have done a good job of refuting it.

I am going to suggest again they ought to read the legislation. They had plenty of time to read the legislation. But it is kind of remindful of the story about Speaker PELOSI saying after the 2,700-page ObamaCare bill was written that you have to pass it to find out what is in it.

Obviously this legislation before us isn't law. It is a proposal. But it is just like people evidently don't read this legislation before it gets out of committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 20–0. The fact is this legislation was on the Web site several weeks before it was voted out of committee, and this language was in it. So you have to wait until a bill gets out of committee before you read the language? No. There are 20 people on the Committee on the Judiciary who had an opportunity to read this legislation before it ever got out of committee. There were no concerns about this language that we hear from the minority of the Senate that they have all of a sudden found obnoxious and somehow it was sneaked into a piece of legislation, which is not true. That is what I am going to speak about.

As one example of what I referred to, yesterday we heard from the Senator from Vermont—my friend, the distinguished ranking member of the committee and former chairman of the committee—that an organization called ATEST is urging that we strike the Hyde amendment language in this bill. ATEST is one of many organizations that had the opportunity to review and comment on this legislation prior to the committee markup of this bill. They met with my staff in February to discuss this bill and never raised any concern with the Hyde amendment at that time. So now I can legitimately question why they are coming forward with this concern only now, weeks after the Senate Committee on the Judiciary reported this legislation.

Then we also heard the Senator from California comment on emails. I want her to know there are emails that clearly show the other side was aware of the Hyde provision, and it is not our majority saying the Democrats are raising a phantom problem. The Senator from California is criticizing a human trafficking advocate who is saying that very point.

It is pretty bad around here when you have Senators attacking anti-trafficking advocates. We learned last week that law enforcement officials in Texas arrested 29 people in an online trafficking sting. As reported in Texas in the Waco Tribune-Herald on March 10:

> The sting was designed to catch suspects seeking underage escorts for sexual acts or trying to become ''pimps'' by trafficking underage prostitutes.

This is only the latest in a string of news stories showing that the commercial exploitation of children is a problem in the United States. The reality that adolescents are victims in many of these cases makes the situation all the more wrenching.

It is vital that we act now to pass legislation to further protect these and other domestic victims of human trafficking. These reports are reasons why this bill should not be stalled by the minority Members of the Senate, particularly when we in the majority pledged, as a result of the last election, that we were going to have an open amendment process.

This bill is under the open amendment process so anybody who doesn't like this language ought to offer an amendment, and let us see where the votes are—whether their side prevails or whether the people who want to pass an antitrafficking bill prevail.

I take this opportunity to again urge my colleagues to support this Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which would establish strong antitrafficking measures that target predators who exploit innocent, young people. The measure focuses both on sex and labor trafficking. It would benefit both children and adult victims of these despicable crimes.

The legislation would equip law enforcement with new tools to fight trafficking, enhance services for victims, and increase penalties for perpetrators. The bill would help fight demand for domestic sex trafficking by ensuring that any person who is trafficking an adult or purchasing a child for sex will be punished under the full force of law. In other words, it goes after the demand side as well as the supply side of these terrible crimes. So it is a meaningful solution that is supported by a large bipartisan group of Senators and more than 200 outside organizations.

The other day, one human trafficking advocate characterized the concern raised by the minority with the Hyde amendment provision in this bill as a phantom problem, and I agree.

The minority leader is focusing on a provision that passed the Senate Judiciary Committee in February unanimously, after committee members debated the bill and had the opportunity to even strike this provision that they find so obnoxious at this particular time. Not only has this language, called the Hyde amendment language, been in a part of this bipartisan bill for months, it is the law of the land today—a consensus measure adopted in 1976. It has been included in appropriations bills every year for decades.

As I mentioned yesterday, it has been included in authorizing legislation on occasions as well.

Why, when we have agreed on the inclusion of Hyde amendment language in bills on so many prior occasions over a 39-year period of time, would we at this time be unable to agree to its inclusion in a bill to help human trafficking victims?

It is fitting that this bill includes such Hyde amendment language. The bill creates a Federal victims fund, and money in the fund will derive from fines imposed on human traffickers. The fund will be a federally administered program.

If the fund is used to support abortion services, then it constitutes Federal funding of abortion. Including the Hyde language is consistent, then, with what we have always done in such cases. This is not the appropriate time or place for the minority party Members of the Senate to seek a rollback of consensus legislation that was adopted as far back as 1976 and has been extended every year since that time.

I urge my colleagues to find another place and another time for congressional debate on taxpayer funding of abortions—not to do it on a bill that has broad, bipartisan support and definitely not on a bill that was reported out of committee 20 to 0, which means 11 Republicans and 9 Democrats supported it.

The argument that this Hyde amendment language was included by—you have heard these words—''sleight of hand'' is simply disingenuous. This bill, after its introduction, was put into the public domain—not after it was voted out of committee, not just 1 day before it was in committee, but weeks before the committee considered it. So it was in the public domain. Nobody could say it wasn't there. So you could read it and know this Hyde language was in it.

It was distributed by email to numerous organizations and congressional offices for their input. It has been posted for 2 months on the U.S. Government Web site, accessible to any congressional staffer or member of the public. So we have people who come to the Senate saying they didn't know this was in there. Well, then, did they not read the bill? Did they not have their staff read the bill? For a long period of time it has been right out there where 300 million people could access it on the Web site.

If lawmakers then are asserting that they did not know the Hyde amendment was included in the bill, then it means they simply didn't read this legislation.

I again call on my colleagues to support the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, focusing on helping survivors of trafficking heal and protect others from becoming victims of such a terrible crime.

It is a meaningful solution that is supported by large bipartisan groups of Senators. We have a real opportunity to provide survivors of trafficking with the kind of support that is essential to their recovery and future success.

Working together, in a bipartisan way, we can restore dignity to survivors. That is why we need to pass this act right now.

It also gives this Senate an opportunity to do what I hear from the people of grassroots Iowa so often in my town meetings, such as Saturday when I was in Truro, IA, and 33 people showed up. I was in Norwalk, IA, and 66 people showed up. At those meetings they keep asking: Why can't you Republicans and Democrats get together?

This is one of those bills where Republicans and Democrats are getting together. Now we find some people—who evidently don't read legislation until the midnight hour—coming to the floor of the Senate saying something along the lines of: We snuck something into the bill.

Snuck something into the bill when the bill has been out there on the Web site for a couple of months already? No, that is disingenuous. So the bill is not moving along. But when this bill is brought up for a final vote, the people will see that Republicans and Democrats can work together if we can get over this hurdle of the stonewalling by the minority party of the Senate, holding up this bill for a disingenuous reason.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I rise today in support of the bill that is currently pending before us, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I commend the chairman for his hard work and effort on this piece of legislation and for ushering it through the Senate.

I also thank and commend the senior Senators from Texas and Minnesota for coming together in a bipartisan fashion on this vitally important human rights legislation.

Because this is such a bipartisan bill—frankly, a nonpartisan issue—I am frustrated that we are at an impasse on moving this bill forward with an open debate.

Let me repeat. This is a nonpartisan issue. I encourage my colleagues across the aisle to move forward with an open debate on this vitally important human rights legislation.

Every day countless innocent victims are bought and sold into modern-day slavery in America. All too often, many of these victims are children.

As the father of four and a grandfather of two, I believe every child should have the opportunity to grow up in a loving and safe environment. I know the Presiding Officer agrees with that. I know everybody in this Chamber agrees with that today. Unfortunately, that is not the case for too many children.

Recognizing this is an important issue. My home State of Nevada has taken action over the past several years not only to assist victims of trafficking but also to ensure these victims have the opportunity to seek compensation for their traffickers. Given Nevada's unique location, especially southern Nevada, this is a crime that is all too prevalent within my home State. Just to give us an idea, 2 years ago the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department reported that 2,144 sex

trafficking victims under the age of 18 were rescued in Las Vegas since 1994. That is an average of 126 per year. Even more daunting, that is 1 person rescued every 3 days. This is one city in one State. More than half of these victims were from Nevada, and the rest of them were trafficked through the State.

While Nevada is taking important steps forward in providing restitution of victims of trafficking, much more needs to be done to stop this crime from occurring in the first place. All too often, trafficking is a crime that is hidden from plain sight. It occurs in every single State. That is why it is vitally important to recognize the warning signs of someone who may be a victim of human trafficking, as well as those who are committing these crimes.

I am pleased to see this underlying bill recognizes this need, especially for local law enforcement, especially for health providers, and especially for first responders.

The bill, however, fails to recognize the important role of our Nation's ports of entry and how they play into our Nation's domestic and international transportation system, and the opportunity they provide for human trafficking. That is why I filed an amendment to this legislation, to ensure that victims of human trafficking and perpetrators of this crime will not be able to pass through such places without additional law enforcement awareness.

My amendment requires the Department of Homeland Security to train TSA, CBP, and other relevant departments' personnel to effectively deter, detect, and disrupt human trafficking. Recognizing the different needs of States and the critical role of local law enforcement in combatting human trafficking, it also allows DHS to provide training to any State, local or tribal government or private organization in order to establish a human trafficking awareness training program.

Finally, this amendment requires DHS to keep records of the number of human trafficking cases reported or confirmed and to report these numbers annually to Congress. That way we can measure progress in our efforts to end human trafficking.

Instead of creating another layer of bureaucracy, my amendment simply complements and enhances the current efforts by DHS to equip its personnel with effective strategies to combat human trafficking at our Nation's ports of entry and other high-risk areas.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to see similar legislation pass the House of Representatives with unanimous support.

I think most of us can agree that this issue of human trafficking is not a partisan issue; it is a human rights issue. Whether one is a parent, a sibling, a child or a relative, this issue is real. That is why I am so pleased to see this Chamber come together in a bipartisan manner to bring this bill to the floor. Once again, I only hope we can come together and move this debate forward.

As I tell Nevadans back home, I came to Washington, DC, to work. I work with Republicans and I work with Democrats. There are issues we may at times have to agree to disagree on, but moving forward on a bipartisan bill such as this should not be one of them.

We need to do all we can to end this disgraceful and disgusting crime once and for all. We should move forward in providing much needed help to these victims, including children.

There is more work to do on this bill and ways to make it a better product through the amendment process, but we should be moving forward instead of stalling out.

I hope I have the opportunity to call up my amendment, and I would urge my colleagues to support my amendment so we can ensure that DHS personnel are properly trained to prevent the serious threat of human trafficking. Help is almost there for these victims. I hope we can come to a resolution today to move forward on this bill.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I support S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. The bill supports law enforcement officers and prosecutors in their efforts to prevent, respond to, and combat human trafficking. Of particular importance, the domestic trafficking victims' fund created by this legislation would help States and localities develop training and services for survivors.

In February, I was proud to join all the women in the Senate in requesting that the Judiciary Committee hold a hearing on human trafficking. I appreciate the work of Chairman GRASSLEY and Ranking Member LEAHY in quickly scheduling that hearing and thank them for inviting Senators MIKULSKI, AYOTTE, GILLIBRAND, and me to testify before the committee on behalf of all of the women in the Senate. I applaud the committee's bipartisan work in shining a light on some of the darkest stories imaginable.

No State is immune from the evils of sex trafficking. Traffickers lure vulnerable victims with the promises of a better life and use violence, threats, lies, money, drugs, and other forms of coercion to trap them in a life of commercial sex. Many criminals who once worked in drugs have now turned to sex trafficking because it is more profitable.

The stories of victims are shocking. Just this past January, police in Bangor, ME, arrested a man and woman for allegedly forcing a 13-year-old girl into prostitution. This child, who was listed as a missing person, was being sold for sex through ads on the Internet. Unfortunately, there are many horrific cases like this occurring across the country.

The policies and tools for law enforcement, prosecutors, and survivors included in S. 178 are important pieces of a strong Federal response to human trafficking, and I commend Senators CORNYN and KLOBUCHAR for their work on this legislation.

I also hope the Senate will adopt an amendment I have cosponsored with Senator LEAHY that would reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, which provide critical preventive and treatment services that help homeless youth around the country. Runaway and homeless youth are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. A meaningful response to the very serious problem of human trafficking must also ensure that those most vulnerable to human trafficking—including our Nation's homeless youth—have the resources they need. The preventive measures provided by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs can help stem the tide of potential trafficking victims.

The State of Maine is doing its part to end the scourge of human trafficking, where the Not Here Justice in Action Network and other partnerships between law enforcement and service providers are helping to raise awareness and help victims. Our health care workers in Maine are also tremendous partners. St. Joseph Hospital in Bangor, ME, for example, has focused its efforts on educating and training clinicians, nurses, and emergency medical providers to recognize the signs of human trafficking among their patients. With the proper tools and training, these nurses can intervene. They are learning how to identify victims and how to ask the right questions, which are critically important to keeping these atrocities from continuing.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act offers important supports for victims and enhanced tools for our law enforcement. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE AND DONNA GUNNING AND BURT TRUMAN

Mr. KING. Madam President, I rise to share some good news from my home State of Maine. It is the story of veterans helping veterans—of three people from Maine who have positively impacted the lives of thousands of veterans in my State and have done so in a unique way. They make personalized wooden canes with a bold and intricate bald eagle head carved into the handle for any Maine veteran who wants one.

I have some pictures that show a large number of the canes and a close-up. As I noted when one of these canes appeared in my office recently, this eagle has an attitude and he is positive about the future of this country.

About 8 years ago, George and Donna Gunning from Windsor, ME, heard about a project in Oklahoma called the Eagle Cane Project. The mission was to help post-9/11 veterans who had trouble walking because of leg disabilities due to combat-related action by providing them with a unique hand-carved cane.

As a Navy veteran, George and his wife Donna Gunning, who grew up in a Navy family, were both intimately familiar with the sacrifices and difficulties that accompany military service. This project touched their hearts and they quickly recognized it as an opportunity to give back to veterans in Maine. They brought their own version of the project to our State, offering a personalized eagle cane to any Maine veteran who had served anywhere in the world in any conflict across the globe.

It wasn't long before the Gunnings were joined by another fellow named Burt Truman from Hallowell, ME, who spent two decades in the military, in the Navy, Army Reserve, and the Air National Guard. The trio worked together on each cane they made—crafting them, painting them, personalizing each one by etching the veteran's name and molding medals to show their branch of the service and any honors they received.

As impressive as each of these masterpieces is, the number that these three people have produced is what is astounding and remarkable. The current count is 2,474 of these personally hand-made canes, made free of charge and funded for Maine veterans entirely through donations.

For all their hard work and dedication, the trio remains adamant that they deserve no special recognition, although I am giving it to them here today. Instead, they would rather the attention and admiration and thanks of all of our people be directed toward the veterans who are receiving these canes, who have borne so much for our country.

That is the true magic of this project. It is about recognizing our veterans, supporting them, and giving them something to lean on, both literally, physically, and emotionally.

In recent months, as the Presiding Officer knows, there have been a number of efforts in the Congress to further support our veterans—to improve their access to care and support services. While the Choice Act, which was signed into law last August, made progress in this area, more work needs to be done. To ensure that provisions of this legislation we all voted for and supported last year are implemented in accordance with our intent, Senator JERRY MORAN, Senator SUSAN COLLINS, myself and others have introduced a bill to improve how the VA determines eligibility for the Choice Program.

Currently, veterans can only use their Choice cards if they cannot get an appointment within 30 days at a VA facility and face an excessive burden of travel, such as a body of water, or if they live more than 40 miles as the crow flies from any VA facility, regardless of whether it provides the type of care they need.

In my opinion this isn't what Congress intended. In rural States such as Maine, as the crow flies is not a good definition of distance. We have to take into account whether the VA facility in question can provide our veterans with the specific care services they require. So the bill sponsored by Senators MORAN, COLLINS, myself, and others offers a fix by requiring the VA to use its existing authority to offer community care to veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the nearest VA facility that provides the type of care they need.

I hope in the coming weeks the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the similar committee in the House will hold hearings on this issue so we are able to provide a path forward and correct what I think is certainly a fixable portion of the Choice Act we passed last year.

As we look for that path, and as we think about veterans' issues, I think these eagle canes provide some inspiration. The bald eagle of course is a national symbol of freedom and independence, and with these canes it has also come to symbolize in Maine the debt of gratitude we owe to our Nation's veterans. Each cane is a treasured reminder that someone cares, someone notices, and someone appreciates what they have done.

I have seen firsthand the powerful effect these canes have. Earlier this month I was meeting with members of the Maine Veterans of Foreign Wars and one of the gentlemen who sat right next to me in my office had with him this beautifully carved eagle cane. Thinking it was the only one of its kind, I asked him where he found something so unique and interesting and powerful. He said: Well, it was made right here in Maine, and I am not the only person who has one. It was one of thousands made in a Windsor, ME, workshop.

Even more telling was how quickly and enthusiastically the VFW members, also in my office that day, jumped in to explain where the canes came from and how glowingly they spoke of this project and what it has meant to veterans in Maine. They knew the history of the project, they described the meticulousness of the craftsmanship—which we can see here—and they quickly gave me George Gunning's name. Their enthusiasm underscored their true appreciation for the support and recognition this Eagle Cane Project in Maine had given to them and their fellow veterans.

Burt, George, and Donna's work is a true testament to the strength of our veterans community in Maine, and that is what it is all about.

Good news from Maine, Madam President. Good news about our commitment to each other and our commitment to our veterans. It is often said that Maine is a big small town with very long streets. We know each other, we care about each other, and in this case we deeply care about our veterans.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor incredibly disappointed that we can't seem to move forward on what should be a noncontroversial, powerful, and bipartisan effort.

I think we can all agree in the Senate that we must do more to combat human trafficking and help the victims of this heinous act, and I was looking forward to, I believe, Senator CORKER offering an amendment on legislation that passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee that would establish a private, nonprofit grantmaking institution known as the End Slavery Initiative Foundation to reduce the worst forms of forced labor and sexual servitude around the world. I was looking forward to having a serious debate about this important issue, and it is truly unfortunate that the debate has been sidelined by matters that are not to the core of the trafficking issue.

I rise to specifically address an amendment that I understand is pending to attempt to hijack our debate about human trafficking. This amendment is out of place and out of step with everything I believe we stand for in the Senate. It is an amendment to a bill that seeks to amend the Constitution of the United States. It is an amendment offered by a Republican colleague that grows the government and increases taxes. It is an amendment to a trafficking bill that could make people more likely to be trafficked.

I am talking about the amendment to eliminate birthright citizenship and end the people's right to be citizens by being born on American soil.

Birthright citizenship is a bedrock principle found not in law but in the Constitution. The 14th Amendment states clearly that ''all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.''

For 115 years the obvious and plain meaning that people born on American soil are American citizens has been affirmed before the Supreme Court and can only be changed by a constitutional amendment. My colleague from Louisiana instead presents a bill and tries to argue with the Supreme Court and the English language by claiming undocumented immigrants are not subject to the jurisdiction thereof. Is he suggesting, for example, that if an undocumented immigrant was brought to court, he or she wouldn't be subject to the court's jurisdiction? Clearly not. And the civil rights leaders who drafted the 14th Amendment didn't think so either.

Instead, the 14th Amendment was adopted after the infamous Dred Scott

decision to make sure the United States never has an unequal class system. This principle, that America isn't a country club, is a profound American value. If my friend from Louisiana wants to change the Constitution, he should abide by the framework our Founding Fathers set up.

If a Senator wants to make a monumental change to how our Nation defines citizenship in the Constitution, he or she must go to the constitutional amending process our Founding Fathers set up to make sure we have widespread and overwhelming consensus. That is why the Founders created a process in which amending the Constitution needed a broad swath of the American population to say, yes, that is worthy of changing the Constitution that has worked so well for us for so many years. We are here to protect the Constitution, and the 14th Amendment is sacrosanct and too important to be defined by the political and discriminatory impulses of any Member of Congress.

But beyond trying to change our Constitution with a piece of legislation, my friend from Louisiana's amendment to a human trafficking bill could make human trafficking worse. Eliminating birthright citizenship would create a perpetual class of undocumented immigrants, ironically growing the undocumented population by ensuring that undocumented children, and their children born here, would become undocumented, and their children and their children's children could never come out of the shadows and be equal under the law.

This new permanent underclass would inevitably lead to some without any citizenship in any country; in other words, they would be stateless. This new underclass would be subject to the worst forms of exploitation, including, for some, becoming victims of human trafficking themselves.

But the irony doesn't stop there. For the party of limited government and low taxes, my friend from Louisiana proposes an amendment that would put the Department of Homeland Security in every delivery room and require the creation of a brandnew, extensive bureaucracy with burdensome procedures. It would also create a de facto birth tax for people to have to go back and prove their citizenship.

My friend from Louisiana tries to justify all this by saying it will prevent people from coming to the United States solely to give birth, but I don't even know if he truly believes that explanation. It ignores the plain fact that the practice he describes is already illegal under the law.

If he wants to get into a discussion about enforcing the existing law, I am always willing to talk about the need for more resources for the men and women in law enforcement in order to be able to do that. This amendment wouldn't make the practice he describes one bit more illegal, but it would change the Constitution of the United States by a simple passage of the Senate, not as an amendment to the Constitution.

This isn't the time and this isn't the place for an amendment attacking birthright citizenship. A bill isn't the place or the venue to change the Constitution. A bill on human trafficking isn't the time for a measure that might increase human trafficking.

Frankly, for someone who wants limited government, they shouldn't put the Department of Homeland Security in the delivery room. This is just another attack on immigrants that is against American values and in this case against our Constitution. We can do far better than that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HOEVEN. 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. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise today to speak in support of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act legislation that has been drafted and introduced by my good friends Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas and Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota. The bill helps survivors of human trafficking and child pornography and aids law enforcement in discouraging demand for these serious crimes.

This is a bill they originally introduced in 2013. I was a cosponsor of that bill, and I am also an original cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation which was introduced earlier this year because I believe it is very important legislation. It is important because it not only compensates victims of human trafficking and other crimes of exploitation for their injuries but also provides resources to help law enforcement prevent such crimes in the future by targeting demand.

The need for this bill is real and it is troubling. Every year across America, children and adults are bought and sold for reprehensible purposes. According to the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, at least 100,000 American children each year are the victims of commercial child prostitution and child trafficking. It is not just a big-State, big-city problem. Every State in the country is facing this issue, including my home State of North Dakota, but we currently have trouble addressing this problem because of the many needs, including the need for resources.

After consultation with the attorney general's office, we learned that North Dakota has had difficulty applying for anti-human trafficking grants because to be eligible, the Department of Justice requires at least 2 years of local data on human trafficking. In recent years, North Dakota has been the fastest growing State in the country in terms of both population and income growth. Consequently, North Dakota has only recently seen a sudden increase in human trafficking issues. To remedy that, I have offered an amendment to the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill to make sure it does not mandate a required time period of collected data. The proposed amendment clarifies that a local or State government with a worthy trafficking initiative will not be precluded from receiving funds under the Cornyn-Klobuchar legislation because they, like North Dakota, have only recently begun collecting data on human trafficking. They only have to demonstrate a valid need, which is, of course, significant and growing across the country.

Here is what a group of victims support groups and law enforcement organizations had to say:

> Women and children, especially girls, are advertised online where buyers purchase them with ease, anonymity, and impunity. This happens in every city, in every State.

There are few issues that we as a governing body can be more unified on than that our children are precious and that it is our duty to protect them. For this reason, the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill has strong bipartisan support in the Senate, and I believe it will also be supported in the House. While it may need some amending here and there, we all recognize we could be doing more to help victims of human trafficking, child pornography, and other crimes of exploitation against children and vulnerable adults. These often-invisible victims not only need to be rescued from their situation, but they also need medical, mental health, housing, legal, and other important services.

The Cornyn-Klobuchar bill addresses the need to do more head-on. It establishes the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund, which is paid for through fines on persons convicted of child pornography, human trafficking, child prostitution, sexual exploitation, and human smuggling offenses.

Under current law those convicted of child abuse, trafficking, and related crimes must pay just a $100 special assessment fee. Under this legislation that fee is increased to $5,000 for every individual convicted of human trafficking, child pornography, and other forms of child exploitation. Those funds go to the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund, which will be used to increase the Federal resources available for human trafficking victims by $7 million a year over a 5-year timeframe, for a total of $35 million.

Funding will be awarded as block grants to State and local governments under the Victim-Centered Human Trafficking Deterrence Block Grant Program. The purpose of these grants is to develop and implement victim-centered programs that train law enforcement to rescue trafficking survivors, prosecute traffickers and pornographers, and help to restore the lives of their innocent victims.

In addition, the Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking Act does a number of things, including making sure that victims get restitution and witnesses get rewards for cooperating with law enforcement before others, encouraging prosecutors to get training on restitution in human trafficking cases, and giving law enforcement greater authority to seize the assets of convicted human traffickers.

It protects victims and witnesses by requiring human traffickers to be treated as violent criminals for purposes of pretrial release and detention pending judicial proceedings.

It ensures that Federal crime victims are informed of any plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement in their case and clarifies that the ordinary standard of appellate review applies in cases concerning Federal crime victims' rights petitions.

It recognizes that child pornography production is a form of human trafficking and ensures that victims have access to direct services at child advocacy centers to help them heal.

It allows State and local human trafficking task forces to get wiretap warrants within their own State courts without Federal approval. That will help them to more effectively investigate crimes of child pornography, child exploitation, and human trafficking.

In addition, the bill improves nationwide communications so that law enforcement can better track and capture traffickers and child pornographers. It ensures regular reporting on the number of human trafficking crimes for purposes of the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program. It also requires law enforcement to upload photos of missing individuals into the National Criminal Information Center database and notifies the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children of any child reported missing from foster care.

Finally, it strengthens the current law to reduce demand for human trafficking by encouraging police, prosecutors, judges, and juries to target all persons involved in the buying and selling of human trafficking victims. It is wrong to prosecute victims and to fail to prosecute those who prey on them.

The value and importance of this bill are reflected in the broad coalition of victims' rights and law enforcement organizations that support it. It has been endorsed by nearly 200 groups, from the Fraternal Order of Police, to the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children.

We need to pass the Cornyn-Klobuchar legislation because crimes such as human trafficking and child pornography target the most vulnerable among us in a most despicable way. I urge all of my colleagues to pass this bill to put an end to modern-day slavery and to help victims get the support they need.

Again, I would like to close with my request to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we be allowed to proceed on the bill and again reference the importance of including my amendment, which ensures that all States, including those that have seen a recent real increase in human trafficking, have access to funds so that they can truly help victims in their State combat human trafficking in their State in conjunction with local law enforcement.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Thank you, Madam President.

All this week I have come to the floor to talk about this issue of birthright citizenship and to offer my amendment that would end that policy. I come to the floor again on that issue.

I have an amendment pending on this bill to change that policy, to end birthright citizenship. I would like to read a statement on the subject:

> The American people are upset, and I think they have a right to be upset, but they are upset for a reason. Our immigration policies, regulating all aspects of entry to the United States, have simply ceased to function in the national interest. ''Immigration policy'' and ''national interest'' are terms that are rarely heard in the context of immigration. We seem to have lost sight of the fact that it is a public policy and, like all public policies, our immigration policy should serve the public interest. But they do not.
>
> Let us talk about legal immigration.
>
> We now admit the equivalent of a major city every year, without having the vaguest idea of how we will educate all the new children, care for the sick, provide housing, jobs, build infrastructure, or attend to any of the human needs of the newcomers or those already here.
>
> Mr. President, each year, we admit—I repeat—the equivalent of a major city. We admit more people each year than make up some of our States. We admit a new State with legal immigrants every year.
>
> At a time of huge budget deficits and severe financial constraints, we have no idea of how these huge costs will be borne. We just do it.
>
> We admit the equivalent of a major city without any assessment of whether these newcomers are likely to be contributing members of our society. Only a tiny fraction of those admitted each year enter because they have skills and abilities that will benefit our country. The rest come merely because they happen to be relatives of other recent immigrants. The result of this so-called policy is that there is now a backlog of almost 3½ million people—the population of a city the size of Los Angeles—who have a claim to immigrate to the United States for no other reason than they are somebody's relative. Is this really a way to run immigration policy?
>
> If making it easy to be an illegal alien is not enough, how about offering a reward for being an illegal immigrant? No sane country would do that, right? Guess again. If you break our laws by entering this country without permission and give birth to a child, we reward that child with U.S. citizenship and guarantee full access to all public and social services this society provides. And that is a lot of services. Is it any wonder that two-thirds of the babies born at taxpayer expense in county-run hospitals in Los Angeles are born to illegal alien mothers?

This is not my statement. This is Senator HARRY REID's statement on the floor of the Senate, including his strong support for an end to birthright citizenship, that he gave on September 20, 1993, to which I refer my colleagues' attention.

In closing, I thank Senator REID for his prior words in strong support of what he yesterday called, quote, VITTER's stupid amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this morning, in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, there was a very valuable hearing on a bipartisan piece of legislation called the Sportsmen's Act, obviously designed to promote hunting and fishing activities which are so important to Oregonians and something our people just enjoy immensely.

I was not able to sit through the whole hearing because we had important business in the Finance Committee, but I got a flavor of it by listening to parts of it here and there. When it came to my turn to ask questions, I pointed out that one cannot go into the woods and hunt and fish if the woods are burning up. My sense is—particularly after what I learned last weekend—that is exactly what we are going to be facing, particularly in the West, and we are going to be facing it sooner rather than later.

We all know the Senate left on Wednesday in order to avoid the snowstorms, so I basically flew all night to make it to Medford, OR, for a fire briefing on Thursday. The idea that we would need to have a fire briefing in March was pretty much unheard of years ago. The fire season was something we faced in the summer or maybe in the early summer we would have a briefing on the challenges and what resources the local officials and Forest Service would need, such as tankers and the like.

Fires are now a year-round proposition. They are getting bigger, hotter, lasting longer, and they are infernos.

What I was told last week in my home State in Medford is that they are facing the driest fire season in 25 years. They took out the map and showed us California, which looks bone dry. After that eye-opening briefing, I went on to Lane County, which is closer to Portland. It is further up the valley. They said they had the least snow in 10 years and so they were just as concerned as Medford.

Malheur County has already asked our Governor to declare a State drought emergency due to record low snowpack and below average water runoff, and these drought declarations usually don't come until months and months later.

One of the reasons I wanted to come to the floor is to highlight how serious this fire season is going to be. This ought to be a wake-up call for all Americans because this is going to put pressure on scarce resources, in my view, like we have never seen before.

These firefighters, as the Presiding Officer knows, are incredibly dedicated and patriotic people. But when we have fires in multiple areas, trying to move resources around quickly becomes a huge challenge, and it is particularly challenging when the system of fighting wildfires in America is broken. I can't describe it any other way than it being essentially broken and badly in need of repair.

The heart of the problem is that Federal policy has consistently shorted the prevention accounts. So what they need to do is go in there and thin forests out and deal with underbrush, such as small trees that pose the greatest risk of fire, and those accounts have been shortchanged for quite some time.

It gets hotter and drier on the forest floor. We can have a debate about why that is. I happen to think climate change is a part of it, others will cite other considerations, but what is indisputable is what is happening. It is hotter, drier, and in our part of the country there are frequent lightning strikes which can cause an inferno that leaps across Federal and State and private lines.

When we have a huge fire on our hands, often what happens is the government runs out of money to fight that megafire, and the handful of others like it, so the government then—really the agencies—borrow from the prevention fund in order to put the fire out, and the problem just gets worse and worse and worse.

What Senator CRAPO and I have proposed in the Senate—and there is a similar bipartisan effort in the House—is to change that. What we have said is that it is time for the government to fight these megafires—just the 1 percent or so of megafires—from the disaster account and not shortchange the prevention fund because that is how we prevent these infernos from taking place. We go in there and do the thinning, we deal with the small trees and underbrush, and we prevent those big fires.

The budget office has actually given us an analysis that this is pretty close to a wash from a budget standpoint, because if we only fight those megafires—the 1 or 2 percent—and we get solid, substantial benefits from prevention because we have prevented a megafire, we really have not added to the budget.

By clearing away the fuels and reducing both the number and intensity of future fires, reducing the amount of fuel on the ground simply makes it easier for our courageous firefighters to stop a fire in its tracks.

I brought this poster to the floor this afternoon. It is not too hard to tell what the benefits are when we actually go out and receive these fuel treatments. It is clear this is a useful tool for holding down the damage for communities and taxpayers. These fuel treatments can be particularly beneficial for reducing wildfires and protecting our populated areas.

My hope is that now we are finally starting to see what this fire season is going to be like, that focusing on prevention and not raiding the prevention fund to deal with those 1 percent of the megafires will help us get out ahead of the problem instead of spending substantially more money and trying to play catchup as the infernos rip their way through the West.

I will close by saying that I think the bill Senator CRAPO and I have introduced is not the only answer to what we are going to be dealing with this fire season, but it is an important one. Another approach I think makes a great deal of sense is the Forest Service Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Programs because, again, these help bring together people of differing political views and differing philosophies to clear flammable materials from our forests while producing saleable timber for the mills.

In the Malheur National Forest in my home State, for one, the Southern Blues Collaborative Project is a real success story. The stewardship contracts there not only helped clear the forests of unhealthy snags and hazardous wildfire fuels, they helped to bring the Malheur Lumber Company mill back from the brink of closure at least once.

There is an effort at the U.S. Department of Agriculture to encourage these collaborative partnerships across the country. I commend the Department of Agriculture, Chief Tidwell in particular, for these collaboratives because they are vital to the health and vitality of our country's forests, and they are a solid foundation for wildfire response.

I would also like to thank the President and the Forest Service for supporting the bipartisan efforts of Senator CRAPO and me, and a similar one that is underway in the House. To me, the bottom line is if we can pass the legislation I have described here today and shore up our priority as being prevention while, at the same time, making better use of existing money by saving the megafires we deal with for the disaster fund, that gets us off to the races in terms of having a more sensible system for fighting wildfires; then, if we support the collaboratives I have just described that are really floundering across the country, and we are seeing more of them, we are seeing bigger collaboratives; that is the kind of policy that helps us get out in front of what is going to be, in my view, another dangerous fire season. If we are just crossing our fingers and hoping somehow this fire season isn't going to be as bad as I was told last week in Medford and in Eugene—that doesn't make any sense to me, particularly given some of the other activities in the Senate that have been bipartisan priorities.

That is why I felt compelled to come to the floor this afternoon because of the hearing this morning on sportsmen. We want to have those opportunities for sportsmen and fishermen and all of the people who want to use our great natural resources. They are part of our heritage and they are a big shot in the arm economically as well. We are not going to be able to go into those woods this summer to hunt and fish if they are burning up.

So I am very hopeful we can quickly pass the bipartisan legislation to change the way in which we fight wildfires, that we can shore up our collaboratives which, dollar for dollar, are about as useful as anything that is done in the natural resources area. I encourage my colleagues this afternoon, given what is looking us in the eye with respect to this fire season, to join me in fixing the wildfire budget and encouraging collaborative partnerships that get us out in front of the fires and end this catastrophic growth of wildfires, particularly in the Western United States.

Mr. President, I note that one of my colleagues is ready to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for yielding.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

My good friend from Wyoming was on the floor yesterday, I believe. He is a frequent critic of the Affordable Care Act. He made a pretty simple point that was reported in the press yesterday critical of the administration for holding so many events talking about the success of the Affordable Care Act.

His suggestion was that we shouldn't be celebrating—the administration shouldn't be celebrating—the success of the Affordable Care Act in terms of the number of people who are gaining access to it, the stabilizing cost curve of health care expenditures all across the country, and the number of people whose emotional well-being is much better today because they don't have to worry about ever losing their health care simply because they get sick, or losing all of their savings simply because their child comes down with an expensive illness.

I guess I would beg to differ because I talk to people all across my State of Connecticut who are celebrating today because the ACA works. They are celebrating because their lives have been transformed by the fact that we now have finally made a commitment as a nation to make sure that if someone's son gets sick, they won't lose their savings, their college 529, their house, their car, just because of an illness.

I think the Affordable Care Act is something to celebrate because a lot of my constituents believe the same thing. Betsy from Litchfield, CT, said that without the Affordable Care Act, she would not have health insurance at

all due to her preexisting condition. One month before the ACA was implemented, she was sick with stage 4 cancer and her insurance company gave her 2 weeks' notice that it was going to end her coverage early. Luckily, Betsy was able to resolve that issue. But she says: ''The bottom line is that before the Affordable Care Act, health insurance could and did kick sick people off of their rolls and 'pre-existing conditions' left many uninsured indefinitely.''

She says:

If you are not insured and have to pay the outrageous costs of U.S. health care out-of-pocket, you will quickly spend all of your retirement savings. That was the situation I was facing in December 2013 and it was an unsettling prospect.

Linda from Winsted, CT, says she is grateful for affordable health care because she has multiple chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and osteoarthritis. She was unable to buy health insurance at any price because the health insurance companies were charging her more because of her preexisting conditions. In Linda's view, this issue boils down to people having basic rights, the freedom to be healthy, the freedom for her to live a life in which she knows she is going to be able to afford coverage for herself.

She said this in an email to me: ''There is no freedom in poverty and certainly none in needless human suffering.''

So Betsy is celebrating today. Linda is celebrating today. There are millions of others like them all across the country who know the Affordable Care Act is working.

But it is not just those individuals, it is newspapers, from the New York Times to USA TODAY, and the Washington Post on down, that are saying with a clear voice: ''The Affordable Care Act has achieved nearly all of its ambitious goals,'' and ''11.4 million Americans are now signed up for health care.''

This is a success story all across the country, but a success story that is at risk. It is at risk because of a Supreme Court which is considering an evisceration of the Affordable Care Act that would be a stunning act of judicial overreach if the plaintiffs were to succeed in the King v. Burwell case. Their contention is simply that it was the intent of Congress to only provide insurance subsidies to States that had State exchanges and not Federal exchanges. I haven't found a single Senator or Representative who voted for that law who says it was their intent to punish States that didn't establish State exchanges by withholding subsidies from millions of Americans. In fact, there is no way to plainly read the statute without coming to the conclusion that subsidies were not just intended but written into the law to go to every single State, no matter what kind of exchange they decided to establish. The law says that because it specifically states that States that don't choose to set up their own exchange will have a Federal exchange take the place of that State exchange.

The totality of the law is clear as well. If the Federal Government had intended to give subsidies only to States that had State exchanges, they would have also made the insurance reforms contingent upon those State exchanges being established. Instead, the insurance reforms are nationwide, meaning that, clearly, the statute was set up to make subsidies nationwide, because the insurance reforms cannot exist—cannot exist—without those subsidies being available to people to be able to buy affordable insurance.

It is not just the individuals who voted for this law who are clear that subsidies should be available; it is the Congressional Budget Office. The Congressional Budget Office reads statutes we pass, independently interprets them, and then assesses a cost to the laws we pass. Doug Elmendorf was before the Appropriations Committee yesterday and I asked him a simple question: When you independently reviewed the Affordable Care Act, did you come to the conclusion that it allowed for subsidies to go to State and Federal exchanges? His answer was clear: Yes. We read the Affordable Care Act as to provide insurance subsidies to both State exchanges and Federal exchanges and, thus, we priced the bill accordingly.

The law is clear. The law's intent is clear. The voices of those who voted for it are clear. The independent Congressional Budget Office is clear. The Affordable Care Act only works if subsidies flow to both States that have Federal exchanges and States that have State exchanges.

For families such as those of Betsy in Litchfield, CT, and Linda in Winsted, CT, who continue celebrating the success of the Affordable Care Act on the ground floor for the millions of lives that have been transformed, this body needs to continue to stand up for the premise that the Affordable Care Act continues to work. That is absolutely something to celebrate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would ask my friend and colleague from Connecticut—we have worked closely together on a number of items—a question or two relating to the fact that the CBO report recently came out—just on Monday—and mentioned that the benchmark policy next year is going to be up 8 percent across the board. The benchmark policy will go up 8 percent, meaning higher premiums not just next year, but the year after that, another 8 percent, and then another 8 percent. I would like to know, as a Senator representing people and as a doctor, how many people in his State believe that is actually a good deal. The President promised the people from his State that premiums would drop by $2,500 per family. NANCY PELOSI, the Speaker of the House—and my friend from Connecticut was a Member of the House at the time—said premiums would drop for everyone.

So we are talking about specifically people buying policies on the exchange. Yet the numbers that came out Monday that the President of the United States is celebrating—and my friend and colleague has a sign up about how this health care law is supposedly working—how that works for people when next year they are going to pay 8 percent more and the year after that 8 percent more, and these are people who are actually getting subsidies who are buying the benchmark insurance through the exchange.

I know we are running short on time, but I would ask my colleague to address that specific component because I hear about it every day.

Mr. MURPHY. I appreciate my friend's question and I will be quick in the answer because I know we are running short on time.

I actually asked the CBO Director a question very similar to the one the Senator from Wyoming proposes. I said: Explain to me why your report actually says the Affordable Care Act is going to cost 10 percent less than you originally estimated and explain to me why the insurance subsidies are going to cost 20 percent less than you originally estimated.

His answer was very clear: It is because premiums have come in lower than CBO initially estimated.

In fact, this year, Kaiser reviewed premiums within these exchanges all across the country and said the average premium increase from last year to this year is 1 percent all across the country. In Connecticut, our biggest insurer increased their premiums by 1 percent. One of the other offerers on the exchange decreased their premiums by 10 percent. The reason the Affordable Care Act is costing much less today is because our actual experience—not our estimated experience into the future—is that premiums are being stabilized in large part because of the reforms in this act.

So if we want to talk about actual experience—what is happening on the ground today—it is that we are seeing premiums coming in almost exactly where they were last year, this year, in comparison to 5 years ago and 10 years ago when we were seeing double-digit increases in premiums from year to year.

So part of the reason I am celebrating this law, quite frankly, I say to my good friend, is because the actual experience from this year to last year is that premiums are remaining stable and in some places like Connecticut are actually coming down, and the Affordable Care Act is costing less money than was initially estimated by CBO, in large part because premiums are lower than expected.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would point out to my friend that the actual reason which he never addressed

is that they are going up next year. CBO has suggested they are going to go up 8 percent next year, and 8 percent the year after that, and 8 percent the year after that.

The other issue, as he says, is the amount of money spent is because fewer people are signing up. People realize it is not a good deal. I think the CBO at one point thought there would be 14 million people signed up by this point and now it is only 11 million. So the fact that people are deciding to not sign up—to not sign up—is one of the reasons the government, while still spending more money than they were in the past, is spending not quite as much as they thought they might have to, had all the people the President thought would sign up for his idea signed up. So that seems to be the situation, when we actually go into the CBO report.

I agree the total dollar figure is less than the high figure anticipated. It has come down some, but it is because fewer people have actually chosen to participate which is because the health care law continues to be unpopular. Many people think it is not a good deal for them; that even though they have subsidies, they can't afford to meet their copay, meet their deductible. Many have insurance, but they can't see a doctor. They have lost their doctor.

Those are some of the issues that I think were highlighted in that CBO report that the President ought to be honest about with the American people. The reason for the celebration I think is very premature and actually in error because so many people have been harmed by this law.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I think I might not be alone, I say to my good friend from Wyoming, in suggesting that most people probably would not suggest that 11 million people signing up for health care means the law is unpopular. Indeed, we have seen a reduction by 25 percent in those across the country who do not have insurance, in a year's worth of time. I think that is a pretty stunning uptake, and it shows how desperately people wanted insurance. But, again, I asked the same question to the CBO head yesterday. His review of why there has been a slight differential—it is a pretty small one between what they initially estimated and why people signed up—is because more companies are maintaining their own health care insurance, less cancellations are happening, and, thus, there are fewer people who are uninsured. So this second argument as to how the sky was going to fall after health care reform, that you were going to see mass cancellations of policies, the CBO Director is saying the reason the number is coming in slightly below where it was initially estimated—albeit 11 million people have insurance because of this law—is because employers are holding on to their insurance, even though we heard from many detractors of the law there was going to be a mass exodus of private insurance plans. Twenty-five percent fewer people have no insurance today. That is the bottom line. In Connecticut, 50 percent fewer people have no insurance. There is just no way to argue that we have not made a big dent in the number of uninsured because of this law's passage.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that 10 minutes be reserved for Senator CORNYN.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I point out that on Saturday, I am going to be in Buffalo, WY, at a health fair. As a doctor, I continue to attend health fairs around the State which are designed to bring low-cost health care screenings to people. I know I will hear from folks there who are concerned with the fact that the CBO has come out and said the premiums are going to go up 8 percent next year, and 8 percent the year after that. Some of them are actually going to be on the ObamaCare exchange. I know some of them are people who had insurance that worked well for them before the President passed his law, and their insurance was canceled.

The President and the Senator from Connecticut may list them as successes, but they don't believe it is that way. They had insurance. They had insurance that they liked. It worked for them, and it worked for their family. They had the benefits that were important for their family, things for which they needed insurance. The President, on the health care law, came out with this mandate that everyone buy health insurance, and not just what worked for them. The President described it as essential benefits. I described them as excessive benefits, because there is a lot of insurance they are forced to buy, according to the law, that they do not need, do not want, cannot afford, and it does not even apply to their families. They have no choice in the matter.

They have had to lose insurance that worked for them and buy insurance that the President said they had to buy, even though it wasn't what was best for them and their families. They know what is best for them and their families, not President Obama.

I expect while I am in Buffalo, WY, visiting people, listening to what they have to say at a health fair, I will hear stories such as that because I do every weekend in Wyoming. People are concerned about the cost. Even those who have been getting subsidies through the exchanges are noticing that deductibles are higher than their previous insurance, and copays are higher. They are paying more. They are paying more and getting less, which is why this health care law continues to be unpopular across the country.

Take a look at any of the national numbers that are coming out, and you are going to find many more people who feel they were harmed by the law than helped by the law. There is a ratio of more people who think they were harmed than helped. More people want it repealed than continued. That is what we are seeing across the country with this health care law.

The President and I would say we should listen to the American people who have these stories to tell. I was on the floor yesterday, and I talked about a woman from Maine. There was an article in the paper in Maine. She found the whole experience that she has been going through now frightening, and she has insurance through the exchange. She said it is a frightening experience. She did her taxes and found out that she ended up owing a lot of money in taxes that she didn't know she was going to owe because of mistakes that were being made and the way the bookkeeping works. That is what is happening. H&R Block, the insurance folks who do the calculation to help people file their policies, are saying, on average, half of the people filing their returns this year are finding they are getting shocked and surprised that their amount of money coming in to the returns is a lot less, by an average of $530, according to H&R Block. This is across the board.

There are a lot of disgruntled people who are disappointed in a President who made promises to them about a health care law, people who can't keep their doctors, high deductibles they can't afford. A study came out yesterday that many people with insurance can't afford anything close to the deductibles they are forced to be paying under the President's insurance that they had to buy, many of whom lost the insurance they liked. We see these problems, and the amount of government waste in this program is incredible.

Oregon earlier this week shut down their exchange. The State of Oregon spent $248 million putting together their own State exchange, and the Governor just signed something saying we are done with it. They have not signed up one single person on the Oregon computer exchange ever—$248 million, taxpayer dollars, gone. Gone. The only people who could sign up in Oregon had to do it by filling it out with paper and pen. This is supposed to be—I heard President Obama—as easy as shopping on Amazon; insurance is cheaper than your cell phone; keep your doctor if you like your doctor. That is not what happened under this health care law. People lost their doctors and can't afford their policies. It is a very complicated situation related to this. Then you get Washington State. It is State after State—13,000 people had too much money taken out of their checking account as just part of the regular process of the monthly withdrawals.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER A. HART TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

NOMINATION OF THO DINH-ZARR TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Christopher A. Hart, of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of two years; and Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Who yields time?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be divided equally.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. 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. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to speak on a number of issues. I rise in support of the nominations of Christopher Hart to be chairman and Bella Dinh-Zarr to be a board member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The National Transportation Safety Board helps keep all of us safe. When a terrible crash happens, we watch on television or read about the crash and wonder what happened. But it is the National Transportation Safety Board that steps in. During those first moments, they get in, preserve evidence, sift through the debris, and then figure out what went wrong.

They play a difficult role. They must put aside all differences between jurisdictions, politics, and partisanship to get the job done. In the last month alone, the board has launched investigations into a ship collision in Texas, a plane veering off the runway in New York, two terrible and fatal train crashes in New York and California, and a tragic incident in DC where smoke filled one of the Metro tunnels and resulted in a passenger dying.

They are also helping with an oil train derailment in West Virginia and one in Illinois that sparked fires and an evacuation. Their work plays a critical role in guiding our decisions about safety and their recommendations have influenced safety improvements. They have played a role in everything from drunk driving and seatbelt laws to the amount of rest that pilots and truck drivers should get, and they are also helping to shape the safety requirements of travel in the future.

In October of last year, a test flight for commercial space flight ended in tragedy when an experimental spacecraft broke apart in midflight over the desert in California.

The National Transportation Safety Board stepped in to investigate the tragic accident. They are still conducting the investigation, and the results are going to help us better address the future safety of commercial space flight to and from the edge of space, which is what that spacecraft was designed to do. This is why it is so critical that we select people with technical knowledge and human compassion to put the pieces of these tragedies back together.

We have two great nominees. Christopher Hart is a dedicated public servant with an extensive career in transportation safety. He has served as Vice Chairman of the NTSB for 5 years; and since April 2014, he has served as the Acting Chairman of that agency.

Like Mr. Hart, Dr. Bella Dinh-Zarr has a distinguished career in transportation safety. She currently serves as the director of the FIA Foundation, which is dedicated to promoting safe and sustainable transportation.

Previously, Dr. Dinh-Zarr worked in various safety capacities with the Make Roads Safe campaign, the American Automobile Association, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

They are both good leaders, and I ask the Senate to join me in supporting their nominations.

TAKATA AIRBAGS

Mr. President, I wish to provide the Senate with an update on what every Senator has had their attention called to—the Takata airbag recall. We have seen five deaths. We have seen a spate of serious injuries related to these defective airbags. One of the deaths occurred in my home State of Florida.

Through my position of working with Chairman JOHN THUNE of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I have been pushing Takata and the automakers to speed up fixes for these defective airbags.

People are driving around with a lethal bomb in their steering wheel. If it is defective and it goes off, they are filled with shrapnel. That has killed five people. It is documented in this country that it has killed five people.

Nobody ought to be driving, therefore, a car for months when, in fact, they have a known defect that can seriously kill them.

Well, it is just not acceptable, and the progress has been painfully slow. We received a letter from NHTSA noting that only 2 million of the vehicles recently recalled—2 million of 17 million—are all that have been repaired as of the end of last year.

That letter notes that Takata has continued to stonewall NHTSA's request for documents related to the defect. It is now being fined $14,000 a day until they start cooperating fully. They have also failed to produce a number of critical documents that the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee has requested as part of its investigation into this mess.

Earlier today, Senator THUNE and I sent a letter to Takata again requesting that they turn over these documents to the committee as soon as possible so that we can complete our investigation into how this mess happened and, very importantly, how we can get people's cars fixed so they are not driving around with this bomb about to explode in their steering wheel. Safety can't wait.

BOB LEVINSON

Mr. President, sadly, this week is the eighth year that Bob Levinson, a retired FBI agent who disappeared on a tourist island in Iran called Kish Island, has not been seen or heard from. He has a wife and seven children.

A couple of years ago, the family received a video. A few months after that, they received a photo.

In these extensive discussions with Iran over matters of war and peace as to whether Iran is going to be willing to step down and not have a nuclear weapon, one of the discussion items also is not only the three known Americans in captivity in Iran but Bob Levinson, who has been missing for 8 years.

Only the Iranian Government can produce the evidence of what has happened to Bob and where he is, and we continue that vigil.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on two nominees who are critical to ensuring the safety of our Nation's transportation network: Christopher Hart, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, also known as the NTSB, and Bella Dinh-Zarr to be a member of the Board.

Mr. Hart has a distinguished career in aviation safety and has served with distinction as acting chair in recent months.

Dr. Dinh-Zarr has a distinguished career in auto safety and will bring an important perspective and background to the board.

Right now, the NTSB only has three members, with one—Mr. Hart—serving as Acting Chairman. Today's vote will add another member and ensure Mr. Hart is Chairman in an official capacity. It is imperative that we have a strong, long-term team at the helm. As a member of the Commerce Committee, I know there is much important work ahead for the agency.

The NTSB is charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States as well as

significant accidents in the other modes of transportation—railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline—and issuing safety recommendations to agencies and others in the transportation industry aimed at preventing future accidents.

It is not a regulatory or oversight agency; rather, it has a unique task—investigating safety issues and accidents and then making recommendations on how we can save lives. It is independent, and this ensures that agencies that regulate and oversee safety aren't investigating themselves when and if there are potential lapses in their oversight.

The NTSB's work is critical—and it has been very busy recently—especially in my region. Last month, we saw a horrific collision at a railway crossing just outside of New York City on our commuter railroad, Metro-North. The tragic incident killed six, including a resident of Danbury, CT. The NTSB is investigating that crash, and its finding will help us so we don't have to witness similar disasters again. Having a full board helps this important work move forward.

This recent investigation comes after the NTSB dedicated tremendous resources and hours into investigating other horrific incidents on Metro-North in 2013 and 2014. At one point, all of the NTSB's rail investigators worked on that one investigation, which resulted in a substantial report last November. The NTSB's conclusions in that report have been a guidepost for reform. At the same time, the NTSB has been busy investigating other major incidents such as rail-grade crossings elsewhere in our country, like in southern California, derailments of trains carrying crude oil, like in West Virginia, plane crashes, major highway disasters, and significant transit incidents.

The NTSB is also evaluating other issues, such as the safety of passenger vehicle tires, distracted driving, substance abuse in the transportation sector, and ensuring procedural compliance by transportation providers. It is a long and extensive list of projects.

We need these nominees in their posts immediately so they can keep these investigations moving forward and bolster the NTSB's critical work. And I note that here in Congress, we need to do our part as well to advance the NTSB's efforts and findings, which include ensuring railroads install positive train control, or PTC, which was first urged by NTSB after a rail collision in 1969 in Darien; requiring advanced technology like cameras in trains; requiring railroads to have redundant signal protection, which, had it been in place, would have saved the life of one of my constituents; requiring better fatigue management in all modes of transportation; improving the crashworthiness of passenger rail cars; and ensuring labor has a voice in safety investigations, among many key reforms.

Thankfully, we have before us today two supremely qualified nominees who will help us advance these key initiatives and make our transportation network safer, more secure, and more reliable. Again, I urge my colleagues to support them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, all week we have been on an important piece of legislation on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Just to remind everybody, this is a bill to treat child prostitutes not as criminals but as the victims they are—obviously, beneath the age of consent—and to recognize that the criminal organizations that traffic in human flesh for sale, economic, sex, and other reasons, are a real problem in our society. So much of what happens in this trade is really nothing more or nothing less than modern-day slavery—something we thought was relegated to the history books and didn't exist in the United States of America, the freest country in the world.

We got here through a rather strange set of circumstances, because the legislation that I introduced was broadly bipartisan—which is a novelty these days. We had 10 Democratic cosponsors of the legislation.

Then, when we had a vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee—Chairman GRASSLEY kindly called up that bill in February—we had a unanimous vote of the Senate Judiciary Committee. All Republicans and all Democrats voted for it.

Then we had another unusual development. Majority Leader MCCONNELL was left wondering: Am I going to have to go through procedural steps to get the bill to the floor? The minority, our Democratic friends, said, I think, fairly: This is not a controversial piece of legislation. We are going to agree to get on the legislation.

But then something very strange happened. All of a sudden, some of our Democratic friends, including the Democratic leader, said: We are going to filibuster this legislation. You can imagine my surprise after that bipartisan record of cooperation leading up to that point.

I was even more surprised when the stated reason for that was a provision in the bill, which was as plain as the nose on your face, and it actually was a provision of the law that was voted on unanimously by all of our Democratic friends late last year.

So it is a provision that has been the law of the land for 39 years, which they reaffirmed with their vote just late last year.

This is what one of the 200 groups—law enforcement and victims groups—had to say about this discovery this week of this appropriations provision known as the Hyde amendment. It said: ''Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.''

So I wish to take a minute to think about who is actually paying the price for the political games that are going on in the Senate. Who is bearing the consequences? Is it going to be the Republican Party or the Democratic Party in the next election? That seems to be the rage in Washington, DC. People want to talk about the politics.

But here we have children, typically between the age of 12 and 14, mainly girls, who are trafficked for sex and who have nowhere to turn. Our bill gives them an opportunity to begin to heal by penalizing the very people who demand this sex trade, taking that money and diverting it into services for the victims.

Reflecting on what has happened this week and thinking that surely we can all get together on something as bipartisan as combatting human sex trafficking for children, surely we can finally come together, all join hands together and support this important legislation, I had to reflect: Why in the world would they ever want to come to the Senate if they are not going to try to help make the lives of these victims of human trafficking just a little better? I mean, we are all used to the hardball of elections and politics. We get it. We are all volunteers. We are grownup men and women. But these children shouldn't have to pay the price for the political games that are going on in the Senate. And it is not only this legislation.

I think it really speaks to: Why in the world would anybody want to serve in a body where all we are doing is filling space and throwing obstacles to the passage of bipartisan legislation that is going to help some of the vulnerable people in our society?

If this is our legacy, I just have to say: Shame on us. Shame on those who would put partisan political games and phantom problems ahead of the welfare of these child victims of human trafficking.

Is this the legacy that any Member of the Senate, Republican or Democratic, would want to be known by? Yes, they served in the Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world. But do you know what they are remembered for? For stopping help for child victims of human trafficking. That is their legacy. Does anyone want that? I don't think so.

Why in the world would we squander a perfectly good opportunity to do everything we can? This isn't a panacea. This isn't going to all of a sudden wipe out the issue of human trafficking in America, but it is a small first step to dedicate $30 million in a crime victims compensation fund—paid for by the very people who purchased these services and who are convicted and pay fines. This is a first step to take that $30 million and to divert it to help the victims of this sordid crime to begin to heal.

So I ask our colleagues to reconsider, to reflect on why they are here—just to play partisan games, or are they actually here to do some good? Is this what they want to be known by? Is this how you want to be remembered by your children and grandchildren? Is this how you want to be remembered in our history books? And why in the world would you come to the Senate only to squander the opportunity to do something good for the most vulnerable people in our country by blocking this legislation over a provision of law which has been the law of the land for 39 years and which all of our Democratic friends have repeatedly voted for time and time again, as recently as late last year in the Omnibus appropriations bill?

This is a phantom problem, and they are choosing a phantom problem over real victims. It is beyond belief and I think deeply depressing. But there is an opportunity for our colleagues to rise above this partisanship they have displayed and to do the right thing. One would think the 10 people who have been cosponsors of the legislation would be for advancing this legislation, as well as all the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Republicans and Democrats alike. One would think that since they have already voted for this provision, they would do so again and let us consider it, along with an open amendment process.

In the end, this isn't hurting us or other Senators. This isn't just poisoning the well here in Washington, DC, making it harder and harder for us to get things done; this isn't just poisoning our reputation in the eyes of the people we represent around the country who look to Washington and see nothing but dysfunction; it is squandering an opportunity to help vulnerable children who are the victims of this sordid sex trafficking. I hope my colleagues will reconsider and allow us to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 178

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the bipartisan Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will go a long way to fight the scourge of modern-day human slavery. It was introduced back in January by a Republican, Senator CORNYN, and a Democrat, Senator KLOBUCHAR. As is done with all legislation, it was posted on the Internet for everyone to read.

Not long after, 14 female senators on the Democrat side joined their female counterparts on the Republican side to call for a Judiciary Committee hearing on the matter. Chairman GRASSLEY is committed to fighting human trafficking. So not only did he hold the hearing they requested, he promptly scheduled a markup on legislation to combat modern human slavery, including the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. That markup was conducted in an open and transparent way. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act was debated and amended in committee.

For example, the senior senator from Connecticut offered an amendment to this bipartisan bill on behalf of himself and the junior senator from Illinois. That amendment was approved.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act was reported unanimously to the floor. Every single Democrat on the Judiciary Committee voted for it. Every single one. Soon after, the junior Senator from North Dakota called on me to take up this bill, which I was happy to do.

The Democratic Majority did not bring this bill to the floor in the last Congress, and I was determined to try to do something about the terrible problem of human trafficking. Just a few days ago, every single Democrat consented to the Senate taking up this bipartisan bill. The Democrat Leader even committed to work to clear any problems that would arise on his side of the aisle, although he said he doubted that any would.

Well, no sooner had these words been uttered, then our Democrat colleagues began complaining about a provision that was sitting on page four of the bill. This provision was in there when this bipartisan bill was introduced. It was in there when the committee held a hearing on it. It was in there when the committee marked it up—at which point every single Democrat voted for it. And it was in there when every Democrat in the Senate agreed to proceed to it on the floor. But now they are complaining about it and even threatening to filibuster this critical human rights bill over it.

Now, I understand threatening to filibuster a bill that you oppose. But our colleagues are threatening to filibuster a bipartisan bill that they have cosponsored, voted for, or in some cases, done both.

We have been reasonable throughout this process. Consistent with that approach, I suggest we resolve this bizarre issue the way the Senate has traditionally done. I will be proposing a consent agreement where our friends on the other side of the aisle will get to offer a motion to strike a provision that so many Democrats voted to support in the past. As part of my offer, I would further propose that such an amendment be the first amendment in order, and that it be decided as a simple up-or-down vote. That is as fair as one can be. An up-or-down vote at a simple majority threshold.

Not only is that the regular order way to resolve this issue, it is also the way that leading antitrafficking groups have said we should resolve this issue. For example, an official from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women said, ''Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.'' She said Senate Democrats should offer an amendment to strip out the provision if they don't like it. And then she said, ''Win or lose and move on.''

I think that is good advice, Mr. President. That is precisely what I am going to suggest. And I hope my Democratic colleagues will take ''yes'' for an answer.

Mr. President, the Senator from Texas, who has been a leader on this issue and is the craftsman of this bill—as has Senator GRASSLEY, the chairman of the committee—has laid out how we got to where we are. It is sort of a mind-boggling, twisted path that makes almost no sense even to the casual observer. The dilemma seems to be that our Democratic friends, having read and signed off on this bill all along the way, have suddenly discovered a piece of it they do not like. Well, of course, the way to eliminate a piece you don't like would be to vote on it.

So I am going to offer a unanimous consent agreement that would give our friends on the other side an opportunity for an up-or-down, simple majority vote on the provision they have recently discovered, after reading the bill for 2 months, that they find offensive. I will give them an opportunity with a simple majority vote to strike the provision which they find objectionable and which Senator CORNYN has pointed out has been part of the law for 39 years.

In that regard, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. 178, that it be in order for Senator LEAHY or his designee to offer an amendment to strike the limitations language; that there be up to 1 hour of debate on the amendment equally divided between the managers or their designees; and that following the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate vote on the amendment; further, that following disposition of this amendment, the managers or their designees be allowed to offer amendments in an alternating fashion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the senior Senator from Texas could write a book on how the Senate has been dysfunctional. That chapter, which would become a huge part of what he would be writing about, would be on what has happened in the last 6 years. Talk about dysfunction. The Republicans have basically filibustered everything, and I mean everything—everything. The decision was made after Obama was elected that they weren't going to support anything, and to your credit, I say to the Presiding Officer and all Republicans, you stuck with it. You supported nothing Obama wanted to get done. So let's not talk about the dysfunction of the Senate because the book on that has been written by the Republican minority for the last 6 years.

Mr. President, the legislation dealing with human trafficking is going to pass this Congress, but it is going to pass this Congress without abortion language in it.

There has been a lot of talk in the last couple of days about how to handle this issue, and the way to handle the issue is very simple: Just take it out of the bill. It could be done with a consent agreement in the matter of a second or two. So that is what we proposed, and we have been proposing it for the last several days. Take the abortion language out of this bill. If my Republican colleagues want to get something done, just take the abortion politics out of this bill. Unfortunately, for those who want to see this trafficking bill pass, Republicans are ignoring the obvious path forward while setting a new low standard on all bipartisan business that is conducted in the Senate.

By saying that Democrats should always assume their Republican partners are just not being forthright, I guess it is our fault because time and time again, whether it is on the funding of Homeland Security or whether it is trying to solve a problem we have in the Middle East, there is always something that comes out of nowhere—something so unusual, so unbelievable that we would have 47 Senators sign a letter directed to the Ayatollah. Never in the 200 years of this body has there been this level of interference in negotiations by the President until just a few days ago.

The bottom line is this: Democratic Senators have been working in good faith on this critical legislation for years. Assuming their Republican partners were being forthright when they provided a list of changes that did not include the addition of the Hyde language, Republicans are now saying that trusting them was a mistake.

There is a clear path forward to passing this trafficking bill, which is the goal shared, I hope, by Democrats and Republicans. Republicans should work with us to remove the unrelated abortion language that has no business being in this bill. Democrats are open to any number of ways to improve the language in this bill, but it is so simple: Just take it out. Take the abortion language out.

Today, Senator LEAHY, a senior Member of this body, submitted text that omits the abortion language. One way forward would be for the Senate to adopt, not simply vote on, this text. Voting to reject the change Democrats are seeking, as Senator MCCONNELL says he wants to do today, is not a viable path forward since it does not address Democrats' concern that abortion language has no place in a bill designed to protect victims of human trafficking.

This trafficking bill could pass quickly if the abortion language were removed, as I said. We hope Republicans will do the right thing in the interest of passing this bill and will work with us to remove the completely unrelated abortion language that has no business being in this bill.

I, therefore, object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to make sure everybody understands what has been objected to. The provision that was in the bill has been in there for 2 months. Everybody had a chance to read it. It came out of committee unanimously. No one objected to proceeding to it on the floor.

I just offered the minority an opportunity for a simple up-or-down vote to strike the provision they recently discovered, and they have objected to it.

Senator CORNYN, Senator GRASSLEY, and a number of others of you have worked very hard on this extremely important legislation. I brought it to the floor the other day, open for amendment, but we have not been able to offer any amendments because the minority doesn't want to have an open amendment process and is insisting on trying to kill this important bill because of a provision they claim somehow they missed. After its being in there for 2 months, they now suddenly find it offensive.

So where we are is we are still on the bill, and we are going to pass this bill, I assure you. I want to assure Senators CORNYN, GRASSLEY, and all the people out in America who have been clamoring for this bill—and I might ask Senator CORNYN, how many groups are there that are supporting this measure?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. If I could respond, Mr. President, there are about 200 different law enforcement and victims' rights organizations, including the one from the chart I mentioned earlier, the Coalition Against Trafficking of Women. This is one of those rare subjects where people have genuinely come together in revulsion to this terrible crime but also in an attempt to do something meaningful to address it.

Mr. MCCONNELL. So what I want to say to those groups is that we are going to stay on this bill until we pass it. I have offered the minority an opportunity to have an up-or-down vote to take out the provision they have suddenly discovered is offensive to them even after having it in the bill for 2 months. Even the most casual observer would have to conclude that the minority is going to great lengths to prevent the Senate from even doing business on things that are overwhelmingly supported. But I will say this to everybody out there who cares about this bill: We are going to stay on it until we finish it.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON HART NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christopher A. Hart, of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of two years?

Mr. INHOFE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 70 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Flake	Murray
Ayotte	Franken	Nelson
Baldwin	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Perdue
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blumenthal	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Reid
Boozman	Heitkamp	Risch
Brown	Heller	Roberts
Burr	Hirono	Rounds
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Schatz
Cardin	Isakson	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Cassidy	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Corker	Lee	Thune
Cornyn	Manchin	Tillis
Cotton	Markey	Toomey
Crapo	McCain	Udall
Cruz	McCaskill	Vitter
Daines	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Mikulski	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Wyden
Feinstein	Murkowski	
Fischer	Murphy	

NOT VOTING—3

Boxer	Rubio	Sanders

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DINH-ZARR NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the committee-reported amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior 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, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, Deb Fischer, Tom Cotton, Ron Johnson, Richard Burr, Daniel Coats, Roy Blunt, Chuck Grassley, Tim Scott, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, Jerry Moran.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send another cloture motion to the desk for the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior 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, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, Deb Fischer, Tom Cotton, Ron Johnson, Richard Burr, Daniel Coats, Roy Blunt, Chuck Grassley, Tim Scott, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, Jerry Moran.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived with respect to these cloture motions.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the first-degree filing deadline be at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 16.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015. I am proud to join with my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation, and I applaud Senator CORNYN and Senator KLOBUCHAR for putting together this bipartisan bill.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act is a call to action. We heard a lot of discussion about it on the floor over the last several days. The horrible crime of human trafficking impacts thousands of Americans—mostly women and children—each year, and it occurs in cities, suburbs, and in rural towns. We cannot allow this horrendous crime to continue.

Last year, I hosted a forum at West Virginia State University to discuss how we could help in West Virginia to combat human trafficking. The event was very well attended and featured law enforcement advocates, academics, and State lawmakers. I also supported several bills when I was in the House of Representatives to further this fight and end this vicious crime.

It is monstrous to consider the sexual exploitation of a human being, especially a child. We must stand up for those voices that have been silenced and say ''no more.''

While not in large numbers, trafficking occurs in West Virginia's small communities and towns, in our hotels and in our truck stops, in schools, and online. Several things contribute to trafficking in the Mountain State—the interstates running in and around, our high poverty and unemployment rates. We also have a drug epidemic which contributes to this problem.

I am working in a bipartisan way with Senator JOE DONNELLY to address this drug epidemic, but we must also say ''no more'' to this shameful crime.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will make it easier for law enforcement to identify and address patterns of human trafficking. It takes a needed two-pronged approach. It bolsters the tools available to law enforcement to crack down on human traffickers and helps victims restore their lives through increased Federal resources.

We need to take care of our sons, our daughters, and our neighbors and keep our eyes and our ears open. This is not a Republican or Democratic issue; it is a human issue. Now is the time to stand up and say ''no more'' to human trafficking. Now is the time to show broad support for these victims and punish traffickers to the fullest extent of the law.

This bill has gone through a very transparent process. It was carefully considered and unanimously approved in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It has been available for every Senator or member of the public to read for months. Earlier this week each and every Senator consented to consider this bill on the Senate floor. It has widespread support from over 200 advocacy groups, including the NAACP, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Rights4Girls, the National Association to Protect Children, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The innocent victims of human trafficking have suffered enough. Now is the time for us to join together and pass this legislation and take a significant step to end this crime.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General of the United States.

It is interesting that this is a week when we have been engaged in a dialogue about human trafficking, which is a serious and significant issue, obviously. But it, along with many other issues, demands a strong Justice Department, and a strong Justice Department is not possible without a confirmed Attorney General as a leader.

Ms. Lynch has now been nominated over 4 months ago. It has been 124 days since her nomination, and she has still yet to be confirmed. I rise to speak on her behalf.

I have visited with Loretta Lynch in person. I have observed her throughout the nominations process. My brother-in-law worked as an assistant U.S. attorney with her in the Eastern District of New York in the late 1990s. I am impressed, as are many of my colleagues, by her credentials and her extensive experience, and I was gratified to see that the Judiciary Committee reported her nomination to the floor.

I am disappointed that it has taken 124 days to get to this point. I was pleased to hear the majority leader indicate that the Senate may take up her nomination next week, but I think it is important for the Nation to recognize how critical this appointment is and how we should not have let it go this long.

I want to reflect back to probably the hardest elected office I held or will hold, which was mayor of Richmond. When I was a city councilman and mayor from 1994 to 2000, my city had the burden of having the second highest homicide rate in the United States. We worked in our community together with everyone, especially law enforcement and community leaders, to try to bring down that scourge of violent crime that was affecting neighborhoods, especially the poorest neighborhoods.

We were able, over the course of 7 years, to achieve some very dramatic success to make our city safer, but along the way I learned a couple of very important things. The first was this. One can't tackle major public safety challenges without a strong relationship between the community and the local police department. It is impossible to make progress if that does not happen. Secondly, I also learned that one cannot tackle a difficult public safety challenge without a strong Department of Justice. We relied upon that partnership with our local U.S. attorney's office in the Eastern District of Virginia—all the way up through

main Justice and the Attorney General—in order to try to tackle and turn our city's public safety situation around.

Today there are critical issues facing this country—urgent issues facing this country—that deal with the relationship between our communities and law enforcement agencies. If there were ever a time when we would want to have a confirmed Attorney General in office without question marks surrounding when that confirmation will take place, it would be now.

Over the last few months, we have seen a series of controversies that have torn at all of us as we have watched challenges and distrust between communities and law enforcement agencies. In early August, Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old, was shot during a confrontation with an officer in Ferguson, MO. That shooting spurred nationwide protests and concerns against what many in Ferguson and elsewhere viewed as overly aggressive tactics by the police.

A month prior to the death of Michael Brown, Eric Garner died as a result of a police chokehold in July in New York when he was confronted over the selling of untaxed cigarettes. There have been similar instances in Cleveland and Madison. It is not limited to one part of the country. It is not limited to North, South, East, or West. There have been similar instances that have raised serious concerns about the connection between law enforcement and communities.

There have also been horrible atrocities committed against members of the law enforcement community, the deaths of two NYPD officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, who were shot pointblank weeks ago in New York City while they sat in their patrol car. Yesterday, as we heard reported, there were shootings of police officers in Ferguson, MO.

These instances in cities around the country demonstrate a significant level of tension and even distrust between the police and communities they serve, which are often minority communities or communities of color.

I am here to say these tensions do not have to exist. They can be bridged. They can be solved. But it takes a fully functioning Department of Justice with a leader at the helm who has been confirmed to solve these issues.

The Department of Justice has, throughout history and today, played a critical role in investigating cases such as this and some of the situations I mentioned. The DOJ has been able to come in and be involved and provide some calm to situations, provide some level of confidence that there would not be a sugarcoating or an effort to sweep legitimate questions into the closet in the community.

In the State of Virginia, there is currently a DOJ investigation concerning the police shooting death of John Geer, an unarmed Caucasian who was shot on the steps of his residence in August of 2013. Local officials in that county have welcomed the involvement of the Department of Justice because they knew that citizens would have a greater confidence in the outcome if it was being done by someone other than the officials who had been elected locally.

There is a critical need at this point to provide some confidence to communities that have questions about the relationship between their own concerns and the service of law enforcement departments, just as law enforcement departments want to have a way to build bridges with the communities they represent.

Loretta Lynch understands the significance of the Attorney General's role in these situations. She testified that one of her key priorities would be to work to strengthen the bonds between law enforcement personnel, whom she has worked with during her entire career, and the communities they serve which she well understands.

Last week, the DOJ released a report from their investigation into the Ferguson policing practices that laid out a number of significant concerns that, if left unaddressed, will continue to lead to distrust in Ferguson and elsewhere. A strong Justice Department that can help mediate and bring the sides together is a part of the solution.

I raised these issues only to highlight that right now we are at a critical time in the Nation's criminal justice system. A delay of confirming an Attorney General for 4-plus months is never warranted, given the importance of the position. A delay is not warranted in this case, given these strong credentials of Loretta Lynch, but the delay is especially unwelcome, given the urgent need to have leadership at the Department of Justice. They can try to calm any potential situations and build confidence in communities and among law enforcement agencies.

We need our incoming AG to be on the job, taking on these challenges in a manner that will bring different aspects of the community together, to make changes as necessary and to strengthen the equality of our criminal justice system for all.

Of course, beyond the issue of community policing, we face so many other challenges, such as national security and terrorism, and in that respect the Eastern District of New York, which is where Ms. Lynch has served, has had one of the most significant dockets of antiterrorism cases of any jurisdiction in the country. She is an expert in those areas. Cyber security, the very human trafficking issues we have been discussing on the floor today, are issues Ms. Lynch has worked on significantly in her role, protecting voting rights, and so many more.

Ms. Lynch is a no-nonsense, hard-working prosecutor known for her aplomb, her demeanor, her intelligence, and her ability to work with a wide variety of stakeholders. I am absolutely confident Ms. Lynch will approach these issues with the same focus, fairness, and expertise with which she has approached her work in the past.

I stand today to urge my colleagues to not wait, and to support Loretta Lynch as our next Attorney General. It has been said to the point where it is a cliche, but nevertheless a true one, that justice delayed is justice denied. The refusal to confirm a leader to head the most important law enforcement agency in the United States is a delay of justice that for many seems to be a denial of justice. We can rectify that concern in communities across this country if we act with dispatch to confirm a person who is eminently qualified to hold the Nation's highest law enforcement position.

With that, I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senator from Mississippi has graciously allowed me to speak before him, and I ask unanimous consent that Senator WICKER be recognized immediately upon the conclusion of my comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have been working on the issue of human trafficking on a bipartisan basis for almost a year, and it is usually bipartisan.

I know when we included my amendment on the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, most Senators voted for it. Only 20 current Republican senators voted against that victims act, and the rest voted for it. All the Democrats voted for it.

But on this issue today, the Judiciary Committee reported out a comprehensive bill with strong bipartisan support. We did that last fall. This year we reported out a less comprehensive bill with fewer protections for those at risk of human trafficking, and despite that setback, I agreed to keep working across the aisle to make it stronger, including the crucial prevention piece that was in last year's committee-reported bill.

We have been on this bill for 3 days. I think we can all admit the progress has been thwarted by the inclusion of a divisive provision that would limit the services available to victims of human trafficking.

I wish to propose a way forward. I know all Senators want to work together to end human trafficking. And just as we saw on my bill, the Violence Against Women Act, 78 Senators voted for that act with its provision on trafficking. We want to support a bill that will pass the Senate.

I filed a substitute amendment, Senate Amendment 300, to get us around

our current impasse. It includes three things. First, the Klobuchar-Cornyn bill as reported earlier this month by the Judiciary Committee; second, the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill, also reported earlier this month by the Judiciary Committee, but without the divisive language that limits victims services; third, the Leahy-Collins-Murkowski-Ayotte amendment that was filed yesterday to protect runaway and homeless youth from trafficking.

This trafficking prevention bill was reported by the Judiciary Committee last year with the support of Senator GRASSLEY, Senator CORNYN, and nearly all of the other Judiciary Committee members, but has been narrowed here at the request of Republicans this year.

I hope the combination of these three bills—and I do it in good faith—can bring us together. More importantly, it is responsive to the requests of survivors and the many dedicated people who work with them to remove the unnecessary partisan provision that has resulted in this impasse. They need us to find a way forward. They need the Senate to stop playing politics and pass a meaningful bill.

With that, I ask unanimous consent that letters written by a number of groups and others who support the removal of this divisive provision so that we can move forward on this trafficking legislation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR YOUTH,
March 11, 2015.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY: The National Network for Youth is grateful for your leadership on human trafficking which is a dark mark on our modern society. Slavery has no place in America and we stand proudly with you to prevent and end human trafficking in America.

The National Network for Youth, founded in 1974, champions the needs of runaway, homeless, and other disconnected youth through strengthening the capacity of community-based services, facilitating resource sharing, and educating the public and policy makers. NN4Y members work collaboratively to prevent youth homelessness and the inherent risks of homelessness, including exploitation, human trafficking, criminal justice involvement, and death.

Human trafficking is a bipartisan and nonpartisan issue. Together, we stand united against modern day slavery, including both sex and labor trafficking. Presently, we are at an important moment in the Senate with both parties unified to take a strong stand against human trafficking, from prevention to law enforcement, and service provision to survivors. We are so pleased that the Runaway and Homeless and Youth Trafficking Prevention has become a part of this important conversation and we thank you for your support of that legislation last Congress.

The National Network for Youth is writing this letter with the hope that the U.S. Senate will remove the partisan piece of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This legislation is desperately needed and we cannot let this moment pass us by because of the addition of partisan and divisive provisions.

Respectfully, thank you for your work. Please work across the aisle to ensure that this critical trafficking legislation becomes the law of the land.

Best regards,

DARLA BARDINE, J.D.,
Executive Director, National Network for Youth.

VERMONT COALITION OF RUNAWAY & HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS,
Montpelier, VT, March 11, 2015.

Senator PATRICK LEAHY,
Russell Senate Building, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY, The Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs wishes to express our ongoing appreciation for your efforts to move the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act. As a longstanding champion of Federal support for efforts to assist vulnerable runaway, homeless and trafficked young people, I know that you must be as frustrated as we are in recent efforts to insert an element of partisanship into what should be a broadly bi-partisan effort to protect victims of human trafficking. The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act and the broader legislation it's amended to should be important opportunities for citizens of the United States and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to unite in moral outrage over the realities of victims of human trafficking.

Difference of opinion and the deliberative role of the Senate is part of what makes our democracy strong, but sometimes unity of purpose should prevail, particularly in efforts involving protections for the most vulnerable among us. There should be no doubt that legislation involving the well-being of individuals who have been victimized by the most base of human behavior should be free of partisan wrangling. It's disappointing and deeply distressing that this isn't always the case.

I write this letter to encourage your efforts to remove partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act in an effort to ensure that the Act and the RHY amendment that Senator Collins and you introduced move forward unimpeded.

Again, thank you for your efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

KREIG PINKHAM,
Executive Director, Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club, VT Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs Board Member.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.

DEAR SENATORS: On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) more than 1.5 million members and supporters nationwide, I write to support the Leahy substitute amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act which would ensure critical protections for victims of trafficking and add necessary protections for runaway and homeless youth that does not include an expansion of the Hyde Amendment language. Each of the components of this substitute amendment has strong bipartisan support.

This amendment will help many vulnerable populations including the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. LGBT individuals are particularly impacted by human trafficking and are at an increased risk for victimization globally. In fact, 10 percent of all trafficking victims identify as LGBT. They also make up a disproportionate amount of the total homeless youth population. Recent studies have found that while LGBT youth comprise only 10 percent of the total youth population, up to 40 percent of youth living on the streets today identify as LGBT.

Increased incidence of homelessness and family rejection make LGBT individuals—especially youth—particularly vulnerable to trafficking. According to the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, one in four LGBT youth is rejected by their families because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Due to this rejection, many LGBT youth find themselves homeless and living on the streets. Once on the street, these youth are targeted for exploitation and trafficking.

Because homelessness can often lead to trafficking, inclusion of protections for runaway and homeless youth will result in a more effective Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs provide critical funding for support systems that serve youth who become homeless. The programs funded by the act—including emergency shelters, street outreach, transitional living and assistance for homeless youth in rural areas—can serve as critical, final safety nets for youth who would otherwise become victims of trafficking.

According to the American Bar Association, for LGBT people who are trafficked the societal stigma around their sexual orientation or gender identity is an additional factor that prevents them from accessing help or reporting abuse. This amendment provides important protections against discrimination for LGBT youth by prohibiting any program funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act from discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

We greatly appreciate your commitment to improving the lives of young people across America, including those who are LGBT. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

DAVID STACY,
Government Affairs Director, Human Rights Campaign.

Planned Parenthood Action Fund
For Immediate Release: Tuesday, March 10, 2015
Contact: Planned Parenthood Action Fund media office: 212–261–4433

PLANNED PARENTHOOD CONDEMNS EFFORT TO INSERT EXTREME ANTI-ABORTION AGENDA INTO BILL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WASHINGTON DC.— Planned Parenthood Action Fund condemned efforts by Senator John Cornyn (R–TX) to advance an extreme abortion restriction as part of important bipartisan efforts to establish greater protections for victims of human trafficking. Following is a statement by Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Action Fund:

''It's outrageous that some politicians are using a bill to protect victims of sex trafficking to push an extreme anti-abortion, anti-immigrant agenda. This is politics at its worst. A bill that was supposed to help women is instead being used to hurt women.

''The Senate should protect victims of human trafficking but should not do so at the expense of women's access to safe and legal abortion. The majority of human trafficking victims are women and girls, and they need access to the full range of reproductive health care services without barriers.''

LEGAL MOMENTUM,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.

NEW YORK, NY.—Today, Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, urged that a provision harmful to women's health be removed from a human trafficking bill being considered by the Senate, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (S. 178).

''The intent of this bill—to support survivors of trafficking—will be subverted if the provision is left intact. Human trafficking survivors—survivors of the worst kind of exploitation, which our government has called 'modern slavery'—who were raped and became pregnant should have access to the full spectrum of health services, including abortion,'' said Legal Momentum's President and CEO, Carol Robles-Román.

Legal Momentum fully supports the aims of the bill minus the troubling provisions. The bill would enhance services for runaway and homeless victims of youth trafficking, improve the response to victims of child sex trafficking, and establish an interagency task force to monitor and combat trafficking. Harmful provisions that deny health care to victims, restrict women's health options, are harmful to immigrants, or fail to adequately protect the LGBT community, should be removed so that the bill can help victims of one of the most heinous crimes, human trafficking, which has been condemned by the whole world. We urge all senators to vote for the Leahy Comprehensive Substitute Amendment, which adheres to the bi-partisan compromises made when the JVTA was reported out of the Judiciary Committee.

GIVE WAY TO FREEDOM,
Essex Junction, VT, March 11, 2015.

Hon. PATRICK LEAHY,
Russell Senate Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEAHY, Thank you for your ongoing leadership in the fight to protect victims of human trafficking and ensure that they receive full support and services to which they are entitled under federal law. Give Way to Freedom is a private operating Foundation based in Vermont that works with victims of trafficking throughout New England and southeast New York. Through this work we see first-hand the complex needs of victims of trafficking.

As Vermont and New England continue to build our response to this heinous crime it is vital that victims remain the core focus of all efforts. We applaud your dedication to this principal, and support your efforts to ensure that victims of trafficking receive the full range of support and services they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

Sincerely,

EDITH KLIMOSKI,
Director.

CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2015.

Ranking Member PATRICK LEAHY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Russell Senate Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER LEAHY, I write today to thank you for your leadership in helping victims of trafficking and resolving the unacceptable situation with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (S. 178). The Center for American Progress extends our deep support for your Comprehensive Substitute Amendment that removes abortion restrictions for the funds to help victims of trafficking and retains nondiscrimination provisions in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

Thank you again for your leadership in moving these important pieces of legislation forward without harmful restrictions.

Sincerely,

DONNA BARRY,
Director of Women's Health and Rights Program.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor, and I thank the Senator from Mississippi for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Vermont is quite welcome, and I am glad we were able to accommodate each other.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the gravity of the current situation with regard to the administration's negotiations with Iran for a nuclear agreement.

I believe it is important to note that we received some important information today in the Senate Armed Services Committee that is helpful to us in this regard.

This morning the Armed Services Committee heard from ADM Bill Gortney. He gave us his assessment of Iran's capabilities and ongoing efforts to thwart international agencies. Admiral Gortney is the commander of the U.S. Northern Command. He is personally responsible for defending Americans in the United States mainland. He is an appointee of President Obama, and here are the words given to us today by Admiral Gortney: Iran has ''committed considerable resources to enhancing its ballistic missile capabilities and has already placed another satellite into orbit this year using a new booster that could serve as a demonstrator for ICBM, intercontinental ballistic technologies. Despite international condemnation and sanctions, Iran has failed to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve all outstanding concerns regarding its nuclear program, particularly those concerning its possible military dimensions.''

These are the words from the head of the Northern Command in this administration, and this regime, which Admiral Gortney described, is the very regime our President and Secretary of State have confidence will live up to any nuclear agreement.

As the Admiral went on to say, the hope for a diplomatic solution should not come without vigilance, and that is what Members on this side of the aisle are trying to insist upon. We cannot ignore these warning signs of noncompliance and uncooperative behavior while expecting Iran to make good on its promises.

A few days ago Prime Minister Netanyahu stressed Iran's record of misconduct and sinister objectives in his powerful address to Congress. He emphasized that a nuclear Iran would have serious implications for the world, the region, and of course for Israel, one of our most steadfast allies. These concerns are important for lawmakers, and I am glad we had a chance to hear them in person.

With a record of foreign policy failures, I regret to say President Obama is under intense scrutiny to hold Iran accountable at this critical moment. He is under intense scrutiny because of these foreign policy failures. Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned and I think Americans are concerned that the administration might be too generous with concessions to Iran, as it has been with deals in past.

The time is running out for the President to establish his legacy—a dangerous motivation for negotiations with the unreliable and volatile nation Admiral Gortney described today.

At the very least, the Senate should insist on the passage of a partisan bill to ensure that the American people have a say in any agreement between the White House and Iran. Congressional approval would add legitimacy to any agreement, and I think that is important. Any foreign nation negotiating with the United States should be mindful of our constitutional system of checks and balances. Congress should also be discussing the appropriate steps to take if an agreement is not reached by the deadline this month.

The President is now threatening to veto legislation that puts tougher sanctions on Iran. But shouldn't there be consequences for Iran if they refuse to cooperate with international investigators? Mistakes are too high to make excuses for stalled negotiations or to rely on wishful thinking about Iran's intentions.

As Mr. Netanyahu said in his speech, ''If Iran wants to be treated like a normal country, let it act like a normal country.''

Instead Iran continues to support terrorist groups and oppressive authoritarian regimes. We cannot afford to ignore its influence in unstable areas and how this influence could dramatically change should they be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech is a reminder that Iran has made no excuses for its belligerent aims and ties to terrorist groups. A bad deal would spell disaster for Israel, whose very existence has been threatened by Iranian leaders.

Israel and the United States share an unwavering commitment to keeping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. It is unfortunate that criticism from the Obama administration surrounded the Prime Minister's earlier visit.

Meanwhile, the world is not safer. Global threats continue to multiply, posing complex challenges to America's national security issues. One looks at the unrest around the world, and it is easy to see how America is failing to lead.

Another member of this administration, Director of National Intelligence

James Clapper, underscored the widespread instability when he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee last month. It is important to compare Director Clapper's testimony with that of the Secretary of State earlier. Director Clapper, our Director of National Intelligence, said there were more deaths from state-sponsored mass killings, more people displaced from their homes, and a higher rate of political instability last year than we have seen in decades. In fact, 2014 was the most lethal year on record for terrorism. We are now facing unpredictable instability as the ''new normal,'' according to this administration's Director of National Intelligence.

The White House's foreign policy team, however, seems unwilling to accept these harsh truths. Listen to the words of Secretary of State John Kerry, our chief negotiator with Iran, in contrast to the words of our Director of National Intelligence. Senator Kerry said:

> We are actually living in a period of less daily threat to Americans and to people in the world than normally; less deaths, less violent deaths today, than through the last century.

It is hard to square the testimony of our chief negotiator with Iran with the words of our Director of National Intelligence.

Particularly troubling is the administration's past reliance on empty promises from adversaries. Under President Obama's watch, Vladimir Putin has invaded and annexed part of Ukraine, continued to support the brutal regime of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, and violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

On February 27, we saw yet another troubling development in Moscow. Opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned down in cold blood on the street after dinner in a secure, well-protected part of Moscow, just steps away from the Kremlin. The Russian Government has denounced Mr. Nemtsov's assassination, but this is not the first time one of President Putin's opponents or critics has been murdered. I will only note that Mr. Nemtsov is only the latest in a line of Putin critics who have mysteriously met their demise over time, and Russia's record of corruption and shameful disregard for human rights continues.

In conclusion, U.S. leadership is of the utmost importance to global security and stability at this pivotal time. Director Clapper was frank in his testimony that ''pervasive uncertainty makes it all the harder to predict the future.'' That is why we must remain vigilant. America can succeed if we demonstrate the fortitude and resolve necessary to defend freedom and stop those who threaten it. This includes taking an honest look at Iran's past and present behavior before we cut a deal we will later regret.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business and to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina.

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

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first of all, I wish to make reference to the famous letter by Senator COTTON to the Iranians conveying to them the realities of the U.S. Constitution and the situation as it will prevail, hopefully, and that is that the Congress of the United States must ratify any agreement between the United States and Iran. Anybody who says we shouldn't ignores history and ignores the impact of this treaty.

I signed that letter, and I believe it is a direct result of the President's statement that he would veto any role the U.S. Congress should play in the ratification or nonratification of a pending agreement. That is what triggered the letter from Senator COTTON, and that is why I stand by it.

Seventy-one percent of Americans believe negotiation with Tehran will not make a difference in preventing Iran from producing nuclear weapons, and 71 percent of the American people are right.

Now I wish to speak with my friend from South Carolina about the situation in Iraq today—specifically, the role Iran is playing and, even more specifically, the combat that is taking place around the city of Tikrit.

Tikrit is the hometown of Saddam Hussein. Tikrit is a Sunni stronghold. Tikrit is now under attack—the ISIS people who are occupying it—by Shia militia, including, specifically, the Badr brigades, and they are led and trained by Iranians. An individual named Soleimani, who is the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, is now the most visible leader. Soleimani is the same guy who sent copper-tipped IEDs into Iraq which killed hundreds of American soldiers and marines. We now are somehow accommodating the individual who is responsible for the deaths of brave young Americans. That is not only unbelievable, it is totally unacceptable.

The question is, When these Shia militias get into Tikrit, how are they going to behave? There are well-documented human rights abuses by these Shia militias. Again, these are the same Badr brigades that we fought against in the Battle of Sadr City during the surge. And now the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff said in January: ''As long as the Iraqi government remains committed to inclusivity of all the various groups inside the country, then I think Iranian influence will be positive.'' I am not making that up.

There is an AP story today that I wish to quote from entitled ''Little progress in key plank of Obama anti-IS struggle.''

> Instead of reaching out for Sunnis, the Iraqi government has bolstered its already close ties to Iran and to Iranian-backed Shiite militias that have been credibly accused of massacring Sunnis, U.S. officials acknowledge. The Iraqi military's reliance on Shiite militias this week to retake Tikrit, a Sunni stronghold, has complicated the prospects of political reconciliation, experts say.
>
> Human Rights Watch said in a March 4 report that it has documented ''numerous'' atrocities against Sunni civilians by the Shiite militias . . .
>
> ''They see it as a Persian invasion of the Sunni heartland,'' said John Maguire, a former CIA case officer with long Middle East experience who travels frequently to Iraq.

I am interested in the reaction of my friend from South Carolina to this:

> After meeting with Abadi, Dempsey—

That is our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—

> told reporters he was given firm assurances that the Shiite-led government is committed to reconciling with the Sunnis. Asked in an interview whether he considered those assurances credible Dempsey said, ''They seemed credible today.''
>
> Dempsey noted that during his helicopter flight over Baghdad, he saw worrisome signs of Iranian influence. He spotted a ''plethora of flags'' at checkpoints and elsewhere in the capital, ''only one of which happens to be the Iraqi flag,'' he said, alluding to the banners of Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

Can we get real, I ask my friend from South Carolina, as to what is taking place?

The Iranians are now in Sana'a, they are in Baghdad, they are in Beirut, they are in Damascus, and they are on the move. Meanwhile, this administration, this President, and this Secretary of State pursue the mirage of a nuclear agreement that will somehow change the entire equation.

I would also be interested in the views of the Senator from South Carolina of what the Saudis are doing, which is accommodating in their own way and possibly making plans to acquire their own nuclear weapons along with other nations in the Middle East.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, just to sum it up, our foreign policy is in a free-for-all. It is incompetent at its core.

No one can feel good about Shia-led groups going into Tikrit with Iranian command and control. If we know anything about Iraq, the hope for Iraq is for the Sunnis, the Shias, and the Kurds to accommodate each other's interests and to work together. So when we see a Shia-led effort against, as the Senator from Arizona said, the Sunni stronghold, with an Iranian commander on the ground who was responsible for killing Americans, and we think that is a good day for us, that is nuts. That is a bad day for America.

Let's talk a little bit about the Iranian nuclear negotiations. I did not sign Senator COTTON's letter until the President threatened to veto congressional legislation to make sure that we would have a say about relieving the sanctions we created. When President Obama told the Congress—a bipartisan

group was being formed to make sure that Congress would have a say about relieving the sanctions that were created—that ''I will veto your efforts to have a say,'' then all bets were off at that point for me.

So I want the Iranians to know, in case they are listening, the Obama administration, the P5+1, the U.N., cannot relieve congressional sanctions without our approval. I don't know what kind of system they have in Iran; I am pretty well sure it is not Democratic.

To President Obama: When you indicated that the letter that was written—the open letter to the Ayatollahs about Congress's insistence that we have a say about sanctions we are creating—you said: You have empowered the hard-liners.

All I can say is that if the President of the United States believes there is a hard line and moderate split in Iran, I want to look at the deal now more than ever. Please name the moderate elements who are in the Government in Iran. And if these people are moderate, God forbid the hard-liners ever get in charge. The idea that there is a split is ridiculous. The President of Iran, the Foreign Minister of Iran are playing the oldest game in the Mideast. The moderates were gunned down in 2009. I can show my colleagues a moderate who was a young lady who was killed in the streets. Every moderate voice was crushed by force of arms, and our President in 2009 sat on the sidelines because he didn't want to disrupt his chance to reach an agreement with the Ayatollahs.

Mr. President: You scare me when you say you believe there is a moderate element in charge of Iran. Look what they are doing as you negotiate regarding their nuclear ambitions. They have taken down a pro-American government in Yemen that allowed us a platform to watch and attack Al Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula, the terrorist organization responsible for the terrorist attack. The Houthis, an Iranian-backed group within Yemen, was able to take down the government that we were working with in providing us counterterrorism platforms. The Iranians are supporting Assad, who has killed 220,000 of his own people, and the instability from Assad's brutality is putting the King of Jordan and everyone else at risk. Over 1 million Syrians have left Syria to go to Lebanon and Jordan. That is not a moderate regime. Moderate regimes do not support insurgencies that, through the force of arm, take down elected governments. Hezbollah is not a moderate voice in Lebanon. They are supported by the Iranians. They have had a record of attacking Israel and killing us for decades. So Iran's support of Hezbollah, of the Houthis, and of Assad—that is not what moderate people do. Now, in Iraq itself, the Shia militia who are roaming around Iraq are committing war crimes as I speak.

So you are completely disconnected from the behavior of the people you are negotiating with, and you don't understand the Iranians at all. You are dangerously in denial or delusional about the threats we face and whom we are dealing with.

So I am glad we wrote the letter to bring some certainty to the process. If the President of the United States negotiates a deal with Iran and that deal includes lifting the congressional sanctions and he does it without our input, he will change a balance of power that has existed for hundreds of years in this country.

We created congressional sanctions by a 100–0 vote over your objection. We are not going to let you tell us we have no voice in lifting the sanctions we created. We are not going to let the United Nations lift sanctions we created.

The Iranians need to understand the following: If there is a deal between the P5+1 and they are telling you congressional sanctions will be lifted by signing the deal, that is not accurate. They won't be lifted unless we agree. I would vote to lift sanctions if I thought we had a good deal. I would vote against a bad deal because a bad deal will start a new arms race in the Middle East.

I will sum this up. I have never been more worried than I am today with what is happening in the Middle East. You have people in our military celebrate Iranian ground activity in Iraq that will expand sectarian conflict. When the Iranians are marching on Tikrit, that is not a sign that Iraq is coming together. To anybody on the American side who believes that is a good idea, what movie have been you been watching?

To the President of the United States: We are going to insist to have a say about sanctions we created before you can negotiate their relief. I am sorry you may not like that. You may find this inconvenient, but we have a say, too.

The bill we are talking about only deals with the sanctions we created. So I hope my Democratic colleagues who are so disappointed will understand why we, at least on this side, are pretty offended at the idea that the President can negotiate away sanctions we created without an input. You should be equally worried. The Israelis and the Arabs have told us one thing: Iran is the most destabilizing force in the Middle East. This President and this administration negotiate a nuclear deal without saying a word about the havoc Iran is creating on the ground.

If I were President, I would tell the Iranians we are not going to talk to you anymore about your nuclear ambitions until you stop destabilizing the region and invading your neighbors. We are not going to talk to you about your nuclear ambitions until you stop building ICBMs that can threaten us, until you stop sponsoring terrorist organizations. But not only has the President remained silent about Iran's wreaking havoc throughout the region, he is negotiating a deal—at least from what I have been able to find out about it—that is a North Korea in the making, and he wants us to be silent.

To my Democratic colleagues and the President, we are not going to be silenced. We are going have a say. We are going to have a vote. I hope in a bipartisan fashion, we will vote a good deal in and a bad deal down. Under the construct, you have to get 60 votes to disapprove the deal, so Republicans alone cannot kill it.

If it is a good deal, we will know it. It will be a deal that gives the Iranians what they say they want, a peaceful nuclear power program. A bad deal is a deal that will allow them to have a nuclear weapon one day. The only thing between a nuclear weapon, us, and Israel is the United Nations. Forget that. That is what we had in North Korea.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask my friend if he recalls the recent testimony by Henry Kissinger, probably the most highly regarded individual in America today? He voiced his concern. His fundamental problem was that, as he put it, we have gone from negotiations to rid Iran from ever having the capability of developing nuclear weapons to delaying it. So that on its face—and again, I want to remind my friend from South Carolina that he and I and our beloved friend, former Member of this body, Joe Lieberman, made visit after visit to Baghdad and to Iraq. We probably were everywhere in that country on many occasions. And how well we remember the fight the surge brought on to bring stability to Iraq. It did bring stability. You remember the battle of Sadr City. Who was it that our forces, our young men and women, were fighting against, the Badr Brigades? Guess who is fighting in Tikrit today. The Badr Brigades.

The Senator and I have been to Walter Reed and many other places like that and have seen our wounded. Wounded by what? By IEDs, the copper-tipped IEDs that Soleimani made sure came into Iraq, that would penetrate armor and wreak havoc and wounded so many and killed so many young Americans.

It is now Soleimani who is visibly leading the fight in Tikrit. Strangely enough, our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff saw so many flags—guess what—with the banners of the Iranian-backed Shia militias.

I would ask my friend, isn't this in some ways a Greek tragedy? Isn't this in some ways a situation where we sacrifice so much? And thanks to the inspired, fantastic leadership of General Petraeus and Colonel McFarland and all of those individuals who fought so well and led so well, we had it won, it was stabilized. And now because of the President's decision not to leave a residual force, we are seeing capitals in the Middle East—whether it be Sana'a, Baghdad, Beirut, or Damascus—we are now seeing an overwhelming Iranian presence that is dedicated, among other things, to the extinction of the State of Israel.

Mr. GRAHAM. All I can say is to the soldiers and to the military personnel who participated in the Iraq fight, you did your job. President Bush made mistakes. To his credit, he adjusted. He made a lot of mistakes upfront, but he did adjust because the surge did work.

President Obama was dealt a pretty good hand when it came to Iraq. Things were better on the security front. Economic and political progress was well noted. His decision not to leave a residual force behind has come back to haunt us, Iraq, and the entire region. It was his decision. We tried to blame the Iraqis. That is just rewriting the history. When he decided to turn down the entire recommendation of his national security team—the national security team's entire recommendation—about doing a no-fly zone and helping the Free Syrian Army 3 years ago, everything Senator MCCAIN said about that decision has come true. Radical Islamists filled in that vacuum.

What you see in the Middle East is as a result of bad policy choices, but what you see today is the beginning of the worst decision, which would be a bad deal with Iran in dealing Congress out.

To the American people, here is one thing I promise you. We and the Congress in a bipartisan fashion will make sure that any deal, if there is one, negotiating with the Iranians, will come to this body to be openly debated so you will know what is in it, and every Member of this Senate is going to take a vote as to whether it is good enough to lift congressional sanctions that we created.

I promise we are not going to allow the most historic decision any President will make any time soon to go without checks and balances. It will come to this body. We will have a vote. I promise you this: If this administration believes there is a hard-line moderate split between those who govern Iran, it should scare you because it scares me. Given what Senator MCCAIN has described, do you really believe there is a moderate element in Iran?

I hope we can reach a diplomatic conclusion to the Iranian nuclear ambitions. They have been lying about their nuclear program for 20 years. I would like to see a good deal, but I will insist on voting on a deal that leads to congressional sanctions.

To the Germans, our friends in Germany, the Foreign Minister of Germany said the letter empowered the Iranians. With all due respect to our German allies, that is the most ridiculous statement I think I have ever heard. Requiring a deal between the Iranians and involving congressional sanctions to come back to the Congress should not embolden anybody. I don't know if the deal you are negotiating goes to the Parliament—the Bundestag in Germany—but we do things a certain way. The efforts of the French and the Germans to discipline Putin, how well has that turned out? We have a group of nations trying to deal with the most thuggish regime in the world acting like the Keystone Kops, in my view.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I remind the Senator that it is the same German Foreign Minister who criticized us and sat by and watched the dismemberment of a European nation for the first time in 70 years; the same Foreign Minister who keeps threatening Vladimir Putin if he keeps this up, and Vladimir Putin continues his aggression and will continue his aggression as well.

I can't give up the floor without mentioning, again, my sorrow at the passage of and murder of my friend, Boris Nemstov. The recent arrests by Vladimir Putin's crack law enforcement team is reminiscent—they rounded up some Chechens—of everybody's favorite film ''Casablanca'' where at the end, Claude Raine says, ''Round up the usual suspects.'' We have seen a scene from that movie again as the Russians have rounded up the usual suspects. Under this regime in Russia, we will never know who the murderers are of Boris Nemstov; and that, my friends, is a tragedy.

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. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I rise to support the Justice for Trafficking Victims Act, and I want to commend the numerous Senators—CORNYN, KLOBUCHAR, and so many others—who have worked so hard to move this act forward.

I realize there are many of us who are new to this body, and I certainly am still learning my way around the procedural maze here. However, it is easy to see how frustrating this maze can be and how it keeps us from getting good things done for the people who elected us and sent us here.

Last year I traveled my State, Alaska, and one of the top concerns I heard from Alaskans is that they were tired of the gridlock, and they want to see a functioning government and an open process in the Senate. So here we are on a bill that is of immense importance to the country and to Alaska—a bill that has very broad bipartisan support. It comes to the floor with a promise of an open amendment process so all Senators can be heard. Yet, a few of my friends on the other side of the aisle are preventing us from moving forward on a bill that will protect some of the Nation's most vulnerable citizens. Evidently a provision in the bill that has been the law of the land for decades has now become an excuse among some not to move the bill forward.

That is a shame for the country, and particularly for the victims who have been snared in the heinous world of human trafficking. As a former attorney general of the great State of Alaska, I have seen the horrible pain and suffering that human trafficking and cases of domestic violence and sexual assault can cause among our fellow citizens. I hail from a great State. We are proud Alaskans, proud of many things that are wonderful about our State. But like most States, we have problems. We have some of the highest rates of sexual abuse and exploitation in the country. Human trafficking is a big problem in my State, just as it is throughout the rest of the country. Since the human trafficking bill was placed on the calendar, I have been working closely with all of my colleagues, not only on this bill but on an amendment that I plan on offering with many others, the Mann Act cooperation amendment. This is an amendment that would be a rare thing in Washington today, a truly win-win amendment for the Federal Government, State governments, and most importantly, for victims of human trafficking.

Now, human trafficking is a problem that, unfortunately, comes in many forms and in many States—all States, in fact—in all corners of our Nation. In order to best combat human trafficking, we must work toward a seamless Federal and State partnership in order to stop this growing problem.

To that end, I have been proud to have worked with many Senators on both sides of the aisle—Senators HEITKAMP, GILLIBRAND, AYOTTE, and MURKOWSKI—on a simple yet straightforward amendment that incentivizes State and Federal cooperation on this important issue.

The Mann Act cooperation amendment will free Federal resources by allowing State attorneys general and local DAs to prosecute human trafficking cases that would otherwise be assigned to Federal Government prosecutors; or if Federal Government prosecutors do not have the resources to take on such cases, oftentimes they are not going to be pursued.

At the same time, this amendment preserves the Federal prosecutor's ability to exercise prosecutorial options while, importantly, increasing transparency about decisions made on human trafficking cases.

In human trafficking cases, it is often local investigators and local prosecutors who have the most information on these cases. As Alaska's attorney general, I saw this firsthand. We usually had great cooperation with our partners in the Federal Government.

But when the Feds can't take on human trafficking cases due to limited resources, they should be encouraged to allow State officials to take on such cases. That is the key goal of this amendment—to enable the resources and cooperation between State and Federal prosecutors to ensure that all cases of human trafficking are pursued, victims have justice, and perpetrators

pay penalties. That is what this amendment will do. That is why I believe it is such a win-win approach to State and Federal prosecutions with regard to human trafficking.

This amendment also provides oversight and transparency by assuring there must also be communication between the States and the Federal Government when making human trafficking prosecution decisions.

However, as to the broader human trafficking bill that so many Members of this body have been working on—so many on both sides of the aisle—if that bill dies on the Senate floor, so will the numerous amendments that would also advance justice for the victims of human trafficking, including the Mann Act cooperation amendment. This is just one of many amendments on this important topic. We should not allow this to happen.

We need to get to work for the victims of human trafficking, who are looking for the Senate's leadership to help stamp out this scourge of human trafficking, which is affecting our country in so many different areas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

DISABILITY INSURANCE TRUST FUND

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak again on the impending exhaustion of reserves in the disability insurance program or the disability insurance trust fund.

As we know, disability insurance, or DI, is an important program administered by Social Security Administration, or SSA. The impending exhaustion of the DI trust fund threatens disabled American workers with benefit cuts, under current law, toward the end of calendar year 2016.

Once again, I am committed to working with anyone to ensure that those cuts do not occur. Unfortunately, the administration and SSA have yet to show they are committed to addressing this problem.

As chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I will continue speaking on the floor about the imminent challenge that we face with the DI trust fund and about solutions.

I will continue to reach out to shareholders and to anyone who is interested in bipartisan discussions aimed at achieving solutions. And I will be acting to at least begin to chip away at the financial challenges facing the DI program, which I have been warning people about for years—that it is going to go broke unless we do something to improve them. I do believe we should act at least to begin to chip away at the financial challenges the DI program is facing, while examining ways we can help improve and modernize the Social Security system itself.

I once again call on my friends on the other side of the aisle and in the administration to join me in this effort.

I wish to take a moment to note that some recent proposals to reform Social Security that have been put forward by some of my friends on the other side of the aisle are, simply put, irresponsible. We have seen proposals recently to raise taxes in the Social Security Program, usually to increase net progressivity in an already progressive structure and then spend most of the revenue on benefit expansion without adequately considering the fact that even under their proposal we have gaping long-run holes in Social Security's finances. Raising taxes and increasing some benefits now, while still leaving an unsustainable financial structure in place, would be fundamentally unfair to younger generations of workers who will have to eventually pay even more taxes, suffer from benefit cuts or, more likely, both.

The so-called progressive reform plans that tax more and promise more benefits, even though the promises are unsustainable, are surely poll-tested with demographic groups who probably do not scoff at promises of more benefits and higher taxes on the so-called rich. Those plans may help in fundraising for numerous groups who try to benefit from the politics of fear surrounding the Social Security system.

But those plans do nothing for younger generations of workers, aside from sending them a clear message that they are on their own.

Again, this is irresponsible.

More generally, some believe that we could solve all or most of the financial challenges facing the DI program and Social Security, in general, through higher taxes.

To investigate whether that is the case, I made several requests of the Congressional Budget Office regarding this strategy. Recent analysis performed in response to those requests shows how difficult this approach can be.

Most proposals to reform Social Security by raising payroll taxes would result in massive tax increases, particularly on the middle class—on middle-class Americans—which would negatively impact job growth and harm middle-income families. That is hardly what our economy needs.

For example, according to CBO, if you wanted to generate long-term balance between inflows and outflows for the DI program—using a DI payroll tax increase alone—you would have to increase the tax rate by 39 percent, which would hit low-, middle-, and upper-income earners alike, and it would hit hard.

If you wanted to generate long-term balance for Social Security, generally, including DI and retirement, and try to do it by eliminating the maximum on earnings subject to the payroll tax and resulting benefits, according to CBO, a worker earning $150,000 a year would pay about 26 percent more in payroll taxes. A worker earning $200,000 a year would pay about 68 percent more, and a worker earning $250,000 a year would pay 109 percent more.

Now, it may be that raising taxes by 26 percent to more than 100 percent on those earners is something that my friends on the other side of the aisle are comfortable with—under the notion of taxing the so-called rich.

I would note, of course, that while a family headed by someone earning $150,000 a year may be comfortable in many areas of the country, it appears that the ever-changing definition of rich is descending lower and lower into the middle class, as my friends on the other side have lectured more and more over recent years about inequality.

Even if you were to eliminate the taxable minimum entirely but still provide corresponding benefits to upper earners in accordance with current law, only around 45 percent of Social Security's long-run financial challenges would be addressed. You would still need to hike taxes more, cut benefits, or both, to fully address the program's long-term fiscal problems. Because upper earners will pay more taxes but also receive corresponding benefits, since Social Security was designed to have such a correspondence, the policy of increasing the taxable maximum ends up giving higher replacement rates to upper earners.

That hardly seems to be a workable solution—since it doesn't solve the financial problem, and it doesn't solve the inequality problem that is so bothersome to my friends on the other side.

Perhaps just for the sake of argument, we should consider eliminating the taxable minimum, thereby raising taxes substantially on upper earners, and not giving them any corresponding benefits for those increased tax payments.

Of course, such a policy is bothersome to some of my friends on the other side of the aisle, since it breaks the connection in Social Security between what people put in and what they get out.

Some would say that this would convert Social Security into another welfare program focused on redistribution and away from a program focused more on self-financed retirement security and protection against income losses from disability. So, instead, maybe we should consider eliminating the taxable maximum and give some small benefit return in exchange.

Well, in such a case, according to CBO, you would still not be able to solve the financial challenges facing Social Security. Using scheduled benefits and replacement rates ''would increase noticeably only for people in the highest quintile of lifetime household earnings.'' I don't think that result would be desirable to the tax-the-rich coalition.

Let me continue by noting some recent remarks on the Senate floor from the junior Senator from Vermont and the ranking member of the Budget Committee, who promises to put forward what he suggests is a courageous way to confront Social Security's financial challenges.

Of course, he has not put forward any legislation or plan in this Congress. So if we want to talk specifics, we have to look at his previous plan, which he released in the 113th Congress.

Under that plan, the current taxable maximum is preserved, as are current payroll tax rates. The new twist is that his plan imposes current payroll tax rates on earnings above $250,000 a year, which, evidently, is where the distinction between the so-called rich and everyone else lies, in their opinion.

That $250,000 threshold is not—let me repeat—is not indexed to inflation. Earnings subject to the tax above $250,000 a year would not be included in earnings used to compute benefits, which is to say that under this plan a worker would pay Social Security taxes on earnings above $250,000 a year, with no corresponding increase in Social Security benefits.

Again, this would move the system away from a self-financed insurance program toward what some would call welfare and redistribution. Since the new $250,000 threshold is not indexed, eventually more and more earnings will become subject to increased Social Security taxes without getting anything in terms of benefits and return.

In around 20 years, middle-class earners who today have just surpassed the taxable maximum will be pushed into the earnings category where they lose the connection between Social Security taxes and corresponding benefits.

At that time, an indexed income equivalent of what is around $120,000 a year today will be deemed to be rich, with earnings above that amount worthy of being taxed more for Social Security but not worthy of receiving any additional Social Security benefits.

So what does the Senator's scheme that, once again, was put forward in the last Congress, accomplish? Admittedly, it does extend the solvency of Social Security by around 28 years or so, but it still does not make the system financially sustainable in the long run, leaving an assured financial shortfall and attendant need for yet more taxes or benefits cuts, and leaving it to younger generations or workers to figure it out. More than likely it will, in many respects, sever the connection between what people pay in to Social Security and what they can expect to get out of this program in terms of benefits. Once again, this represents a fundamental shift in Social Security policy, one that some may support but few are now willing to openly defend.

I look forward to debating, discussing, and voting on any plan that any of my friends on the other side of the aisle put forward to tackle Social Security's financial challenges, including any new plan the junior Senator from Vermont wants to put forward, particularly if it resembles the plan he introduced last Congress. Indeed, I would be anxious to see how many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to go on record in support of yet more tax increases and a fundamental shift in the nature of the Social Security Program.

In the meantime, we still have the pending depletion of reserves in the DI trust fund, which is something we will have to address before the end of calendar year 2016.

From my perspective, the sooner we tackle this challenge the better, but it is hard to act when we have an administration that refuses to engage in discussion and seems to want to make this a partisan issue by putting forward a plan to reallocate payroll taxes from one trust fund to another without any further discussion or debate.

What I continue to hear from the administration and many of its allies in Congress are stale talking points, many of which are wrong or distorted, and a ''take it or leave it'' approach to deliberating over the reallocation scheme devised unilaterally by this administration. The only thing this administration appears willing to discuss when it comes to Social Security is its own kick-the-can strategy coupled with additional administrative funds for the SSA, either funded with yet more Federal debt or by crowding out spending on other discretionary programs.

Meanwhile, I am comforted by many in the disability advocacy community who are at least willing to have conversations about how we can work to improve Social Security's programs while also paying attention to its financial challenges. There are several groups currently hard at work analyzing options and having debate and discussion about what we could look at for program improvements and fiscal responsibility.

There is certainly more we can do to improve the DI system and help make it work better for beneficiaries. There is certainly more we can do to improve Social Security's retirement side to help make it work better for modern family situations. There is certainly more we can do on the program integrity side, including some of the President's proposals and more. There is certainly more we can do to protect against frivolous decisionmaking by administrative law judges in the DI program—and there is plenty of that which is costing us arms and legs. There is certainly more we can do to reduce fraud in the DI program, which literally robs resources from those truly in need.

Sadly, the Obama administration's approach to DI and Social Security in general has thus far been largely to remain silent, even in the face of the impending DI trust fund exhaustion. The only major structural change the administration briefly considered was adoption of the chained CPI in governmentwide price indexation coupled with benefit enhancements for vulnerable populations. However, the President has since withdrawn even that modest proposal and has publicly stated he would not even discuss the idea unless he was assured of getting yet another tax hike for the general fund to go along with it.

As I have said before, it is premature to kick the can down the road again by agreeing on some payroll tax reallocation between the two trust funds in Social Security as a temporary patch of convenience and a patch that was unilaterally constructed by this administration.

Yes, there have been reallocations among many trust funds in the past, under many varying circumstances, and, yes, many of them have had bipartisan support, but we have known about this coming shortfall for roughly 20 years. In other words, Congress has had roughly 20 years to come up with solutions to help put the DI program and perhaps Social Security in general on a path to long-term financial sustainability, and Congress has failed.

We are now being asked by the current administration to double down on that failed approach—to do another reallocation of push the problem further down the road and hope that in the interim Congress will not fail again.

President Obama, in other policy areas, has argued that if decades show a policy is not working, then ''it's time for a new approach.'' Sadly, that sentiment does not seem to apply when he is talking about Social Security.

As I have said before, it seems we have two paths to choose from; one is the path I prefer, involving examination and discussion of what we can do to enhance the DI program and its finances and what we can agree upon; the other is to engage in divisive political rhetoric and demagogue the issue even further, which is irresponsible, in my view, and not what disabled American workers and all workers insured by the DI program should tolerate.

I repeat my previous call to my colleagues in the Senate: To anyone from either party who wishes to engage in a constructive dialogue about how to fix and improve the DI program and Social Security in general, my door is open. In the meantime, I plan to take whatever steps I can as the chairman of the committee of jurisdiction to help preserve these programs for beneficiaries in the near and long term.

We can't keep going down this way of always demanding more taxes and more spending to solve problems we could have solved a long time ago. We are going to have to get serious about this, and I intend to see that we do.

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. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SPORTSMEN'S ACT

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak on the

Sportmen's Act of 2015, and I will start out by acknowledging the great work by the chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska, who has been a great partner in quickly moving this legislation forward.

The Sportsmen's Act of 2015 is gaining new momentum and earning widespread bipartisan support from both sides of the aisle, from the east coast to the west coast and, frankly, everywhere in between. Improving access for hunters and anglers, restoring wildlife habitat, and protecting the way of life that so many of us cherish are things we can all agree on because as Americans we all have a unique and deep connection to the outdoors.

The Sportmen's Act of 2015 includes a broad array of bipartisan measures to enhance opportunities for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. It reauthorizes key conservation programs, improves access to our public lands, and helps boost the outdoor recreation economy. Hunting is a way of life for me and for many families across this great Nation,

Similar to many New Mexicans, my 11-year-old son and I went out hunting on public land last fall. The bull elk we brought home will feed our family for most of the coming year, but more importantly the experience of backpacking into the Sangre de Cristos and Carson National Forest, sleeping on the ground, and hearing the elk bugle all around us will feed my son's imagination for decades to come.

The Sportmen's Act will help ensure that American families can pass on these outdoor traditions year after year and for generations to come.

When I travel around New Mexico and talk with sportsmen and sportswomen, their No. 1 issue is access, and that is why I am so pleased that a provision I have been championing to unlock countless public lands is included in this package. Public lands, such as the Gila Wilderness, Valles Caldera National Preserve, and the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument are some of the most special places to hunt and fish left on the planet.

The HUNT Act directs all Federal public land management agencies to identify our shared lands where hunting and fishing and outdoor recreation are permitted but where access is nonexistent or significantly restricted and develop plans to provide that access.

Additionally, a provision led by my colleague, Montana Senator JON TESTER, is also included in this bill to require a percentage of our annual Land and Water Conservation Funds to be made available to improve recreational access to difficult-to-reach public lands.

Among many other bipartisan, pragmatic efforts to enhance opportunities for hunters and anglers, the Sportsmen's Act would reauthorize NAWCA, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.

It is clear these efforts increase and reaffirm our country's commitment to the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, but they are just as important for the future of our economy across the West.

Nationally, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, more than 140 million Americans either make their living off the outdoors or make outdoor activity a priority in their daily lives. When they do that, they end up spending $646 billion on outdoor recreation, resulting in quality jobs for another 6.1 million Americans.

In my home State of New Mexico—a small State with just 2 million people—outdoor recreation generates more than $6 billion a year. It provides 68,000 jobs and $1.7 billion in wages and annual salaries.

A survey done recently by New Mexico Game and Fish found that sportsmen alone spend more than $613 million per year in our State. This boost to our economy is felt by business owners, outfitter guides, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and the entire local community—especially in our rural communities. The truth is our deep connection to the outdoors is part of the American experience and it is part of our heritage and culture in the West. It is something we learn from our mothers and fathers and pass down to our sons and our daughters.

The Sportmen's Act will help protect that heritage and ensure it continues for generations to come.

I thank the Presiding Officer for indulging me, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HONORING VIETNAM VETERANS AND NORTH DAKOTA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN VIETNAM

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today I rise to speak about and honor our Nation's Vietnam veterans, particularly North Dakota's Vietnam veterans. Since I took office, I have made it a priority to travel throughout North Dakota to meet with my State's veterans, so many wonderful men and women who continue to serve not only their country but also our State and their communities. All these veterans deserve a place of honor in our society.

We are in the midst of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war. On May 25, 2012, President Obama issued this proclamation calling on the Nation to honor Vietnam veterans and to honor particularly those brave servicemembers who gave their lives in service to their country.

This special period of honoring our Vietnam veterans runs through 2025. Today I follow up on a commitment I made last year. I want to focus on North Dakota's soldiers who lost their lives in Vietnam. In this effort, I have partnered with students from Bismarck High School in researching these soldiers. I want to thank their instructors, Lori Forde, Sara Rinas, and Allison Wendel for coordinating this project and sharing their students' research with my office. I think this is a wonderful partnership to explain and to research a war that was long forgotten for many of these young students.

Throughout this effort I want to make sure our Nation never forgets the needs of our Vietnam veterans. I want to make sure our Nation continues further to honor them. I have a poster that we have created that will be placed in every one of our offices, both in Washington, DC, and in my various State offices. I am hopeful we will be able to distribute this poster throughout all of the veterans service organizations in North Dakota as we continue this period of remembrance.

In North Dakota, we take much pride in our history and devotion to service. When our Nation, our State, and our community are called, North Dakotans stand up—no matter what the cost. And 198 sons of North Dakota did not make it home from the Vietnam war; 198 sons of North Dakota gave their lives in service to the freedom of this country. These sons, brothers, and fathers have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Today, I want to honor them individually by talking about the lives of these individuals—some of these individual members. I intend throughout this Congress to come to the floor and remember each one of them individually and remember each one of their sacrifices.

DAVID ELSBERND

So today, I begin with David Elsbernd. He was born June 28, 1949, and he was from the community of Crosby. He served in the Army in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. The date of his death was September 9, 1969. He was 20 years old. David had a sister and three brothers—one who also served. The brother who also served was injured in Vietnam. David's father remembers him as a kind, generous person who thought of everyone else first.

Fellow soldier Paul Hughes wrote the book ''The Light Within,'' which includes an account of David's death. David's family is thankful to his fellow soldiers and friends for taking care of him.

ELROY BEIER

Elroy Beier was born February 26, 1947, and grew up in Langdon. He served in the Army in the 101st Airborne Division. His date of death was May 5, 1968. He was 21 years old. He had three brothers and one sister. His mother Violet was proud to be a Gold Star Mother and was a member of the VFW and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Elroy played basketball for Langdon Area High School. In Vietnam, Elroy

was injured while firing at opposing forces to help his fellow soldiers return to safety. Despite his injury, Elroy refused to return to the United States. After healing, he bravely stood his ground in a firefight to help his fellow soldiers but was fatally wounded.

Elroy's nephew, Marcus, was inspired by Elroy's bravery and sacrifice and, as a result, he joined the military.

JOHN LUNDIN

John Lundin was born February 3, 1932. His hometown was Sentinel Butte. He served in the Army, Advisory Team 91. The date of his death was April 25, 1970. He was 38 years old. John was the oldest of eight children.

While stationed in Germany, he met and married Charlotte. When he was killed in action, he left behind Charlotte and 3 children, ages 14, 9, and 4.

Before his deployment to Vietnam, the Army taught him the Vietnamese language. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action and the Bronze Star for valor. John's family cherishes the letter the Army gave them describing John's heroism the day he died, when he sacrificed himself by drawing fire away from his fellow soldiers.

I want to give special thanks to Bismarck High School students Emily Schmid, Brittany Hawkinson, McKenzie Rittel, and Shelby Wittenberg for reaching out to John Lundin's family and learning this important information about John's life and his extraordinary service.

MARVIS BRISS

Marvis Briss was born November 6, 1948. He grew up in Binford. He served in the Army, 11th Battalion, 9th Infantry Division. He died May 28, 1969, at the age of 20.

Marvis grew up on a farm, and his siblings remember him as a wonderful brother. His family is honored that he was so brave. He earned the Air Medal for meritorious achievement, outstanding degree of professionalism, and devotion to duty, and the Army Commendation Medal for heroic actions in keeping with the highest traditions of military service.

Marvis was pictured in the 1969 LIFE magazine article about the 242 American soldiers killed in 7 days in the Vietnam war.

KENYON BEAN

Kenyon ''Ken'' Bean was born May 25, 1946. He grew up in Williston. He served in the Army, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. His date of death was May 19, 1967. He was 20 years old. Ken was the oldest of three. Ken's sister Cheryl and brother Lowell remember his wonderful sense of humor and his strong desire to farm.

He earned the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the National Defense Service Medal for heroism in his attempt to move his critically injured platoon leader to safety while under sniper fire.

His commanding officer cited Ken's courageous self-sacrifice and inspiring bravery as reflecting great credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.

PAUL WOLOS

Paul Wolos was born July 22, 1947. He is from Canada, but he enlisted in Fargo. He served in the Marine Corps, 1 Marine Expeditionary Force, 1st Marine Division. He died May 28, 1967. At the time of his death, he was 20 years old.

His uncle, a U.S. Marine, sponsored him so that as a Canadian he could enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. Paul was proud to volunteer and to serve the United States as a marine so he could fight communism.

Paul signed a noncitizen waiver so he could serve in-country in Vietnam with his unit. One story that his friends recall is on a hunting trip Paul was so proud of his service as a U.S. Marine, that when he went home for Christmas after basic training, his friends joked that Paul didn't take his uniform off once.

DAVID BERDAHL

David Berdahl was born January 16, 1953. He grew up in Minot. He served in the Army, 101st Airborne Division. His date of death is stated to be January 20, 1972. He was 19 years old when he went missing.

David is the first son born of 13 children. His family remembers him as always helping others. During the Minot floods of 1969, the family moved to safety, but David stayed in town, sandbagging all night long.

At age 17, David expressed interest in joining the Army, but his mom asked him to wait. At 18, he joined on his own.

In Vietnam, he started as a helicopter mechanic. He offered to go on a helicopter rescue mission, but the helicopter was shot down, causing it to catch fire and costing David his life.

RICHARD ''DICK'' OLSON

Richard ''Dick'' Olson, born June 8, 1949, grew up in Grand Forks. He was in the Marine Corps, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. His date of death was April 26, 1968. He went missing at age 18.

Richard was survived by his parents, two sisters, and a brother. He loved to sing and was in a band for some of his teenage years. His sister, Roberta, remembers his generosity and tells about how Dick once bought groceries for a friend in need and how once Dick literally gave the shirt off his back so his friend would have a nice shirt to wear the day he enlisted in the Marines. Dick entered the Marine Corps at age 17 and was killed in action 1 year later.

MERLIN LABER

Merlin Laber was born September 5, 1947, and grew up in Sykeston. He served in the Army, 198th Light Infantry Brigade. The date of his death was May 14, 1969. He was 21 years old.

He was the oldest of nine children; he had four brothers and four sisters. His father served in World War II. Two of his brothers also served in the military, one in Korea and Vietnam and the other in the Middle East. Merlin loved cars, and he held the Sykeston record in track. He was also featured in the 1969 LIFE magazine article about the 242 American soldiers killed in 7 days in the Vietnam war.

THOMAS ''TOM'' BEYER

Tom Beyer was born March 10, 1941. He grew up in Fargo. He served in the Air Force, 20th Tactical Support Squadron. His date of death was July 30, 1968. He was 27 years old when he went missing.

He was survived by his wife Karen and his two children, Sandra and Steven. He was preceded in death by one son, John. The family remembers Thomas as a wonderful person. He graduated from NDSU and enjoyed his family, flying, playing the piano, hunting, and golf. After his death, he was promoted from captain to major. His remains were recovered and laid to rest in Fargo in 2010.

CHARLES WENDT

Charles Wendt was born February 24, 1947, and grew up in Dickinson. He served in the Army, 4th Infantry Division. His date of death was June 5, 1968, and he was 21 years old. His father, also named Charles Wendt, served in the Army.

Prior to joining the Army at age 20, Charles worked for Viegel Engineering, which is now KLJ, one of the most prominent engineering firms in the State of North Dakota.

DOUGLAS PIERCE

Douglas Pierce was born September 24, 1952. He was from Illinois, but he was living in Fargo when he enlisted. He served in the Army, 1st Cavalry Regiment. His date of death was November 26, 1971, and he was 19 years old.

His father worked as a VA hospital administrator in several cities, including Fargo. Two brothers, Vince and Mark, also died as a result of the Vietnam conflict. Doug was a straight-A student, an A-plus student who wanted to serve his country. He loved Appaloosa horses. His twin sister, Debby, fondly remembers the day when, as children, they attended a Hollywood parade and Doug ran into the street to pick up and keep the horseshoe that fell off of the foot of Roy Rogers' horse, Trigger.

DALE AMUNDSON

Dale Amundson was born July 11, 1948. He was from Finley and served in the Army, 1st Infantry Regiment. October 30, 1968, was his date of death at the age of 20.

One of his nephews is named after him. His nephew is named Dale. In high school, he was one of the charter members of the first FAA chapter in Finley. Private First Class Amundson died about 2 months after beginning his service in Vietnam.

WILLIAM BACKER

William Backer was born June 28, 1949. He was from Mandan. He served in the Marine Corps, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. His date of death was January 12, 1968. He died at the age of 18.

William was a third-generation veteran. His grandfather served in the

Army in World War I and was awarded the Silver Star. His father served in the Army in World War II. William had three brothers: Paul, Jim, and John. William's brothers remember him as a dedicated marine who gave his life for a cause in which he strongly believed. They cherish the memories and the stories they keep in their hearts today about their brother.

GILBERT ''GIL'' BARGMANN

Gil Bargmann was born July 26, 1950. He grew up in Hannover, served in the Army, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment. He died on June 19, 1969, at the age of 18.

Gil had three brothers and two sisters. He grew up on a dairy farm in the Hannover area. One of his squad brothers credits Gil for saving his life by covering his flank the day Gil died.

Gil's niece, Briana, connected three men who served with Gil in Vietnam with Gil's family. Three of Gil's friends and two of their wives traveled to Hannover to meet Gil's mother and siblings.

I am struck as I go through these names and as I review all of the people, and I am struck, sitting by children who are maybe just 2 years younger than these brave men who served our country. I know it is impossible to predict what amazing things they would have done had they not sacrificed their lives. So it is so important that we recognize their heroism, that we recognize their sacrifice, and that we honor them during this period of recognition of the sacrifices of the Vietnam war.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

ATF PROPOSAL ON M855 AMMUNITION

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, in my home State of Kansas, we enjoy a special way of life. I have talked about it many times on the Senate floor. That special way of life includes a rich tradition of hunting, target shooting, and other law-abiding activities covered by our Second Amendment rights. Our State welcomes nearly 300,000 hunters each year, and in turn those individuals create jobs and economic opportunity for many Kansans.

I was disturbed to learn of a recent proposal by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. On Friday, February 13, the ATF proposed—without any instruction from Congress, on its own volition—a framework to determine whether M855 ammunition, which is popular for hunting and target shooting, is primarily intended to be used for sporting or if it is more likely to be used in handguns by criminals. ATF indicated it wants to ban the ammunition, which has been used by law-abiding citizens, including Kansans, for decades because it is ''armor piercing'' and, therefore, poses a risk to the safety of law enforcement officials.

The fact is that almost all rifle ammunition is armor-piercing. The Law Enforcement Protection Act of 1986, which ATF cites as a statutory authority to ban this ammunition, specifically exempts armor-piercing ammunition ''which the Attorney General finds is primarily intended to be used for sporting purposes.'' Congress's intent for providing this exemption was clear: Law-abiding citizens should not be deprived of their right to use this ammo for legitimate purposes, such as target shooting, hunting, and shooting competitions. In fact, Kansans, who expressed their concern to me about this issue in recent weeks, have consistently indicated that the proposed ban would directly interfere with their sporting uses and, more broadly, their Second Amendment rights.

Most troubling about the ATF proposal was how it intended to judge ''likely use'' of this ammunition. ATF planned to judge that M855 ammunition is more likely to be used in a handgun for criminal purposes rather than for sporting purposes simply based upon the bullet's weight and type of firearm in which it could be loaded. What was missing was any interest by ATF in the law-abiding ammunition consumers across the county. How might they use the ammunition? How could ATF determine primary intended use without conducting a study on how that ammunition actually would be used by the public?

The ATF framework failed to make any objective conclusions and would have served as nothing more than a tool for increased gun restrictions—and I would say increased gun restrictions that weren't passed by Congress.

Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman, Senator GRASSLEY, circulated a letter among my colleagues and to me directed at ATF Director B. Todd Jones outlining these and many other concerns related to the proposed framework to ban this ammunition. I join Senator GRASSLEY in signing this letter, and I am thankful it appears that our message was received because on Tuesday of this week the ATF announced that it will ''formally delay'' the implementation of the proposed ammunition ban. I thank the thousands—in fact, tens of thousands of Americans who voiced their concerns both to Congress and to ATF. ATF received an incredible 80,000 public comments on the proposed framework.

Congress has never banned this ammunition and has never intended to ban it. In the future, the ATF should not propose to ban any widely used form of ammunition favored by law-abiding civilians for lawful purposes.

Again, I am thankful that the proposed framework has now been rescinded, and I will continue my efforts in the Senate to support the Second Amendment freedoms of all Americans.

I yield to the Senator from Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I appreciate the good work of the Senator from Kansas. We have worked on, in the Banking Committee, a number of issues together, and I appreciate the work we have been able to do across party lines. So I thank the Senator for that.

TRADE TRANSPARENCY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I am joined on the floor this evening by Senator CASEY. Just 2 weeks ago, he and I and a half dozen other Senators came to the floor in an unusual configuration. It is not something Senators do all that often. We came as a group, but each spoke individually about our concerns with trade promotion authority and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, both the so-called fast track and the trade agreement that is being negotiated among the United States, Canada, Mexico, some Pacific nations, and Peru, I believe, too, as well as nations in Asia.

The concerns we have and the concerns an increasing number of Senators have about trade promotion authority, about fast track—they changed the name because they knew the public did not like fast track, so they tried to obscure it by coming up with some technical-sounding name—trade promotion authority. We have increasingly seen the public rising up against these trade agreements because we have watched them for some 20 years, and we have seen the damage the North American Free Trade Agreement did to the United States, to our economy, and to workers around the world. We have seen that has been sort of a prototype for the next generation of CAFTA and other agreements in Colombia and Peru and now the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

I want to discuss this, in part, because we know so little about the U.S. Trade Representative's upcoming trade agenda and specifically the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The way we pass trade agreements, and it is important for colleagues to understand this, stands in a class by itself. No other legislation we do is as hidden not only from public view but even those in this body whose constitutional duty it is to approve or reject them.

Senator CASEY and I stood here in the well of the Senate, we raised our right hands—Senator CASEY and I were honored to come in at the same time, as of January 2007 and then again in January 2013. We raised our right hands and took an oath understanding our constitutional duty to approve or reject trade agreements.

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution entrusts in Congress the authority to regulate commerce with foreign nations, but the current TPP language is

being guarded as though it were a State secret. Members of this body were permitted to view the language only with U.S. Trade Representative staff there, not with their personal staff.

Nora Todd, in my office, who has great skills and expertise and has worked on trade issues for years, because she is not committee staff is not able to view this. The USTR refuses to put down in writing their policy for restricting access. So the access is restricted, but we can't even find out from the U.S. Trade Rep what this actually means, except we know access is restricted. It means few Senators and fewer of our staff—and damn the public who have worked on this issue—have ever seen the text at all.

Trade agreements such as this affect our entire economy. Forty percent of world GDP is included in this Trans-Pacific Partnership, with countries as big as Japan, the United States, and economies as big as Canada's and Mexico's. This will affect the entire economy and cause ripple effects for decades.

We know what CAFTA did, and that was only three countries—the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This is four times that many countries. They should be debated in a transparent process. The public should know, Senators and Members of Congress should know. We don't know enough. Yet the Finance Committee fairly soon is going to push this trade agreement out of fast track and the agreement out onto the Senate Floor, when we simply don't have access to information.

Let me give an example. Last year, the U.S. Trade Rep developed a proposal on something called the rules of origin for automobiles. That really matters in my State. It matters in Senator CASEY's State because they are such a major part of the steel and other supply chain items for autos. I have been trying to work with the USTR to better understand this proposal since last October. I personally spoke again last week with Ambassador Froman to understand it better.

Rules of origin are very important provisions in a trade agreement. They determine how much of a product's components need to come from TPP countries in order to qualify under the agreement. What that means is we know as American consumers it is hard to find a suit, it is hard to find much of anything made in the U.S.A., but we also know many American consumers would like to buy products that are 40 or 50 or 80 percent from the United States—made by workers in Kansas or workers in Pennsylvania or workers in Ohio. But we aren't able to tell under the rules of origin what that number is and where those components come from.

So if there is going to be a trade advantage to Japan—and they have had plenty of trade advantages when it comes to autos—we don't know if those automobile components come 70 or 80 percent from Japan and maybe 20 percent from China or 60 percent from China. We don't know that because the U.S. Trade Rep will not tell us. So what we are concerned about—and China is not in TPP—is that the People's Republic of China will manufacture so much of the supply chain, so many of these components, backdoor it into China, so people in China are hired instead of people in the United States or the people in these countries we are trading with.

These provisions are critical for the auto supply chain in our country because they are already facing fierce competition with China. We need to make sure we have strong rules of origin so cars are made and assembled in TPP countries, not China. The auto supply chain employs 120,000 people in Ohio. It will be affected by the auto rules of origin in TPP.

To understand how important that is, our country, from 2000 to 2010, the end of the Clinton administration until 2 years into the Obama administration—mostly the 8 Bush years—we lost 5 million manufacturing jobs, 60,000 plants in places such as Pennsylvania and Ohio. We know that. Our economy has been growing, however, since two things: the Recovery Act of 2009 and the auto rescue of 2010. We have seen 58, 59, 60 months of economic growth, consecutive months, since then. That underscores how important auto is in my State, where, as I said, 120,000 people are in the auto supply chain.

But we continue to face roadblocks just to getting the basic information on a plan that would have a major effect on Ohio's auto supply chain. What I don't understand is why would this body, why would the 100 people who took that oath, as Senator CASEY and I did in 2013 and 2007 in this Chamber, vote for something we can't get information about? Why would anybody who took an oath of office do that?

We worked with the administration to rescue the auto manufacturing sector, and it helped save our auto industry—tens of thousands of jobs in that supply chain—so I want to make sure the TPP rules of origin for autos will not benefit China. I want it to benefit American companies, and I want it to benefit American workers.

I grew up in Mansfield, OH. I have seen what globalization has done for jobs, and I have seen what globalization has done to wages. Mansfield, OH, is a city of 50,000. We have a lot of Mansfields in my State: Zanesville, Chillicothe, Ravenna, Lima, Springfield. These are cities that used to be prosperous manufacturing hubs that have lost so many jobs. Not all jobs were lost due to globalization, but a big part of that is globalization. That is why, when USTR will not share the information we need to understand this proposal, it is particularly troubling.

We can see what has happened. This trade agreement—corporate handout, worker sellout—look what has happened since 1980. These are the average salaries, the blue line, of the richest 1 percent in America. Look what has happened to the richest 1 percent starting in the early days of the Reagan administration. Look what has happened to everyone else. We have the richest 1 percent who have seen their incomes go up about 130 percent. We have everybody else's incomes that have gone up around 10, 12 or 15 percent—and that is not for here, that is for overall.

Again, globalization is not the entire reason, but when they will not share, when USTR will not tell us what is going on, it is particularly troubling when we look at this chart. We know our workers—we know Ohio workers and manufacturers can compete with anyone in the world, but they need fair rules and they need a level playing field. They do not have that here. It is clear. The rules of origin aren't the only part of the deal being developed in the dark. News reports yesterday revealed the USTR may be negotiating side letters on intellectual property provisions. The same report indicates the side letters might cover other issues as well.

We remember the NAFTA side letters on labor and the environment and we know how effective they were. They weren't. Clearly, they were sort of the Bush administration, the first, negotiating and then the Clinton administration, trying to get support in the Senate and the House, adding these side agreements that amounted to nothing. It was to placate workers and to placate the environmentalists, but it did very little. We can't make the same mistake with the TPP.

Will the side letters be covered by the agreement's dispute settlement? When will Members of Congress be able to see these letters? What impact will they have on the overall agreement? These are questions Members of Congress are asking and we are not getting answers from Ambassador Froman or the U.S. Trade Rep's office. It is time the USTR provided some real answers.

It is our job to scrutinize every trade proposal to ensure it creates a level playing field. It isn't just another corporate handout that shifts jobs overseas.

This lack of transparency isn't limited to TPP. I have asked the USTR to make the United States-European Union—the so-called TTIP agreement—proposal public. Once again, these requests for more transparency have been met with nothing but secrecy. Meanwhile, the EU makes their proposals public.

This isn't about protecting the privileges of Senator CASEY and me—the privilege of Senators, this is about protecting our small companies, our manufacturing companies that get obliterated when large companies move offshore. This is about protecting the workers in places such as Toledo and Akron, OH. This is about protecting these communities. When plants close in Jackson, OH, and plants close in Waverly and Portsmouth and St.

Clairsville and Lisbon, school districts lay off teachers, police departments lay off cops, and cities lay off firefighters.

We have been down this road too many times in this country. It has been more than 20 years since NAFTA. Too many plants shut down in Ohio, too many shut down in Pennsylvania, and too many shut down in the State of Louisiana—the State of the Presiding Officer. Too many good jobs were shipped abroad, and if they were replaced at all it is with low-wage jobs with little benefits.

Bad trade deals exacerbate the rise in inequality, corporate profits go up, and middle-class families struggle to get by. These trade agreements are all about corporate handouts and worker sellouts. Over the past four decades, worker productivity rose 75 percent, wages rose 9 percent. What that says, since 1946 into the Reagan years, productivity went like this, workers were this much more productive, and wages stayed parallel to that. But since the Reagan years, as productivity went up workers wages have been flat, except for the richest 1 percent, who saw their salaries explode. Everybody else has lived in an economy where things just don't get better.

The report of the Commission on Inclusive Prosperity, cochaired by Larry Summers, concluded that ''powerful forces of globalization . . . must be navigated or inequalities will continue to widen, and for many, precarious low-skill work will increasingly become the norm.''

Fast-tracking—that is what TPA is—fast-tracking proposals such as TPP, without congressional input, without congressional knowledge, let alone public knowledge of this—without congressional input, without oversight, even the bare facts of the deal—reduces our ability to navigate the forces of globalization and to advocate for the workers, which is what Senator CASEY and I spend most of our time doing here. It perpetuates the USTR's approach to trade negotiations. I am in the middle of reading a book, ''The House of Morgan,'' about J.P. Morgan, Sr., and J.P. Morgan, Jr. I can't help thinking, that attitude, the public be damned, is what the USTR is doing to us right now. They don't care to share information with Senator CASEY and me and the rest of this body, supporters of the USTR and opponents of the USTR, and they sure don't care about the public learning more about this. All of this will only lead to more inequality.

I want trade; I support trade; I want more trade. Ohio workers want access to new markets for our products. But we need trade that works. The way we get trade that works is not by rushing into more corporate-sponsored trade agreements without even knowing what we are signing. The USTR needs to open up the process; otherwise, the public is convinced they are going to see more corporate handouts and more worker sellouts.

I yield the floor to my friend, Senator CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to address the same issue Senator BROWN raised, the issue of trade, and I thank him and commend him for not only his leadership on this issue for many years, his time in the U.S. House of Representatives and now in the Senate for the last 8 years, but especially his work and his focus on this issue most recently because we are moving into a period now of great debate about trade promotion authority and trade agreements that will be debated here in the Senate and throughout the country. So I commend him for that.

What Senator BROWN spoke to was a basic economic insecurity that so many Americans feel. It didn't just arise in the last couple of years. This is a long-standing problem and a long-standing threat to people's economic insecurity. Trade agreements play a role in it.

I spoke the last time when the Senator and I were here about the concerns I had about these trade agreements, but also the specific concern about jobs or the adverse impact on jobs since the North American Free Trade Agreement and then subsequent trade agreements in the intervening years. Today I rise to talk about a related but very urgent issue, and that is the issue of wages. Senator BROWN spoke to this as well.

We know that middle-class spending power is the main driver of our economic growth and the foundation of the American dream. If people have money in their pockets because they have reasonable and fair wages, they are going to drive the economy in a much more substantial way. But in recent years this spending power that I speak of, of most Americans, has fallen dramatically.

According to the Federal Reserve, the average worker's weekly earnings were 15 percent lower in 2012 than in 1972, when adjusted for inflation. So just in that roughly 40-year time period, wages were down in real dollars by 15 percent.

Senator BROWN referred to a disconnect between productivity and wage growth, and there was a recent chart that was developed by the Economic Policy Institute. The source for this is the Economic Policy Institute analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis. I hold it up. It is not big enough for people to see, but there is a big line in the middle of this chart. Because it is a chart, I won't enter it into the RECORD, but I will refer to it.

The basic conclusion is, when we look at the question of productivity growth and wage growth from 1948 to 2013, here is what we find. It is a two-chapter book. Chapter 1 is a positive chapter; chapter 2 is really disturbing. It is one of the most significant charts I have ever seen of what has happened to the wages of working Americans.

Here is what it says. From 1948 to 1973, productivity up 96.7 percent, hourly compensation up 91.3. So the difference between productivity increase and wage increase basically from World War II to 1973 was a differential of about 6 percentage points.

As Senator BROWN mentioned, an alignment over that time period between wages and productivity makes sense. When workers are producing more, when the economy is, as it was after World War II, producing so much more, wages should go up in a commensurate manner. Unfortunately, that is chapter 1. Chapter 2 of this book starts in 1973 and it ends on this chart in 2013. In that 40-year time period, productivity was up again. It wasn't up 96.7 percent, but it was up 74.4 percent, so still a strong productivity increase between 1973 and 2013.

What, we might ask, happened to wages? Was it still a line? Was there a gap? Was it exactly the same? Unfortunately, the story is a terribly sad story. Hourly compensation, 1973 to 2013, was up a grand total of 9.2 percent.

So in the first period, wages were up 91.3 percent. In the second period, 1973 to 2013, wages were only up 9.2 percent. No one in this body, no one in the other body in Congress—no one who represents the American people in Congress or any State legislature, no one who represents our country, can be satisfied with a 9.2-percent wage growth over 40 years when we are still having robust productivity increases.

There are a lot of reasons for it. There are a lot of causes we could make that we could attribute to that terrible diminution, but we have to do something about it. Part of that is having an agenda that will speak to wages and the middle class, and not to the issues that are in front of us, including these trade agreements.

I would argue without a doubt that our trade agreements have made this problem significantly worse over the last 20 or 25 years, and I am afraid we are headed down that path were trade promotion authority, the so-called Trans-Pacific Partnership, enacted into law.

Here is what the wage diminution meant in Pennsylvania in a shorter period of time, about 15 years. Pennsylvania median household income fell by 3 percent in the years between 1998 and 2013, according to the Census Bureau.

But this trend we are talking about continues today. Even as our economy recovers and stock markets reach a record high, the average American's paycheck is barely keeping up with the rising cost of living. So this problem of a lack of wage growth is nowhere near being solved.

The decline in middle-class workers' purchasing power—another way of saying wages—is not just unfair, but economic analysis also shows it is a drag on our economy, which is primarily driven by consumption. So this isn't just a story of a worker and his or her

family being pulled down by very powerful forces, only having their wages go up 9 percent in 40 years, it is also about the wider economy. If folks don't have fair wages, it is going to drag down the economy, and we are seeing evidence of that over those 40 years.

But instead of enacting policies that help the middle class and focus on this issue of wages or the lack of growth of wages, like policies such as increasing the minimum wage—that would be one of the right things to do to go at this problem—or facilitating access to high-quality childcare, for a lot of families the second highest cost they have other than housing and maybe some other expense, usually housing or some other expense—No. 2 is usually the cost of childcare. It is a barrier to work. If you can't afford childcare, you can't go to work or you have to accept a job that pays less.

Extended relief to workers displaced by foreign competition. I would put the word ''unfair'' foreign competition. That is something else we should work on.

So if we are working on raising the minimum wage, growing the middle class, helping families pay for childcare, helping families pay for the terribly high cost of higher education, maybe no other number is more disturbing than this ''wage, 9 percent in 40 years'' number that I mentioned. Maybe the only other number more disturbing is the cost of college education going up higher than anything in our lives the last couple of decades.

Middle-class workers know this type of policy that some are pursuing is headed in the wrong direction. Instead of them seeing us working on policies that will advance and support the middle class, they see Congress considering a massive trade agreement with 11 Asia Pacific countries. So these same middle-class families who look to us for progress and action and results for the middle class and for their wages are seeing a lot of folks in Washington focus on trade agreements that will make the problem worse.

A recent Pew poll of the Nation found that 83 percent of Americans said free trade does not raise their wages and 45 percent said so-called free trade lowers American wages. For many years, many economists have argued that trade was a net positive for Americans and did not have a noticeable impact on wages. However, recently I think other economists are having a different perspective.

A 2009 paper by three economists, one from the University of Pennsylvania, found that when workers are displaced by trade and switch jobs, they suffer real wage loss of between 12 and 17 percent. So in light of this data by economists that says when you have a job switch or a job change because of trade and your wages are going to go down 12 to 17 percent, and all the other data that we have about what has happened in States such as Pennsylvania, or Ohio, which Senator BROWN represents—what has happened to those communities and those people—why would we go down the same path of ratifying agreements which will do the same over time? I don't think we should, and that is why this debate is very important.

Another analysis by the Economic Policy Institute, a standard economic model shows that American workers without a college degree earn $1,800 less each year as a result of expanded trade. Again, further exacerbation of the same problem that trade agreements lead to.

I know people in my home State of Pennsylvania—and I am sure this is true in Ohio and a number of other States—are skeptical of these trade deals because they have experienced these pressures firsthand. This is real life for them. So before we cut another deal, we should work to level the playing field for our own companies and workers, including ensuring workers and companies get real relief from unfair trade practices.

Pennsylvanians and, I think, Americans want Congress and the administration to focus on policies that lead to both good jobs and good wages. Fundamentally, I argue that these agreements cause major concerns on both fronts, the jobs front as well as the wage front.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

SAVING THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about an issue that all Senators should be concerned about, and that is the future of the Organization of American States.

The origin of the OAS dates to the First International Conference of American States held in Washington from October 1889 to April 1890. The OAS was formally established in 1948 with the signing of the OAS Charter, which entered into force in 1951.

As the OAS Charter states, its mission is to achieve among its members ''an order of peace and justice, and to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence.'' That is an important and inspiring responsibility, and no less so today than when the OAS was founded, although many of the challenges of one-half century ago have been replaced by new challenges today.

Today the OAS consists of 35 independent States and is, at least in composition and tradition, the primary political, judicial, and social governmental forum in this hemisphere. Another 69 States and the European Union have permanent observer status.

The OAS supports programs and activities in four principle areas to carry out its mission—democracy, human rights, security, and development—and it does so in a myriad of ways, some far more successfully than others.

Few here may be aware that the United States is by far the largest contributor to the OAS, paying 60 percent of its annual budget. Two other countries pay 22 percent and the remaining 32 countries together pay only 12 percent.

Of course, the United States has by far the largest economy and should pay its fair share, but no country should be assessed to pay more than 50 percent. Other members should also pay their fair share, and we should all expect the OAS to be competently managed and to deliver tangible results that justify its expenditures.

The OAS can be proud of the indispensable work of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and the Inter-American Court, its internationally respected election observer missions, and other activities to support democracy and promote transparent and accountable governance. These priorities should be strengthened, as I will mention shortly.

But the reputation of the OAS as a hemispheric leader has taken a beating. This is partly due to ideological polarization driven primarily by the viscerally anti-United States rhetoric and policies of the leaders of four of its member States, and partly due to the fact that the OAS has failed to exercise effective leadership in response to key issues and events, while recent subhemispheric groupings have taken up much of the slack and become the region's principal fora.

The OAS has allowed itself to be spread too thin, accepting too many mandates from its member States without rigorous assessment of the costs and benefits. Scarce resources have been spent on employees—without regard to transparent hiring and promotion practices—some of whom contribute little to the organization. At the same time, the OAS is facing severe budget constraints and there is no monetary reserve to respond to contingencies. It is astounding that because some countries, including Brazil, stopped paying their quotas or are in arrears, and the OAS had nothing in reserve, it had to obtain a loan in order to pay employee salaries. This is not the kind of management the OAS needs; it is mismanagement.

The Inter-American Commission and the Inter-American Court play essential roles as institutions of last resort for victims of human rights violations in countries where impunity is the norm. When corrupt, dysfunctional judicial systems fail to provide access to justice for victims of crimes against humanity or other violations of human rights, the OAS helps fill that void. Likewise, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression plays a critical role at a time when some governments, such as Venezuela and Ecuador, are engaged in a systematic effort to intimidate and silence their critics in the

independent press, while others, including Mexico and Honduras, fail to protect journalists from threats and attacks by gangs or violence related to drug trafficking.

Yet a shortage of funding and the failure of some member States to comply with the decisions of the Commission and the rulings of the Court undermine their effectiveness. Some governments have actively sought to weaken these key institutions by withholding financial support and proposing to limit the legal authority of the Commission and the Court. They and the Special Rapporteur for Freedom and Expression need sufficient resources to do their jobs, and it is time to establish a mechanism for sanctioning noncompliance.

The United States is not blameless, having signed but not yet ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. This provides a convenient excuse for other governments to accuse us of hypocrisy as we urge their adherence to human rights norms. It is time for the Congress to act on this piece of unfinished business.

I would add, however, that the United States is part of the Inter-American Commission, as are all OAS member States, regardless of whether or not they have ratified the Convention. In fact, the United States has more cases at the Commission than any other country, and we strive to implement its decisions.

The OAS needs to strengthen its election monitoring capability—including insisting on timely and equal participation by opposition political parties, freedom of the press and association—to ensure a level playing field when some Latin governments refuse to allow early access by the OAS. Many Latin Americans are becoming cynical about the ability of democratic governments to deliver basic services in a manner that is transparent and accountable. Elected governments which are corrupt and neglect, or are unable to protect their people, erode support for democracy.

Similarly, the OAS and the Secretary General in particular need to respond swiftly to political crises, and exercise stronger leadership in defense of democratic institutions and human rights when they are under assault, consistent with the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

There is also the issue of hemispheric security. During the Cold War there was a single-minded, concerted effort to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining another foothold in Latin America. Countless innocent people were threatened, disappeared, tortured, or killed in the name of fighting communism by Central and South American security forces, many of them encouraged, trained and equipped by the United States, and only a token number of the individuals responsible have been punished.

Today the hemisphere faces new threats, such as drug cartels, gang violence, transnational crime, money laundering, and natural disasters. But the plans to address them like the Merida Initiative and the Alliance for Prosperity, while identifying such priorities as police and judicial reform, poverty, fiscal transparency, and corruption, tend to be long on goals and short on specifics of how to achieve them. Cooperation on multi-dimensional security threats is not a matter of ideology. Cuba and the United States are already cooperating against drug-traffickers, as we are with other countries. But there is a lot more that can and should be done to identify the causes and develop and implement more effective regional strategies to address these problems.

Several Latin countries have made notable strides in the past decade and are providing greater opportunities for their people. The OAS can play a role in convening a debate, identifying solutions, and facilitating an alliance of key development organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the Pan American Health Organization, to address areas of shared interest such as achieving sustained, equitable economic growth, strengthening public education and health, and protecting natural resources.

The OAS has an important, under-utilized role to play in interfacing with the wide range of civil society organizations which are essential to any democracy and are often under-appreciated, under-funded, and persecuted. With OAS offices throughout the hemisphere, its under-utilized employees could engage far more actively with academia, civil society, and the media. This should include any such entities that reject violence, not just those that are ''registered'' by local governments which sometimes use the registration process to silence legitimate voices whose views the government disagrees with.

Finally, the OAS needs to decide how to interact with other hemispheric multilateral organizations in a manner that strengthens the OAS and encourages cooperation. Cuba's suspension, and then refusal to return, provided an impetus for the creation of new entities like CELAC, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, that are anti-OAS and anti-United States and have sowed division within the hemisphere.

The next Secretary General of the OAS, who will be selected on March 18, has his work cut out for him. I say ''him'' because there is only one candidate, which says volumes about how the job is perceived. The Secretary General plays a crucial role as the strategic leader, but not the day-to-day manager, of the organization. The next Secretary General needs an Assistant Secretary General with the managerial expertise and mandate to right this sinking ship.

It will mean tough budgetary decisions, including the ability to say no to new programs and mandates and to focus instead on doing better at what it does best.

As soon as possible after they assume their positions I urge them to review Public Law 113–41, the ''Organization of American States Revitalization and Reform Act of 2013.'' That Act, which received bipartisan support, identifies key issues that need to be addressed—many of which I have touched on here—and provides recommendations for how to address them.

I wish them both well because the people of every country in the hemisphere, including those whose governments have sought to harm the OAS, need the OAS. But absent significant and rapid reforms beginning with the quota issue, the OAS's decline may be irreversible.

CONTINUING AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP IN MEDICAL INNOVATION FOR PATIENTS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing this week.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CONTINUING AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP IN MEDICAL INNOVATION FOR PATIENTS

We've got three major objectives in this committee: Fixing No Child Left Behind, Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, and third—one we're all looking forward to without exception—improving biomedical innovation, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Today is the first hearing Ranking Member Murray and I are holding on our bipartisan initiative to examine how we get drugs, devices and treatments from the discovery process through the regulatory process into our medicine cabinets and doctors' offices.

Today discoveries supported by NIH often do not come to FDA's door for six, eight, ten, or even twelve years. And the average cost to get a single drug from the laboratory through the approval process to the medicine cabinet is, according to some estimates, about $1 billion. Other estimates say it's double that or even more.

This initiative builds on work the committee has done—legislation was passed in 1997 and as recently as 2012—to try to get at the same goal of speeding up review and approval of drugs and devices while still ensuring they are safe.

This is a subject that has a lot of interest.

President Obama this year announced his new Precision Medicine Initiative, saying: ''21st century businesses will rely on American science, technology, research and development. I want the country that eliminated polio and mapped the human genome to lead a new era of medicine—one that delivers the right treatment at the right time. In some patients with cystic fibrosis, this approach has reversed a disease once thought unstoppable.''

In the House, Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton and Representative Diana Degette have been working on parallel tracks on their 21st Century Cures initiative to accelerate the pace of cures in America.

In late January, Sen. Burr and I released a report titled ''Innovation for Healthier

Americans'' that examined the process we have in place today for drug and device development.

We have received over 80 comments already, and have shared those with the staff of all members on the committee.

Our committee also has a bipartisan staff working group that has been meeting for around a month now, learning more about the key agencies involved in biomedical research and development.

We have with us today Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health, which funds and enables much of the early stage research that leads to medical breakthroughs. And Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, which regulates all the medical products we come in contact with.

Dr. Collins wrote in 2013 that: ''Drugs exist for only about 250 of the more than 4,400 conditions with defined molecular causes. And it takes far too long and far too much money to get a new drug into our medicine cabinets. This is an old problem that cries out for new and creative solutions.''

Since Dr. Collins wrote that, the number of conditions with defined molecular causes has increased to more than 5,400, yet the number of new drugs approved has not kept pace with these discoveries.

Dr. Hamburg has said that ''we are left relying on the 20th century approaches for the review, approval and oversight of the treatments and cures of the 21st century.''

So today's hearing is a perfect place for us to start—with the heads of these two critical agencies, both of whom have sounded the alarm on our existing process for drug and device development.

This work will affect every single American—from a very ill patient who has run out of treatment options and is counting on the most cutting-edge drug, to an active child with asthma who's hoping to run faster and farther with the aid of a new drug.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses more about their thoughts on these five issues that Senator Burr and I identified in our report: First, it costs too much to bring medical products through the pipeline to patients. Second, as science and technology advance, the discovery and development process takes too long for medical products to make their way to patients. Third, FDA's responsibilities have grown to include many activities unrelated to the core function of regulating medical products to advance the public health. Fourth, the disparity in scientific knowledge at FDA and the fast pace of biomedical innovation are slowing, and in some cases, stifling innovation in American medicine. Fifth, a working FDA is essential to continuing biomedical innovation in the United States and maintaining America's global leadership in medical innovation.

In the words of Andrew Eschenbach, the former Commissioner of the FDA and Director of the National Cancer Institute: ''We stand on the cusp of a revolution in health care. Advances in molecular medicine will allow us to develop powerful new treatments that can cure or even prevent diseases like Alzheimer's and cancer. Tomorrow's high-tech cures can also slash health-care costs and eliminate ineffective treatments.''

I look forward to taking the first step toward addressing these important issues. If we do it right, our work here will help improve the lives of every single American.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

• Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, this week marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of legislation to create the Appalachian Regional Commission, ARC.

In the decade of the 1960s, intense poverty and economic struggle characterized the existence for many people and towns running down the spine of the Appalachian Mountains. At the time, more than 19 million Americans were living in the Appalachian region and struggling to achieve the American dream.

The magnitude and vastness of the challenges in Appalachia, which spread across many States, led the region's Governors in 1960 to form the Conference of Appalachian Governors to develop a regional approach for resolving these complex issues.

In 1961, they took their case to newly elected President John F. Kennedy, who had been deeply moved by the poverty he saw during campaign trips to West Virginia. Their efforts led to the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission and a broad bipartisan coalition in Congress passed the Appalachian Regional Development Act, ARDA, early in 1965. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on March 9, 1965. It is a unique agency to this day, made up of one Federal co-chair and 13 Governors who serve as State co-chairs. It also receives local input on allocation of resources from the local development districts.

Over the last 50 years, it has been able to inject Federal funds and leverage State and private resources to address the deep needs of this region. Much success has been achieved, but yet much remains to be done.

Poverty has been cut in half in Appalachia from nearly 31 percent of the region's people in 1960 to about 16 percent today.

In 1960, only 32 percent of the Appalachian population completed high school and 5 percent had a college degree. Since then, the number of college graduates had increased four-fold to 21 percent.

One of the most critical challenges facing the Appalachian region in 1964 was its relative isolation. With the aid of the Appalachian Regional Commission, nearly 2,700 miles of highway development routes have been built.

Since 1965, ARC has financed nearly 25,000 separate strategic investments in non-highway activities in the region, which includes $3.8 billion in Federal funds. The positive result has been that nearly three times that amount, $9 billion has been forthcoming in matching funds from other Federal, State and local funding sources. Better yet, ARC-financed investments in Appalachia have also leveraged nearly $16 billion in added private investment.

I want to congratulate the Appalachian Regional Commission on its 50th Anniversary. I look forward to working with and supporting the future efforts of ARC and the local development districts as they continue to work with the States, localities and the private sector to build the economy of the Appalachian region.•

CELEBRATING KEMP MILL SYNAGOGUE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE SERVICE OF RABBI YAAKOV ''JACK'' BIELER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Saturday, I will have the privilege and pleasure of visiting Kemp Mill Synagogue, KMS, for a Melava Malka on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. KMS held its first service on March 17, 1990, attended by a group of 50 worshipers in a Kemp Mill home, and held its first services in its current location on Kemp Mill Road on Shabbat of September 19, 1998. The Modern Orthodox Synagogue is a vibrant and loving community where members of the congregation gather to daven, learn, celebrate, and observe lifecycle events, smachot, and rituals together.

In 1994, Rabbi Yaakov (Jack) Bieler officially became the first rabbi of KMS. As the leader of the KMS community, Rabbi Bieler has led and inspired the development of an ambitious program of shiurim, study groups, scholars-in-residence and educational programs. Weekly Divrei Tora by men and women enlighten the congregation by offering a diversity of perspectives. Youth groups and social activities contribute to creating a warm and engaged community.

Rabbi Bieler is a great friend and true leader in Maryland's faith-based community. While he has been at KMS for over 20 years, his commitment to his faith and community has been a lifelong passion. Rabbi Bieler was raised in Bayside, Queens, and attended local public schools. In 1969, he graduated from the James Striar School of Jewish Studies in New York, where he honed his mastery of Jewish texts. He spent the years of 1969 to 1971 studying at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh in Israel.

When Rabbi Bieler returned to New York, he studied at Yeshiva University, where he was ordained by the Rabbi Isaac Eichanan Theological Seminary. This prestigious program, which dates back to 1886, challenges and trains leaders of Judaism to hold fast to the ways of the Torah while responding to the questions and demands of modern society. During this time, he also pursued a master of arts in Jewish Education from the Ferkauf Graduate School of Education, completing his studies in 1974.

While Rabbi Bieler's studies prepared him to be a Jewish religious leader, he always sought new ways to share his knowledge with others. To this end, Rabbi Bieler has spent much of his life in the classroom. He served on the faculty and was a chairman of the Talmud Department of the Joseph H. Lookstein Upper School of Ramaz from 1974 to

1988. In these roles, he helped to educate children in Judaic and general studies, holding himself and others to high standards in the classroom and in the community. And he has always been committed to menschlichkeit, or the values of human dignity and mutual respect, and the strength of Jewish heritage. Today, he is still guided by these commitments.

Rabbi Bieler served concurrently on the faculty of the Adult Education Institute of the Lincoln Square Synagogue between 1971 and 1977 and as a permanent scholar-in-residence of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun from 1977 to 1988. This service speaks to Rabbi Bieler's belief that our education—in faith and in life—never ends; we are always learning, always seeking to become better versions of ourselves. His role as an educator grew and changed before he found his way to Kemp Mill Synagogue. In 1988, he assumed the position of lead teacher and chairman of the Judaic Studies Department at the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, now the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy, a Modern Orthodox Jewish day school in Rockville, MD. He worked at the Hebrew Academy of Washington for a number of years and in a variety of roles, becoming the Upper School assistant principal in charge of Judaic Studies in 1991. During his tenure, Rabbi Bieler strove to provide students with a firm foundation in Torah and Jewish law, to encourage creativity and critical thinking, and promoted a deep sense of community and personal responsibility in students.

Rabbi Bieler is a man who is much loved and respected by his community. And he is a humble man, so it falls to others to recite his many achievements. During his tenure at Ramaz, he was awarded the Gruss Outstanding Educator award. In 1985, he received a prestigious Jerusalem Fellows fellowship and spent the year with family, including his beloved wife Dr. Joanie Bieler, in Jerusalem. Among other achievements, Rabbi Bieler has published numerous articles on Jewish education and issues facing Judaism today, especially concerning Modern Orthodoxy.

Rabbi Bieler will be retiring from his service as the leader of the Kemp Mill Synagogue community on June 30, 2015. He has faithfully served KMS for most of its 25-year history, leading and inspiring the development of an ambitious educational program indicative of his love for teaching, learning, and sharing Judaism. Under his leadership, KMS has encouraged a congregation of mutual enlightenment and diversified perspectives. Furthermore, youth groups and social activities have been cultivated and grown, creating a warm and engaged community. KMS is an important hub of community and faith in Silver Spring. KMS members are leaders in the Jewish Federation, local day schools, the Rabbinical Council, the Emunah Society, the Kemp Mill Civic Association, the Orthodox Union, and the larger community. They are committed to worship and to service, to the United States, and to the State of Israel.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating KMS on its 25th anniversary and acknowledging the inspired service, dedication, and leadership of Rabbi Yaakov and Dr. Joanie Bieler who will undoubtedly continue to be involved in their community and inspire others to serve even when their formal leadership roles at KMS come to an end. I wish them all the best.●

REMEMBERING PAUL CHRISTENSEN

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, we honor the life and service of Paul Christensen, whose passing signifies a great loss for Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to his wife Norma and the entire family in this time of mourning. Mr. Christensen was a man committed to his country, his State, and his community. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Christensen moved with his father and mother to Las Vegas in 1939 when his father started the family's jewelry business. He graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1950 and continued his studies at Brigham Young University, where he earned his bachelor's degree. He then enlisted in the U.S. Air Force as a pilot, serving in the Korean war. As one of our Nation's servicemembers, he made exceptional sacrifices for our country. I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Christensen for his courageous contributions to the United States of America. His service to his country and his bravery earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation and will never be forgotten.

After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Mr. Christensen returned to Las Vegas in 1957 and worked in the family jewelry store. It was during this time that he married Mrs. Christensen and began his lifelong legacy of commitment to his local community. He served in the Nevada Assembly in the 1950s and then the Nevada Senate in the 1960s. In 1977 and 1981, Christensen was elected to the Las Vegas City Council, during which time he focused on the safety of southern Nevada communities by improving police presence and increasing the number of firefighters. He also worked to improve road conditions, specifically widening Jones Boulevard.

Mr. Christensen then continued his service to the great State of Nevada by working tirelessly on the Clark County Commission until 1996. During his decades spent working to better the Silver State, he was also chairman of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, president of the Las Vegas Valley Water District, and was appointed by Governor Kenny Guinn to serve on the Transportation Services Authority. In October of 2013, the Paul J. Christensen Bridge was named after him in honor of his work in his local community, a distinction well deserved. Mr. Christensen continued philanthropic work for the Las Vegas community until his health declined.

Throughout his life, Mr. Christensen worked tirelessly to make southern Nevada the best it could be, which I am honored to commend. He was a role model and his legacy will live on. Today, I join the Las Vegas community and citizens of the Silver State to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan, Paul Christensen.●

RECOGNIZING GOODWILL OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Goodwill of Southern Nevada for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans, military servicemembers, and their families with supportive services to aid in securing a job and financial solidarity. The Veterans Integration Program, VIP, is a unique service that assists our Nation's bravest as they return from the battlefield and readjust to life in their communities.

These heroes who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom frequently arrive home to a struggling economy. All too often, returning veterans and their families are unable to find a job and struggle with financial uncertainty. Goodwill of Southern Nevada is a positive light in the local Las Vegas community, working to change this reality. As of the end of January 2015, VIP has helped 507 local veterans in southern Nevada and their immediate families find work. The program offers help in job training and job placement and provides necessary tools to fluidly transition from the military back into the local community successfully. Although there is no way to ever adequately thank our military men and women, Goodwill of Southern Nevada stands as a shining example of an organization that has gone above and beyond to positively impact the lives of our heroes who so bravely fought for our freedom.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but also to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans service organizations like Goodwill of Southern Nevada are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing Goodwill of Southern Nevada, an organization with a mission that is both noble and charitable. I am humbled and honored to recognize the Goodwill of

Southern Nevada and its tireless efforts in providing veterans with the skills necessary to reintegrate into the local community. This organization's commitment to helping veterans, military servicemembers, and their families get back on their feet is admirable, and I wish it the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING DR. KENNETH DOBBINS

● Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Dr. Kenneth Dobbins on his retirement and to thank him for his many years of leadership and service to the field of higher education. For 24 years, including the last 16 years as president, Ken Dobbins has served Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO. Ken considered his job as president the position of a lifetime, and his dedication and passion for the University and its students is unparalleled. It is my pleasure to honor him today.

Ken received a B.S. in accounting from the University of Akron in 1971. Upon graduation, Ken served as a commissioned officer and civilian executive in the U.S. Air Force for nearly 10 years and was awarded the 1978 Air Force Audit Agency Outstanding Civilian Auditor of the Year. Ken also received an M.B.A. from Old Dominion University in 1979 and a Ph.D. in higher education administration from Kent State University in 1987.

Before his tenure with Southeast Missouri State, Ken held positions in higher education administration at Kent State. At Southeast Missouri State, Ken served as the University's vice president of finance and administration from 1991 to 1993 and executive vice president from 1993 until his appointment as president in 1999.

During Ken's presidency, the university reached significant milestones in enrollment and diversity, academic partnerships, programs, and construction. Ken's effective leadership shaped Southeast Missouri State University into the outstanding school it is today. As president, one of his greatest accomplishments was the significant increase in enrollment of students. In 1994, there were 7,500 students. Today there are over 12,000 students.

In addition, Ken oversaw more than $400 million in new construction and building improvement projects, including the Seabaugh Polytechnic Building and the $58 million River Campus. New academic programs, including the College of Science, Technology, and Agriculture and the Earl and Margie Holland School of Visual and Performing Arts were established. Ken instituted a comprehensive review of all academic and nonacademic programs to minimize student fee increases in the face of extensive State appropriation reductions. He was also responsible for developing an innovative postprofessorial merit program, which provides base salary increases and professional development funds for faculty members.

As president, Ken held numerous leadership positions in higher education administration. He served a 2-year term as president of the Missouri Council on Public Higher Education, and served 3 years as president of the Ohio Valley Conference. He currently serves on the board of directors for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Outside his work in higher education, Ken serves on the Greater St. Louis Area Council for the Boy Scouts of America, and was elected by local council associates to serve on the National Council for the Boy Scouts of America. Ken was awarded the Silver Beaver Award, the highest honor given to a Boy Scout volunteer by a council. Additionally, Ken has been elected to the St. Louis Regional Chamber board of directors and is a member of the Hawthorne Foundation.

Ken is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Jeanine, son Paul, daughter-in-law Stacey, and his two grandchildren. I know they will enjoy the opportunity to spend more time with him. Ken will continue to be involved in higher education during his retirement by serving as a consultant with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

It is my pleasure to honor Ken Dobbins today. He has touched the lives of many and immensely improved the quality of Southeast Missouri State University and the Cape Girardeau community. His dedication to higher education and the State of Missouri has been invaluable.

I ask that the Senate join me in congratulating and honoring Dr. Kenneth Dobbins.●

103RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize the 103rd anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America. What started out as a group of 18 girls in Georgia organized by Juliette Low has grown into an organization of more than 3.2 million girls and women and more than 59 million alumnae, including myself. As a former Girl Scout, I know firsthand how important the Girl Scouts are for learning about leadership, service, and personal development.

When the Girl Scouts started, women couldn't vote, women couldn't have property in their name, and in some States women couldn't go to college. The founding of the Girl Scouts started a revolutionary movement to empower girls. Now, Girl Scouts is working to bring gender balance to leadership roles, whether it is creating jobs in the private sector or representing constituents in public office. I believe in that mission, and I know it can be achieved.

What I love about the Girl Scouts is that it is always reinventing itself and looking to the future. Whether it is new uniforms or new badges, the Girl Scouts are engaging in a new generation of leadership. Their core programs focused on environmental stewardship, healthy living, financial literacy, and global citizenship help girls develop a solid and well-rounded foundation in leadership. Their award-winning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics—STEM—Program helps girls build strong, hands-on foundations to become future leaders and meet the growing need for skilled science and technology professionals in the United States. And last year, the Girl Scouts joined the STEM mentoring initiative, Million Women Mentors, a national initiative to increase interest for girls and women to pursue STEM career paths. This program would help close the gender gap in the field and gives girls the confidence and the ability to believe that they too can be those female scientists, engineers, and doctors who are serving as mentors for the program.

I have taken the lessons I learned from the Girl Scouts with me to the U.S. Senate every day and in every way. These lessons include: Let's help people at all times. Let's be honest and fair. Let's be friendly and helpful. Let's be considerate and caring, courageous and strong and responsible. Let's respect ourselves and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout whether she is here or around the world. For all of these reasons and more, I am honored to recognize the 103rd anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America.●

RECOGNIZING GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

● Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I wish to honor Girl Scouts of the USA. As the proud father of two Girl Scouts, I join them as they celebrate Girl Scout Day. On this day in 1912, Juliette Gordon Low founded the first Girl Scout troop with just 18 girls in Savannah, GA. Over 100 years later, Girl Scouts serves 2 million girls and has 59 million alumnae across the United States.

Juliette Gordon Low believed that all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually. Gordon sought to bring girls out of isolated home environments and into community service in order to become well rounded members of society. By building courage, confidence, and character, Girl Scouts raised awareness on important issues. They became leaders and made their way into American hearts.

Girl Scouts today participate in numerous activities that foster and strengthen their leadership abilities, financial literacy, outdoor and environmental awareness, and teach them the value of service. They learn new skills that help them develop their full individual potential, and take action to improve the world around them. Girls who earn the Gold Award, the highest achievement a Girl Scout can earn,

take extraordinary steps to effect positive change and make a sustainable impact in their communities and beyond.

Today's Girl Scouts are tomorrow's leaders. Former Girl Scouts are at the top of their fields in science, media, medicine, business, and politics. With one-half of the women in the 114th Congress being former Girl Scouts, it is evident that Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence and character.

On this Girl Scout Day, I wish to applaud the work of Girl Scout councils throughout Michigan and across our country. Their commitment to diversity and service, tied with their dedication, makes them true leaders of society.●

TRIBUTE TO PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, a beloved American icon recently celebrated her 90th birthday. For more than one-half century, Phyllis Schlafly has been a leading voice in defense of our Constitution, our values, and our way of life. Fearlessly, tirelessly, Phyllis has championed the American family and American values. As a speaker, author, activist, and radio commentator, Phyllis has inspired and mobilized generations of conservatives.

Her 1964 book, ''A Choice Not an Echo,'' took direct aim at the establishment class and helped pave the way for Goldwater and Reagan. Her advocacy presaged many of the political challenges we face today in ensuring that the voiceless have a voice and that the everyday worker, mother, father, and citizen is not drowned out by special interests. As one profile noted, Phyllis ''continues comforting the afflicted conservative, afflicting the comfortable Republican.''

I remember well reading ''A Choice Not an Echo'' while in high school and her arguments helped shape my political philosophy as it shaped the philosophy of many others. I also remember attending her speech at the University of Alabama dealing with the national defense issues she wrote about while I was in law school. Dynamic, smart, beautiful, and articulate, she played an important role in establishing a sound conservative philosophy.

An unrelenting critic of big government, Phyllis has spoken out time and again on the need for the family—not the bureaucracy—to form the center of American life. She has explained that we cannot strengthen our financial system without also strengthening our families and our communities. She knows that no nation can be better than the people who make it up and that families, communities, and churches are vital to developing good people.

The values Phyllis embodies are not merely traditional but enduring—just as she is. Enduring values are a national compass, a guide for all times—always pointing true north in even the stormiest weather.

Congratulations to Phyllis on her remarkable 90th year and her even more remarkable life.●

RECOGNIZING THE LEARNING TRAIN

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, American small businesses across the country possess the ability to recognize and fill unique service gaps in their local towns and cities. This is especially important when these small businesses work with the children in our communities. Such is the case with this week's Small Business of the Week, The Learning Train, located in Lafayette, LA.

Keri and Matt Hebert opened The Learning Train as a way to promote the physical, emotional, educational, and social development of children aged 6 months to 4 years old through a variety of weekly classes and camps. A mother of two, Mrs. Hebert designed The Learning Train to offer small group classes that promote learning and bonding between parents and their children. A typical 45-minute session at the center provides children and their parents with a safe, fun space to hone age-appropriate developmental skills through enjoyable playtime with peers. The center's structured learning activities aid in developing crucial skills, including symbolic thinking, active listening, problem solving, and knowledge retention.

In addition to the sharpening of technical skills, children are afforded quality time strengthening and developing healthy social bonds, as well. Having spent thirteen years as an educator, Mrs. Hebert noticed a growing need for a safe, fun environment for young children to be nurtured. She maintains that a child's time spent playing with their guardian reinforces social development and builds trust between the two. The Learning Center's diverse classes provide ample space, opportunity, and variety to reinforce bonds between a child's parents as well as with their peers. Since its establishment in 2013, the Learning Train also regularly partners with local organizations to give back to their community, including participating in food drives.

I am honored to recognize a business that provides the high quality care and attention that our future generations deserve. Congratulations again to The Learning Train for being selected as Small Business of the Week, and I thank them for the important work they do for the families and children in the Lafayette region.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Chiappardi, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY) has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 1213. An act to make administrative and technical corrections to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. COATS, and Mr. COONS):

S. 723. A bill to amend the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to provide guidance on utility energy service contracts used by Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 724. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide enhanced penalties for marketing candy-flavored controlled substances to minors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 725. A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COATS:

S. 726. A bill to establish the prudential regulator of community and independent depository institutions as the conduit and arbiter of all Federal financial oversight, examination, and reporting; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 727. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include biomass heating appliances for tax credits available for energy-efficient building property and energy property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 728. A bill to provide for programs and activities with respect to the prevention of underage drinking; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 729. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 730. A bill to permanently extend the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2009; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 731. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits and ensure the long-term solvency of the Social Security program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. UDALL):

S. 732. A bill to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. REID, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 733. A bill to exempt children of certain Filipino World War II veterans from the numerical limitations on immigrant visas and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. AYOTTE:

S. 734. A bill to provide for the equitable distribution of Universal Service funds to rural States; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 735. A bill to require that any trade agreement eligible for expedited consideration by Congress include requirements with respect to paying adequate wages and maintaining sustainable production methods, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 736. 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 Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 737. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend the application of the Medicare payment rate floor to primary care services furnished under Medicaid and to apply the rate floor to additional providers of primary care services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 738. A bill to reduce the risks associated with genetically altered salmon in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PAUL:

S. Res. 100. A resolution to provide sufficient time for legislation to be read; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. Res. 101. A resolution relating to proceedings of the Senate in the event of a partial or full shutdown of the Federal Government; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 23

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 23, a bill to amend title 17, United States Code, with respect to the definition of ''widow'' and ''widower'', and for other purposes.

S. 149

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 149, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 163

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 163, a bill to establish a grant program to help State and local law enforcement agencies reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism and other disabilities.

S. 164

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 164, a bill to increase the rates of pay under the General Schedule and other statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 3.8 percent, and for other purposes.

S. 178

At the request of Mr. DAINES, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 299, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, supra.

S. 352

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 370

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 370, a bill to require breast density reporting to physicians and patients by facilities that perform mammograms, and for other purposes.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) were added as cosponsors of S. 423, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 467

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 467, a bill to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, and for other purposes.

S. 539

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 539, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 568, a bill to extend the trade adjustment assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 570

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 570, a bill to improve access to oral health care for vulnerable and underserved populations.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 599, a bill to extend and expand the Medicaid emergency psychiatric demonstration project.

S. 628

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 628, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the designation of maternity care health professional shortage areas.

S. 636

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 636, a bill to reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse.

S. 637

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 637, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 650

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr.

SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 650, a bill to extend the positive train control system implementation deadline, and for other purposes.

S. 665

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 665, a bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 273

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 273 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 279

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 279 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 290

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 290 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 297

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 297 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 724. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide enhanced penalties for marketing candy-flavored controlled substances to minors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator GRASSLEY in re-introducing the Protecting Kids from Candy-Flavored Drugs Act of 2015, formerly known as the Saving Kids from Dangerous Drugs Act.

For years, law enforcement has seen drug dealers flavor and market their illegal drugs to entice minors, using techniques like combining drugs with chocolate and fruit flavors, and even packaging them to look like actual candy and soda. This bill would address this serious and dangerous problem by providing stronger penalties when drug dealers alter controlled substances by combining them with beverages or candy products, marketing or packaging them to resemble legitimate products, or flavoring or coloring them, all with the intent to sell the drugs to minors.

Recent reports by law enforcement and by the media demonstrate the need for this legislation. Last year, a captain in the Drugs and Vice Division of an Oregon police department told my office that he ''routinely encounter[s]'' ecstasy; it is ''often found packaged with cartoon characters on the labeling[,] shaped in pacifier form[,] or with the outline of various animals stamped [on the] drug when in pill form.'' He continued that '''[c]andy' bracelets of MDMA [ecstasy] are also common. Various unique colors of pills are also frequently encountered with the clear intent to market and make the drug appealing to the young.''

Also last year, a narcotics team member in an Oregon sheriff's office told my office that he frequently encounters gummy bears laced with Xanex. The ''only customers are juveniles,'' according to the officer. He noted that if a youth gets hooked, he will become a regular customer.

Law enforcement has made several notable busts of large productions of candied or flavored drugs. In January 2013, the Drug Enforcement Administration seized THC-laden soft drinks, cookies, brownies, and candy from two phony medical marijuana dispensaries in my home state of California. These dispensaries grossed an estimated $3.5 million annually. The names of the products seized show how the purveyors of these drugs marketed them under names that resembled popular soda and candy products: bottles were labeled ''7 High,'' ''Dr. Feelgood,'' and ''Laughing Lemonade''; cookies and brownies had such names as ''White Chip Hash Brownie'' and ''Reese's Crumbled Hash Brownie; and candy was named ''Jolly Stones THC Medicated Hard Candies'' and ''Stone Candy.''

Around Halloween 2013, police seized more than 40 pounds of THC-laced candy from a campus apartment at West Chester University, outside of Philadelphia. This candy was vividly colored, in a virtual rainbow assortment—pink, yellow, orange, blue, and red. When college students are peddling these drugs, it is not hard to see how minors can become targets of the operation.

Many recent incidents involve methamphetamine, a drug whose users face a ''very high'' risk of ''developing psychotic symptoms—hallucinations and delusions,'' according to a recent Harvard Medical School publication. A 2007 article in USA Today entitled ''DEA: Flavored meth use on the rise'' stated that ''[r]eports of candy-flavored methamphetamine are emerging around the nation, stirring concern among police and abuse prevention experts that drug dealers are marketing the drug to younger people.'' In March of 2012, police in Chicago warned parents about a drug that ''looks and smells like candy,'' called ''strawberry quick'' or ''strawberry meth.'' Because of the drug's similarity to candy, police urged parents to tell their children not to take candy from anyone, not even a classmate.

Regrettably, this is a problem that has persisted for many years, with drug dealers trying various methods to lure kids to try many dangerous drugs. The dealers' logic is simple: the best way to create a life-long customer is to hook that person when he or she is young. According to an Indiana sheriff quoted in a 2007 article entitled ''Fruity meth aimed at kids,'' flavoring a drug like methamphetamine makes it ''more attractive to teens, because it takes away meth's normally bitter taste, and some dealers will tell potential users this meth is safer, and has less side effects.''

That is why the practice of flavoring or coloring drugs to entice youth is so dangerous. It deceives the young customer into believing that he or she is not actually ingesting drugs, or at least not ingesting drugs that are as potent as non-flavored drugs. One in three teens already believes there is ''only a slight or no risk in trying [methamphetamine],'' according to the 2007 National Meth Use & Attitudes Survey. When you flavor methamphetamine or market it as candy or soda, the number of teens who believe that the drug is not harmful is surely higher.

The size and sophistication of some of these operations is particularly alarming. In March of 2006, DEA discovered large-scale marijuana cultivation and production facilities in Emeryville and Oakland, CA. Thousands of marijuana plants, and hundreds of marijuana-related soda, candy, and other products were seized from the drug dealers' facilities. The products were designed and packaged to look like legitimate products, including an item called ''Munchy Way'' candy bars.

Similarly, in March of 2008, Drug Enforcement Administration, DEA, agents seized cocaine near Modesto, CA, that was valued at $272,400; a significant quantity had been flavored like cinnamon, coconut, lemon, or strawberry. After that raid, one DEA agent stated that ''[a]ttempting to lure new, younger customers to a dangerous drug by adding candy 'flavors' is an unconscionable marketing technique.''

I completely agree. That is why we need to act now to stop those who alter

drugs to make them more appealing to youth.

Under current Federal law, there is no enhanced penalty for a person who alters a controlled substance to make the drug more appealing to youth. Someone who alters a controlled substance in ways prohibited by the legislation we are introducing today would be subject to an additional penalty of up to 10 years, in addition to the penalty for the underlying offense. If someone is convicted of a second offense that is prohibited by the act, that person would face an additional penalty of up to 20 years. Furthermore, a prosecutor who does not charge the separate crime of candying or flavoring a drug may still seek an enhancement at sentencing, under this bill.

This bill sends a strong and clear message to drug dealers—if you flavor or candy up your drugs to try to entice our children, there will be a very heavy price to pay. It will help stop drug dealers from engaging in these activities, and punish them appropriately if they don't.

I am pleased that many of the leading national law enforcement and anti-drug organizations support this bill: the Fraternal Order of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, and the National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, HIDTA, Directors' Association have all endorsed this legislation. The individuals that these organizations represent are on the front lines working to keep these drugs out of our communities.

The Senate passed a similar version of this legislation by unanimous consent in the 111th Congress, but it was not considered in the House. The time is now for Congress to finish this work, and enact this bill into law.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator GRASSLEY in supporting this bill.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 729. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 729

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fairness for Struggling Students Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXCEPTIONS TO DISCHARGE.

Section 523(a)(8) of title 11, United States Code, is amended by striking ''dependents, for'' and all that follows through the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting ''dependents, for an educational benefit overpayment or loan made, insured, or guaranteed by a governmental unit or made under any program funded in whole or in part by a governmental unit or an obligation to repay funds received from a governmental unit as an educational benefit, scholarship, or stipend;''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 100—TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LEGISLATION TO BE READ

Mr. PAUL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 100

Resolved, That (a) it shall not be in order for the Senate to consider any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment between the Houses, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter until 1 session day has passed since introduction for every 20 pages included in the measure or matter in the usual form plus 1 session day for any number of remaining pages less than 20 in the usual form.

(b)(1) Any Senator may raise a point of order that consideration of any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment, treaty, or any other measure or matter is not in order under subsection (a). No motion to table the point of order shall be in order.

(2) Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. All motions to waive under this paragraph shall be debatable collectively for not to exceed 3 hours equally divided between the Senator raising the point for order and the Senator moving to waive the point of order or their designees. A motion to waive the point of order shall not be amendable.

(3) This resolution is enacted pursuant to the power granted to each House of Congress to determine the Rules of its Proceedings in clause 2 of section 5 of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 101—RELATING TO PROCEEDINGS OF THE SENATE IN THE EVENT OF A PARTIAL OR FULL SHUTDOWN OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. GARDNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 101

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the ''Shutdown Accountability Resolution''.

SEC. 2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE SENATE DURING A FULL OR PARTIAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''Government shutdown'' means a lapse in appropriations for 1 or more agencies of the Federal Government.

(b) CONVENING OF THE SENATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any rule or order of the Senate, during the period of a Government shutdown—

(A) the Senate shall convene at 8:00 a.m. each day, unless the body is in continuous session; and

(B) it shall not be in order to ask for, and the Presiding Officer shall not entertain a request for, unanimous consent to change the hour or day on which the Senate shall convene under subparagraph (A).

(2) SENATE NOT IN SESSION.—If the Senate is not in session on the first calendar day of a Government shutdown, the majority leader, after consultation with the minority leader, shall notify Members of the Senate that, pursuant to this standing order, the Senate shall convene at 8:00 a.m. on the next calendar day of the Government shutdown.

(c) PRESENCE OF A QUORUM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During the period of a Government shutdown, and notwithstanding any provision of the Standing Rules of the Senate—

(A) immediately after the Presiding Officer takes the chair in accordance with rule IV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Presiding Officer shall direct the Clerk to call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum; and

(B) 1 hour after the presence of a quorum has last been demonstrated, the Presiding Officer shall direct the Clerk to call the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum.

(2) LACK OF QUORUM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If, upon a calling of the roll under paragraph (1), it shall be ascertained that a quorum is not present—

(i) the Presiding Officer shall direct the Clerk to call the names of any absent Senators; and

(ii) following the calling of the names under clause (i), the Presiding Officer shall, without intervening motion or debate, submit to the Senate by a yea-and-nay vote the question: ''Shall the Sergeant-at-Arms be directed to request the attendance of absent Senators?''.

(B) DIRECTION TO COMPEL ATTENDANCE.—If a quorum is not present 15 minutes after the time at which the vote on a question submitted under subparagraph (A)(ii) starts, the Presiding Officer shall, without intervening motion or debate, submit to the Senate by a yea-and-nay vote the question: ''Shall the Sergeant-at-Arms be directed to compel the attendance of absent Senators?''.

(C) ARREST OF ABSENT SENATORS.—Effective 1 hour after the Sergeant-at-Arms is directed to compel the attendance of absent Senators under subparagraph (B), if any Senator not excused under rule XII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is not in attendance, the Senate shall be deemed to have agreed an order that reads as follows: ''Ordered, That the Sergeant at Arms be directed to arrest absent Senators; that warrants for the arrests of all Senators not sick nor excused be issued under the signature of the Presiding Officer and attested by the Secretary, and that such warrants be executed without delay.''.

(D) REPORTS.—Not less frequently than once per hour during proceedings to compel the attendance of absent Senators, the Sergeant at Arms shall submit to the Senate a report on absent Senators, which shall—

(i) be laid before the Senate;

(ii) identify each Senator whose absence is excused;

(iii) identify each Senator who is absent without excuse; and

(iv) for each Senator identified under clause (iii), provide information on the current location of the Senator.

(3) REGAINING THE FLOOR.—If a Senator had been recognized to speak at the time a call of the roll to ascertain the presence of a quorum was initiated under paragraph (2)(A),

and if the presence of a quorum is established, that Senator shall be entitled to be recognized to speak.

(d) ADJOURNING AND RECESSING.—During the period of a Government shutdown—

(1) a motion to adjourn or to recess the Senate shall be decided by a yea-or-nay vote;

(2) if a quorum is present, the Presiding Officer shall not entertain a request to adjourn or recess the Senate by unanimous consent or to vitiate the yeas and nays on such a motion by unanimous consent;

(3) a motion to adjourn or a motion to recess made during the period beginning at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 11:59 p.m., shall only be agreed to upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Senators present and voting, a quorum being present; and

(4) if the Senate must adjourn due to the absence of a quorum, the Senate shall reconvene 2 hours after the time at which it adjourns and ascertain the presence of a quorum in accordance with subsection (c)(1).

(e) NO SUSPENSION OF REQUIREMENTS.—The Presiding Officer may not entertain a request to suspend the operation of this standing order by unanimous consent or motion.

(f) CONSISTENCY WITH SENATE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES.—Nothing in this standing order shall be construed in a manner that is inconsistent with S. Res. 296 (108th Congress) or any other emergency procedures or practices of the Senate.

(g) STANDING ORDER.—This section shall be a standing order of the Senate.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 298. Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 299. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 300. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 298. Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. VITTER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 48, line 21, strike ''human smuggling)'' and all that follows through page 49, line 2 and insert ''human smuggling).''.

SA 299. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 60, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

''(4) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES COLLECTING DATA ON CHILD HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—No eligible entity shall be precluded from being awarded a grant under subsection (a) on the grounds that the eligible entity has only recently begun collecting data on child human trafficking.''.

SA 300. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. REID, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Sec. 101. Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.
Sec. 102. Clarifying the benefits and protections offered to domestic victims of human trafficking.
Sec. 103. Victim-centered child human trafficking deterrence block grant program.
Sec. 104. Direct services for victims of child pornography.
Sec. 105. Increasing compensation and restitution for trafficking victims.
Sec. 106. Streamlining human trafficking investigations.
Sec. 107. Enhancing human trafficking reporting.
Sec. 108. Reducing demand for sex trafficking.
Sec. 109. Sense of Congress.
Sec. 110. Using existing task forces and components to target offenders who exploit children.
Sec. 111. Targeting child predators.
Sec. 112. Monitoring all human traffickers as violent criminals.
Sec. 113. Crime victims' rights.
Sec. 114. Combat Human Trafficking Act.
Sec. 115. Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act.
Sec. 116. Bringing Missing Children Home Act.
Sec. 117. Grant accountability.

TITLE II—COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Subtitle A—Enhancing Services for Runaway and Homeless Victims of Youth Trafficking

Sec. 201. Amendments to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

Subtitle B—Improving the Response to Victims of Child Sex Trafficking

Sec. 211. Response to victims of child sex trafficking.

Subtitle C—Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking

Sec. 221. Victim of trafficking defined.
Sec. 222. Interagency task force report on child trafficking primary prevention.
Sec. 223. GAO Report on intervention.
Sec. 224. Provision of housing permitted to protect and assist in the recovery of victims of trafficking.

TITLE III—HERO ACT

Sec. 301. Short title.
Sec. 302. HERO Act.

TITLE IV—RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT

Sec. 401. Runaway and homeless youth and trafficking prevention.
Sec. 402. Response to missing children and victims of child sex trafficking.

TITLE V—STOP EXPLOITATION THROUGH TRAFFICKING ACT

Sec. 501. Short title.
Sec. 502. Safe Harbor Incentives.
Sec. 503. Report on restitution paid in connection with certain trafficking offenses.
Sec. 504. National human trafficking hotline.
Sec. 505. Job corps eligibility.
Sec. 506. Clarification of authority of the United States Marshals Service.
Sec. 507. Establishing a national strategy to combat human trafficking.

TITLE I—JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

SEC. 101. DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 201 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 3014. Additional special assessment

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and ending on September, 30 2019, in addition to the assessment imposed under section 3013, the court shall assess an amount of $5,000 on any non-indigent person or entity convicted of an offense under—

''(1) chapter 77 (relating to peonage, slavery, and trafficking in persons);

''(2) chapter 109A (relating to sexual abuse);

''(3) chapter 110 (relating to sexual exploitation and other abuse of children);

''(4) chapter 117 (relating to transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes); or

''(5) section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324) (relating to human smuggling), unless the person induced, assisted, abetted, or aided only an individual who at the time of such action was the alien's spouse, parent, son, or daughter (and no other individual) to enter the United States in violation of law.

''(b) SATISFACTION OF OTHER COURT-ORDERED OBLIGATIONS.—An assessment under subsection (a) shall not be payable until the person subject to the assessment has satisfied all outstanding court-ordered fines and orders of restitution arising from the criminal convictions on which the special assessment is based.

''(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund, to be known as the 'Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund' (referred to in this section as the 'Fund'), to be administered by the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

''(d) DEPOSITS.—Notwithstanding section 3302 of title 31, or any other law regarding the crediting of money received for the Government, there shall be deposited in the Fund an amount equal to the amount of the assessments collected under this section, which shall remain available until expended.

''(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts in the Fund, in addition to any other amounts available, and without further appropriation, the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, for each of fiscal years 2016 through

2020, use amounts available in the Fund to award grants or enhance victims' programming under—

''(A) sections 202, 203, and 204 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044a, 14044b, and 14044c);

''(B) subsections (b)(2) and (f) of section 107 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105); and

''(C) section 214(b) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13002(b)).

''(2) GRANTS.—Of the amounts in the Fund used under paragraph (1), not less than $2,000,000, if such amounts are available in the Fund during the relevant fiscal year, shall be used for grants to provide services for child pornography victims under section 214(b) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13002(b)).

''(f) TRANSFERS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Effective on the day after the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, on September 30 of each fiscal year, all unobligated balances in the Fund shall be transferred to the Crime Victims Fund established under section 1402 of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601).

''(2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts transferred under paragraph (1)—

''(A) shall be available for any authorized purpose of the Crime Victims Fund; and

''(B) shall remain available until expended.

''(g) COLLECTION METHOD.—The amount assessed under subsection (a) shall, subject to subsection (b), be collected in the manner that fines are collected in criminal cases.

''(h) DURATION OF OBLIGATION.—Subject to section 3613(b), the obligation to pay an assessment imposed on or after the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 shall not cease until the assessment is paid in full.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 201 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3013 the following:

''3014. Additional special assessment.''.

SEC. 102. CLARIFYING THE BENEFITS AND PROTECTIONS OFFERED TO DOMESTIC VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Section 107(b)(1) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (F) and (G) as subparagraphs (G) and (H), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following:

''(F) NO REQUIREMENT OF OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION FOR UNITED STATES CITIZENS AND LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS.—Nothing in this section may be construed to require United States citizens or lawful permanent residents who are victims of severe forms of trafficking to obtain an official certification from the Secretary of Health and Human Services in order to access any of the specialized services described in this subsection or any other Federal benefits and protections to which they are otherwise entitled.''; and

(3) in subparagraph (H), as redesignated, by striking ''subparagraph (F)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (G)''.

SEC. 103. VICTIM-CENTERED CHILD HUMAN TRAFFICKING DETERRENCE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 203 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044b) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 203. VICTIM-CENTERED CHILD HUMAN TRAFFICKING DETERRENCE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

''(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General may award block grants to an eligible entity to develop, improve, or expand domestic child human trafficking deterrence programs that assist law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judicial officials, and qualified victims' services organizations in collaborating to rescue and restore the lives of victims, while investigating and prosecuting offenses involving child human trafficking.

''(b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—Grants awarded under subsection (a) may be used for—

''(1) the establishment or enhancement of specialized training programs for law enforcement officers, first responders, health care officials, child welfare officials, juvenile justice personnel, prosecutors, and judicial personnel to—

''(A) identify victims and acts of child human trafficking;

''(B) address the unique needs of child victims of human trafficking;

''(C) facilitate the rescue of child victims of human trafficking;

''(D) investigate and prosecute acts of human trafficking, including the soliciting, patronizing, or purchasing of commercial sex acts from children, as well as training to build cases against complex criminal networks involved in child human trafficking; and

''(E) utilize, implement, and provide education on safe harbor laws enacted by States, aimed at preventing the criminalization and prosecution of child sex trafficking victims for prostitution offenses, and other laws aimed at the investigation and prosecution of child human trafficking;

''(2) the establishment or enhancement of dedicated anti-trafficking law enforcement units and task forces to investigate child human trafficking offenses and to rescue victims, including—

''(A) funding salaries, in whole or in part, for law enforcement officers, including patrol officers, detectives, and investigators, except that the percentage of the salary of the law enforcement officer paid for by funds from a grant awarded under this section shall not be more than the percentage of the officer's time on duty that is dedicated to working on cases involving child human trafficking;

''(B) investigation expenses for cases involving child human trafficking, including—

''(i) wire taps;

''(ii) consultants with expertise specific to cases involving child human trafficking;

''(iii) travel; and

''(iv) other technical assistance expenditures;

''(C) dedicated anti-trafficking prosecution units, including the funding of salaries for State and local prosecutors, including assisting in paying trial expenses for prosecution of child human trafficking offenders, except that the percentage of the total salary of a State or local prosecutor that is paid using an award under this section shall be not more than the percentage of the total number of hours worked by the prosecutor that is spent working on cases involving child human trafficking;

''(D) the establishment of child human trafficking victim witness safety, assistance, and relocation programs that encourage cooperation with law enforcement investigations of crimes of child human trafficking by leveraging existing resources and delivering child human trafficking victims' services through coordination with—

''(i) child advocacy centers;

''(ii) social service agencies;

''(iii) State governmental health service agencies;

''(iv) housing agencies;

''(v) legal services agencies; and

''(vi) nongovernmental organizations and shelter service providers with substantial experience in delivering wrap-around services to victims of child human trafficking; and

''(E) the establishment or enhancement of other necessary victim assistance programs or personnel, such as victim or child advocates, child-protective services, child forensic interviews, or other necessary service providers; and

''(3) the establishment or enhancement of problem solving court programs for trafficking victims that include—

''(A) mandatory and regular training requirements for judicial officials involved in the administration or operation of the court program described under this paragraph;

''(B) continuing judicial supervision of victims of child human trafficking, including case worker or child welfare supervision in collaboration with judicial officers, who have been identified by a law enforcement or judicial officer as a potential victim of child human trafficking, regardless of whether the victim has been charged with a crime related to human trafficking;

''(C) the development of a specialized and individualized, court-ordered treatment program for identified victims of child human trafficking, including—

''(i) State-administered outpatient treatment;

''(ii) life skills training;

''(iii) housing placement;

''(iv) vocational training;

''(v) education;

''(vi) family support services; and

''(vii) job placement;

''(D) centralized case management involving the consolidation of all of each child human trafficking victim's cases and offenses, and the coordination of all trafficking victim treatment programs and social services;

''(E) regular and mandatory court appearances by the victim during the duration of the treatment program for purposes of ensuring compliance and effectiveness;

''(F) the ultimate dismissal of relevant non-violent criminal charges against the victim, where such victim successfully complies with the terms of the court-ordered treatment program; and

''(G) collaborative efforts with child advocacy centers, child welfare agencies, shelters, and nongovernmental organizations with substantial experience in delivering wrap-around services to victims of child human trafficking to provide services to victims and encourage cooperation with law enforcement.

''(c) APPLICATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity shall submit an application to the Attorney General for a grant under this section in such form and manner as the Attorney General may require.

''(2) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—An application submitted under this subsection shall—

''(A) describe the activities for which assistance under this section is sought;

''(B) include a detailed plan for the use of funds awarded under the grant;

''(C) provide such additional information and assurances as the Attorney General determines to be necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of this section; and

''(D) disclose—

''(i) any other grant funding from the Department of Justice or from any other Federal department or agency for purposes similar to those described in subsection (b) for which the eligible entity has applied, and which application is pending on the date of the submission of an application under this section; and

''(ii) any other such grant funding that the eligible entity has received during the 5-year period ending on the date of the submission of an application under this section.

''(3) PREFERENCE.—In reviewing applications submitted in accordance with paragraphs (1) and (2), the Attorney General shall give preference to grant applications if—

''(A) the application includes a plan to use awarded funds to engage in all activities described under paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (b); or

''(B) the application includes a plan by the State or unit of local government to continue funding of all activities funded by the award after the expiration of the award.

''(d) DURATION AND RENEWAL OF AWARD.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant under this section shall expire 3 years after the date of award of the grant.

''(2) RENEWAL.—A grant under this section shall be renewable not more than 2 times and for a period of not greater than 2 years.

''(e) EVALUATION.—The Attorney General shall—

''(1) enter into a contract with a nongovernmental organization, including an academic or nonprofit organization, that has experience with issues related to child human trafficking and evaluation of grant programs to conduct periodic evaluations of grants made under this section to determine the impact and effectiveness of programs funded with grants awarded under this section;

''(2) instruct the Inspector General of the Department of Justice to review evaluations issued under paragraph (1) to determine the methodological and statistical validity of the evaluations; and

''(3) submit the results of any evaluation conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) to—

''(A) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

''(B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

''(f) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—An eligible entity awarded funds under this section that is found to have used grant funds for any unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost shall not be eligible for any grant funds awarded under the block grant for 2 fiscal years following the year in which the unauthorized expenditure or unallowable cost is reported.

''(g) COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENT.—An eligible entity shall not be eligible to receive a grant under this section if within the 5 fiscal years before submitting an application for a grant under this section, the grantee has been found to have violated the terms or conditions of a Government grant program by utilizing grant funds for unauthorized expenditures or otherwise unallowable costs.

''(h) ADMINISTRATIVE CAP.—The cost of administering the grants authorized by this section shall not exceed 5 percent of the total amount expended to carry out this section.

''(i) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of a program funded by a grant awarded under this section shall be—

''(1) 70 percent in the first year;

''(2) 60 percent in the second year; and

''(3) 50 percent in the third year, and in all subsequent years.

''(j) AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING; FULLY OFFSET.—For purposes of carrying out this section, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, is authorized to award not more than $7,000,000 of the funds available in the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund, established under section 3014 of title 18, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

''(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'child' means a person under the age of 18;

''(2) the term 'child advocacy center' means a center created under subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13001 et seq.);

''(3) the term 'child human trafficking' means 1 or more severe forms of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102)) involving a victim who is a child; and

''(4) the term 'eligible entity' means a State or unit of local government that—

''(A) has significant criminal activity involving child human trafficking;

''(B) has demonstrated cooperation between Federal, State, local, and, where applicable, tribal law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and social service providers in addressing child human trafficking;

''(C) has developed a workable, multi-disciplinary plan to combat child human trafficking, including—

''(i) the establishment of a shelter for victims of child human trafficking, through existing or new facilities;

''(ii) the provision of trauma-informed, gender-responsive rehabilitative care to victims of child human trafficking;

''(iii) the provision of specialized training for law enforcement officers and social service providers for all forms of human trafficking, with a focus on domestic child human trafficking;

''(iv) prevention, deterrence, and prosecution of offenses involving child human trafficking, including soliciting, patronizing, or purchasing human acts with children;

''(v) cooperation or referral agreements with organizations providing outreach or other related services to runaway and homeless youth;

''(vi) law enforcement protocols or procedures to screen all individuals arrested for prostitution, whether adult or child, for victimization by sex trafficking and by other crimes, such as sexual assault and domestic violence; and

''(vii) cooperation or referral agreements with State child welfare agencies and child advocacy centers; and

''(D) provides an assurance that, under the plan under subparagraph (C), a victim of child human trafficking shall not be required to collaborate with law enforcement officers to have access to any shelter or services provided with a grant under this section.

''(l) GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY; SPECIALIZED VICTIMS' SERVICE REQUIREMENT.—No grant funds under this section may be awarded or transferred to any entity unless such entity has demonstrated substantial experience providing services to victims of human trafficking or related populations (such as runaway and homeless youth), or employs staff specialized in the treatment of human trafficking victims.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (22 U.S.C. 7101 note) is amended by striking the item relating to section 203 and inserting the following:

''Sec. 203. Victim-centered child human trafficking deterrence block grant program.''.

SEC. 104. DIRECT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.

The Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13001 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 212(5) (42 U.S.C. 13001a(5)), by inserting '', including human trafficking and the production of child pornography'' before the semicolon at the end; and

(2) in section 214 (42 U.S.C. 13002)—

(A) by redesignating subsections (b), (c), and (d) as subsections (c), (d), and (e), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

''(b) DIRECT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY.—The Administrator, in coordination with the Director and with the Director of the Office of Victims of Crime, may make grants to develop and implement specialized programs to identify and provide direct services to victims of child pornography.''.

SEC. 105. INCREASING COMPENSATION AND RESTITUTION FOR TRAFFICKING VICTIMS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 18.—Section 1594 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking ''that was used or'' and inserting ''that was involved in, used, or''; and

(ii) by inserting '', and any property traceable to such property'' after ''such violation''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting '', or any property traceable to such property'' after ''such violation'';

(2) in subsection (e)(1)(A)—

(A) by striking ''used or'' and inserting ''involved in, used, or''; and

(B) by inserting '', and any property traceable to such property'' after ''any violation of this chapter'';

(3) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g); and

(4) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

''(f) TRANSFER OF FORFEITED ASSETS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Attorney General shall transfer assets forfeited pursuant to this section, or the proceeds derived from the sale thereof, to satisfy victim restitution orders arising from violations of this chapter.

''(2) PRIORITY.—Transfers pursuant to paragraph (1) shall have priority over any other claims to the assets or their proceeds.

''(3) USE OF NONFORFEITED ASSETS.—Transfers pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not reduce or otherwise mitigate the obligation of a person convicted of a violation of this chapter to satisfy the full amount of a restitution order through the use of non-forfeited assets or to reimburse the Attorney General for the value of assets or proceeds transferred under this subsection through the use of nonforfeited assets.''.

(b) AMENDMENT TO TITLE 28.—Section 524(c)(1)(B) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''chapter 77 of title 18,'' after ''criminal drug laws of the United States or of''.

(c) AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 31.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 97 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating section 9703 (as added by section 638(b)(1) of the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Act, 1993 (Public Law 102–393; 106 Stat. 1779)) as section 9705; and

(B) in section 9705(a), as redesignated—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) in subparagraph (I)—

(aa) by striking ''payment'' and inserting ''Payment''; and

(bb) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(II) in subparagraph (J), by striking ''payment'' and inserting ''Payment''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) in subparagraph (B)—

(aa) in clause (iii)—

(AA) in subclause (I), by striking ''or'' and inserting ''of''; and

(BB) in subclause (III), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(bb) in clause (iv), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(cc) by inserting after clause (iv) the following:

''(v) United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement with respect to a violation of chapter 77 of title 18 (relating to human trafficking);'';

(II) in subparagraph (G), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(III) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period.

(2) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) CROSS REFERENCES.—

(i) TITLE 28.—Section 524(c) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(I) in paragraph (4)(C), by striking ''section 9703(g)(4)(A)(ii)'' and inserting ''section 9705(g)(4)(A)'';

(II) in paragraph (10), by striking ''section 9703(p)'' and inserting ''section 9705(o)''; and

(III) in paragraph (11), by striking ''section 9703'' and inserting ''section 9705''.

(ii) TITLE 31.—Title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(I) in section 312(d), by striking ''section 9703'' and inserting ''section 9705''; and

(II) in section 5340(1), by striking ''section 9703(p)(1)'' and inserting ''section 9705(o)''.

(iii) TITLE 39.—Section 2003(e)(1) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''section 9703(p)'' and inserting ''section 9705(o)''.

(B) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for chapter 97 of title 31, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''9701. Fees and charges for Government services and things of value.
''9702. Investment of trust funds.
''9703. Managerial accountability and flexibility.
''9704. Pilot projects for managerial accountability and flexibility.
''9705. Department of the Treasury Forfeiture Fund.''.

SEC. 106. STREAMLINING HUMAN TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATIONS.

Section 2516 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (a), by inserting a comma after ''weapons)'';

(B) in subparagraph (c)—

(i) by inserting ''section 1581 (peonage), section 1584 (involuntary servitude), section 1589 (forced labor), section 1590 (trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor),'' before ''section 1591'';

(ii) by inserting ''section 1592 (unlawful conduct with respect to documents in furtherance of trafficking, peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor),'' before ''section 1751'';

(iii) by inserting a comma after ''virus)'';

(iv) by striking '',, section'' and inserting a comma;

(v) by striking ''or'' after ''misuse of passports),''; and

(vi) by inserting ''or'' before ''section 555'';

(C) in subparagraph (j), by striking ''pipeline,)'' and inserting ''pipeline),''; and

(D) in subparagraph (p), by striking ''documents, section 1028A (relating to aggravated identity theft))'' and inserting ''documents), section 1028A (relating to aggravated identity theft)''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, child pornography production,'' after ''kidnapping''.

SEC. 107. ENHANCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORTING.

Section 505 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3755) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) PART 1 VIOLENT CRIMES TO INCLUDE HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—For purposes of this section, the term 'part 1 violent crimes' shall include severe forms of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102)).''.

SEC. 108. REDUCING DEMAND FOR SEX TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''or maintains'' and inserting ''maintains, patronizes, or solicits'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or obtained'' and inserting ''obtained, patronized, or solicited''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''or obtained'' and inserting ''obtained, patronized, or solicited''; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking ''or maintained'' and inserting '', maintained, patronized, or solicited''; and

(B) by striking ''knew that the person'' and inserting ''knew, or recklessly disregarded the fact, that the person''.

(b) DEFINITION AMENDED.—Section 103(10) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(10)) is amended by striking ''or obtaining'' and inserting ''obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting''.

(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the amendments made by this section is to clarify the range of conduct punished as sex trafficking.

SEC. 109. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, defines a sex trafficker as a person who ''knowingly. . .recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, or maintains by any means a person . . . knowing, or in reckless disregard of the fact, that means of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion . . . or any combination of such means will be used to cause the person to engage in a commercial sex act, or that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act'';

(2) while use of the word ''obtains'' in section 1591, United States Code, has been interpreted, prior to the date of enactment of this Act, to encompass those who purchase illicit sexual acts from trafficking victims, some confusion persists;

(3) in United States vs. Jungers, 702 F.3d 1066 (8th Cir. 2013), the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled that section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, applied to persons who purchase illicit sexual acts with trafficking victims after the United States District Court for the District of South Dakota erroneously granted motions to acquit these buyers in two separate cases; and

(4) section 108 of this title amends section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, to add the words ''solicits or patronizes'' to the sex trafficking statute making absolutely clear for judges, juries, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials that criminals who purchase sexual acts from human trafficking victims may be arrested, prosecuted, and convicted as sex trafficking offenders when this is merited by the facts of a particular case.

SEC. 110. USING EXISTING TASK FORCES AND COMPONENTS TO TARGET OFFENDERS WHO EXPLOIT CHILDREN.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall ensure that—

(1) all task forces and working groups within the Innocence Lost National Initiative engage in activities, programs, or operations to increase the investigative capabilities of State and local law enforcement officers in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of persons who patronize, or solicit children for sex; and

(2) all components and task forces with jurisdiction to detect, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor trafficking engage in activities, programs, or operations to increase the capacity of such components to deter and punish child labor trafficking.

SEC. 111. TARGETING CHILD PREDATORS.

(a) CLARIFYING THAT CHILD PORNOGRAPHY PRODUCERS ARE HUMAN TRAFFICKERS.—Section 2423(f) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''means (1) a'' and inserting the following: ''means—

''(1) a'';

(2) by striking ''United States; or (2) any'' and inserting the following: ''United States;

''(2) any''; and

(3) by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: ''; or

''(3) production of child pornography (as defined in section 2256(8)).''.

(b) HOLDING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACCOUNTABLE.—Section 2423(g) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''a preponderance of the evidence'' and inserting ''clear and convincing evidence''.

SEC. 112. MONITORING ALL HUMAN TRAFFICKERS AS VIOLENT CRIMINALS.

Section 3156(a)(4)(C) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''77,'' after ''chapter''.

SEC. 113. CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3771 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

''(9) The right to be informed in a timely manner of any plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement.

''(10) The right to be informed of the rights under this section and the services described in section 503(c) of the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 10607(c)) and provided contact information for the Office of the Victims' Rights Ombudsman of the Department of Justice.'';

(2) in subsection (d)(3), in the fifth sentence, by inserting '', unless the litigants, with the approval of the court, have stipulated to a different time period for consideration'' before the period; and

(3) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking ''this chapter, the term'' and inserting the following: ''this chapter:

''(1) COURT OF APPEALS.—The term 'court of appeals' means—

''(A) the United States court of appeals for the judicial district in which a defendant is being prosecuted; or

''(B) for a prosecution in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

''(2) CRIME VICTIM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term'';

(B) by striking ''In the case'' and inserting the following:

''(B) MINORS AND CERTAIN OTHER VICTIMS.—In the case''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) DISTRICT COURT; COURT.—The terms 'district court' and 'court' include the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.''.

(b) CRIME VICTIMS FUND.—Section 1402(d)(3)(A)(i) of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601(d)(3)(A)(i)) is amended by inserting ''section'' before ''3771''.

(c) APPELLATE REVIEW OF PETITIONS RELATING TO CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3771(d)(3) of title 18, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2) of this section, is amended by inserting after the fifth sentence the following: ''In deciding such application, the court of appeals shall apply ordinary standards of appellate review.''.

(2) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any

petition for a writ of mandamus filed under section 3771(d)(3) of title 18, United States Code, that is pending on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 114. COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015''.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMERCIAL SEX ACT; SEVERE FORMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS; STATE; TASK FORCE.—The terms ''commercial sex act'', ''severe forms of trafficking in persons'', ''State'', and ''Task Force'' have the meanings given those terms in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

(2) COVERED OFFENDER.—The term ''covered offender'' means an individual who obtains, patronizes, or solicits a commercial sex act involving a person subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(3) COVERED OFFENSE.—The term ''covered offense'' means the provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a commercial sex act involving a person subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(4) FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term ''Federal law enforcement officer'' has the meaning given the term in section 115 of title 18, United States Code.

(5) LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term ''local law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of a unit of local government authorized by law or by a local government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(6) STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term ''State law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of a State authorized by law or by a State government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TRAINING AND POLICY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, PROSECUTORS, AND JUDGES.—

(1) TRAINING.—

(A) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that each anti-human trafficking program operated by the Department of Justice, including each anti-human trafficking training program for Federal, State, or local law enforcement officers, includes technical training on—

(i) effective methods for investigating and prosecuting covered offenders; and

(ii) facilitating the provision of physical and mental health services by health care providers to persons subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(B) FEDERAL PROSECUTORS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that each anti-human trafficking program operated by the Department of Justice for United States attorneys or other Federal prosecutors includes training on seeking restitution for offenses under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, to ensure that each United States attorney or other Federal prosecutor, upon obtaining a conviction for such an offense, requests a specific amount of restitution for each victim of the offense without regard to whether the victim requests restitution.

(C) JUDGES.—The Federal Judicial Center shall provide training to judges relating to the application of section 1593 of title 18, United States Code, with respect to ordering restitution for victims of offenses under chapter 77 of such title.

(2) POLICY FOR FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that Federal law enforcement officers are engaged in activities, programs, or operations involving the detection, investigation, and prosecution of covered offenders.

(d) MINIMUM PERIOD OF SUPERVISED RELEASE FOR CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT COMMERCIAL CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.—Section 3583(k) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''1594(c),'' after ''1591,''.

(e) BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS REPORT ON STATE ENFORCEMENT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROHIBITIONS.—The Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics shall—

(1) prepare an annual report on—

(A) the rates of—

(i) arrest of individuals by State law enforcement officers for a covered offense;

(ii) prosecution (including specific charges) of individuals in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(iii) conviction of individuals in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(B) sentences imposed on individuals convicted in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(2) submit the annual report prepared under paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives;

(B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

(C) the Task Force;

(D) the Senior Policy Operating Group established under section 105(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(g)); and

(E) the Attorney General.

SEC. 115. SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING EMPOWERMENT ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act''.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking (referred to in this section as the ''Council''), which shall provide advice and recommendations to the Senior Policy Operating Group established under section 105(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(g)) (referred to in this section as the ''Group'') and the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking established under section 105(a) of such Act (referred to in this section as the ''Task Force'').

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) COMPOSITION.—The Council shall be composed of not less than 8 and not more than 14 individuals who are survivors of human trafficking.

(2) REPRESENTATION OF SURVIVORS.—To the extent practicable, members of the Council shall be survivors of trafficking, who shall accurately reflect the diverse backgrounds of survivors of trafficking, including—

(A) survivors of sex trafficking and survivors of labor trafficking; and

(B) survivors who are United States citizens and survivors who are aliens lawfully present in the United States.

(3) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the President shall appoint the members of the Council.

(4) TERM; REAPPOINTMENT.—Each member of the Council shall serve for a term of 2 years and may be reappointed by the President to serve 1 additional 2-year term.

(d) FUNCTIONS.—The Council shall—

(1) be a nongovernmental advisory body to the Group;

(2) meet, at its own discretion or at the request of the Group, not less frequently than annually to review Federal Government policy and programs intended to combat human trafficking, including programs relating to the provision of services for victims and serve as a point of contact for Federal agencies reaching out to human trafficking survivors for input on programming and policies relating to human trafficking in the United States;

(3) formulate assessments and recommendations to ensure that policy and programming efforts of the Federal Government conform, to the extent practicable, to the best practices in the field of human trafficking prevention; and

(4) meet with the Group not less frequently than annually, and not later than 45 days before a meeting with the Task Force, to formally present the findings and recommendations of the Council.

(e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and each year thereafter until the date described in subsection (h), the Council shall submit a report that contains the findings derived from the reviews conducted pursuant to subsection (d)(2) to—

(1) the chair of the Task Force;

(2) the members of the Group;

(3) the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Appropriations, and the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

(4) the Committees on Foreign Relations, Appropriations, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and the Judiciary of the Senate.

(f) EMPLOYEE STATUS.—Members of the Council—

(1) shall not be considered employees of the Federal Government for any purpose; and

(2) shall not receive compensation other than reimbursement of travel expenses and per diem allowance in accordance with section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(g) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FACA.—The Council shall not be subject to the requirements under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(h) SUNSET.—The Council shall terminate on September 30, 2020.

SEC. 116. BRINGING MISSING CHILDREN HOME ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Bringing Missing Children Home Act''.

(b) CRIME CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS.—Section 3702 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5780) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) a recent photograph of the child, if available;''; and

(3) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''paragraph (2)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)'';

(B) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''60 days'' and inserting ''30 days''; and

(ii) by inserting ''and a photograph taken during the previous 180 days'' after ''dental records'';

(C) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(D) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D);

(E) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children of each report received relating to a child reported missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution;'';

(F) in subparagraph (D), as redesignated—

(i) by inserting ''State and local child welfare systems and'' before ''the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(G) by adding at the end the following:

''(E) grant permission to the National Crime Information Center Terminal Contractor for the State to update the missing person record in the National Crime Information Center computer networks with additional information learned during the investigation relating to the missing person.''.

SEC. 117. GRANT ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''covered grant'' means a grant awarded by the Attorney General under section 203 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044b), as amended by section 103.

(b) ACCOUNTABILITY.—All covered grants shall be subject to the following accountability provisions:

(1) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act, and in each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall conduct audits of recipients of a covered grant to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees. The Inspector General shall determine the appropriate number of grantees to be audited each year.

(B) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term ''unresolved audit finding'' means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General that the audited grantee has utilized grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved within 12 months from the date when the final audit report is issued.

(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of a covered grant that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive a covered grant during the following 2 fiscal years.

(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding covered grants the Attorney General shall give priority to eligible entities that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years prior to submitting an application for a covered grant.

(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If an entity is awarded a covered grant during the 2-fiscal-year period in which the entity is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

(i) deposit an amount equal to the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the General Fund of the Treasury; and

(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the fund from the grant recipient that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

(2) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph and covered grants, the term ''nonprofit organization'' means an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

(B) PROHIBITION.—The Attorney General may not award a covered grant to a nonprofit organization that holds money in offshore accounts for the purpose of avoiding paying the tax described in section 511(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(C) DISCLOSURE.—Each nonprofit organization that is awarded a covered grant and uses the procedures prescribed in regulations to create a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness for the compensation of its officers, directors, trustees and key employees, shall disclose to the Attorney General, in the application for the grant, the process for determining such compensation, including the independent persons involved in reviewing and approving such compensation, the comparability data used, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision. Upon request, the Attorney General shall make the information disclosed under this subsection available for public inspection.

(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts transferred to the Department of Justice under this title, or the amendments made by this title, may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or organization awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this title, or the amendments made by this title, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than $20,000 in Department funds, unless the Deputy Attorney General or such Assistant Attorney Generals, Directors, or principal deputies as the Deputy Attorney General may designate, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host a conference.

(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food and beverages, audiovisual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and any entertainment.

(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives on all approved conference expenditures referenced in this paragraph.

(D) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Beginning in the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this title, the Attorney General shall submit, to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, an annual certification that—

(i) all audits issued by the Office of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) have been completed and reviewed by the appropriate Assistant Attorney General or Director;

(ii) all mandatory exclusions required under paragraph (1)(C) have been issued;

(iii) all reimbursements required under paragraph (1)(E) have been made; and

(iv) includes a list of any grant recipients excluded under paragraph (1) from the previous year.

(4) PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts awarded under this title, or any amendments made by this title, may not be utilized by any grant recipient to—

(i) lobby any representative of the Department of Justice regarding the award of grant funding; or

(ii) lobby any representative of a Federal, State, local, or tribal government regarding the award of grant funding.

(B) PENALTY.—If the Attorney General determines that any recipient of a covered grant has violated subparagraph (A), the Attorney General shall—

(i) require the grant recipient to repay the grant in full; and

(ii) prohibit the grant recipient from receiving another covered grant for not less than 5 years.

TITLE II—COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Subtitle A—Enhancing Services for Runaway and Homeless Victims of Youth Trafficking

SEC. 201. AMENDMENTS TO THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH ACT.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 343(b)(5) (42 U.S.C. 5714–23(b)(5))—

(A) in subparagraph (A) by inserting '', severe forms of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9))), and sex trafficking (as defined in section 103(10) of such Act (22 U.S.C. 7102(10)))'' before the semicolon at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (B) by inserting '', severe forms of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9))), or sex trafficking (as defined in section 103(10) of such Act (22 U.S.C. 7102(10)))'' after ''assault''; and

(C) in subparagraph (C) by inserting '', including such youth who are victims of trafficking (as defined in section 103(15) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(15)))'' before the semicolon at the end; and

(2) in section 351(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714–41(a)) by striking ''or sexual exploitation'' and inserting ''sexual exploitation, severe forms of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9))), or sex trafficking (as defined in section 103(10) of such Act (22 U.S.C. 7102(10)))''.

Subtitle B—Improving the Response to Victims of Child Sex Trafficking

SEC. 211. RESPONSE TO VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.

Section 404(b)(1)(P)(iii) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5773(b)(1)(P)(iii)) is amended by striking ''child prostitution'' and inserting ''child sex trafficking, including child prostitution''.

Subtitle C—Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking

SEC. 221. VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING DEFINED.

In this subtitle, the term ''victim of trafficking'' has the meaning given such term in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

SEC. 222. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE REPORT ON CHILD TRAFFICKING PRIMARY PREVENTION.

(a) REVIEW.—The Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, established under section 105 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103), shall conduct a review that, with regard to trafficking in persons in the United States—

(1) in consultation with nongovernmental organizations that the Task Force determines appropriate, surveys and catalogs the activities of the Federal Government and State governments—

(A) to deter individuals from committing trafficking offenses; and

(B) to prevent children from becoming victims of trafficking;

(2) surveys academic literature on—

(A) deterring individuals from committing trafficking offenses;

(B) preventing children from becoming victims of trafficking;

(C) the commercial sexual exploitation of children; and

(D) other similar topics that the Task Force determines to be appropriate;

(3) identifies best practices and effective strategies—

(A) to deter individuals from committing trafficking offenses; and

(B) to prevent children from becoming victims of trafficking; and

(4) identifies current gaps in research and data that would be helpful in formulating effective strategies—

(A) to deter individuals from committing trafficking offenses; and

(B) to prevent children from becoming victims of trafficking.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the

Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking shall provide to Congress, and make publicly available in electronic format, a report on the review conducted pursuant to subparagraph (a).

SEC. 223. GAO REPORT ON INTERVENTION.

On the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to Congress that includes information on—

(1) the efforts of Federal and select State law enforcement agencies to combat human trafficking in the United States; and

(2) each Federal grant program, a purpose of which is to combat human trafficking or assist victims of trafficking, as specified in an authorizing statute or in a guidance document issued by the agency carrying out the grant program.

SEC. 224. PROVISION OF HOUSING PERMITTED TO PROTECT AND ASSIST IN THE RECOVERY OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Section 107(b)(2)(A) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)(A)) is amended by inserting ‘‘, including programs that provide housing to victims of trafficking’’ before the period at the end.

TITLE III—HERO ACT

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ‘‘Human Exploitation Rescue Operations Act of 2015’’ or the ‘‘HERO Act of 2015’’.

SEC. 302. HERO ACT.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The illegal market for the production and distribution of child abuse imagery is a growing threat to children in the United States. International demand for this material creates a powerful incentive for the rape, abuse, and torture of children within the United States.

(2) The targeting of United States children by international criminal networks is a threat to the homeland security of the United States. This threat must be fought with trained personnel and highly specialized counter-child-exploitation strategies and technologies.

(3) The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security serves a critical national security role in protecting the United States from the growing international threat of child exploitation and human trafficking.

(4) The Cyber Crimes Center of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a vital national resource in the effort to combat international child exploitation, providing advanced expertise and assistance in investigations, computer forensics, and victim identification.

(5) The returning military heroes of the United States possess unique and valuable skills that can assist law enforcement in combating global sexual and child exploitation, and the Department of Homeland Security should use this national resource to the maximum extent possible.

(6) Through the Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child Rescue Corps program, the returning military heroes of the United States are trained and hired to investigate crimes of child exploitation in order to target predators and rescue children from sexual abuse and slavery.

(b) CYBER CRIMES CENTER, CHILD EXPLOITATION INVESTIGATIONS UNIT, AND COMPUTER FORENSICS UNIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle H of title VIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

‘‘SEC. 890A. CYBER CRIMES CENTER, CHILD EXPLOITATION INVESTIGATIONS UNIT, COMPUTER FORENSICS UNIT, AND CYBER CRIMES UNIT.

‘‘(a) CYBER CRIMES CENTER.—

‘‘(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall operate, within United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a Cyber Crimes Center (referred to in this section as the ‘Center’).

‘‘(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Center shall be to provide investigative assistance, training, and equipment to support United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s domestic and international investigations of cyber-related crimes.

‘‘(b) CHILD EXPLOITATION INVESTIGATIONS UNIT.—

‘‘(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall operate, within the Center, a Child Exploitation Investigations Unit (referred to in this subsection as the ‘CEIU’).

‘‘(2) FUNCTIONS.—The CEIU—

‘‘(A) shall coordinate all United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement child exploitation initiatives, including investigations into—

‘‘(i) child exploitation;

‘‘(ii) child pornography;

‘‘(iii) child victim identification;

‘‘(iv) traveling child sex offenders; and

‘‘(v) forced child labor, including the sexual exploitation of minors;

‘‘(B) shall, among other things, focus on—

‘‘(i) child exploitation prevention;

‘‘(ii) investigative capacity building;

‘‘(iii) enforcement operations; and

‘‘(iv) training for Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement agency personnel, upon request;

‘‘(C) shall provide training, technical expertise, support, or coordination of child exploitation investigations, as needed, to cooperating law enforcement agencies and personnel;

‘‘(D) shall provide psychological support and counseling services for United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel engaged in child exploitation prevention initiatives, including making available other existing services to assist employees who are exposed to child exploitation material during investigations;

‘‘(E) is authorized to collaborate with the Department of Defense and the National Association to Protect Children for the purpose of the recruiting, training, equipping and hiring of wounded, ill, and injured veterans and transitioning service members, through the Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child Rescue Corps program; and

‘‘(F) shall collaborate with other governmental, nongovernmental, and nonprofit entities approved by the Secretary for the sponsorship of, and participation in, outreach and training activities.

‘‘(3) DATA COLLECTION.—The CEIU shall collect and maintain data concerning—

‘‘(A) the total number of suspects identified by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

‘‘(B) the number of arrests by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, disaggregated by type, including—

‘‘(i) the number of victims identified through investigations carried out by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and

‘‘(ii) the number of suspects arrested who were in positions of trust or authority over children;

‘‘(C) the number of cases opened for investigation by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and

‘‘(D) the number of cases resulting in a Federal, State, foreign, or military prosecution.

‘‘(4) AVAILABILITY OF DATA TO CONGRESS.—In addition to submitting the reports required under paragraph (7), the CEIU shall make the data collected and maintained under paragraph (3) available to the committees of Congress described in paragraph (7).

‘‘(5) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The CEIU is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements to accomplish the functions set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3).

‘‘(6) ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS.—

‘‘(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to accept monies and in-kind donations from the Virtual Global Taskforce, national laboratories, Federal agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions to create and expand public awareness campaigns in support of the functions of the CEIU.

‘‘(B) EXEMPTION FROM FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION.—Gifts authorized under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation for competition when the services provided by the entities referred to in such subparagraph are donated or of minimal cost to the Department.

‘‘(7) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the HERO Act of 2015, and annually for the following 4 years, the CEIU shall—

‘‘(A) submit a report containing a summary of the data collected pursuant to paragraph (3) during the previous year to—

‘‘(i) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

‘‘(ii) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

‘‘(iii) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

‘‘(iv) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives;

‘‘(v) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives; and

‘‘(vi) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

‘‘(B) make a copy of each report submitted under subparagraph (A) publicly available on the website of the Department.

‘‘(c) COMPUTER FORENSICS UNIT.—

‘‘(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall operate, within the Center, a Computer Forensics Unit (referred to in this subsection as the ‘CFU’).

‘‘(2) FUNCTIONS.—The CFU—

‘‘(A) shall provide training and technical support in digital forensics to—

‘‘(i) United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel; and

‘‘(ii) Federal, State, local, tribal, military, and foreign law enforcement agency personnel engaged in the investigation of crimes within their respective jurisdictions, upon request and subject to the availability of funds;

‘‘(B) shall provide computer hardware, software, and forensic licenses for all computer forensics personnel within United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

‘‘(C) shall participate in research and development in the area of digital forensics, in coordination with appropriate components of the Department; and

‘‘(D) is authorized to collaborate with the Department of Defense and the National Association to Protect Children for the purpose of recruiting, training, equipping, and hiring wounded, ill, and injured veterans and transitioning service members, through the Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child Rescue Corps program.

‘‘(3) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The CFU is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements to accomplish the functions set forth in paragraph (2).

‘‘(4) ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS.—

‘‘(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to accept monies and in-kind donations

from the Virtual Global Task Force, national laboratories, Federal agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions to create and expand public awareness campaigns in support of the functions of the CFU.

''(B) EXEMPTION FROM FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION.—Gifts authorized under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation for competition when the services provided by the entities referred to in such subparagraph are donated or of minimal cost to the Department.

''(d) CYBER CRIMES UNIT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall operate, within the Center, a Cyber Crimes Unit (referred to in this subsection as the 'CCU').

''(2) FUNCTIONS.—The CCU—

''(A) shall oversee the cyber security strategy and cyber-related operations and programs for United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

''(B) shall enhance United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ability to combat criminal enterprises operating on or through the Internet, with specific focus in the areas of—

''(i) cyber economic crime;

''(ii) digital theft of intellectual property;

''(iii) illicit e-commerce (including hidden marketplaces);

''(iv) Internet-facilitated proliferation of arms and strategic technology; and

''(v) cyber-enabled smuggling and money laundering;

''(C) shall provide training and technical support in cyber investigations to—

''(i) United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel; and

''(ii) Federal, State, local, tribal, military, and foreign law enforcement agency personnel engaged in the investigation of crimes within their respective jurisdictions, upon request and subject to the availability of funds;

''(D) shall participate in research and development in the area of cyber investigations, in coordination with appropriate components of the Department; and

''(E) is authorized to recruit participants of the Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child Rescue Corps program for investigative and forensic positions in support of the functions of the CCU.

''(3) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The CCU is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements to accomplish the functions set forth in paragraph (2).

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.''.

(2) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101 note) is amended by adding after the item relating to section 890 the following:

''Sec. 890A. Cyber crimes center, child exploitation investigations unit, computer forensics unit, and cyber crimes unit.''.

(c) HERO CORPS HIRING.—It is the sense of Congress that Homeland Security Investigations of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement should hire, recruit, train, and equip wounded, ill, or injured military veterans (as defined in section 101, title 38, United States Code) who are affiliated with the HERO Child Rescue Corps program for investigative, intelligence, analyst, and forensic positions.

(d) INVESTIGATING CHILD EXPLOITATION.—Section 307(b)(3) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 187(b)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) conduct research and development for the purpose of advancing technology for the investigation of child exploitation crimes, including child victim identification, trafficking in persons, and child pornography, and for advanced forensics.''.

TITLE IV—RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT

SEC. 401. RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Except as otherwise specifically provided, whenever in this section an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a provision, the amendment or repeal shall be considered to be made to a provision of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.).

(c) FINDINGS.—Section 302 (42 U.S.C. 5701) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and'' before ''linguistically appropriate'';

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking ''outside the welfare system and the law enforcement system'' and inserting '', in collaboration with public assistance systems, the law enforcement system, and the child welfare system'';

(3) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by inserting ''a safe place to live and'' after ''youth need''; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in paragraph (6), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) runaway and homeless youth are at a high risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.''.

(d) BASIC CENTER GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) GRANTS FOR CENTERS AND SERVICES.—Section 311(a) (42 U.S.C. 5711(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''services'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''safe shelter and services, including trauma-informed services, for runaway and homeless youth and, if appropriate, services for the families of such youth, including (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''mental health,'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''21 days; and'' and inserting ''30 days;'';

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''individual'';

(bb) by inserting '', as appropriate,'' after ''group''; and

(cc) by striking ''as appropriate'' and inserting ''including (if appropriate) counseling for individuals identified by such youth as family''; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) suicide prevention services; and''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) in clause (ii), by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''home-based services'';

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

(III) in clause (iv), by striking ''diseases.'' and inserting ''infections;''; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) trauma-informed and gender-responsive services for runaway or homeless youth, including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(vi) an assessment of family engagement in support and reunification (if reunification is appropriate), interventions, and services for parents or legal guardians of such youth, or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family.''.

(2) ELIGIBILITY; PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—Section 312 (42 U.S.C. 5712) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (5), by inserting '', or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family,'' after ''parents or legal guardians'';

(ii) in paragraph (6), by striking ''cultural minority and persons with limited ability to speak English'' and inserting ''cultural minority, persons with limited ability to speak English, and runaway or homeless youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation'';

(iii) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following:

''(7) shall keep adequate statistical records profiling the youth and family members of such youth whom the applicant serves, including demographic information on and the number of—

''(A) such youth who are not referred to out-of-home shelter services;

''(B) such youth who are members of vulnerable or underserved populations;

''(C) such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation, disaggregated by—

''(i) such youth who have been coerced or forced into a commercial sex act, as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

''(ii) such youth who have been coerced or forced into other forms of labor; and

''(iii) such youth who have engaged in a commercial sex act, as so defined, for any reason other than by coercion or force;

''(D) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(E) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(F) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system;'';

(iv) by redesignating paragraphs (8) through (13) as paragraphs (9) through (14);

(v) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

''(8) shall ensure that—

''(A) the records described in paragraph (7), on an individual runaway or homeless youth, shall not be disclosed without the consent of the individual youth and of the parent or legal guardian of such youth or (if appropriate) an individual identified by such youth as family, to anyone other than another agency compiling statistical records or a government agency involved in the disposition of criminal charges against an individual runaway or homeless youth; and

''(B) reports or other documents based on the statistics described in paragraph (7) shall not disclose the identity of any individual runaway or homeless youth;'';

(vi) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated, by striking ''statistical summaries'' and inserting ''statistics'';

(vii) in paragraph (13)(C), as so redesignated—

(I) by striking clause (i) and inserting:

''(i) the number and characteristics of runaway and homeless youth, and youth at risk of family separation, who participate in the project, including such information on—

''(I) such youth (including both types of such participating youth) who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation, disaggregated by—

''(aa) such youth who have been coerced or forced into a commercial sex act, as defined

in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

''(bb) such youth who have been coerced or forced into other forms of labor; and

''(cc) such youth who have engaged in a commercial sex act, as so defined, for any reason other than by coercion or force;

''(II) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(III) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(IV) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system; and''; and

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

(viii) in paragraph (14), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''for natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies;''; and

(ix) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) shall provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to runaway and homeless youth; and

''(16) shall assist youth in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1090).''; and

(B) in subsection (d)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' after ''provide'';

(II) by striking ''families (including unrelated individuals in the family households) of such youth'' and inserting ''families of such youth (including unrelated individuals in the family households of such youth and, if appropriate, individuals identified by such youth as family)''; and

(III) by inserting ''suicide prevention,'' after ''physical health care,''; and

(ii) in paragraph (4), by inserting '', including training on trauma-informed and youth-centered care'' after ''home-based services''.

(3) APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS.—Section 313(b) (42 U.S.C. 5713(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''priority to'' and all that follows through ''who'' and inserting ''priority to eligible applicants who'';

(B) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(C) by striking paragraph (2).

(e) TRANSITIONAL LIVING GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714–2(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''information and counseling services''; and

(B) by striking ''job attainment skills, and mental and physical health care'' and inserting ''job attainment skills, mental and physical health care, and suicide prevention services'';

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (8) and (9) through (16) as paragraphs (5) through (10) and (12) through (19), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) to provide counseling to homeless youth and to encourage, if appropriate, the involvement in such counseling of their parents or legal guardians, or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family;

''(4) to provide aftercare services, if possible, to homeless youth who have received shelter and services from a transitional living youth project, including (to the extent practicable) such youth who, after receiving such shelter and services, relocate to a State other than the State in which such project is located;'';

(4) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated—

(A) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' after ''referral of homeless youth to'';

(B) by striking ''and health care programs'' and inserting ''mental health service and health care programs, including programs providing wrap-around services to victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation,''; and

(C) by striking ''such services for youths;'' and inserting ''such programs described in this paragraph;'';

(5) by inserting after paragraph (10), as so redesignated, the following:

''(11) to develop a plan to provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable that address the needs of homeless and street youth;'';

(6) in paragraph (12), as so redesignated, by striking ''the applicant and statistical'' through ''who participate in such project,'' and inserting ''the applicant, statistical summaries describing the number, the characteristics, and the demographic information of the homeless youth who participate in such project, including the prevalence of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of such youth,''; and

(7) in paragraph (19), as so redesignated, by inserting ''regarding responses to natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies'' after ''management plan''.

(f) COORDINATING, TRAINING, RESEARCH, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.—

(1) COORDINATION.—Section 341 (42 U.S.C. 5714–21) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''safety, well-being,'' after ''health,''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''other Federal entities'' and inserting ''the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice''.

(2) GRANTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING.—Section 342 (42 U.S.C. 5714–22) is amended by inserting '', including onsite and web-based techniques, such as on-demand and online learning,'' before ''to public and private entities''.

(3) GRANTS FOR RESEARCH, EVALUATION, DEMONSTRATION, AND SERVICE PROJECTS.—Section 343 (42 U.S.C. 5714–23) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (5)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''violence, trauma, and'' before ''sexual abuse and assault'';

(II) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''sexual abuse and assault; and'' and inserting ''sexual abuse or assault, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation;'';

(III) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''who have been sexually victimized'' and inserting ''who are victims of sexual abuse or assault, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation''; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) best practices for identifying and providing age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to—

''(i) vulnerable and underserved youth populations; and

''(ii) youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(E) verifying youth as runaway or homeless to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1090);'';

(ii) in paragraph (9), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in paragraph (10), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(11) examining the intersection between the runaway and homeless youth populations and trafficking in persons, including noting whether such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons were previously involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.''; and

(B) in subsection (c)(2)(B), by inserting '', including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation'' after ''runaway or homeless youth''.

(4) PERIODIC ESTIMATE OF INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.—Section 345 (42 U.S.C. 5714–25) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by striking ''13'' and inserting ''12''; and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) that includes demographic information about and characteristics of runaway or homeless youth, including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(4) that does not disclose the identity of any runaway or homeless youth.''; and

(B) in subsection (b)(1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''13'' and inserting ''12'';

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

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C);

(iv) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) incidences, if any, of—

''(i) such individuals who are victims of trafficking in persons; or

''(ii) such individuals who are victims of sexual exploitation; and''; and

(v) in subparagraph (C), as so redesignated—

(I) in clause (ii), by striking ''; and'' and inserting '', including mental health services;''; and

(II) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) access to education and job training; and''.

(g) SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM.—Section 351 (42 U.S.C. 5714–41) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''public and'' before ''nonprofit''; and

(B) by striking ''prostitution, or sexual exploitation.'' and inserting ''violence, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an applicant shall certify to the Secretary that such applicant has systems in place to ensure that such applicant can provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to all youth described in subsection (a).''.

(h) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

(1) REPORTS.—Section 382(a) (42 U.S.C. 5715(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (D) as subparagraphs (C) through (E), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) collecting data on trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of runaway and homeless youth;''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) the number and characteristics of homeless youth served by such projects, including—

''(i) such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation;

''(ii) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(iii) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(iv) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system;''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''intrafamily problems'' and inserting ''problems within the family, including (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family,''.

(2) NONDISCRIMINATION.—Part F is amended by inserting after section 386A (42 U.S.C. 5732–1) the following:

''SEC. 386B. NONDISCRIMINATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in section 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under this title, or any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with amounts appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance administered under this title.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—If sex segregation or sex-specific programming is necessary to the essential operation of a program, nothing in this section shall prevent any such program or activity from consideration of an individual's sex. In such circumstances, grantees may meet the requirements of this section by providing comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming.

''(c) DISQUALIFICATION.—The authority of the Secretary to enforce this section shall be the same as that provided for with respect to section 654 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9849).

''(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed, interpreted, or applied to supplant, displace, preempt, or otherwise limit the responsibilities and liabilities under other Federal or State civil rights laws.''.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—Section 387 (42 U.S.C. 5732a) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (6), and paragraphs (7) and (8), as paragraphs (2) through (7), and paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

''(1) CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE.—The term 'culturally and linguistically appropriate', with respect to services, has the meaning given the term 'culturally and linguistically appropriate services' in the 'National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care', issued in April 2013, by the Office of Minority Health of the Department of Health and Human Services.'';

(C) in paragraph (6)(B)(v), as so redesignated—

(i) by redesignating subclauses (II) through (IV) as subclauses (III) through (V), respectively;

(ii) by inserting after subclause (I), the following:

''(II) trafficking in persons;'';

(iii) in subclause (IV), as so redesignated—

(I) by striking ''diseases'' and inserting ''infections''; and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iv) in subclause (V), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(VI) suicide.'';

(D) in paragraph (7)(B), as so redesignated, by striking ''prostitution,'' and inserting ''trafficking in persons,'';

(E) by inserting after paragraph (7), as so redesignated, the following:

''(8) TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.—The term 'trafficking in persons' has the meaning given the term 'severe forms of trafficking in persons' in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).'';

(F) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated—

(i) by inserting ''to homeless youth'' after ''provides''; and

(ii) by inserting '', to establish a stable family or community supports,'' after ''self-sufficient living''; and

(G) in paragraph (10)(B), as so redesignated—

(i) in clause (ii)—

(I) by inserting ''or able'' after ''willing''; and

(II) by striking ''or'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) who is involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system, but who is not receiving government-funded housing.''.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''for fiscal year 2009,'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.'';

(B) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.'' and inserting ''$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking ''for fiscal year 2009'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''.

SEC.

402. RESPONSE TO MISSING CHILDREN AND VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.—

(a) MISSING CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE ACT.—Section 404(b)(1)(P)(iii) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5773(b)(1)(P)(iii)) is amended by striking ''child prostitution'' and inserting ''child sex trafficking''.

(b) CRIME CONTROL ACT OF 1990.—Section 3702 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5780) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) a recent photograph of the child, if available;''; and

(3) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''60 days'' and inserting ''30 days'';

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

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by inserting ''State and local child welfare systems and'' before ''the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) grant permission to the National Crime Information Center Terminal Contractor for the State to update the missing person record in the National Crime Information Center computer networks with additional information learned during the investigation relating to the missing person.''.

TITLE V—STOP EXPLOITATION THROUGH TRAFFICKING ACT

SEC. 501. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act of 2015''.

SEC. 502. SAFE HARBOR INCENTIVES.

Part Q of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 1701(c), by striking ''where feasible'' and all that follows, and inserting the following: ''where feasible, to an application—

''(1) for hiring and rehiring additional career law enforcement officers that involves a non-Federal contribution exceeding the 25 percent minimum under subsection (g); or

''(2) from an applicant in a State that has in effect a law that—

''(A) treats a minor who has engaged in, or has attempted to engage in, a commercial sex act as a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

''(B) discourages or prohibits the charging or prosecution of an individual described in subparagraph (A) for a prostitution or sex trafficking offense, based on the conduct described in subparagraph (A); and

''(C) encourages the diversion of an individual described in subparagraph (A) to appropriate service providers, including child welfare services, victim treatment programs, child advocacy centers, rape crisis centers, or other social services.''; and

(2) in section 1709, by inserting at the end the following:

''(5) 'commercial sex act' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

''(6) 'minor' means an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

''(7) 'severe form of trafficking in persons' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).''.

SEC. 503. REPORT ON RESTITUTION PAID IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN TRAFFICKING OFFENSES.

Section 105(d)(7)(Q) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)(Q)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''1590,'' the following: ''1591,'';

(2) by striking ''and 1594'' and inserting ''1594, 2251, 2251A, 2421, 2422, and 2423'';

(3) in clause (iv), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in clause (v), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(5) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

''(vi) the number of individuals required by a court order to pay restitution in connection with a violation of each offense under title 18, United States Code, the amount of restitution required to be paid under each such order, and the amount of restitution actually paid pursuant to each such order; and

''(vii) the age, gender, race, country of origin, country of citizenship, and description of the role in the offense of individuals convicted under each offense; and''.

SEC. 504. NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE.

Section 107(b)(1)(B) of the Victims of Crime Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Subject'' and inserting ''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE.—Beginning in fiscal year 2017 and each fiscal year thereafter, of amounts made

available for grants under paragraph (2), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make grants for a national communication system to assist victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons in communicating with service providers. The Secretary shall give priority to grant applicants that have experience in providing telephone services to victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.''.

SEC. 505. JOB CORPS ELIGIBILITY.

Section 144(a)(3) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3194(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(F) A victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102)). Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an individual described in this subparagraph shall not be required to demonstrate eligibility under such paragraph.''.

SEC. 506. CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE.

Section 566(e)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C), the following:

''(D) assist State, local, and other Federal law enforcement agencies, upon the request of such an agency, in locating and recovering missing children.''.

SEC. 507. ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall implement and maintain a National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking (referred to in this section as the ''National Strategy'') in accordance with this section.

(b) REQUIRED CONTENTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The National Strategy shall include the following:

(1) Integrated Federal, State, local, and tribal efforts to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases, including—

(A) the development by each United States attorney, in consultation with State, local, and tribal government agencies, of a district-specific strategic plan to coordinate the identification of victims and the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes;

(B) the appointment of not fewer than 1 assistant United States attorney in each district dedicated to the prosecution of human trafficking cases or responsible for implementing the National Strategy;

(C) the participation in any Federal, State, local, or tribal human trafficking task force operating in the district of the United States attorney; and

(D) any other efforts intended to enhance the level of coordination and cooperation, as determined by the Attorney General.

(2) Case coordination within the Department of Justice, including specific integration, coordination, and collaboration, as appropriate, on human trafficking investigations between and among the United States attorneys, the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(3) Annual budget priorities and Federal efforts dedicated to preventing and combating human trafficking, including resources dedicated to the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and all other entities that receive Federal support that have a goal or mission to combat the exploitation of adults and children.

(4) An ongoing assessment of the future trends, challenges, and opportunities, including new investigative strategies, techniques, and technologies, that will enhance Federal, State, local, and tribal efforts to combat human trafficking.

(5) Encouragement of cooperation, coordination, and mutual support between private sector and other entities and organizations and Federal agencies to combat human trafficking, including the involvement of State, local, and tribal government agencies to the extent Federal programs are involved.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled ''Examining the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CORNYN. 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 12, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Protecting Taxpayers from Schemes and Scams During the 2015 Tax Filing Season.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. 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 12, 2015, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Visa Waiver Program: Implications for U.S. National Security.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it so ordered.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Bridging the Gap: How Prepared are Americans for Retirement.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, March 16, 2015, at 5 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 17 and Calendar No. 18; that there be 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions 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 statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 3 and Calendar No. 4; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions 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 statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's

actions, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Michael Greco, of New York, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of New York for the term of four years.

Ronald Lee Miller, of Kansas, to be United States Marshal for the District of Kansas for the term of four years.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF GEORGIA JONES-AYERS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 85.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 85) honoring the life and legacy of Georgia Jones-Ayers.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 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.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 85) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 25, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 7 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 7) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 7) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in the RECORD of March 3, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, March 16; 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 leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 178.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators should expect a rollcall vote at 5:30 p.m. on Monday on confirmation of the Assistant Secretary of Transportation. I filed cloture on the trafficking bill earlier today, and that vote will occur on Tuesday morning under the regular order.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2015, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:01 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 16, 2015, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 12, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MICHAEL GRECO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

RONALD LEE MILLER, OF KANSAS, TO BE UNITED STATES MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS FOR THE TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

THO DINH–ZARR, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2018.

CHRISTOPHER A. HART, OF COLORADO, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS.

Daily Digest

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Routine Proceedings, pages S1451–S1509.

Measures Introduced: Sixteen bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 723–738, and S. Res. 100–101. **Pages S1494–95**

Measures Passed:

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Georgia Jones-Ayers: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 85, honoring the life and legacy of Georgia Jones-Ayers, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1509**

Authorizing the Use of Emancipation Hall: Committee on Rules and Administration was discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1509**

Measures Considered:

Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, taking action on the following amendments and motions proposed thereto: **Pages S1456–70, S1474–75**

Pending:

Portman Amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking. **Page S1457**

Portman Amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of ''homeless person'' under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth. **Page S1457**

Vitter Amendment No. 284 (to Amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth. **Page S1457**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the committee-reported substitute amendment to the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Tuesday, March 17, 2015. **Pages S1474–75**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the committee-reported substitute amendment to the bill. **Page S1475**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the first-degree amendment filing deadline be at 5 p.m., on Monday, March 16, 2015. **Pages S1475, S1509**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 4 p.m., on Monday, March 16, 2015, Senate resume consideration of the bill. **Page S1509**

Monje, Jr. and Brown Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 5 p.m., on Monday, March 16, 2015, Senate begin consideration of the nominations of Carlos A. Monje, Jr., of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, and Manson K. Brown, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce; that there be 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; and that no further motions be in order. **Page S1508**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By a unanimous vote of 97 yeas (Vote No. EX. 70), Christopher A. Hart, of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of two years. **Pages S1471–74**

Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018. **Pages S1471–74**

Michael Greco, of New York, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of New York for the term of four years. **Pages S1508–09**

Ronald Lee Miller, of Kansas, to be United States Marshal for the District of Kansas for the term of four years. **Pages S1508–09**

Messages from the House: **Page S1494**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1495–96**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1496–98**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1491–94**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1498–S1508**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1508**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—70) **Page S1474**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 6:01 p.m., until 3 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1509.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: SECRETARY OF THE SENATE, SENATE SERGEANT AT ARMS, AND CAPITOL POLICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Secretary of the Senate, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and the Capitol Police, after receiving testimony from Julie E. Adams, Secretary of the Senate; Frank J. Larkin, Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate; and Kim C. Dine, Chief of Police, United States Capitol Police.

APPROPRIATIONS: FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Food and Drug Administration, after receiving testimony from Margaret Hamburg, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS: FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE, DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION, AND BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies concluded open and closed hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2016 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, after receiving testimony from James B. Comey, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Stacia A. Hylton, Director, U.S. Marshals Service, Michele Leonhart, Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration, and B. Todd Jones, Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, all of the Department of Justice.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Admiral William E. Gortney, USN, Commander, U.S. Northern Command, and Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command, and General John F. Kelly, USMC, Commander, U.S. Southern Command, both of the Department of Defense.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces received a closed briefing on missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program from Vice Admiral James D. Syring, USN, Director, Missile Defense Agency, and M. Elaine Bunn, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy, both of the Department of Defense.

NASA BUDGET

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, after receiving testimony from Charles F. Bolden, Jr., Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

BIPARTISAN SPORTSMEN'S ACT

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine S. 556, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, after receiving testimony from Steve Ellis, Deputy Director, Operations, Bureau of

Land Management, Department of the Interior; Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief for National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and Jeff Crane, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and Whit Fosburgh, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, both of Washington, D.C.

PROTECTING TAXPAYERS FROM SCHEMES AND SCAMS

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine protecting taxpayers from schemes and scams during the 2015 tax filing season, after receiving testimony from Caroline Ciraolo, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Tax Division, Department of Justice; Timothy P. Camus, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, Department of the Treasury; Mike Alley, Indiana Department of Revenue Commissioner, Indianapolis; John L. Valentine, Utah State Tax Commission Chairman, Salt Lake City; and Ellen Klem, Oregon Department of Justice Office of the Attorney General Director of Consumer Outreach and Education, Portland.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Visa Waiver Program, focusing on implications for United States national security, after receiving testimony from Mark Koumans, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Office of Policy, and Maureen Dugan, Deputy Executive Director, National Targeting Center, Office of Field Operations, Customs and Border Protection, both of the Department of Homeland Security; Edward J. Ramotowski, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Visa Services; Michael Chertoff, former Secretary of Homeland Security, The Chertoff Group, and Marc E. Frey, former Director, Visa Waiver Program, Department of Homeland Security, Steptoe and Johnson LLP, both of Washington, D.C.; and Brian Michael Jenkins, RAND Corporation, Arlington, Virginia.

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee ordered favorably reported an original bill entitled "Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015".

AMERICANS' PREPAREDNESS FOR RETIREMENT

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine how prepared Americans are for retirement, after receiving testimony from Jean Chatzky, NBC Today, Briarcliff Manor, New York; Alicia H. Munnell, Boston College Center for Retirement Research, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts; Michal Grinstein-Weiss, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri; and Rob Carmichael, Maine Savings Federal Credit Union, Bangor.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet in a Pro Forma session at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 13, 2015.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

3 p.m., Monday, March 16

Senate Chamber

Program for Monday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, with the filing deadline for first-degree amendments at 5 p.m.

At 5 p.m., Senate will begin consideration of the nominations of Carlos A. Monje, Jr., of Louisiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation, and Manson K. Brown, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, and vote on confirmation of the nominations at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Friday, March 13

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m.

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