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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Reverend James Stoeger, S.J., President, Jesuit Secondary Education Association, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

God of love, bless the Members of this House. Please help those who labor here recognize how You are present in their service and leadership. Guide them as they seek to be effective for the good of all Your people.

Loving God, may our leaders be alert to the cares, hurts, and challenges of our citizens and our communities. Help those leaders choose well directions and actions that benefit those likely to be left out and all who express and strengthen our Nation's values, which are our greatest assets.

May we hear and pursue Your sacred message, merciful God, that we be women and men with the capacity of peacemakers, realistic and also deeply thoughtful and wise.

Finally, gentle God, bring to those who serve here a participation in Your own gifts, such as rich insight and also joy, in their care for the well-being of our country and the world.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Texas (SAM JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

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

NUCLEAR DEAL WITH IRAN

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

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, by all accounts, President Obama seems hell-bent on striking a nuclear deal with Iran, a deal that would hurt our national security interests and sell out our proven ally and friend, Israel.

Let's be clear: Iran is a foe, not a friend. Just consider: last week, Iran's supreme leader said ''death to America''; the regime has blood of American soldiers on its hands; and Iran is working overtime to expand influence in the region.

Mr. Speaker, Iran is determined to be a nuclear power, period. Unfortunately, the President seems intent to ignore the majority of American people who believe this deal would not prevent Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon.

Mr. Speaker, the President is going rogue. That is wrong. He needs to stop. Nothing less than our national security is at stake.

HONORING THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the city of Miami Beach in Florida's 23rd Congressional District.

Incorporated on March 26, 1915, Miami Beach took its place on the map with only a handful of residents. Now home to nearly 100,000 people, the city of Miami Beach has not only grown in population, but in reputation. This vacation paradise is an internationally recognized tourist destination visited by millions each year, a hub for business, and a trendsetter in the areas of arts, culture, fine dining, and entertainment.

This week, Miami Beach celebrated its centennial with 100 hours of showcasing its history and all that the city has to offer, culminating in an oceanfront concert by Miami Beach residents and cultural icons Gloria Estefan, Barry Gibb, and Andrea Bocelli.

It is a great honor for me to represent the city of Miami Beach in our Nation's Capitol. I thank Mayor Philip Levine, the members of the city commission, and the city's staff for their many accomplishments that have made the city of Miami Beach a wonderful place to work, live, visit, and raise a family.

☐ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., ☐ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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CONGRATULATING THE WICHITA STATE SHOCKERS

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

Ms. JENKINS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Wichita State Shockers on their victory against the Kansas Jayhawks this past weekend. Despite a valiant effort by the Jayhawks, the Shockers and Coach Gregg Marshall prevailed, just as my friend Congressman POMPEO predicted.

In Kansas, we are proud of our State's rich basketball tradition, from James Naismith to Dean Smith, to Adolph Rupp, to Gene Smithson, to Jack Gardner, to Wilt Chamberlain, to Xavier McDaniel, to Mitch Richmond. I could go on and on and on.

However, as two proud Kansas schools, the real victor here is the State of Kansas. We love the competition, but after the game is over, we are all one big family. My daughter currently attends Wichita State, I attended K-State, and I represent KU, so I know full well the pride we have in all our teams.

So as the Shockers move on to the Sweet 16 for the second time in 3 years, I wish them the best of luck tonight and beyond.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS KILLING HUMANITY

(Mr. TED LIEU of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise because the majority is making worse the one issue that can kill humanity as a species—climate change. The majority's budget exacerbates America's overdependence on foreign oil and reliance on the dirty and unsafe fuels of the 19th century.

But there is a better way. We need to produce more energy-saving appliances and machines that are designed, manufactured, and installed by American workers. It is time to invest in new and renewable energies that never go away, such as wind, solar, and biofuels. It is time to do what is best for America, not what is best for coal companies.

Mr. Speaker, let me end by saying: Go, UCLA.

WISHING SCOTT KELLY THE BEST AS HE EMBARKS ON AMERICA'S YEARLONG SPACE ADVENTURE

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

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the American people's attention to NASA Astronaut Scott Kelly as he prepares to make history tomorrow when he embarks on a yearlong mission to the International Space Station.

As the proud representative of the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Kelly several times to discuss his historic mission. This will mark the first time that an American has spent an entire year continuously in space.

On the eve of this important moment, I would like to thank Mr. Kelly for his heroic commitment, leadership, and dedication to advancing America's human spaceflight program.

Mr. Speaker, his mission to the International Space Station provides a tremendous boost to our human spaceflight program, while furthering our understanding of the effects that longer term exposure to weightlessness has on the body. This understanding will pave the way for crewed missions to Mars.

On behalf of a proud American public, Scott, we wish you all the best, and thank you.

CALIFORNIA AEROSPACE WEEK

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

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, this is California Aerospace Week.

California is rich in our history of flight. In my district alone, we have seen the sound barrier broken for the first time and the ultimate airspeed record set, and many other flights from the F–80 through our beloved F–22. We have also seen my district build all of the space shuttles, all of the B–1s, all of the B–2s, and most of the fighters that fly over our friendly skies.

Our State has had an over 100-year history in flight, and Aerospace Week culminates that production and that test. Our State and my district have continued to put America in the lead over the skies, and we will continue to do so in the future.

KEEPING OUR COMMITMENTS TO OUR RURAL COUNTIES

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

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, we have a great opportunity before us today to not only provide certainty for healthcare providers and seniors by repealing the flawed SGR for Medicare, but also to fund rural schools and rural forested counties. So I commend my colleagues for their work on this with me.

Included in this legislation is 2 years' worth of funding for the Secure Rural Schools program. Now, this is like one of those cans of Fix-A-Flat, if you will. It is an emergency repair on the side of the road to solve a short-term problem, when what we really need is a permanent fix for our forested counties. But this is an emergency, and what we are doing here today is providing that lifeline to our schoolchildren in the classrooms in our rural counties that are forested under Federal land and making sure that our local law enforcement folks have the resources they need and, in my own State of Oregon, protecting some counties from actually going bankrupt because of lack of management and lack of activity on our Federal lands.

So I remain fully committed to working on forestry legislation that puts people back to work in the woods, reduces the threat of wildfire, and produces the revenue to allow for self-sustaining counties and the people in them. I just hope this time with a new Senate we will be able to move forward.

A BUDGET IS A VALUES STATEMENT

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

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to comment on the budget that was passed yesterday out of this House by the Republicans.

I come from Scranton, Pennsylvania, the birthplace of our Vice President. Our Vice President is often heard to say that people talk about family values all the time, family values this, family values that. He says: Look, don't talk to me about your values. Show me your budget, and I will tell you what your values are.

This Republican budget was something that I could not support because it will have the effect of cutting over 1 million jobs over the next year. Even worse than that, it will turn Medicare into, effectively, a voucher program. If you are on Medicare and you need treatment and they give you a voucher, you had better hope that that voucher covers the services you need; otherwise, you are out of luck.

So if your values include increasing jobs and employment in this country and taking care of our seniors, that Republican budget was not the one to vote for.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2, MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 27, 2015, THROUGH APRIL 10, 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 173 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 173

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and strengthen Medicare access by improving physician payments and making other improvements, to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in the report of the Committee

on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. On any legislative day during the period from March 27, 2015, through April 10, 2015—

(a) the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and

(b) the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time, within the limits of clause 4, section 5, article I of the Constitution, to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment.

SEC. 3. The Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution as though under clause 8(a) of rule I.

SEC. 4. Each day during the period addressed by section 2 of this resolution shall not constitute a calendar day for purposes of section 7 of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1546).

SEC. 5. The Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Ways and Means each may, at any time before 5 p.m. on April 6, 2015, file reports to accompany measures.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

□ 0915

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 173 provides for consideration of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, under a closed rule, reflecting the careful, intricate, bipartisan negotiations which brought this legislation to the floor.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate, equally divided among the chairs and ranking members of the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

As is customary, the rule allows the minority to offer a motion to recommit on the bill.

Finally, the rule provides for the customary district work period authority.

This bill, H.R. 2, resolves an issue that many of us have worked on for our entire congressional careers.

This bill reflects years of bipartisan work, work across committees, and even work across the Capitol with the other body. We brought together Members of all ideological groups, as well as diverse outside groups. We coalesced around a policy that will help patients, help doctors, help providers to get out from under the constant threat of payment cuts under the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula.

Everyone agrees that Medicare's sustainable growth formula has got to go. Today, we are considering a bill to realistically accomplish that goal.

The SGR formula was enacted as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 in an attempt to restrain Federal spending in Medicare part B. We now know that that is not working.

The SGR consists of expenditure targets which apply a growth rate designed to bring spending in line.

Since 2002, the SGR formula has resulted in a reduction in physician reimbursement rates. However, even though Congress has consistently passed legislation to override the formula, these patches have resulted in hundreds of billions of spent funds that could have gone to improving the Medicare system.

If Congress were to let the formula continue, physicians would face a 21 percent reduction in reimbursement rates on April 1. The sustainable growth rate's unrealistic assumptions of spending inefficiency have plagued the healthcare profession and our Medicare beneficiaries for over 13 years.

The bill before us repeals the sustainable growth rate formula, avoiding potentially devastating across-the-board cuts slated to go into effect next week. We do so at a cost lower than what Congress has already spent or is likely to spend over the next 10 years. The Congressional Budget Office has found that enacting H.R. 2 will cost less than if we patched this formula over the next 10 years.

The bill before us today provides 5 years of payment transition. It allows improved beneficiary access and allows medicine to concentrate on moving to broad adoption of quality reporting and, most importantly, allows Congress to move past the distraction of the SGR formula and to begin identifying Medicare reforms that can further benefit our citizens. This will also allow providers the time to develop and test quality measures and clinical practice improvement activities, which will be used for performance assessment during phase II.

During the stability period, physicians will receive annual increases of one half of 1 percent. It seems small, but it is above what has been provided over the past several years.

The quality measures are implemented in what is called the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System. That will be evidence-based and developed through a transparent process that values input from provider groups. Quality reporting will measure providers against their peers rather than a one-size-fits-all generic standard. Providers will also self-determine their measures.

The bill consolidates three reporting programs into this incentive payment system, easing administrative burdens and furthering the congressionally established goals of quality, resource use, and meaningful use.

This new reimbursement structure ensures continued access to high-quality care while providing physicians with certainty and security in their reimbursements. They will be aware of the benchmark they are competing against and, unlike current law, all penalties assessed on those not meeting the benchmark will go to those who do, keeping the dollars in the Medicare system.

Provider standards will be developed by professional organizations in conjunction with existing programs and will incorporate ongoing feedback to physicians, further ensuring that optimal care is provided to the patient.

Realtime feedback will be gained through registries and performance data. Physicians will be encouraged to participate in the process through data reporting. For eligible professionals who choose to opt out of the fee-for-service program, alternative payment models will be available.

These alternative payment models may include a patient-centered medical home, whether they are in primary or specialty care, bundled care, or episodes of care. Qualifying practices that move a significant amount of their patients into these alternative payment models could see a 5 percent quality bonus. By encouraging alternative payment models and care coordination, this legislation will foster and facilitate innovation.

It is important to note that while taking these important steps toward ensuring quality care, the bill specifically states that these quality measures are not creating a Federal right of action or a legal standard of care.

Mr. Speaker, from beginning to end, this bill is about access: access for our seniors, access for those who utilize the Nation's 9,000 community health centers, and, very importantly, the over 8 million children who receive their care at some point during the year through the Children's Health Insurance Program.

The bill also addresses health programs that have become known as ''extenders.'' Most are extended for 2 years under the bill. By resolving the SGR, Congress will have the ability to commit itself to working through these policies in the future.

The bill also puts into place important structural reforms to Medicare that are the first steps toward starting the Medicare program on a really long-term trajectory towards fiscal stability.

The bill is consistent in its themes throughout: payment stability; reduce

and streamline the administrative burden; increase predictability and provider's interactions with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; build transparency into systems; encourage innovation of delivery of services; and keep providers in the driver's seat.

Most importantly, we provide access to care for our Nation's patients.

America's providers agree:

''The American Osteopathic Association views this bipartisan legislation as a clear and definitive approach toward comprehensive reforms in our health care system for children, seniors, and our Nation's physicians.''

Here is one from the American Academy of Family Physicians:

''This legislation is the result of bipartisan negotiations that have produced legislative responses to some of our Nation's most pressing health care issues.''

America's Essential Hospitals praised this bill, stating:

''This legislation represents the first truly bipartisan major health care legislation in years. Please do not let this opportunity pass you by—approve H.R. 2 as swiftly as possible.''

This is just a small sampling of the close to 800 organizations spanning the political spectrum who have come together to endorse this bill. From primary care, to specialists, to surgeons, to organized nursing, our Nation's hospitals, and everyone in between, they have supported this policy.

For that reason, I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the underlying bills.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) for the customary 30 minutes. I also want to thank him for his work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, for far too long, Congress has shirked its responsibility when it came to permanently fixing the sustainable growth rate formula. Since its inception, our Nation's doctors and hospitals were held hostage to a misguided funding formula that was included as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

I voted against the Balanced Budget Act back then when I was a new Member of Congress. It was plain to me that the Medicare cuts and proposed financing included in that bill were simply impossible to sustain. I am glad that 18 years later Congress is finally doing the right thing and repealing the sustainable growth rate formula and replacing it with a payment system based on value.

It is past time that we repeal this misguided formula that has wreaked havoc throughout our healthcare system. Year after year after year, Congress, whether controlled by Democrats or Republicans, was forced to temporarily patch this formula. And year after year after year, Congress did the bare minimum, providing a temporary fix without actually addressing the real problem and permanently repealing the formula.

Today, Congress is finally doing the right thing. That alone is worth supporting. But this bill does more than just repeal the sustainable growth rate formula. Instead, it provides a clearly defined schedule of payment adjustments that will give physicians and healthcare providers the stability they need while ensuring quality and value in the services patients require.

In addition, H.R. 2 also provides critical funding through September 2017 for our Nation's community health centers, funding that was initially provided under the Affordable Care Act, and it also provides support for the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP.

I have already started to hear from hospitals in my district about why this bill is good for them and good for their patients. UMass Memorial Medical Center, in my hometown of Worcester, is one of the Nation's most distinguished academic healthcare systems and is the safety net hospital for all of central Massachusetts. The folks there are pleased to see the delay in additional cuts to safety net hospitals and the delay in the implementation of the two-midnight rule.

Now, this bill is not perfect—nothing around here is ever perfect—but this is the result of long and careful bipartisan negotiation. Even though there are many very positive aspects of this bill, there are some provisions that are more problematic, and I would be remiss if I didn't at least mention some of them.

Most troubling is the inclusion of the Hyde amendment and its application to the funding for the community health centers. It is important to clarify that this language is not a permanent extension or codification of the Hyde amendment. It only applies to the funding for community health centers and expires when that funding expires. It does not affect non-Federal funds. In fact, it is the same language that has been included in annual appropriations bills for nearly three decades.

Let me be clear: I do not support the Hyde amendment. However, the language in this bill mirrors both President Obama's executive order and the language included in the annual appropriations bills.

And I wish the CHIP extension was for 4 years rather than 2. But in this environment, I think that having a 2-year extension is a good thing, is an accomplishment, is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important accomplishment, and I want to thank both Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI for their work in reaching this compromise, a deal that will finally enable this House to move away from annual doc-fix patches and toward providing stability and certainty for Medicare physicians and patients.

I am encouraged by the process taken to reach this agreement. For a Congress that I might say accurately has been called ''broken,'' ''hopeless,'' ''helpless''—a Congress plagued by gridlock and extreme partisanship—this bill represents what I hope will be a renewed commitment by my friends in the majority to work across the aisle with Democrats to address some of our country's most pressing issues. It is, and has always been, the way Congress passes important, substantive, and even historic legislation.

This place can work when we work together. Just look at what this House has done over the past few weeks. We responsibly kept the Department of Homeland Security open, and now we are on the verge of passing an incredibly vital bipartisan bill to repeal the sustainable growth rate, fund community health centers, and reauthorize CHIP.

I hope this bipartisan approach is contagious. I hope this is not the exception but becomes the rule. Every Member represents the same number of constituents, and every voice in this House needs and deserves to be heard.

Today—thanks to the leadership of Leader PELOSI and Speaker BOEHNER and so many others—we are doing something that we can feel good about, something more than a campaign slogan, something that is more than red meat for the political base.

□ 0930

This is something that will help seniors, kids, and low-income families. It deserves our support.

Before I reserve my time, Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the Statement of Administration Policy, which begins with the following:

''The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 2 because it would reform the flawed Medicare physician payment system to incentivize quality and value'' and ''would make reforms that could help slow health care cost growth, and would extend other important programs such as health care coverage for children.''

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 2—MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Rep. Burgess, R-Texas, and 10 cosponsors)

The Administration supports House passage of H.R. 2 because it would reform the flawed Medicare physician payment system to incentivize quality and value (a proposal called for in the President's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget), would make reforms that could help slow health care cost growth, and would extend other important programs such as health care coverage for children.

Medicare payments to physicians are determined under a formula, commonly referred to as the ''sustainable growth rate'' (SGR). This formula has called for reductions in physician payment rates since 2002, which the Congress has overridden 17 times. Under the SGR, physician payment rates would be reduced by about 21 percent on April 1, 2015. A cut of this magnitude could

reduce access to physicians for Medicare beneficiaries throughout the country. H.R. 2 would replace this system with one that offers predictability and accelerates participation in alternative payment models that encourage quality and efficiency. The proposal would advance the Administration's goal of moving the Nation's health care delivery system toward one that achieves better care, smarter spending, and healthier people through the expansion of new health care payment models, which could contribute to slowing long-term health care cost growth.

The Administration also supports the legislation's inclusion of a continuation of policies and funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The President's Budget includes a four-year extension of this program, which has provided meaningful health coverage to over eight million children; extending CHIP would ensure continued, comprehensive, affordable coverage for these children. H.R. 2 also includes other important proposals in the President's Budget, such as an extension of the Home Visiting Program and additional funding for the Community Health Center (CHC) Fund, although the legislation includes restrictions on the use of the CHC Fund which would be unnecessary given Executive Order 13535. The Administration supports the legislation's provision to make permanent the Qualifying Individual program, which pays the Medicare Part B premiums for certain low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

The legislation would pay for costs above what is needed to hold Medicare payments to physicians fixed at their current level. The savings would come from sensible reforms, which are expected to cover a larger share of the bill's costs over the long run. These include cost-saving changes to Medicare provider payments as well as increases in the income-related premium for certain high-income Medicare beneficiaries, who represent about five percent of those covered by Medicare. A similar proposal was included in the President's Budget to help improve the financial stability of the Medicare program by reducing the Federal subsidy of Medicare costs for those who need the subsidy the least. The bill also would, starting in 2020, prohibit Medicare Supplemental Insurance (Medigap) policies from covering the Part B deductible (currently $147) for new beneficiaries. This would encourage more efficient health care choices, lowering Medicare costs and Medigap premiums.

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING).

Mr. FLEMING. I would like to thank my good friend, Dr. BURGESS.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2. As a family physician who has been in private practice since 1982, I have seen a lot of things happen with Medicare, and this idea of sustainable growth rate, SGR, which came up in 1997—a Republican idea—is not only flawed, it is idiotic.

It requires physicians to control throughout the country the entire volume of services provided, something that is absolutely impossible to do. It actually has had the opposite effect that was desired, and it has actually increased the amount of activity because of the loss of the valuable economic foundations that are necessary to make this system work.

What this repeal of SGR will do is, number one, actually show what the cost of this is. We have been hiding it, like a shell game, for years with temporary patches that last, oh, maybe a year and sometimes less.

Not only will this pay for itself in the second decade, but it actually begins to lower that cost even in the first decade, and it does so by using several mechanisms but with two important reforms that my colleagues need to know about.

One, it reforms Medigap policies, which gives patients skin in the game. It makes patients, once again, a part of the decision team so that they, by having some element of price sensitivity, can work with the doctors to decide what is necessary and what is not, what is affordable and what is not; also, it asks higher-income seniors to do their share.

Remember that the current Medicare system is a highly subsidized system for everybody, including for Warren Buffett, a $40 billion billionaire who gets his health care subsidized.

I urge my colleagues to support this. This will increase patient care.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA).

Mr. BERA. I want to thank my colleague from Massachusetts for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, as a doctor who has cared for hundreds of seniors on Medicare, this is an important step forward because, for over a decade, we have had this flawed formula that has put the security of seniors' health care access at risk.

I want to applaud Dr. BURGESS, and I want to applaud the bipartisan Doctors Caucus. You will hear from a lot of doctors here in Congress that this is a step forward because, when we took our oath to practice medicine, we took an oath to put our patients first.

This is a good bill that puts our patients first: our seniors, folks who have worked their whole lives and who now, in retirement, need that security of being able to see their doctors. This bill repeals a flawed formula that has been patched 17 times over the years, and it replaces it with a better formula, a formula that moves us away from this fee-for-service model and that moves us toward practicing higher quality care and putting our patients first.

It is not a perfect bill. Like many, I am disappointed to see the Hyde amendment included in this bill. I have always stood against the Hyde amendment and against other attempts to restrict a woman's right to make her own reproductive health decisions.

The Hyde amendment is a temporary rider that expires every year; and we, along with many women across this country, look forward to the day when it will end. I came to Congress to put people first. I came to Congress to work across the aisle in a bipartisan way and to put our country first, and this is a great attempt.

Again, I applaud the doctors in Congress. I applaud the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, the members of the Ways and Means Committee, the Speaker, and the leader of the Democratic Party here in the House for working together to put people first.

This is a good bill as 7.4 million patients will still have access to care at community health centers, 8 million low-income children and pregnant women will still have access to care through the CHIP program, 49 million patients are enrolled in Medicare, and another 10,000 baby boomers enroll every day. This is a good thing.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, we have got to honor the promises that we have made to our constituents and to the people of America. We have got to honor the promises that we have made to our patients and doctors. This is a good bill.

I look forward to voting for and passing this bill today and to continuing to move America forward.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK).

Mr. BENISHEK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for all of your good work on this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule for H.R. 2.

Since the current flawed Medicare payment rate was enacted in 1997, Congress has kicked the can down the road and has passed 17 different patches to avoid devastating cuts to Medicare. These patches have cost the taxpayers almost $170 billion, more money than it will cost to permanently fix this problem right now.

Today, we have the opportunity to actually fix a major problem and pass meaningful legislation that will help keep Medicare solvent and ensure that seniors are able to get the medical care they deserve.

As a doctor who has taken care of patients in northern Michigan for over 30 years, I know how terrible it would be if we failed to act today and how seniors would bear the brunt of that failure. Today's legislation may not be perfect; it is a bipartisan compromise that will ensure that Medicare continues to provide necessary health care for my constituents in northern Michigan.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this commonsense and long overdue fix.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR).

Mr. AGUILAR. I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan compromise that we will address this afternoon over SGR will strengthen Medicare by lowering costs and by ensuring that seniors have the doctors of their choice. While this agreement has important provisions, including critical

programs to help low-income seniors, families, and children, it does fall short in a few ways.

As a member of the Pro-Choice Caucus, I am disappointed that this deal both ignores the need for women to have access to their healthcare providers and that it includes an antichoice provision. Today's bill falls short of measures to increase women's access to necessary health measures, such as annual exams or prescription medications.

The other troubling aspect of today's bill is the inclusion of the Hyde amendment, as the gentleman from Massachusetts mentioned. This is clearly another attack to block access to reproductive care. The inclusion of this language is disappointing because it permits antichoice language in an otherwise pragmatic, bipartisan compromise in exchange for community health center funding.

I plan to support this bipartisan compromise because it solves longstanding problems and is a step in the right direction.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 18½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Massachusetts has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, which is a bill to repeal and replace the sustainable growth rate.

This bill presents an historic opportunity for Congress to end the doc fix and comprehensively reform the Medicare physician payment system once and for all. SGR has been broken for over a decade, and Congress has passed a temporary patch for this law 17 times. The price of putting off a permanent fix has cost the taxpayers almost $170 billion and has masked the insolvency of Medicare.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, Mr. BURGESS' legislation to repeal SGR would save $900 million over the next decade, compared to freezing payment rates for physician services.

After a decade of Congress patching the flawed SGR formula, it is finally time to permanently repeal and replace the system once and for all. I urge my colleagues in the House and in the Senate to pass this bill and finally fix the doc fix.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include the following statements for the RECORD in support of H.R. 2: the statement by the Massachusetts Hospital Association, a statement by the Massachusetts Medical Society, a list of a number of groups in support of H.R. 2, statements by the American Hospital Association, SEIU, and others. They are all in support of this bill.

MASSACHUSETTS HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (MHA) STATEMENT ON H.R. 2

March 25, 2015

The Massachusetts Hospital Association gives its full support to H.R. 2, the U.S. House bipartisan package to permanently repeal the Medicare physician Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR).

We are especially relieved because there have been 17 short-term SGR fixes over the past few years, nearly all of which included significant reimbursement cuts to hospitals and other providers for nothing more than a couple-month band aid. This bill draws these short term patches to an end. We are relieved that Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding, community health center funding, and a continued delay to enforcement of the two-midnight rule are included.

We support the bill not only for what it does, but also for what it does not do; it rejects cuts to graduate medical education, Medicare bad debt, site neutral cuts to hospital outpatient departments and inpatient rehabilitation facilities, and it does not include unsound and inequitable area wage index and rural floor policies.

Obviously, we would prefer not to be part of the offsets to help pay for the package, but we are realistic and especially so because we realize that if this deal falls through and Congress must consider another one-year SGR delay, then these cuts to providers will still be in play to pay for a meaningless, additional one-year delay. We strongly prefer a permanent SGR fix and therefore give our full support to this bill.

Most importantly, we thank our congressional delegation for their efforts on behalf of hospitals. Given the political environment that has been a barrier to collaboration on major legislation, this bill represents an exceptional accomplishment that benefits hospitals, physicians, other providers, and most notably, the long term health of the Medicare program.

MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY,
Waltham, MA, March 25, 2015.

Hon. JAMES P. MCGOVERN,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MCGOVERN: I am writing you as President of the Massachusetts Medical Society to urge you to vote in support of HR 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. Your support for this legislation will be critical to its success and our members' ability to continue to treat Medicare and Tricare patients who need and deserve quality health care. Moreover this bill will continue funding for the CHIP program at increased levels for two years and provide necessary funds for our Community Health Centers, a vital component of our health care system.

We have been extremely grateful for your ongoing support for SGR reforms in the past. As you are well aware, Congress has passed 17 temporary measures which ultimately have cost the government more money than a permanent solution. We believe the time has finally come to pass permanent Medicare physician payment reform.

The importance of the SGR reforms extends well beyond the 26,000 members of the Massachusetts Medical Society. It will impact the nearly 71,597 military families who receive their health insurance through Tricare, the 74,525 people employed by physicians and the over 1,104,483 Medicare beneficiaries who live in the Commonwealth. This bill will also impact every hospital in the state that employs physicians, every medical device manufacturer who sells products to physicians' offices and the myriad of organizations that rely on Medicare dollars. This bill is about ensuring seniors and military families' access to care. It is about sustaining physician practices. Of equal importance, this legislation will significantly foster and reward changes in the health care delivery system that we all hope to achieve.

We also strongly support provisions reauthorizing the CHIP program. The MMS has been a strong supporter of this program since its inception. This legislation provides an opportunity for Congress to address the health care needs of children and low-income Americans by extending funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program and providing critical support for Community Health Centers. We believe a straightforward 2 year reauthorization of the CHIP program at the 23% increased rates set by the ACA would be critically important to the patients served by this program. Should the program not be reauthorized at these levels it is estimated that Massachusetts could lose millions of dollars—funds that this state desperately needs.

We knew that passage of final SGR repeal would never be easy. But we are truly at that point where we believe the leadership has developed a SGR strategy that is achievable.

As President of the Massachusetts Medical Society I want to thank you for your ongoing support for Medicare payment reform and urge you to continue your support by voting for HR 2 when it comes to the House floor.

Sincerely,

RICHARD S. PIETERS, M.D.

SOME OF THE GROUPS SUPPORTING H.R. 2, MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Center for American Progress, Families USA, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), National Coalition on Health Care (coalition of over 80 groups), Healthcare Leadership Council, March of Dimes, JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes), Georgetown Center for Children and Families, National Association of Community Health Centers, Third Way, Bipartisan Policy Center, American Medical Association, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American College of Cardiology, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Osteopathic Association, American Academy of Family Physicians.

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, American Association of Medical Colleges, Digestive Health Physicians Association, American College of Radiology, Council of Academic Family Medicine, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery, American Hospital Association, Federation of American Hospitals, America's Essential Hospitals, Children's Hospital Association, Catholic Health Association of the United States, American Health Care Association, National Center for Assisted Living.

American Nurses Association, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, American College of Nurse-Midwives, Gerontological Advance Practice Nurses Association, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, Medical Group Management Association, Premier healthcare alliance, VHA Inc., LUGPA (Large Urology Group Practice Association), National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, National Retail Federation.

AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, March 24, 2015.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: On behalf of the nearly 5,000 members of the American Hospital Association, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 2, bipartisan legislation to repeal the flawed Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula for physician payments under the Medicare program. We believe Congress should move forward and address this issue on a permanent basis.

While we are disappointed that hospitals would be looked to as an offset given that Medicare already pays less than the cost of delivering services to beneficiaries, the package strikes a careful balance in the way it funds the SGR repeal and embraces a number of structural reforms to the Medicare program. Equally important, the legislation rejects a number of flawed policy options, including reductions to outpatient hospital services (so-called ''site-neutral'' cuts), Medicare bad debt payments, graduate medical education, critical access hospitals and certain services provided in rehabilitative hospitals. Moreover, the bill rejects a further delay in the ICD–10 program, and prevents a potential 0.55 percent coding offset previously proposed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The legislation also eliminates cuts to the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital program in fiscal year 2017. Finally, the bill includes a needed extension of a number of expiring provision (so-called extenders), including the Medicare Dependent Hospital program, the rural low-volume adjustment, the rural ambulance add-on, the partial enforcement delay on Medicare's ''two-midnight'' policy, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

We commend the House Republican and Democratic leadership in their design of this package, and urge the House to pass it.

Sincerely,

RICH UMBDENSTOCK,
President and CEO.

SEIU,
March 25, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) expresses its support for H.R. 2, legislation that would permanently replace the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula used to determine Medicare payments to doctors. We appreciate the bipartisan negotiations that led to this compromise, and, at this point in the process, urge House members to vote yes to move the process forward.

Tens of millions of Americans, and approximately one million of SEIU members, have jobs that depend on a strong health care economy, and many work in environments that face considerable strains as a result of the uncertainty created by the SGR. For example, due to short-term SGR patches, hospitals face the threat of problematic payment changes every several months, creating an unpredictable landscape that adversely affects the ability of hospitals to provide care as well as their ability to support the health care workforce. Long-term, the pressure that the SGR creates will continue to grow because the cost of replacing the policy, in both patches and in its entirety, only increases radically over time. H.R. 2 permanently replaces the SGR formula, offsetting $70 billion in costs, preventing significantly higher and potentially more harmful cuts to Medicare and other health care programs now and in the future.

In addition to relieving the burden that the costs of SGR patches and replacement place on the health care system, this legislation extends, and in some case makes permanent, programs that are essential to low- and moderate-income families. H.R. 2 extends full funding under current law for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for an additional two years. CHIP funding is set to expire in September 2015. Millions of families, including those of our members, depend on CHIP to provide health care coverage for their children. Though we support extending CHIP funding under current law for four years, extending CHIP funding under current law for two years does provide predictability that states need to appropriately administer the program and prevents problematic changes in eligibility and coverage that would limit access to care or increase costs for the CHIP population. In addition, this legislation provides an additional funding for Community Health Centers, a critically important source of health care for millions of families. Finally, the legislation makes permanent the Qualifying Individual (QI) program, which covers the cost of Medicare Part B premiums for low-income people with Medicare, and the Transitional Medicaid Assistance (TMA) program, which supports families losing coverage. These important programs that protect low-income populations are set to expire and, without passage of this legislation, face an uncertain future, as historically they have been extended only on a temporary basis.

Like any compromise, this package has serious flaws. As previously stated, House Republican leaders should have agreed to fund CHIP under current law for an additional four years and should not have required changes to Medicare benefits in order to reach an agreement. While some of the changes to Medicare are mitigated because they only apply to consumers with truly higher incomes, we have concerns about the precedents set by these changes and changes to Medigap coverage policies. In addition, we continue to oppose any language that expands policies that deny millions of women the right to access the full range of reproductive health care services. Lastly, in order to avoid policy changes that put additional financial burdens on beneficiaries and providers—who have already faced significant SGR-related cuts—other stakeholders should have been required to contribute more in terms of offsets. However, despite these concerns, when considering the potential impact of this package versus the adverse consequences that non-resolution of both the SGR and CHIP funding may have on all health programs and the populations they serve, we believe that this is an acceptable solution that House members should support.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote yes on this compromise legislation. If you have any questions, please call Ilene Stein, SEIU Assistant Legislative Director.

Sincerely,

MARY KAY HENRY,
International President.

STATEMENT BY SENIOR FELLOW ALLYSON SCHWARTZ, SENIOR FELLOW DR. ZEKE EMANUEL, AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR HEALTH POLICY TOPHER SPIRO

The Center for American Progress supports the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, or MACRA. This bipartisan legislation represents a significant achievement because it reforms Medicare's payment system and maintains critical funding for health care for millions of low-income children, families, and seniors. While we urge Congress to offer amendments that would improve the bill, enactment of this legislation would be far better than resorting to another short-term fix that could put these programs in jeopardy. The addition of the Hyde language restricting abortions is unnecessary and frankly offensive, but we believe the deal is an important step forward.

Unless Congress extends funding for these programs now, they will face tremendous uncertainty and risk and could be held hostage in partisan legislation later in the year. MACRA addresses this serious risk by including the following:

The bill extends the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, for two years. Without this extension, about 2 million children would become uninsured, while millions more would lose their current coverage and face higher costs. Importantly, this is a ''clean'' extension that maintains policies and funding included in the Affordable Care Act—and that does not include detrimental policies or cuts proposed by the Republican leadership in Congress. This clean extension would be a significant feat given the political realities of this Congress and should not be discounted. Even so, we strongly urge Congress to amend MACRA to extend CHIP for at least four years.

The bill extends funding for community health centers included in the Affordable Care Act. Without this funding, 7.4 million low-income patients—including 4.3 million women—would lose access to health care. While not a change to current policy, the bill applies the Hyde Amendment, which restricts funding for abortions, to this funding. CAP opposes the Hyde Amendment, which harms low-income women, and ultimately wants this temporary restriction to expire for good. The application of the Hyde Amendment is, at best, unnecessary and, at worst, an indication that Republican leadership in Congress will attempt to use every bill to restrict access to abortion, which is unacceptable. In this case, the offensive language does not change policy and—similar to the Hyde Amendment that has always applied to funding for community health centers—is temporary and expires along with the funding to which it applies. Even so, we strongly urge Congress to amend MACRA to remove this language.

The bill extends the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program for two years. This funding supports evidence-based programs that have been proven to reduce health care costs, improve school readiness, and increase family self-sufficiency and economic security. We strongly urge Congress to amend MACRA to extend this program for at least four years.

The bill extends the Qualifying Individual Program—which subsidizes Medicare premiums for low-income beneficiaries—permanently.

By permanently correcting Medicare payments to physicians, MACRA at long last provides much-needed certainty and stability to the Medicare program. Importantly, the bill provides financial incentives to reinforce the country's path toward a health care system that rewards value and quality of care.

We recognize that any bipartisan compromise that could be enacted by Congress would need to pay for at least a portion of the additional spending that would result—and that the pay-fors would need to include a roughly equal mixture of cuts to providers and cuts to beneficiaries. We also recognize that the alternative—a never-ending series of short-term patches that are fully paid for—would likely result in deeper and more painful cuts to the Medicare program over time.

On the beneficiary side, MACRA increases Medicare premiums by $82.50 per month for couples with incomes from $267,000 to $428,000 and singles with incomes from $133,500 to $214,000. Because this premium increase is targeted to the top 2 percent of beneficiaries, it is the least objectionable beneficiary cut

that could have been included in such a package. The bill does not otherwise increase premiums across the board by $58 billion, as some have asserted, compared to premium levels under current policy.

MACRA's other beneficiary cut causes us more concern. Currently, about 12 percent of beneficiaries purchase Medigap supplemental policies to cover their out-of-pocket costs. The bill prohibits these policies from covering the deductible for physician services, which is $147 in 2015. The effect of this change is limited because it goes into effect in 2020 and applies only to new beneficiaries. In addition, because Medigap policies would no longer cover the deductible, premiums for these policies would go down. For most affected beneficiaries, the savings from lower Medigap premiums would actually exceed the costs from deductibles. However, it is possible that hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries with incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty line would face net costs of less than $100 per year. We strongly urge Congress to amend MACRA to protect low-income beneficiaries from this change—either by exempting primary care from their deductibles or by expanding cost-sharing subsidies for this targeted group.

While we would like to see this legislation strengthened, as we have recommended above, this compromise legislation takes an important step in Medicare payment reform and ensures continued funding that improves the health and welfare of millions of children, families, and seniors. We urge Congress to enact it.

BPC URGES CONGRESS TO PASS LEGISLATION TO REFORM MEDICARE AND EXTEND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

[Press Release, March 25, 2015]

WASHINGTON, DC.—The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) issued the following statement by BPC President Jason Grumet; Senior Vice President Bill Hoagland; and Health Policy Director Katherine Hayes regarding the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015:

''We urge Congress to act swiftly to pass H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act introduced this week by chairmen and ranking members of the House Energy & Commerce and Ways & Means Committees. This bill would permanently replace Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) physician payment system, extend funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and implement structural reforms in Medicare to improve care delivery and slow rising costs.

''Like any good bipartisan compromise, this legislation strikes a careful balance that will draw both praise and criticism. By reconciling these competing views, the proposed legislation offers a set of politically viable solutions that deserve broad bipartisan support.

''A permanent SGR repeal—coupled with new incentives to improve quality and value in Medicare—would end the senseless perennial series of temporary patches to prevent payment cuts to physicians; it would also enable Congress to move forward on a broader set of reforms.

''A two-year extension of full CHIP funding with no programmatic changes, would provide near-term certainty to states and low-income families who rely upon this essential program.

''A balanced package of policy 'offsets'—including cuts from providers and 2% of high-income seniors—would pay for a significant portion of the legislation. Additional savings from improved Medicare payment incentives may accrue over the long term.

''A provision to make permanent the Medicare Qualifying Individual program would provide extra help to lower income seniors in paying their Medicare Part B premiums.

''We urge U.S. Senators and House members to act now to extend and improve these critical programs for our nation's seniors, children, and health care providers.''

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is not a perfect bill, but it represents, I think, a major accomplishment.

If I could inquire of the gentleman as to how many additional speakers he has.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional speakers at this time. I am prepared to close after the gentleman closes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield myself the balance of my time, and I will take this opportunity to close my side of the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin by thanking all of those who have been involved in this compromise, especially Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI. I want to thank Mr. BURGESS. I want to thank all of the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee. I am grateful to the staffs of all of the relevant committees for all of the work that they have put into this.

I especially want to acknowledge the incredible work of the staff who works in the Office of Legislative Counsel. They don't always get thanked, but they do so much of the work around here, not only on important and complicated legislation like what we are debating here today, but on all legislation, so we are grateful to them.

I don't really know what else to say here except that I am happy we are doing something, and I am happy that we are actually putting forward a bill, a bipartisan bill, that will help a lot of the people who most need help.

As Mr. BURGESS said, in reality, this bill is about access, making sure our senior citizens have the access to the doctors and to the health care that they want. We are making that possible through this bill, as well as helping countless children and low-income families and supporting our community health centers.

This has been kind of an incredible week. It is hard to believe. First, we read that TED CRUZ signs up for ObamaCare, and now, we have this bipartisan compromise on the doc fix, and it reauthorizes CHIP and provides money to our community health centers.

Who knows. I mean, if this is contagious, maybe next week, we will deal with climate change, so I am feeling good as we close this week. Again, I hope this is a coming attraction of what we can see in the future: more bipartisan cooperation, more give and take.

If we follow what we did here, we actually can accomplish a lot more for the American people, and I think that would be a good thing.

Let's get this done.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Today's rule provides for the consideration of legislation addressing the pernicious sustainable growth rate formula, the most threatening issue in Medicare, risking patient access to care for our seniors.

As I close, I would like to note that each committee's work is represented in H.R. 2. The base policy of H.R. 2 has the backing of the House and Senate negotiators and of all three committees of jurisdiction.

I certainly want to thank the Speaker and the minority leader and their staffs for building off of the policy work accomplished by the committees to present a political pathway forward for this bipartisan bill.

I thank the chairmen and ranking members of the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means, as well as of the Senate Finance Committee, for coming together for our Nation's doctors and seniors.

I must note Chairman UPTON, Chairman PITTS, Chairman RYAN, Chairman BRADY, and former Chairman Camp, as well as Ranking Members PALLONE, GENE GREEN, SANDER LEVIN, JIM MCDERMOTT, and former Ranking Member Henry Waxman.

I would also like to thank all of the staffs who have worked on this issue—who have labored on this issue—for years. I know I will miss some people, but I do want to mention a few at the committee level who have dedicated themselves to getting us here today.

□ 0945

Some have left or switched their roles, but their work from the beginning deserves recognition. Certainly I want to thank Clay Alspach, Robert Horne, Ryan Long, Dr. John O'Shea, Dr. Steve Ferrara, Amy Hall, Eddie Garcia, Tiffany Guarascio, Arielle Woronoff, Brett Baker, Brian Sutter, Matt Hoffmann, Erin Richardson, and J. P. Paluskiewicz on my staff.

I also want to thank the unsung heroes at the House Legislative Counsel, namely, Jessica Shapiro, Ed Grossman, and Jesse Cross.

Every success we have had at each point in this process was further than we had ever come before, and that involved a lot of work, a lot of negotiation, and a lot of overwhelming desire to see the process through to the end.

Ultimately, if this is a package that can go to the White House, all of this will be worth it. I certainly do look forward to passage and hope that, given the positive signs evidenced over the past several days, the other Chamber will quickly embrace this package and ultimately get this badly needed policy into law.

I certainly want my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. This bill funds Community Health Centers for two years at $7.2 billion dollars. These community health centers serve many of the newly insured people in my district. Thanks to the Affordable

Care Act, they have health insurance, but thanks to community health centers, they have health care.

H.R. 2 also extends the CHIP program and keeps over 8 million low-income children and pregnant women in families from losing their health insurance.

Lastly, H.R. 2 finally fixes the SGR, the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate. The SGR was an ill-conceived plan to control the growth in health care costs by slashing doctor pay. We were in danger of doctors dropping Medicare patients, putting seniors' access to critical medical care at risk. The yearly short-term fixes have cost us more over the years than it would have to get rid of it, so I am pleased we are finally doing the right thing today in a way that moves us toward quality health care for Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to clarify a provision in H.R. 2 and how it differs from S. 178—the Senate Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (JVTA).

As you know, the Senate is having a debate about a provision to make the Hyde Amendment part of permanent law and to apply it to non-taxpayer funds. As co-chair of the Pro Choice Caucus, I want to make this clear: the Senate bill creates a new Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund that would be funded—not by taxpayer dollars—but through fines imposed on defendants convicted of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and human smuggling crimes. The Hyde Amendment only applies to taxpayer dollars. Hyde Amendment restrictions have never been applied on a federal fund containing zero taxpayer dollars. This new fund is not federal dollars and therefore not eligible for Hyde. The pro-choice senators who are fighting against this expansion have my full support.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 402, nays 12, answered ''present'' 5, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 143]

YEAS—402

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—12

Amash
Brooks (AL)
Cicilline
Cooper
Gallego
Graham
Huelskamp
Jones
Massie
Rangel
Tonko
Tsongas

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—5

Gosar
Griffith
Labrador
Mulvaney
Stutzman

NOT VOTING—13

Conyers
Franks (AZ)
Hinojosa
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Langevin
Meeks
Palazzo
Payne
Ruiz
Schweikert
Smith (WA)
Young (AK)

□ 1011

Mr. AMASH changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. BISHOP of Georgia, WALZ, LOEBSACK, MCNERNEY, CAPUANO, O'ROURKE, HANNA, and SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I was not present for rollcall vote No. 143. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 143, I voted "no" and I intended to vote "yes."

MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 173, I call up the bill (H.R. 2) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and strengthen Medicare access by improving physician payments and making other improvements, to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). Pursuant to House Resolution 173, the amendment printed in House Report 114–50 is considered adopted. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 2

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SGR REPEAL AND MEDICARE PROVIDER PAYMENT MODERNIZATION

Sec. 101. Repealing the sustainable growth rate (SGR) and improving Medicare payment for physicians' services.
Sec. 102. Priorities and funding for measure development.
Sec. 103. Encouraging care management for individuals with chronic care needs.
Sec. 104. Empowering beneficiary choices through continued access to information on physicians' services.
Sec. 105. Expanding availability of Medicare data.
Sec. 106. Reducing administrative burden and other provisions.

TITLE II—MEDICARE AND OTHER HEALTH EXTENDERS

Subtitle A—Medicare Extenders

Sec. 201. Extension of work GPCI floor.
Sec. 202. Extension of therapy cap exceptions process.
Sec. 203. Extension of ambulance add-ons.
Sec. 204. Extension of increased inpatient hospital payment adjustment for certain low-volume hospitals.
Sec. 205. Extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program.
Sec. 206. Extension for specialized Medicare Advantage plans for special needs individuals.
Sec. 207. Extension of funding for quality measure endorsement, input, and selection.
Sec. 208. Extension of funding outreach and assistance for low-income programs.
Sec. 209. Extension and transition of reasonable cost reimbursement contracts.
Sec. 210. Extension of home health rural add-on.

Subtitle B—Other Health Extenders

Sec. 211. Permanent extension of the qualifying individual (QI) program.
Sec. 212. Permanent extension of transitional medical assistance (TMA).
Sec. 213. Extension of special diabetes program for type I diabetes and for Indians.
Sec. 214. Extension of abstinence education.
Sec. 215. Extension of personal responsibility education program (PREP).
Sec. 216. Extension of funding for family-to-family health information centers.
Sec. 217. Extension of health workforce demonstration project for low-income individuals.
Sec. 218. Extension of maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting programs.
Sec. 219. Tennessee DSH allotment for fiscal years 2015 through 2025.
Sec. 220. Delay in effective date for Medicaid amendments relating to beneficiary liability settlements.
Sec. 221. Extension of funding for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and teaching health centers.

TITLE III—CHIP

Sec. 301. 2-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program.
Sec. 302. Extension of express lane eligibility.
Sec. 303. Extension of outreach and enrollment program.
Sec. 304. Extension of certain programs and demonstration projects.
Sec. 305. Report of Inspector General of HHS on use of express lane option under Medicaid and CHIP.

TITLE IV—OFFSETS

Subtitle A—Medicare Beneficiary Reforms

Sec. 401. Limitation on certain medigap policies for newly eligible Medicare beneficiaries.
Sec. 402. Income-related premium adjustment for parts B and D.

Subtitle B—Other Offsets

Sec. 411. Medicare payment updates for post-acute providers.
Sec. 412. Delay of reduction to Medicaid DSH allotments.
Sec. 413. Levy on delinquent providers.
Sec. 414. Adjustments to inpatient hospital payment rates.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS

Subtitle A—Protecting the Integrity of Medicare

Sec. 501. Prohibition of inclusion of Social Security account numbers on Medicare cards.
Sec. 502. Preventing wrongful Medicare payments for items and services furnished to incarcerated individuals, individuals not lawfully present, and deceased individuals.
Sec. 503. Consideration of measures regarding Medicare beneficiary smart cards.
Sec. 504. Modifying Medicare durable medical equipment face-to-face encounter documentation requirement.
Sec. 505. Reducing improper Medicare payments.
Sec. 506. Improving senior Medicare patrol and fraud reporting rewards.
Sec. 507. Requiring valid prescriber National Provider Identifiers on pharmacy claims.
Sec. 508. Option to receive Medicare Summary Notice electronically.
Sec. 509. Renewal of MAC contracts.
Sec. 510. Study on pathway for incentives to States for State participation in medicaid data match program.
Sec. 511. Guidance on application of Common Rule to clinical data registries.
Sec. 512. Eliminating certain civil money penalties; gainsharing study and report.
Sec. 513. Modification of Medicare home health surety bond condition of participation requirement.
Sec. 514. Oversight of Medicare coverage of manual manipulation of the spine to correct subluxation.
Sec. 515. National expansion of prior authorization model for repetitive scheduled non-emergent ambulance transport.
Sec. 516. Repealing duplicative Medicare secondary payor provision.
Sec. 517. Plan for expanding data in annual CERT report.
Sec. 518. Removing funds for Medicare Improvement Fund added by IMPACT Act of 2014.
Sec. 519. Rule of construction.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

Sec. 521. Extension of two-midnight PAMA rules on certain medical review activities.
Sec. 522. Requiring bid surety bonds and State licensure for entities submitting bids under the Medicare DMEPOS competitive acquisition program.
Sec. 523. Payment for global surgical packages.
Sec. 524. Extension of Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.
Sec. 525. Exclusion from PAYGO scorecards.

TITLE I—SGR REPEAL AND MEDICARE PROVIDER PAYMENT MODERNIZATION

SEC. 101. REPEALING THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE (SGR) AND IMPROVING MEDICARE PAYMENT FOR PHYSICIANS' SERVICES.

(a) STABILIZING FEE UPDATES.—

(1) REPEAL OF SGR PAYMENT METHODOLOGY.—Section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) is amended—

(A) in subsection (d)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(A)—

(I) by inserting ''and ending with 2025'' after ''beginning with 2001''; and

(II) by inserting ''or a subsequent paragraph'' after ''paragraph (4)''; and

(ii) in paragraph (4)—

(I) in the heading, by inserting ''AND ENDING WITH 2014'' after ''YEARS BEGINNING WITH 2001''; and

(II) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and ending with 2014'' after ''a year beginning with 2001''; and

(B) in subsection (f)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting ''through 2014'' after ''of each succeeding year''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and ending with 2014'' after ''beginning with 2000''.

(2) UPDATE OF RATES FOR 2015 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—Subsection (d) of section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by adding at the end the following: ''There shall be two separate conversion factors for each year beginning with 2026, one for items and services furnished by a qualifying APM participant (as defined in section 1833(z)(2)) (referred to in this subsection as the 'qualifying APM conversion factor') and the other for other items and services (referred to in this subsection as the 'nonqualifying APM conversion factor'), equal to the respective conversion factor for the previous year (or, in the case of 2026, equal to the single conversion factor for 2025) multiplied by the update established under paragraph (20) for such respective conversion factor for such year.'';

(B) in paragraph (1)(D), by inserting ''(or, beginning with 2026, applicable conversion factor)'' after ''single conversion factor''; and

(C) by striking paragraph (16) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(16) UPDATE FOR JANUARY THROUGH JUNE OF 2015.—Subject to paragraphs (7)(B), (8)(B), (9)(B), (10)(B), (11)(B), (12)(B), (13)(B), (14)(B), and (15)(B), in lieu of the update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) that would otherwise apply for 2015 for the period beginning on January 1, 2015, and ending on June 30, 2015, the update to the single conversion factor shall be 0.0 percent.

''(17) UPDATE FOR JULY THROUGH DECEMBER OF 2015.—The update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) for the period beginning on July 1, 2015, and ending on December 31, 2015, shall be 0.5 percent.

''(18) UPDATE FOR 2016 THROUGH 2019.—The update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) for 2016 and each subsequent year through 2019 shall be 0.5 percent.

''(19) UPDATE FOR 2020 THROUGH 2025.—The update to the single conversion factor established in paragraph (1)(C) for 2020 and each subsequent year through 2025 shall be 0.0 percent.

''(20) UPDATE FOR 2026 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—For 2026 and each subsequent year, the update to the qualifying APM conversion factor established under paragraph (1)(A) is 0.75 percent, and the update to the nonqualifying APM conversion factor established under such paragraph is 0.25 percent.''.

(3) MEDPAC REPORTS.—

(A) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than July 1, 2017, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission shall submit to Congress a report on the relationship between—

(i) physician and other health professional utilization and expenditures (and the rate of increase of such utilization and expenditures) of items and services for which payment is made under section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4); and

(ii) total utilization and expenditures (and the rate of increase of such utilization and expenditures) under parts A, B, and D of title XVIII of such Act.

Such report shall include a methodology to describe such relationship and the impact of changes in such physician and other health professional practice and service ordering patterns on total utilization and expenditures under parts A, B, and D of such title.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than July 1, 2021, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission shall submit to Congress a report on the relationship described in subparagraph (A), including the results determined from applying the methodology included in the report submitted under such subparagraph.

(C) REPORT ON UPDATE TO PHYSICIANS' SERVICES UNDER MEDICARE.—Not later than July 1, 2019, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission shall submit to Congress a report on—

(i) the payment update for professional services applied under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act for the period of years 2015 through 2019;

(ii) the effect of such update on the efficiency, economy, and quality of care provided under such program;

(iii) the effect of such update on ensuring a sufficient number of providers to maintain access to care by Medicare beneficiaries; and

(iv) recommendations for any future payment updates for professional services under such program to ensure adequate access to care is maintained for Medicare beneficiaries.

(b) CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN CURRENT LAW PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS WITH NEW MERIT-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM.—

(1) EHR MEANINGFUL USE INCENTIVE PROGRAM.—

(A) SUNSETTING SEPARATE MEANINGFUL USE PAYMENT ADJUSTMENTS.—Section 1848(a)(7)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(a)(7)(A)) is amended—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''2015 or any subsequent payment year'' and inserting ''each of 2015 through 2018'';

(ii) in clause (ii)(III), by striking ''each subsequent year'' and inserting ''2018''; and

(iii) in clause (iii)—

(I) in the heading, by striking ''AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS'';

(II) by striking ''and each subsequent year''; and

(III) by striking '', but in no case shall the applicable percent be less than 95 percent''.

(B) CONTINUATION OF MEANINGFUL USE DETERMINATIONS FOR MIPS.—Section 1848(o)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(o)(2)) is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (A), in the matter preceding clause (i)—

(I) by striking ''For purposes of paragraph (1), an'' and inserting ''An''; and

(II) by inserting '', or pursuant to subparagraph (D) for purposes of subsection (q), for a performance period under such subsection for a year'' after ''under such subsection for a year''; and

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

''(D) CONTINUED APPLICATION FOR PURPOSES OF MIPS.—With respect to 2019 and each subsequent payment year, the Secretary shall, for purposes of subsection (q) and in accordance with paragraph (1)(F) of such subsection, determine whether an eligible professional who is a MIPS eligible professional (as defined in subsection (q)(1)(C)) for such year is a meaningful EHR user under this paragraph for the performance period under subsection (q) for such year.''.

(2) QUALITY REPORTING.—

(A) SUNSETTING SEPARATE QUALITY REPORTING INCENTIVES.—Section 1848(a)(8)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(a)(8)(A)) is amended—

(i) in clause (i), by striking ''2015 or any subsequent year'' and inserting ''each of 2015 through 2018''; and

(ii) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''and each subsequent year'' and inserting '', 2017, and 2018''.

(B) CONTINUATION OF QUALITY MEASURES AND PROCESSES FOR MIPS.—Section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) is amended—

(i) in subsection (k), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) CONTINUED APPLICATION FOR PURPOSES OF MIPS AND FOR CERTAIN PROFESSIONALS VOLUNTEERING TO REPORT.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with subsection (q)(1)(F), carry out the provisions of this subsection—

''(A) for purposes of subsection (q); and

''(B) for eligible professionals who are not MIPS eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (q)(1)(C)) for the year involved.''; and

(ii) in subsection (m)—

(I) by redesignating paragraph (7) added by section 10327(a) of Public Law 111–148 as paragraph (8); and

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

''(9) CONTINUED APPLICATION FOR PURPOSES OF MIPS AND FOR CERTAIN PROFESSIONALS VOLUNTEERING TO REPORT.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with subsection (q)(1)(F), carry out the processes under this subsection—

''(A) for purposes of subsection (q); and

''(B) for eligible professionals who are not MIPS eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (q)(1)(C)) for the year involved.''.

(3) VALUE-BASED PAYMENTS.—

(A) SUNSETTING SEPARATE VALUE-BASED PAYMENTS.—Clause (iii) of section 1848(p)(4)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(p)(4)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

''(iii) APPLICATION.—The Secretary shall apply the payment modifier established under this subsection for items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2015, with respect to specific physicians and groups of physicians the Secretary determines appropriate, and for services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, with respect to all physicians and groups of physicians. Such payment modifier shall not be applied for items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2019.''.

(B) CONTINUATION OF VALUE-BASED PAYMENT MODIFIER MEASURES FOR MIPS.—Section 1848(p) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(p)) is amended—

(i) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) CONTINUED APPLICATION FOR PURPOSES OF MIPS.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with subsection (q)(1)(F), carry out subparagraph (B) for purposes of subsection (q).''; and

(ii) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following: ''With respect to 2019 and each subsequent year, the Secretary shall, in accordance with subsection (q)(1)(F), carry out this paragraph for purposes of subsection (q).''.

(c) MERIT-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM.—

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

''(q) MERIT-BASED INCENTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this subsection, the Secretary shall establish an eligible professional Merit-based Incentive Payment System (in this subsection referred to as the 'MIPS') under which the Secretary shall—

''(i) develop a methodology for assessing the total performance of each MIPS eligible professional according to performance standards under paragraph (3) for a performance period (as established under paragraph (4)) for a year;

''(ii) using such methodology, provide for a composite performance score in accordance with paragraph (5) for each such professional for each performance period; and

''(iii) use such composite performance score of the MIPS eligible professional for a performance period for a year to determine and apply a MIPS adjustment factor (and, as applicable, an additional MIPS adjustment factor) under paragraph (6) to the professional for the year.

Notwithstanding subparagraph (C)(ii), under the MIPS, the Secretary shall permit any eligible professional (as defined in subsection (k)(3)(B)) to report on applicable measures and activities described in paragraph (2)(B).

''(B) PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.—The MIPS shall apply to payments for items and services furnished on or after January 1, 2019.

''(C) MIPS ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEFINED.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subsection, subject to clauses (ii) and (iv), the term 'MIPS eligible professional' means—

''(I) for the first and second years for which the MIPS applies to payments (and for the performance period for such first and second year), a physician (as defined in section 1861(r)), a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, and clinical nurse specialist (as such terms are defined in section 1861(aa)(5)), a certified registered nurse anesthetist (as defined in section 1861(bb)(2)), and a group that includes such professionals; and

''(II) for the third year for which the MIPS applies to payments (and for the performance period for such third year) and for each succeeding year (and for the performance period for each such year), the professionals described in subclause (I), such other eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (k)(3)(B)) as specified by the Secretary, and a group that includes such professionals.

''(ii) EXCLUSIONS.—For purposes of clause (i), the term 'MIPS eligible professional' does not include, with respect to a year, an eligible professional (as defined in subsection (k)(3)(B)) who—

''(I) is a qualifying APM participant (as defined in section 1833(z)(2));

''(II) subject to clause (vii), is a partial qualifying APM participant (as defined in clause (iii)) for the most recent period for which data are available and who, for the performance period with respect to such year, does not report on applicable measures and activities described in paragraph (2)(B) that are required to be reported by such a professional under the MIPS; or

''(III) for the performance period with respect to such year, does not exceed the low-

volume threshold measurement selected under clause (iv).

''(iii) PARTIAL QUALIFYING APM PARTICIPANT.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'partial qualifying APM participant' means, with respect to a year, an eligible professional for whom the Secretary determines the minimum payment percentage (or percentages), as applicable, described in paragraph (2) of section 1833(z) for such year have not been satisfied, but who would be considered a qualifying APM participant (as defined in such paragraph) for such year if—

''(I) with respect to 2019 and 2020, the reference in subparagraph (A) of such paragraph to 25 percent was instead a reference to 20 percent;

''(II) with respect to 2021 and 2022—

''(aa) the reference in subparagraph (B)(i) of such paragraph to 50 percent was instead a reference to 40 percent; and

''(bb) the references in subparagraph (B)(ii) of such paragraph to 50 percent and 25 percent of such paragraph were instead references to 40 percent and 20 percent, respectively; and

''(III) with respect to 2023 and subsequent years—

''(aa) the reference in subparagraph (C)(i) of such paragraph to 75 percent was instead a reference to 50 percent; and

''(bb) the references in subparagraph (C)(ii) of such paragraph to 75 percent and 25 percent of such paragraph were instead references to 50 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

''(iv) SELECTION OF LOW-VOLUME THRESHOLD MEASUREMENT.—The Secretary shall select a low-volume threshold to apply for purposes of clause (ii)(III), which may include one or more or a combination of the following:

''(I) The minimum number (as determined by the Secretary) of individuals enrolled under this part who are treated by the eligible professional for the performance period involved.

''(II) The minimum number (as determined by the Secretary) of items and services furnished to individuals enrolled under this part by such professional for such performance period.

''(III) The minimum amount (as determined by the Secretary) of allowed charges billed by such professional under this part for such performance period.

''(v) TREATMENT OF NEW MEDICARE ENROLLED ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONALS.—In the case of a professional who first becomes a Medicare enrolled eligible professional during the performance period for a year (and had not previously submitted claims under this title such as a person, an entity, or a part of a physician group or under a different billing number or tax identifier), such professional shall not be treated under this subsection as a MIPS eligible professional until the subsequent year and performance period for such subsequent year.

''(vi) CLARIFICATION.—In the case of items and services furnished during a year by an individual who is not a MIPS eligible professional (including pursuant to clauses (ii) and (v)) with respect to a year, in no case shall a MIPS adjustment factor (or additional MIPS adjustment factor) under paragraph (6) apply to such individual for such year.

''(vii) PARTIAL QUALIFYING APM PARTICIPANT CLARIFICATIONS.—

''(I) TREATMENT AS MIPS ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL.—In the case of an eligible professional who is a partial qualifying APM participant, with respect to a year, and who, for the performance period for such year, reports on applicable measures and activities described in paragraph (2)(B) that are required to be reported by such a professional under the MIPS, such eligible professional is considered to be a MIPS eligible professional with respect to such year.

''(II) NOT ELIGIBLE FOR QUALIFYING APM PARTICIPANT PAYMENTS.—In no case shall an eligible professional who is a partial qualifying APM participant, with respect to a year, be considered a qualifying APM participant (as defined in paragraph (2) of section 1833(z)) for such year or be eligible for the additional payment under paragraph (1) of such section for such year.

''(D) APPLICATION TO GROUP PRACTICES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Under the MIPS:

''(I) QUALITY PERFORMANCE CATEGORY.—The Secretary shall establish and apply a process that includes features of the provisions of subsection (m)(3)(C) for MIPS eligible professionals in a group practice with respect to assessing performance of such group with respect to the performance category described in clause (i) of paragraph (2)(A).

''(II) OTHER PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES.—The Secretary may establish and apply a process that includes features of the provisions of subsection (m)(3)(C) for MIPS eligible professionals in a group practice with respect to assessing the performance of such group with respect to the performance categories described in clauses (ii) through (iv) of such paragraph.

''(ii) ENSURING COMPREHENSIVENESS OF GROUP PRACTICE ASSESSMENT.—The process established under clause (i) shall to the extent practicable reflect the range of items and services furnished by the MIPS eligible professionals in the group practice involved.

''(E) USE OF REGISTRIES.—Under the MIPS, the Secretary shall encourage the use of qualified clinical data registries pursuant to subsection (m)(3)(E) in carrying out this subsection.

''(F) APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—In applying a provision of subsection (k), (m), (o), or (p) for purposes of this subsection, the Secretary shall—

''(i) adjust the application of such provision to ensure the provision is consistent with the provisions of this subsection; and

''(ii) not apply such provision to the extent that the provision is duplicative with a provision of this subsection.

''(G) ACCOUNTING FOR RISK FACTORS.—

''(i) RISK FACTORS.—Taking into account the relevant studies conducted and recommendations made in reports under section 2(d) of the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act of 2014, and, as appropriate, other information, including information collected before completion of such studies and recommendations, the Secretary, on an ongoing basis, shall, as the Secretary determines appropriate and based on an individual's health status and other risk factors—

''(I) assess appropriate adjustments to quality measures, resource use measures, and other measures used under the MIPS; and

''(II) assess and implement appropriate adjustments to payment adjustments, composite performance scores, scores for performance categories, or scores for measures or activities under the MIPS.

''(2) MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES UNDER PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES.—

''(A) PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES.—Under the MIPS, the Secretary shall use the following performance categories (each of which is referred to in this subsection as a performance category) in determining the composite performance score under paragraph (5):

''(i) Quality.

''(ii) Resource use.

''(iii) Clinical practice improvement activities.

''(iv) Meaningful use of certified EHR technology.

''(B) MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES SPECIFIED FOR EACH CATEGORY.—For purposes of paragraph (3)(A) and subject to subparagraph (C), measures and activities specified for a performance period (as established under paragraph (4)) for a year are as follows:

''(i) QUALITY.—For the performance category described in subparagraph (A)(i), the quality measures included in the final measures list published under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year and the list of quality measures described in subparagraph (D)(vi) used by qualified clinical data registries under subsection (m)(3)(E).

''(ii) RESOURCE USE.—For the performance category described in subparagraph (A)(ii), the measurement of resource use for such period under subsection (p)(3), using the methodology under subsection (r) as appropriate, and, as feasible and applicable, accounting for the cost of drugs under part D.

''(iii) CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES.—For the performance category described in subparagraph (A)(iii), clinical practice improvement activities (as defined in subparagraph (C)(v)(III)) under subcategories specified by the Secretary for such period, which shall include at least the following:

''(I) The subcategory of expanded practice access, such as same day appointments for urgent needs and after hours access to clinician advice.

''(II) The subcategory of population management, such as monitoring health conditions of individuals to provide timely health care interventions or participation in a qualified clinical data registry.

''(III) The subcategory of care coordination, such as timely communication of test results, timely exchange of clinical information to patients and other providers, and use of remote monitoring or telehealth.

''(IV) The subcategory of beneficiary engagement, such as the establishment of care plans for individuals with complex care needs, beneficiary self-management assessment and training, and using shared decision-making mechanisms.

''(V) The subcategory of patient safety and practice assessment, such as through use of clinical or surgical checklists and practice assessments related to maintaining certification.

''(VI) The subcategory of participation in an alternative payment model (as defined in section 1833(z)(3)(C)).

In establishing activities under this clause, the Secretary shall give consideration to the circumstances of small practices (consisting of 15 or fewer professionals) and practices located in rural areas and in health professional shortage areas (as designated under section 332(a)(1)(A) of the Public Health Service Act).

''(iv) MEANINGFUL EHR USE.—For the performance category described in subparagraph (A)(iv), the requirements established for such period under subsection (o)(2) for determining whether an eligible professional is a meaningful EHR user.

''(C) ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.—

''(i) EMPHASIZING OUTCOME MEASURES UNDER THE QUALITY PERFORMANCE CATEGORY.—In applying subparagraph (B)(i), the Secretary shall, as feasible, emphasize the application of outcome measures.

''(ii) APPLICATION OF ADDITIONAL SYSTEM MEASURES.—The Secretary may use measures used for a payment system other than for physicians, such as measures for inpatient hospitals, for purposes of the performance categories described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A). For purposes of the previous sentence, the Secretary may not

use measures for hospital outpatient departments, except in the case of items and services furnished by emergency physicians, radiologists, and anesthesiologists.

''(iii) GLOBAL AND POPULATION-BASED MEASURES.—The Secretary may use global measures, such as global outcome measures, and population-based measures for purposes of the performance category described in subparagraph (A)(i).

''(iv) APPLICATION OF MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES TO NON-PATIENT-FACING PROFESSIONALS.—In carrying out this paragraph, with respect to measures and activities specified in subparagraph (B) for performance categories described in subparagraph (A), the Secretary—

''(I) shall give consideration to the circumstances of professional types (or subcategories of those types determined by practice characteristics) who typically furnish services that do not involve face-to-face interaction with a patient; and

''(II) may, to the extent feasible and appropriate, take into account such circumstances and apply under this subsection with respect to MIPS eligible professionals of such professional types or subcategories, alternative measures or activities that fulfill the goals of the applicable performance category.

In carrying out the previous sentence, the Secretary shall consult with professionals of such professional types or subcategories.

''(v) CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES.—

''(I) REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.—In initially applying subparagraph (B)(iii), the Secretary shall use a request for information to solicit recommendations from stakeholders to identify activities described in such subparagraph and specifying criteria for such activities.

''(II) CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE CATEGORY.—In applying subparagraph (B)(iii), the Secretary may contract with entities to assist the Secretary in—

''(aa) identifying activities described in subparagraph (B)(iii);

''(bb) specifying criteria for such activities; and

''(cc) determining whether a MIPS eligible professional meets such criteria.

''(III) CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'clinical practice improvement activity' means an activity that relevant eligible professional organizations and other relevant stakeholders identify as improving clinical practice or care delivery and that the Secretary determines, when effectively executed, is likely to result in improved outcomes.

''(D) ANNUAL LIST OF QUALITY MEASURES AVAILABLE FOR MIPS ASSESSMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Under the MIPS, the Secretary, through notice and comment rulemaking and subject to the succeeding clauses of this subparagraph, shall, with respect to the performance period for a year, establish an annual final list of quality measures from which MIPS eligible professionals may choose for purposes of assessment under this subsection for such performance period. Pursuant to the previous sentence, the Secretary shall—

''(I) not later than November 1 of the year prior to the first day of the first performance period under the MIPS, establish and publish in the Federal Register a final list of quality measures; and

''(II) not later than November 1 of the year prior to the first day of each subsequent performance period, update the final list of quality measures from the previous year (and publish such updated final list in the Federal Register), by—

''(aa) removing from such list, as appropriate, quality measures, which may include the removal of measures that are no longer meaningful (such as measures that are topped out);

''(bb) adding to such list, as appropriate, new quality measures; and

''(cc) determining whether or not quality measures on such list that have undergone substantive changes should be included in the updated list.

''(ii) CALL FOR QUALITY MEASURES.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Eligible professional organizations and other relevant stakeholders shall be requested to identify and submit quality measures to be considered for selection under this subparagraph in the annual list of quality measures published under clause (i) and to identify and submit updates to the measures on such list. For purposes of the previous sentence, measures may be submitted regardless of whether such measures were previously published in a proposed rule or endorsed by an entity with a contract under section 1890(a).

''(II) ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION DEFINED.—In this subparagraph, the term 'eligible professional organization' means a professional organization as defined by nationally recognized specialty boards of certification or equivalent certification boards.

''(iii) REQUIREMENTS.—In selecting quality measures for inclusion in the annual final list under clause (i), the Secretary shall—

''(I) provide that, to the extent practicable, all quality domains (as defined in subsection (s)(1)(B)) are addressed by such measures; and

''(II) ensure that such selection is consistent with the process for selection of measures under subsections (k), (m), and (p)(2).

''(iv) PEER REVIEW.—Before including a new measure in the final list of measures published under clause (i) for a year, the Secretary shall submit for publication in applicable specialty-appropriate, peer-reviewed journals such measure and the method for developing and selecting such measure, including clinical and other data supporting such measure.

''(v) MEASURES FOR INCLUSION.—The final list of quality measures published under clause (i) shall include, as applicable, measures under subsections (k), (m), and (p)(2), including quality measures from among—

''(I) measures endorsed by a consensus-based entity;

''(II) measures developed under subsection (s); and

''(III) measures submitted under clause (ii)(I).

Any measure selected for inclusion in such list that is not endorsed by a consensus-based entity shall have a focus that is evidence-based.

''(vi) EXCEPTION FOR QUALIFIED CLINICAL DATA REGISTRY MEASURES.—Measures used by a qualified clinical data registry under subsection (m)(3)(E) shall not be subject to the requirements under clauses (i), (iv), and (v). The Secretary shall publish the list of measures used by such qualified clinical data registries on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

''(vii) EXCEPTION FOR EXISTING QUALITY MEASURES.—Any quality measure specified by the Secretary under subsection (k) or (m), including under subsection (m)(3)(E), and any measure of quality of care established under subsection (p)(2) for the reporting period or performance period under the respective subsection beginning before the first performance period under the MIPS—

''(I) shall not be subject to the requirements under clause (i) (except under items (aa) and (cc) of subclause (II) of such clause) or to the requirement under clause (iv); and

''(II) shall be included in the final list of quality measures published under clause (i) unless removed under clause (i)(II)(aa).

''(viii) CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS.—Relevant eligible professional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including State and national medical societies, shall be consulted in carrying out this subparagraph.

''(ix) OPTIONAL APPLICATION.—The process under section 1890A is not required to apply to the selection of measures under this subparagraph.

''(3) PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.—

''(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—Under the MIPS, the Secretary shall establish performance standards with respect to measures and activities specified under paragraph (2)(B) for a performance period (as established under paragraph (4)) for a year.

''(B) CONSIDERATIONS IN ESTABLISHING STANDARDS.—In establishing such performance standards with respect to measures and activities specified under paragraph (2)(B), the Secretary shall consider the following:

''(i) Historical performance standards.

''(ii) Improvement.

''(iii) The opportunity for continued improvement.

''(4) PERFORMANCE PERIOD.—The Secretary shall establish a performance period (or periods) for a year (beginning with 2019). Such performance period (or periods) shall begin and end prior to the beginning of such year and be as close as possible to such year. In this subsection, such performance period (or periods) for a year shall be referred to as the performance period for the year.

''(5) COMPOSITE PERFORMANCE SCORE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the succeeding provisions of this paragraph and taking into account, as available and applicable, paragraph (1)(G), the Secretary shall develop a methodology for assessing the total performance of each MIPS eligible professional according to performance standards under paragraph (3) with respect to applicable measures and activities specified in paragraph (2)(B) with respect to each performance category applicable to such professional for a performance period (as established under paragraph (4)) for a year. Using such methodology, the Secretary shall provide for a composite assessment (using a scoring scale of 0 to 100) for each such professional for the performance period for such year. In this subsection such a composite assessment for such a professional with respect to a performance period shall be referred to as the 'composite performance score' for such professional for such performance period.

''(B) INCENTIVE TO REPORT; ENCOURAGING USE OF CERTIFIED EHR TECHNOLOGY FOR REPORTING QUALITY MEASURES.—

''(i) INCENTIVE TO REPORT.—Under the methodology established under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall provide that in the case of a MIPS eligible professional who fails to report on an applicable measure or activity that is required to be reported by the professional, the professional shall be treated as achieving the lowest potential score applicable to such measure or activity.

''(ii) ENCOURAGING USE OF CERTIFIED EHR TECHNOLOGY AND QUALIFIED CLINICAL DATA REGISTRIES FOR REPORTING QUALITY MEASURES.—Under the methodology established under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall—

''(I) encourage MIPS eligible professionals to report on applicable measures with respect to the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(i) through the use of certified EHR technology and qualified clinical data registries; and

''(II) with respect to a performance period, with respect to a year, for which a MIPS eligible professional reports such measures through the use of such EHR technology, treat such professional as satisfying the clinical quality measures reporting requirement described in subsection (o)(2)(A)(iii) for such year.

''(C) CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE SCORE.—

''(i) RULE FOR CERTIFICATION.—A MIPS eligible professional who is in a practice that is certified as a patient-centered medical home or comparable specialty practice, as determined by the Secretary, with respect to a performance period shall be given the highest potential score for the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(iii) for such period.

''(ii) APM PARTICIPATION.—Participation by a MIPS eligible professional in an alternative payment model (as defined in section 1833(z)(3)(C)) with respect to a performance period shall earn such eligible professional a minimum score of one-half of the highest potential score for the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(iii) for such performance period.

''(iii) SUBCATEGORIES.—A MIPS eligible professional shall not be required to perform activities in each subcategory under paragraph (2)(B)(iii) or participate in an alternative payment model in order to achieve the highest potential score for the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(iii).

''(D) ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT.—

''(i) TAKING INTO ACCOUNT IMPROVEMENT.—Beginning with the second year to which the MIPS applies, in addition to the achievement of a MIPS eligible professional, if data sufficient to measure improvement is available, the methodology developed under subparagraph (A)—

''(I) in the case of the performance score for the performance category described in clauses (i) and (ii) of paragraph (2)(A), shall take into account the improvement of the professional; and

''(II) in the case of performance scores for other performance categories, may take into account the improvement of the professional.

''(ii) ASSIGNING HIGHER WEIGHT FOR ACHIEVEMENT.—Subject to clause (i), under the methodology developed under subparagraph (A), the Secretary may assign a higher scoring weight under subparagraph (F) with respect to the achievement of a MIPS eligible professional than with respect to any improvement of such professional applied under clause (i) with respect to a measure, activity, or category described in paragraph (2).

''(E) WEIGHTS FOR THE PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Under the methodology developed under subparagraph (A), subject to subparagraph (F)(i) and clause (ii), the composite performance score shall be determined as follows:

''(I) QUALITY.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—Subject to item (bb), thirty percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (i) of paragraph (2)(A). In applying the previous sentence, the Secretary shall, as feasible, encourage the application of outcome measures within such category.

''(bb) FIRST 2 YEARS.—For the first and second years for which the MIPS applies to payments, the percentage applicable under item (aa) shall be increased in a manner such that the total percentage points of the increase under this item for the respective year equals the total number of percentage points by which the percentage applied under subclause (II)(bb) for the respective year is less than 30 percent.

''(II) RESOURCE USE.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—Subject to item (bb), thirty percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (ii) of paragraph (2)(A).

''(bb) FIRST 2 YEARS.—For the first year for which the MIPS applies to payments, not more than 10 percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (ii) of paragraph (2)(A). For the second year for which the MIPS applies to payments, not more than 15 percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (ii) of paragraph (2)(A).

''(III) CLINICAL PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES.—Fifteen percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (iii) of paragraph (2)(A).

''(IV) MEANINGFUL USE OF CERTIFIED EHR TECHNOLOGY.—Twenty-five percent of such score shall be based on performance with respect to the category described in clause (iv) of paragraph (2)(A).

''(ii) AUTHORITY TO ADJUST PERCENTAGES IN CASE OF HIGH EHR MEANINGFUL USE ADOPTION.—In any year in which the Secretary estimates that the proportion of eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (o)(5)) who are meaningful EHR users (as determined under subsection (o)(2)) is 75 percent or greater, the Secretary may reduce the percent applicable under clause (i)(IV), but not below 15 percent. If the Secretary makes such reduction for a year, subject to subclauses (I)(bb) and (II)(bb) of clause (i), the percentages applicable under one or more of subclauses (I), (II), and (III) of clause (i) for such year shall be increased in a manner such that the total percentage points of the increase under this clause for such year equals the total number of percentage points reduced under the preceding sentence for such year.

''(F) CERTAIN FLEXIBILITY FOR WEIGHTING PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES, MEASURES, AND ACTIVITIES.—Under the methodology under subparagraph (A), if there are not sufficient measures and activities (described in paragraph (2)(B)) applicable and available to each type of eligible professional involved, the Secretary shall assign different scoring weights (including a weight of 0)—

''(i) which may vary from the scoring weights specified in subparagraph (E), for each performance category based on the extent to which the category is applicable to the type of eligible professional involved; and

''(ii) for each measure and activity specified under paragraph (2)(B) with respect to each such category based on the extent to which the measure or activity is applicable and available to the type of eligible professional involved.

''(G) RESOURCE USE.—Analysis of the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(ii) shall include results from the methodology described in subsection (r)(5), as appropriate.

''(H) INCLUSION OF QUALITY MEASURE DATA FROM OTHER PAYERS.—In applying subsections (k), (m), and (p) with respect to measures described in paragraph (2)(B)(i), analysis of the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(i) may include data submitted by MIPS eligible professionals with respect to items and services furnished to individuals who are not individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under part B.

''(I) USE OF VOLUNTARY VIRTUAL GROUPS FOR CERTAIN ASSESSMENT PURPOSES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In the case of MIPS eligible professionals electing to be a virtual group under clause (ii) with respect to a performance period for a year, for purposes of applying the methodology under subparagraph (A) with respect to the performance categories described in clauses (i) and (ii) of paragraph (2)(A)—

''(I) the assessment of performance provided under such methodology with respect to such performance categories that is to be applied to each such professional in such group for such performance period shall be with respect to the combined performance of all such professionals in such group for such period; and

''(II) with respect to the composite performance score provided under this paragraph for such performance period for each such MIPS eligible professional in such virtual group, the components of the composite performance score that assess performance with respect to such performance categories shall be based on the assessment of the combined performance under subclause (I) for such performance categories and performance period.

''(ii) ELECTION OF PRACTICES TO BE A VIRTUAL GROUP.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with the requirements under clause (iii), establish and have in place a process to allow an individual MIPS eligible professional or a group practice consisting of not more than 10 MIPS eligible professionals to elect, with respect to a performance period for a year to be a virtual group under this subparagraph with at least one other such individual MIPS eligible professional or group practice. Such a virtual group may be based on appropriate classifications of providers, such as by geographic areas or by provider specialties defined by nationally recognized specialty boards of certification or equivalent certification boards.

''(iii) REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements for the process under clause (ii) shall—

''(I) provide that an election under such clause, with respect to a performance period, shall be made before the beginning of such performance period and may not be changed during such performance period;

''(II) provide that an individual MIPS eligible professional and a group practice described in clause (ii) may elect to be in no more than one virtual group for a performance period and that, in the case of such a group practice that elects to be in such virtual group for such performance period, such election applies to all MIPS eligible professionals in such group practice;

''(III) provide that a virtual group be a combination of tax identification numbers;

''(IV) provide for formal written agreements among MIPS eligible professionals electing to be a virtual group under this subparagraph; and

''(V) include such other requirements as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(6) MIPS PAYMENTS.—

''(A) MIPS ADJUSTMENT FACTOR.—Taking into account paragraph (1)(G), the Secretary shall specify a MIPS adjustment factor for each MIPS eligible professional for a year. Such MIPS adjustment factor for a MIPS eligible professional for a year shall be in the form of a percent and shall be determined—

''(i) by comparing the composite performance score of the eligible professional for such year to the performance threshold established under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year;

''(ii) in a manner such that the adjustment factors specified under this subparagraph for a year result in differential payments under this paragraph reflecting that—

''(I) MIPS eligible professionals with composite performance scores for such year at or above such performance threshold for such year receive zero or positive payment adjustment factors for such year in accordance

with clause (iii), with such professionals having higher composite performance scores receiving higher adjustment factors; and

''(II) MIPS eligible professionals with composite performance scores for such year below such performance threshold for such year receive negative payment adjustment factors for such year in accordance with clause (iv), with such professionals having lower composite performance scores receiving lower adjustment factors;

''(iii) in a manner such that MIPS eligible professionals with composite scores described in clause (ii)(I) for such year, subject to clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (F), receive a zero or positive adjustment factor on a linear sliding scale such that an adjustment factor of 0 percent is assigned for a score at the performance threshold and an adjustment factor of the applicable percent specified in subparagraph (B) is assigned for a score of 100; and

''(iv) in a manner such that—

''(I) subject to subclause (II), MIPS eligible professionals with composite performance scores described in clause (ii)(II) for such year receive a negative payment adjustment factor on a linear sliding scale such that an adjustment factor of 0 percent is assigned for a score at the performance threshold and an adjustment factor of the negative of the applicable percent specified in subparagraph (B) is assigned for a score of 0; and

''(II) MIPS eligible professionals with composite performance scores that are equal to or greater than 0, but not greater than ¼ of the performance threshold specified under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year, receive a negative payment adjustment factor that is equal to the negative of the applicable percent specified in subparagraph (B) for such year.

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

''(i) for 2019, 4 percent;

''(ii) for 2020, 5 percent;

''(iii) for 2021, 7 percent; and

''(iv) for 2022 and subsequent years, 9 percent.

''(C) ADDITIONAL MIPS ADJUSTMENT FACTORS FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE.—For 2019 and each subsequent year through 2024, in the case of a MIPS eligible professional with a composite performance score for a year at or above the additional performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(ii) for such year, in addition to the MIPS adjustment factor under subparagraph (A) for the eligible professional for such year, subject to subparagraph (F)(iv), the Secretary shall specify an additional positive MIPS adjustment factor for such professional and year. Such additional MIPS adjustment factors shall be in the form of a percent and determined by the Secretary in a manner such that professionals having higher composite performance scores above the additional performance threshold receive higher additional MIPS adjustment factors.

''(D) ESTABLISHMENT OF PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS.—

''(i) PERFORMANCE THRESHOLD.—For each year of the MIPS, the Secretary shall compute a performance threshold with respect to which the composite performance score of MIPS eligible professionals shall be compared for purposes of determining adjustment factors under subparagraph (A) that are positive, negative, and zero. Such performance threshold for a year shall be the mean or median (as selected by the Secretary) of the composite performance scores for all MIPS eligible professionals with respect to a prior period specified by the Secretary. The Secretary may reassess the selection of the mean or median under the previous sentence every 3 years.

''(ii) ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE THRESHOLD FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE.—In addition to the performance threshold under clause (i), for each year of the MIPS, the Secretary shall compute an additional performance threshold for purposes of determining the additional MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (C). For each such year, the Secretary shall apply either of the following methods for computing such additional performance threshold for such a year:

''(I) The threshold shall be the score that is equal to the 25th percentile of the range of possible composite performance scores above the performance threshold determined under clause (i).

''(II) The threshold shall be the score that is equal to the 25th percentile of the actual composite performance scores for MIPS eligible professionals with composite performance scores at or above the performance threshold with respect to the prior period described in clause (i).

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR INITIAL 2 YEARS.—With respect to each of the first two years to which the MIPS applies, the Secretary shall, prior to the performance period for such years, establish a performance threshold for purposes of determining MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (A) and a threshold for purposes of determining additional MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (C). Each such performance threshold shall—

''(I) be based on a period prior to such performance periods; and

''(II) take into account—

''(aa) data available with respect to performance on measures and activities that may be used under the performance categories under subparagraph (2)(B); and

''(bb) other factors determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(E) APPLICATION OF MIPS ADJUSTMENT FACTORS.—In the case of items and services furnished by a MIPS eligible professional during a year (beginning with 2019), the amount otherwise paid under this part with respect to such items and services and MIPS eligible professional for such year, shall be multiplied by—

''(i) 1, plus

''(ii) the sum of—

''(I) the MIPS adjustment factor determined under subparagraph (A) divided by 100, and

''(II) as applicable, the additional MIPS adjustment factor determined under subparagraph (C) divided by 100.

''(F) AGGREGATE APPLICATION OF MIPS ADJUSTMENT FACTORS.—

''(i) APPLICATION OF SCALING FACTOR.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—With respect to positive MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) for eligible professionals whose composite performance score is above the performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year, subject to subclause (II), the Secretary shall increase or decrease such adjustment factors by a scaling factor in order to ensure that the budget neutrality requirement of clause (ii) is met.

''(II) SCALING FACTOR LIMIT.—In no case may the scaling factor applied under this clause exceed 3.0.

''(ii) BUDGET NEUTRALITY REQUIREMENT.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (iii), the Secretary shall ensure that the estimated amount described in subclause (II) for a year is equal to the estimated amount described in subclause (III) for such year.

''(II) AGGREGATE INCREASES.—The amount described in this subclause is the estimated increase in the aggregate allowed charges resulting from the application of positive MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (A) (after application of the scaling factor described in clause (i)) to MIPS eligible professionals whose composite performance score for a year is above the performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year.

''(III) AGGREGATE DECREASES.—The amount described in this subclause is the estimated decrease in the aggregate allowed charges resulting from the application of negative MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (A) to MIPS eligible professionals whose composite performance score for a year is below the performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year.

''(iii) EXCEPTIONS.—

''(I) In the case that all MIPS eligible professionals receive composite performance scores for a year that are below the performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(i) for such year, the negative MIPS adjustment factors under subparagraph (A) shall apply with respect to such MIPS eligible professionals and the budget neutrality requirement of clause (ii) and the additional adjustment factors under clause (iv) shall not apply for such year.

''(II) In the case that, with respect to a year, the application of clause (i) results in a scaling factor equal to the maximum scaling factor specified in clause (i)(II), such scaling factor shall apply and the budget neutrality requirement of clause (ii) shall not apply for such year.

''(iv) ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE PAYMENT ADJUSTMENTS.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subclause (II), in specifying the MIPS additional adjustment factors under subparagraph (C) for each applicable MIPS eligible professional for a year, the Secretary shall ensure that the estimated aggregate increase in payments under this part resulting from the application of such additional adjustment factors for MIPS eligible professionals in a year shall be equal (as estimated by the Secretary) to $500,000,000 for each year beginning with 2019 and ending with 2024.

''(II) LIMITATION ON ADDITIONAL INCENTIVE PAYMENT ADJUSTMENTS.—The MIPS additional adjustment factor under subparagraph (C) for a year for an applicable MIPS eligible professional whose composite performance score is above the additional performance threshold under subparagraph (D)(ii) for such year shall not exceed 10 percent. The application of the previous sentence may result in an aggregate amount of additional incentive payments that are less than the amount specified in subclause (I).

''(7) ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULT OF ADJUSTMENTS.—Under the MIPS, the Secretary shall, not later than 30 days prior to January 1 of the year involved, make available to MIPS eligible professionals the MIPS adjustment factor (and, as applicable, the additional MIPS adjustment factor) under paragraph (6) applicable to the eligible professional for items and services furnished by the professional for such year. The Secretary may include such information in the confidential feedback under paragraph (12).

''(8) NO EFFECT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—The MIPS adjustment factors and additional MIPS adjustment factors under paragraph (6) shall apply only with respect to the year involved, and the Secretary shall not take into account such adjustment factors in making payments to a MIPS eligible professional under this part in a subsequent year.

''(9) PUBLIC REPORTING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, in an easily understandable format, make available on the Physician Compare Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services the following:

''(i) Information regarding the performance of MIPS eligible professionals under the MIPS, which—

''(I) shall include the composite score for each such MIPS eligible professional and the performance of each such MIPS eligible professional with respect to each performance category; and

''(II) may include the performance of each such MIPS eligible professional with respect to each measure or activity specified in paragraph (2)(B).

''(ii) The names of eligible professionals in eligible alternative payment models (as defined in section 1833(z)(3)(D)) and, to the extent feasible, the names of such eligible alternative payment models and performance of such models.

''(B) DISCLOSURE.—The information made available under this paragraph shall indicate, where appropriate, that publicized information may not be representative of the eligible professional's entire patient population, the variety of services furnished by the eligible professional, or the health conditions of individuals treated.

''(C) OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND SUBMIT CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary shall provide for an opportunity for a professional described in subparagraph (A) to review, and submit corrections for, the information to be made public with respect to the professional under such subparagraph prior to such information being made public.

''(D) AGGREGATE INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall periodically post on the Physician Compare Internet website aggregate information on the MIPS, including the range of composite scores for all MIPS eligible professionals and the range of the performance of all MIPS eligible professionals with respect to each performance category.

''(10) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with stakeholders in carrying out the MIPS, including for the identification of measures and activities under paragraph (2)(B) and the methodologies developed under paragraphs (5)(A) and (6) and regarding the use of qualified clinical data registries. Such consultation shall include the use of a request for information or other mechanisms determined appropriate.

''(11) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SMALL PRACTICES AND PRACTICES IN HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into contracts or agreements with appropriate entities (such as quality improvement organizations, regional extension centers (as described in section 3012(c) of the Public Health Service Act), or regional health collaboratives) to offer guidance and assistance to MIPS eligible professionals in practices of 15 or fewer professionals (with priority given to such practices located in rural areas, health professional shortage areas (as designated under in section 332(a)(1)(A) of such Act), and medically underserved areas, and practices with low composite scores) with respect to—

''(i) the performance categories described in clauses (i) through (iv) of paragraph (2)(A); or

''(ii) how to transition to the implementation of and participation in an alternative payment model as described in section 1833(z)(3)(C).

''(B) FUNDING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—For purposes of implementing subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall provide for the transfer from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund established under section 1841 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account of $20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020. Amounts transferred under this subparagraph for a fiscal year shall be available until expended.

''(12) FEEDBACK AND INFORMATION TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE.—

''(A) PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Beginning July 1, 2017, the Secretary—

''(I) shall make available timely (such as quarterly) confidential feedback to MIPS eligible professionals on the performance of such professionals with respect to the performance categories under clauses (i) and (ii) of paragraph (2)(A); and

''(II) may make available confidential feedback to such professionals on the performance of such professionals with respect to the performance categories under clauses (iii) and (iv) of such paragraph.

''(ii) MECHANISMS.—The Secretary may use one or more mechanisms to make feedback available under clause (i), which may include use of a web-based portal or other mechanisms determined appropriate by the Secretary. With respect to the performance category described in paragraph (2)(A)(i), feedback under this subparagraph shall, to the extent an eligible professional chooses to participate in a data registry for purposes of this subsection (including registries under subsections (k) and (m)), be provided based on performance on quality measures reported through the use of such registries. With respect to any other performance category described in paragraph (2)(A), the Secretary shall encourage provision of feedback through qualified clinical data registries as described in subsection (m)(3)(E)).

''(iii) USE OF DATA.—For purposes of clause (i), the Secretary may use data, with respect to a MIPS eligible professional, from periods prior to the current performance period and may use rolling periods in order to make illustrative calculations about the performance of such professional.

''(iv) DISCLOSURE EXEMPTION.—Feedback made available under this subparagraph shall be exempt from disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code.

''(v) RECEIPT OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary may use the mechanisms established under clause (ii) to receive information from professionals, such as information with respect to this subsection.

''(B) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Beginning July 1, 2018, the Secretary shall make available to MIPS eligible professionals information, with respect to individuals who are patients of such MIPS eligible professionals, about items and services for which payment is made under this title that are furnished to such individuals by other suppliers and providers of services, which may include information described in clause (ii). Such information may be made available under the previous sentence to such MIPS eligible professionals by mechanisms determined appropriate by the Secretary, which may include use of a web-based portal. Such information may be made available in accordance with the same or similar terms as data are made available to accountable care organizations participating in the shared savings program under section 1899.

''(ii) TYPE OF INFORMATION.—For purposes of clause (i), the information described in this clause, is the following:

''(I) With respect to selected items and services (as determined appropriate by the Secretary) for which payment is made under this title and that are furnished to individuals, who are patients of a MIPS eligible professional, by another supplier or provider of services during the most recent period for which data are available (such as the most recent three-month period), such as the name of such providers furnishing such items and services to such patients during such period, the types of such items and services so furnished, and the dates such items and services were so furnished.

''(II) Historical data, such as averages and other measures of the distribution if appropriate, of the total, and components of, allowed charges (and other figures as determined appropriate by the Secretary).

''(13) REVIEW.—

''(A) TARGETED REVIEW.—The Secretary shall establish a process under which a MIPS eligible professional may seek an informal review of the calculation of the MIPS adjustment factor (or factors) applicable to such eligible professional under this subsection for a year. The results of a review conducted pursuant to the previous sentence shall not be taken into account for purposes of paragraph (6) with respect to a year (other than with respect to the calculation of such eligible professional's MIPS adjustment factor for such year or additional MIPS adjustment factor for such year) after the factors determined in subparagraph (A) and subparagraph (C) of such paragraph have been determined for such year.

''(B) LIMITATION.—Except as provided for in subparagraph (A), there shall be no administrative or judicial review under section 1869, section 1878, or otherwise of the following:

''(i) The methodology used to determine the amount of the MIPS adjustment factor under paragraph (6)(A) and the amount of the additional MIPS adjustment factor under paragraph (6)(C) and the determination of such amounts.

''(ii) The establishment of the performance standards under paragraph (3) and the performance period under paragraph (4).

''(iii) The identification of measures and activities specified under paragraph (2)(B) and information made public or posted on the Physician Compare Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services under paragraph (9).

''(iv) The methodology developed under paragraph (5) that is used to calculate performance scores and the calculation of such scores, including the weighting of measures and activities under such methodology.''.

(2) GAO REPORTS.—

(A) EVALUATION OF ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL MIPS.—Not later than October 1, 2021, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report evaluating the eligible professional Merit-based Incentive Payment System under subsection (q) of section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4), as added by paragraph (1). Such report shall—

(i) examine the distribution of the composite performance scores and MIPS adjustment factors (and additional MIPS adjustment factors) for MIPS eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (q)(1)(c) of such section) under such program, and patterns relating to such scores and adjustment factors, including based on type of provider, practice size, geographic location, and patient mix;

(ii) provide recommendations for improving such program;

(iii) evaluate the impact of technical assistance funding under section 1848(q)(11) of the Social Security Act, as added by paragraph (1), on the ability of professionals to improve within such program or successfully transition to an alternative payment model (as defined in section 1833(z)(3) of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (e)), with priority for such evaluation given to practices located in rural areas, health professional shortage areas (as designated in section 332(a)(1)(A) of the Public Health Service Act), and medically underserved areas; and

(iv) provide recommendations for optimizing the use of such technical assistance funds.

(B) STUDY TO EXAMINE ALIGNMENT OF QUALITY MEASURES USED IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act,

the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

(I) compares the similarities and differences in the use of quality measures under the original Medicare fee-for-service program under parts A and B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act, the Medicare Advantage program under part C of such title, selected State Medicaid programs under title XIX of such Act, and private payer arrangements; and

(II) makes recommendations on how to reduce the administrative burden involved in applying such quality measures.

(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The report under clause (i) shall—

(I) consider those measures applicable to individuals entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under such part A, or enrolled under such part B and individuals under the age of 65; and

(II) focus on those measures that comprise the most significant component of the quality performance category of the eligible professional MIPS incentive program under subsection (q) of section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4), as added by paragraph (1).

(C) STUDY ON ROLE OF INDEPENDENT RISK MANAGERS.—Not later than January 1, 2017, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report examining whether entities that pool financial risk for physician practices, such as independent risk managers, can play a role in supporting physician practices, particularly small physician practices, in assuming financial risk for the treatment of patients. Such report shall examine barriers that small physician practices currently face in assuming financial risk for treating patients, the types of risk management entities that could assist physician practices in participating in two-sided risk payment models, and how such entities could assist with risk management and with quality improvement activities. Such report shall also include an analysis of any existing legal barriers to such arrangements.

(D) STUDY TO EXAMINE RURAL AND HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREA ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS.—Not later than October 1, 2021, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that examines the transition of professionals in rural areas, health professional shortage areas (as designated in section 332(a)(1)(A) of the Public Health Service Act), or medically underserved areas to an alternative payment model (as defined in section 1833(z)(3) of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (e)). Such report shall make recommendations for removing administrative barriers to practices, including small practices consisting of 15 or fewer professionals, in rural areas, health professional shortage areas, and medically underserved areas to participation in such models.

(3) FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—For purposes of implementing the provisions of and the amendments made by this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide for the transfer of $80,000,000 from the Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund established under section 1841 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Program Management Account for each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2019. Amounts transferred under this paragraph shall be available until expended.

(d) IMPROVING QUALITY REPORTING FOR COMPOSITE SCORES.—

(1) CHANGES FOR GROUP REPORTING OPTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 1848(m)(3)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(m)(3)(C)(ii)) is amended by inserting ''and, for 2016 and subsequent years, may provide'' after ''shall provide''.

(B) CLARIFICATION OF QUALIFIED CLINICAL DATA REGISTRY REPORTING TO GROUP PRACTICES.—Section 1848(m)(3)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(m)(3)(D)) is amended by inserting ''and, for 2016 and subsequent years, subparagraph (A) or (C)'' after ''subparagraph (A)''.

(2) CHANGES FOR MULTIPLE REPORTING PERIODS AND ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY REPORTING.—Section 1848(m)(5)(F) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(m)(5)(F)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''and subsequent years'' and inserting ''through reporting periods occurring in 2015''; and

(B) by inserting ''and, for reporting periods occurring in 2016 and subsequent years, the Secretary may establish'' after ''shall establish''.

(3) PHYSICIAN FEEDBACK PROGRAM REPORTS SUCCEEDED BY REPORTS UNDER MIPS.—Section 1848(n) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(n)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) REPORTS ENDING WITH 2017.—Reports under the Program shall not be provided after December 31, 2017. See subsection (q)(12) for reports under the eligible professionals Merit-based Incentive Payment System.''.

(4) COORDINATION WITH SATISFYING MEANINGFUL EHR USE CLINICAL QUALITY MEASURE REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Section 1848(o)(2)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(o)(2)(A)(iii)) is amended by inserting ''and subsection (q)(5)(B)(ii)(II)'' after ''Subject to subparagraph (B)(ii)''.

(e) PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS.—

(1) INCREASING TRANSPARENCY OF PHYSICIAN-FOCUSED PAYMENT MODELS.—Section 1868 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ee) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) PHYSICIAN-FOCUSED PAYMENT MODELS.—

''(1) TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

''(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an ad hoc committee to be known as the 'Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee' (referred to in this subsection as the 'Committee').

''(B) MEMBERSHIP.—

''(i) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Committee shall be composed of 11 members appointed by the Comptroller General of the United States.

''(ii) QUALIFICATIONS.—The membership of the Committee shall include individuals with national recognition for their expertise in physician-focused payment models and related delivery of care. No more than 5 members of the Committee shall be providers of services or suppliers, or representatives of providers of services or suppliers.

''(iii) PROHIBITION ON FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.—A member of the Committee shall not be an employee of the Federal Government.

''(iv) ETHICS DISCLOSURE.—The Comptroller General shall establish a system for public disclosure by members of the Committee of financial and other potential conflicts of interest relating to such members. Members of the Committee shall be treated as employees of Congress for purposes of applying title I of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–521).

''(v) DATE OF INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The initial appointments of members of the Committee shall be made by not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection.

''(C) TERM; VACANCIES.—

''(i) TERM.—The terms of members of the Committee shall be for 3 years except that the Comptroller General shall designate staggered terms for the members first appointed.

''(ii) VACANCIES.—Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term. A member may serve after the expiration of that member's term until a successor has taken office. A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

''(D) DUTIES.—The Committee shall meet, as needed, to provide comments and recommendations to the Secretary, as described in paragraph (2)(C), on physician-focused payment models.

''(E) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), a member of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

''(ii) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Committee.

''(F) OPERATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation shall provide technical and operational support for the Committee, which may be by use of a contractor. The Office of the Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services shall provide to the Committee actuarial assistance as needed.

''(ii) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, such amounts as are necessary to carry out this paragraph (not to exceed $5,000,000) for fiscal year 2015 and each subsequent fiscal year. Any amounts transferred under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year shall remain available until expended.

''(G) APPLICATION.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Committee.

''(2) CRITERIA AND PROCESS FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF PHYSICIAN-FOCUSED PAYMENT MODELS.—

''(A) CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING PHYSICIAN-FOCUSED PAYMENT MODELS.—

''(i) RULEMAKING.—Not later than November 1, 2016, the Secretary shall, through notice and comment rulemaking, following a request for information, establish criteria for physician-focused payment models, including models for specialist physicians, that could be used by the Committee for making comments and recommendations pursuant to paragraph (1)(D).

''(ii) MEDPAC SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS.—During the comment period for the proposed rule described in clause (i), the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission may submit comments to the Secretary on the proposed criteria under such clause.

''(iii) UPDATING.—The Secretary may update the criteria established under this subparagraph through rulemaking.

''(B) STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSION OF PHYSICIAN-FOCUSED PAYMENT MODELS.—On an ongoing basis, individuals and stakeholder entities may submit to the Committee proposals for physician-focused payment models that such individuals and entities believe meet the criteria described in subparagraph (A).

''(C) COMMITTEE REVIEW OF MODELS SUBMITTED.—The Committee shall, on a periodic

basis, review models submitted under subparagraph (B), prepare comments and recommendations regarding whether such models meet the criteria described in subparagraph (A), and submit such comments and recommendations to the Secretary.

''(D) SECRETARY REVIEW AND RESPONSE.—The Secretary shall review the comments and recommendations submitted by the Committee under subparagraph (C) and post a detailed response to such comments and recommendations on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

''(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impact the development or testing of models under this title or titles XI, XIX, or XXI.''.

(2) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN ELIGIBLE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS.—Section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 13951) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(z) INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN ELIGIBLE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS.—

''(1) PAYMENT INCENTIVE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of covered professional services furnished by an eligible professional during a year that is in the period beginning with 2019 and ending with 2024 and for which the professional is a qualifying APM participant with respect to such year, in addition to the amount of payment that would otherwise be made for such covered professional services under this part for such year, there also shall be paid to such professional an amount equal to 5 percent of the estimated aggregate payment amounts for such covered professional services under this part for the preceding year. For purposes of the previous sentence, the payment amount for the preceding year may be an estimation for the full preceding year based on a period of such preceding year that is less than the full year. The Secretary shall establish policies to implement this subparagraph in cases in which payment for covered professional services furnished by a qualifying APM participant in an alternative payment model—

''(i) is made to an eligible alternative payment entity rather than directly to the qualifying APM participant; or

''(ii) is made on a basis other than a fee-for-service basis (such as payment on a capitated basis).

''(B) FORM OF PAYMENT.—Payments under this subsection shall be made in a lump sum, on an annual basis, as soon as practicable.

''(C) TREATMENT OF PAYMENT INCENTIVE.—Payments under this subsection shall not be taken into account for purposes of determining actual expenditures under an alternative payment model and for purposes of determining or rebasing any benchmarks used under the alternative payment model.

''(D) COORDINATION.—The amount of the additional payment under this subsection or subsection (m) shall be determined without regard to any additional payment under subsection (m) and this subsection, respectively. The amount of the additional payment under this subsection or subsection (x) shall be determined without regard to any additional payment under subsection (x) and this subsection, respectively. The amount of the additional payment under this subsection or subsection (y) shall be determined without regard to any additional payment under subsection (y) and this subsection, respectively.

''(2) QUALIFYING APM PARTICIPANT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualifying APM participant' means the following:

''(A) 2019 AND 2020.—With respect to 2019 and 2020, an eligible professional for whom the Secretary determines that at least 25 percent of payments under this part for covered professional services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year) were attributable to such services furnished under this part through an eligible alternative payment entity.

''(B) 2021 AND 2022.—With respect to 2021 and 2022, an eligible professional described in either of the following clauses:

''(i) MEDICARE PAYMENT THRESHOLD OPTION.—An eligible professional for whom the Secretary determines that at least 50 percent of payments under this part for covered professional services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year) were attributable to such services furnished under this part through an eligible alternative payment entity.

''(ii) COMBINATION ALL-PAYER AND MEDICARE PAYMENT THRESHOLD OPTION.—An eligible professional—

''(I) for whom the Secretary determines, with respect to items and services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year), that at least 50 percent of the sum of—

''(aa) payments described in clause (i); and

''(bb) all other payments, regardless of payer (other than payments made by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and other than payments made under title XIX in a State in which no medical home or alternative payment model is available under the State program under that title),

meet the requirement described in clause (iii)(I) with respect to payments described in item (aa) and meet the requirement described in clause (iii)(II) with respect to payments described in item (bb);

''(II) for whom the Secretary determines at least 25 percent of payments under this part for covered professional services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year) were attributable to such services furnished under this part through an eligible alternative payment entity; and

''(III) who provides to the Secretary such information as is necessary for the Secretary to make a determination under subclause (I), with respect to such professional.

''(iii) REQUIREMENT.—For purposes of clause (ii)(I)—

''(I) the requirement described in this subclause, with respect to payments described in item (aa) of such clause, is that such payments are made to an eligible alternative payment entity; and

''(II) the requirement described in this subclause, with respect to payments described in item (bb) of such clause, is that such payments are made under arrangements in which—

''(aa) quality measures comparable to measures under the performance category described in section 1848(q)(2)(B)(i) apply;

''(bb) certified EHR technology is used; and

''(cc) the eligible professional participates in an entity that—

''(AA) bears more than nominal financial risk if actual aggregate expenditures exceeds expected aggregate expenditures; or

''(BB) with respect to beneficiaries under title XIX, is a medical home that meets criteria comparable to medical homes expanded under section 1115A(c).

''(C) BEGINNING IN 2023.—With respect to 2023 and each subsequent year, an eligible professional described in either of the following clauses:

''(i) MEDICARE PAYMENT THRESHOLD OPTION.—An eligible professional for whom the Secretary determines that at least 75 percent of payments under this part for covered professional services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year) were attributable to such services furnished under this part through an eligible alternative payment entity.

''(ii) COMBINATION ALL-PAYER AND MEDICARE PAYMENT THRESHOLD OPTION.—An eligible professional—

''(I) for whom the Secretary determines, with respect to items and services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year), that at least 75 percent of the sum of—

''(aa) payments described in clause (i); and

''(bb) all other payments, regardless of payer (other than payments made by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and other than payments made under title XIX in a State in which no medical home or alternative payment model is available under the State program under that title),

meet the requirement described in clause (iii)(I) with respect to payments described in item (aa) and meet the requirement described in clause (iii)(II) with respect to payments described in item (bb);

''(II) for whom the Secretary determines at least 25 percent of payments under this part for covered professional services furnished by such professional during the most recent period for which data are available (which may be less than a year) were attributable to such services furnished under this part through an eligible alternative payment entity; and

''(III) who provides to the Secretary such information as is necessary for the Secretary to make a determination under subclause (I), with respect to such professional.

''(iii) REQUIREMENT.—For purposes of clause (ii)(I)—

''(I) the requirement described in this subclause, with respect to payments described in item (aa) of such clause, is that such payments are made to an eligible alternative payment entity; and

''(II) the requirement described in this subclause, with respect to payments described in item (bb) of such clause, is that such payments are made under arrangements in which—

''(aa) quality measures comparable to measures under the performance category described in section 1848(q)(2)(B)(i) apply;

''(bb) certified EHR technology is used; and

''(cc) the eligible professional participates in an entity that—

''(AA) bears more than nominal financial risk if actual aggregate expenditures exceeds expected aggregate expenditures; or

''(BB) with respect to beneficiaries under title XIX, is a medical home that meets criteria comparable to medical homes expanded under section 1115A(c).

''(D) USE OF PATIENT APPROACH.—The Secretary may base the determination of whether an eligible professional is a qualifying APM participant under this subsection and the determination of whether an eligible professional is a partial qualifying APM participant under section 1848(q)(1)(C)(iii) by using counts of patients in lieu of using payments and using the same or similar percentage criteria (as specified in this subsection and such section, respectively), as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) COVERED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.—The term 'covered professional services' has the meaning given that term in section 1848(k)(3)(A).

''(B) ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL.—The term 'eligible professional' has the meaning given

that term in section 1848(k)(3)(B) and includes a group that includes such professionals.

''(C) ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODEL (APM).—The term 'alternative payment model' means, other than for purposes of subparagraphs (B)(ii)(I)(bb) and (C)(ii)(I)(bb) of paragraph (2), any of the following:

''(i) A model under section 1115A (other than a health care innovation award).

''(ii) The shared savings program under section 1899.

''(iii) A demonstration under section 1866C.

''(iv) A demonstration required by Federal law.

''(D) ELIGIBLE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT ENTITY.—The term 'eligible alternative payment entity' means, with respect to a year, an entity that—

''(i) participates in an alternative payment model that—

''(I) requires participants in such model to use certified EHR technology (as defined in subsection (o)(4)); and

''(II) provides for payment for covered professional services based on quality measures comparable to measures under the performance category described in section 1848(q)(2)(B)(i); and

''(ii)(I) bears financial risk for monetary losses under such alternative payment model that are in excess of a nominal amount; or

''(II) is a medical home expanded under section 1115A(c).

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

''(A) The determination that an eligible professional is a qualifying APM participant under paragraph (2) and the determination that an entity is an eligible alternative payment entity under paragraph (3)(D).

''(B) The determination of the amount of the 5 percent payment incentive under paragraph (1)(A), including any estimation as part of such determination.''.

(3) COORDINATION CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 13951) is further amended—

(A) in subsection (x)(3), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The amount of the additional payment for a service under this subsection and subsection (z) shall be determined without regard to any additional payment for the service under subsection (z) and this subsection, respectively.''; and

(B) in subsection (y)(3), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''The amount of the additional payment for a service under this subsection and subsection (z) shall be determined without regard to any additional payment for the service under subsection (z) and this subsection, respectively.''.

(4) ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF CERTAIN MODELS.—Section 1115A(b)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a(b)(2)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(xxi) Focusing primarily on physicians' services (as defined in section 1848(j)(3)) furnished by physicians who are not primary care practitioners.

''(xxii) Focusing on practices of 15 or fewer professionals.

''(xxiii) Focusing on risk-based models for small physician practices which may involve two-sided risk and prospective patient assignment, and which examine risk-adjusted decreases in mortality rates, hospital readmissions rates, and other relevant and appropriate clinical measures.

''(xxiv) Focusing primarily on title XIX, working in conjunction with the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services.''; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)(viii), by striking ''other public sector or private sector payers'' and inserting ''other public sector payers, private sector payers, or statewide payment models''.

(5) CONSTRUCTION REGARDING TELEHEALTH SERVICES.—Nothing in the provisions of, or amendments made by, this title shall be construed as precluding an alternative payment model or a qualifying APM participant (as those terms are defined in section 1833(z) of the Social Security Act, as added by paragraph (1)) from furnishing a telehealth service for which payment is not made under section 1834(m) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(m)).

(6) INTEGRATING MEDICARE ADVANTAGE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS.—Not later than July 1, 2016, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress a study that examines the feasibility of integrating alternative payment models in the Medicare Advantage payment system. The study shall include the feasibility of including a value-based modifier and whether such modifier should be budget neutral.

(7) STUDY AND REPORT ON FRAUD RELATED TO ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS UNDER THE MEDICARE PROGRAM.—

(A) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall conduct a study that—

(i) examines the applicability of the Federal fraud prevention laws to items and services furnished under title XVIII of the Social Security Act for which payment is made under an alternative payment model (as defined in section 1833(z)(3)(C) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 13951(z)(3)(C)));

(ii) identifies aspects of such alternative payment models that are vulnerable to fraudulent activity; and

(iii) examines the implications of waivers to such laws granted in support of such alternative payment models, including under any potential expansion of such models.

(B) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under subparagraph (A). Such report shall include recommendations for actions to be taken to reduce the vulnerability of such alternative payment models to fraudulent activity. Such report also shall include, as appropriate, recommendations of the Inspector General for changes in Federal fraud prevention laws to reduce such vulnerability.

(f) COLLABORATING WITH THE PHYSICIAN, PRACTITIONER, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE RESOURCE USE MEASUREMENT.—Section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4), as amended by subsection (c), is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(r) COLLABORATING WITH THE PHYSICIAN, PRACTITIONER, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE RESOURCE USE MEASUREMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to involve the physician, practitioner, and other stakeholder communities in enhancing the infrastructure for resource use measurement, including for purposes of the Merit-based Incentive Payment System under subsection (q) and alternative payment models under section 1833(z), the Secretary shall undertake the steps described in the succeeding provisions of this subsection.

''(2) DEVELOPMENT OF CARE EPISODE AND PATIENT CONDITION GROUPS AND CLASSIFICATION CODES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to classify similar patients into care episode groups and patient condition groups, the Secretary shall undertake the steps described in the succeeding provisions of this paragraph.

''(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF EXISTING EFFORTS TO DESIGN AN EPISODE GROUPER.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services a list of the episode groups developed pursuant to subsection (n)(9)(A) and related descriptive information.

''(C) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—The Secretary shall accept, through the date that is 120 days after the day the Secretary posts the list pursuant to subparagraph (B), suggestions from physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders for episode groups in addition to those posted pursuant to such subparagraph, and specific clinical criteria and patient characteristics to classify patients into—

''(i) care episode groups; and

''(ii) patient condition groups.

''(D) DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION CODES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Taking into account the information described in subparagraph (B) and the information received under subparagraph (C), the Secretary shall—

''(I) establish care episode groups and patient condition groups, which account for a target of an estimated ½ of expenditures under parts A and B (with such target increasing over time as appropriate); and

''(II) assign codes to such groups.

''(ii) CARE EPISODE GROUPS.—In establishing the care episode groups under clause (i), the Secretary shall take into account—

''(I) the patient's clinical problems at the time items and services are furnished during an episode of care, such as the clinical conditions or diagnoses, whether or not inpatient hospitalization occurs, and the principal procedures or services furnished; and

''(II) other factors determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(iii) PATIENT CONDITION GROUPS.—In establishing the patient condition groups under clause (i), the Secretary shall take into account—

''(I) the patient's clinical history at the time of a medical visit, such as the patient's combination of chronic conditions, current health status, and recent significant history (such as hospitalization and major surgery during a previous period, such as 3 months); and

''(II) other factors determined appropriate by the Secretary, such as eligibility status under this title (including eligibility under section 226(a), 226(b), or 226A, and dual eligibility under this title and title XIX).

''(E) DRAFT CARE EPISODE AND PATIENT CONDITION GROUPS AND CLASSIFICATION CODES.—Not later than 270 days after the end of the comment period described in subparagraph (C), the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services a draft list of the care episode and patient condition codes established under subparagraph (D) (and the criteria and characteristics assigned to such code).

''(F) SOLICITATION OF INPUT.—The Secretary shall seek, through the date that is 120 days after the Secretary posts the list pursuant to subparagraph (E), comments from physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders, including representatives of individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under this part, regarding the care episode and patient condition groups (and codes) posted under subparagraph (E). In seeking such comments, the Secretary shall use one or more mechanisms (other than notice and comment rulemaking) that may include use of open door forums, town

hall meetings, or other appropriate mechanisms.

''(G) OPERATIONAL LIST OF CARE EPISODE AND PATIENT CONDITION GROUPS AND CODES.—Not later than 270 days after the end of the comment period described in subparagraph (F), taking into account the comments received under such subparagraph, the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services an operational list of care episode and patient condition codes (and the criteria and characteristics assigned to such code).

''(H) SUBSEQUENT REVISIONS.—Not later than November 1 of each year (beginning with 2018), the Secretary shall, through rulemaking, make revisions to the operational lists of care episode and patient condition codes as the Secretary determines may be appropriate. Such revisions may be based on experience, new information developed pursuant to subsection (n)(9)(A), and input from the physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders, including representatives of individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under this part.

''(3) ATTRIBUTION OF PATIENTS TO PHYSICIANS OR PRACTITIONERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to facilitate the attribution of patients and episodes (in whole or in part) to one or more physicians or applicable practitioners furnishing items and services, the Secretary shall undertake the steps described in the succeeding provisions of this paragraph.

''(B) DEVELOPMENT OF PATIENT RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES AND CODES.—The Secretary shall develop patient relationship categories and codes that define and distinguish the relationship and responsibility of a physician or applicable practitioner with a patient at the time of furnishing an item or service. Such patient relationship categories shall include different relationships of the physician or applicable practitioner to the patient (and the codes may reflect combinations of such categories), such as a physician or applicable practitioner who—

''(i) considers themself to have the primary responsibility for the general and ongoing care for the patient over extended periods of time;

''(ii) considers themself to be the lead physician or practitioner and who furnishes items and services and coordinates care furnished by other physicians or practitioners for the patient during an acute episode;

''(iii) furnishes items and services to the patient on a continuing basis during an acute episode of care, but in a supportive rather than a lead role;

''(iv) furnishes items and services to the patient on an occasional basis, usually at the request of another physician or practitioner; or

''(v) furnishes items and services only as ordered by another physician or practitioner.

''(C) DRAFT LIST OF PATIENT RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES AND CODES.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services a draft list of the patient relationship categories and codes developed under subparagraph (B).

''(D) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—The Secretary shall seek, through the date that is 120 days after the Secretary posts the list pursuant to subparagraph (C), comments from physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders, including representatives of individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under this part, regarding the patient relationship categories and codes posted under subparagraph (C). In seeking such comments, the Secretary shall use one or more mechanisms (other than notice and comment rulemaking) that may include open door forums, town hall meetings, web-based forums, or other appropriate mechanisms.

''(E) OPERATIONAL LIST OF PATIENT RELATIONSHIP CATEGORIES AND CODES.—Not later than 240 days after the end of the comment period described in subparagraph (D), taking into account the comments received under such subparagraph, the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services an operational list of patient relationship categories and codes.

''(F) SUBSEQUENT REVISIONS.—Not later than November 1 of each year (beginning with 2018), the Secretary shall, through rulemaking, make revisions to the operational list of patient relationship categories and codes as the Secretary determines appropriate. Such revisions may be based on experience, new information developed pursuant to subsection (n)(9)(A), and input from the physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders, including representatives of individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under this part.

''(4) REPORTING OF INFORMATION FOR RESOURCE USE MEASUREMENT.—Claims submitted for items and services furnished by a physician or applicable practitioner on or after January 1, 2018, shall, as determined appropriate by the Secretary, include—

''(A) applicable codes established under paragraphs (2) and (3); and

''(B) the national provider identifier of the ordering physician or applicable practitioner (if different from the billing physician or applicable practitioner).

''(5) METHODOLOGY FOR RESOURCE USE ANALYSIS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to evaluate the resources used to treat patients (with respect to care episode and patient condition groups), the Secretary shall, as the Secretary determines appropriate—

''(i) use the patient relationship codes reported on claims pursuant to paragraph (4) to attribute patients (in whole or in part) to one or more physicians and applicable practitioners;

''(ii) use the care episode and patient condition codes reported on claims pursuant to paragraph (4) as a basis to compare similar patients and care episodes and patient condition groups; and

''(iii) conduct an analysis of resource use (with respect to care episodes and patient condition groups of such patients).

''(B) ANALYSIS OF PATIENTS OF PHYSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS.—In conducting the analysis described in subparagraph (A)(iii) with respect to patients attributed to physicians and applicable practitioners, the Secretary shall, as feasible—

''(i) use the claims data experience of such patients by patient condition codes during a common period, such as 12 months; and

''(ii) use the claims data experience of such patients by care episode codes—

''(I) in the case of episodes without a hospitalization, during periods of time (such as the number of days) determined appropriate by the Secretary; and

''(II) in the case of episodes with a hospitalization, during periods of time (such as the number of days) before, during, and after the hospitalization.

''(C) MEASUREMENT OF RESOURCE USE.—In measuring such resource use, the Secretary—

''(i) shall use per patient total allowed charges for all services under part A and this part (and, if the Secretary determines appropriate, part D) for the analysis of patient resource use, by care episode codes and by patient condition codes; and

''(ii) may, as determined appropriate, use other measures of allowed charges (such as subtotals for categories of items and services) and measures of utilization of items and services (such as frequency of specific items and services and the ratio of specific items and services among attributed patients or episodes).

''(D) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—The Secretary shall seek comments from the physician specialty societies, applicable practitioner organizations, and other stakeholders, including representatives of individuals entitled to benefits under part A or enrolled under this part, regarding the resource use methodology established pursuant to this paragraph. In seeking comments the Secretary shall use one or more mechanisms (other than notice and comment rulemaking) that may include open door forums, town hall meetings, web-based forums, or other appropriate mechanisms.

''(6) IMPLEMENTATION.—To the extent that the Secretary contracts with an entity to carry out any part of the provisions of this subsection, the Secretary may not contract with an entity or an entity with a subcontract if the entity or subcontracting entity currently makes recommendations to the Secretary on relative values for services under the fee schedule for physicians' services under this section.

''(7) LIMITATION.—There shall be no administrative or judicial review under section 1869, section 1878, or otherwise of—

''(A) care episode and patient condition groups and codes established under paragraph (2);

''(B) patient relationship categories and codes established under paragraph (3); and

''(C) measurement of, and analyses of resource use with respect to, care episode and patient condition codes and patient relationship codes pursuant to paragraph (5).

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

''(9) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) PHYSICIAN.—The term 'physician' has the meaning given such term in section 1861(r)(1).

''(B) APPLICABLE PRACTITIONER.—The term 'applicable practitioner' means—

''(i) a physician assistant, nurse practitioner, and clinical nurse specialist (as such terms are defined in section 1861(aa)(5)), and a certified registered nurse anesthetist (as defined in section 1861(bb)(2)); and

''(ii) beginning January 1, 2019, such other eligible professionals (as defined in subsection (k)(3)(B)) as specified by the Secretary.

''(10) CLARIFICATION.—The provisions of sections 1890(b)(7) and 1890A shall not apply to this subsection.''.

SEC. 102. PRIORITIES AND FUNDING FOR MEASURE DEVELOPMENT.

Section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4), as amended by subsections (c) and (f) of section 101, is further amended by inserting at the end the following new subsection:

''(s) PRIORITIES AND FUNDING FOR MEASURE DEVELOPMENT.—

''(1) PLAN IDENTIFYING MEASURE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND TIMELINES.—

''(A) DRAFT MEASURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—Not later than January 1, 2016, the Secretary shall develop, and post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, a draft plan for the development of quality measures for application under the applicable provisions (as defined in paragraph (5)). Under such plan the Secretary shall—

''(i) address how measures used by private payers and integrated delivery systems could be incorporated under title XVIII;

''(ii) describe how coordination, to the extent possible, will occur across organizations developing such measures; and

''(iii) take into account how clinical best practices and clinical practice guidelines should be used in the development of quality measures.

''(B) QUALITY DOMAINS.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'quality domains' means at least the following domains:

''(i) Clinical care.

''(ii) Safety.

''(iii) Care coordination.

''(iv) Patient and caregiver experience.

''(v) Population health and prevention.

''(C) CONSIDERATION.—In developing the draft plan under this paragraph, the Secretary shall consider—

''(i) gap analyses conducted by the entity with a contract under section 1890(a) or other contractors or entities;

''(ii) whether measures are applicable across health care settings;

''(iii) clinical practice improvement activities submitted under subsection (q)(2)(C)(iv) for identifying possible areas for future measure development and identifying existing gaps with respect to such measures; and

''(iv) the quality domains applied under this subsection.

''(D) PRIORITIES.—In developing the draft plan under this paragraph, the Secretary shall give priority to the following types of measures:

''(i) Outcome measures, including patient reported outcome and functional status measures.

''(ii) Patient experience measures.

''(iii) Care coordination measures.

''(iv) Measures of appropriate use of services, including measures of over use.

''(E) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—The Secretary shall accept through March 1, 2016, comments on the draft plan posted under paragraph (1)(A) from the public, including health care providers, payers, consumers, and other stakeholders.

''(F) FINAL MEASURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—Not later than May 1, 2016, taking into account the comments received under this subparagraph, the Secretary shall finalize the plan and post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services an operational plan for the development of quality measures for use under the applicable provisions. Such plan shall be updated as appropriate.

''(2) CONTRACTS AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR QUALITY MEASURE DEVELOPMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into contracts or other arrangements with entities for the purpose of developing, improving, updating, or expanding in accordance with the plan under paragraph (1) quality measures for application under the applicable provisions. Such entities shall include organizations with quality measure development expertise.

''(B) PRIORITIZATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In entering into contracts or other arrangements under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall give priority to the development of the types of measures described in paragraph (1)(D).

''(ii) CONSIDERATION.—In selecting measures for development under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider—

''(I) whether such measures would be electronically specified; and

''(II) clinical practice guidelines to the extent that such guidelines exist.

''(3) ANNUAL REPORT BY THE SECRETARY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than May 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall post on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services a report on the progress made in developing quality measures for application under the applicable provisions.

''(B) REQUIREMENTS.—Each report submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

''(i) A description of the Secretary's efforts to implement this paragraph.

''(ii) With respect to the measures developed during the previous year—

''(I) a description of the total number of quality measures developed and the types of such measures, such as an outcome or patient experience measure;

''(II) the name of each measure developed;

''(III) the name of the developer and steward of each measure;

''(IV) with respect to each type of measure, an estimate of the total amount expended under this title to develop all measures of such type; and

''(V) whether the measure would be electronically specified.

''(iii) With respect to measures in development at the time of the report—

''(I) the information described in clause (ii), if available; and

''(II) a timeline for completion of the development of such measures.

''(iv) A description of any updates to the plan under paragraph (1) (including newly identified gaps and the status of previously identified gaps) and the inventory of measures applicable under the applicable provisions.

''(v) Other information the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

''(4) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—With respect to paragraph (1), the Secretary shall seek stakeholder input with respect to—

''(A) the identification of gaps where no quality measures exist, particularly with respect to the types of measures described in paragraph (1)(D);

''(B) prioritizing quality measure development to address such gaps; and

''(C) other areas related to quality measure development determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(5) DEFINITION OF APPLICABLE PROVISIONS.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable provisions' means the following provisions:

''(A) Subsection (q)(2)(B)(i).

''(B) Section 1833(z)(2)(C).

''(6) FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, of $15,000,000 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019. Amounts transferred under this paragraph shall remain available through the end of fiscal year 2022.

''(7) ADMINISTRATION.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not apply to the collection of information for the development of quality measures.''.

SEC. 103. ENCOURAGING CARE MANAGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH CHRONIC CARE NEEDS.

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

''(8) ENCOURAGING CARE MANAGEMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH CHRONIC CARE NEEDS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to encourage the management of care for individuals with chronic care needs the Secretary shall, subject to subparagraph (B), make payment (as the Secretary determines to be appropriate) under this section for chronic care management services furnished on or after January 1, 2015, by a physician (as defined in section 1861(r)(1)), physician assistant or nurse practitioner (as defined in section 1861(aa)(5)(A)), clinical nurse specialist (as defined in section 1861(aa)(5)(B)), or certified nurse midwife (as defined in section 1861(gg)(2)).

''(B) POLICIES RELATING TO PAYMENT.—In carrying out this paragraph, with respect to chronic care management services, the Secretary shall—

''(i) make payment to only one applicable provider for such services furnished to an individual during a period;

''(ii) not make payment under subparagraph (A) if such payment would be duplicative of payment that is otherwise made under this title for such services; and

''(iii) not require that an annual wellness visit (as defined in section 1861(hhh)) or an initial preventive physical examination (as defined in section 1861(ww)) be furnished as a condition of payment for such management services.''.

(b) EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.—

(1) CAMPAIGN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this subsection referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall conduct an education and outreach campaign to inform professionals who furnish items and services under part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act and individuals enrolled under such part of the benefits of chronic care management services described in section 1848(b)(8) of the Social Security Act, as added by subsection (a), and encourage such individuals with chronic care needs to receive such services.

(B) REQUIREMENTS.—Such campaign shall—

(i) be directed by the Office of Rural Health Policy of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Minority Health of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; and

(ii) focus on encouraging participation by underserved rural populations and racial and ethnic minority populations.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than December 31, 2017, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the use of chronic care management services described in such section 1848(b)(8) by individuals living in rural areas and by racial and ethnic minority populations. Such report shall—

(A) identify barriers to receiving chronic care management services; and

(B) make recommendations for increasing the appropriate use of chronic care management services.

SEC. 104. EMPOWERING BENEFICIARY CHOICES THROUGH CONTINUED ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON PHYSICIANS' SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—On an annual basis (beginning with 2015), the Secretary shall make publicly available, in an easily understandable format, information with respect to physicians and, as appropriate, other eligible professionals on items and services furnished to Medicare beneficiaries under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

(b) TYPE AND MANNER OF INFORMATION.—The information made available under this section shall be similar to the type of information in the Medicare Provider Utilization and Payment Data: Physician and Other Supplier Public Use File released by the Secretary with respect to 2012 and shall be made available in a manner similar to the manner in which the information in such file is made available.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—The information made available under this section shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Information on the number of services furnished by the physician or other eligible professional under part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395j et seq.), which may include information on the most frequent services furnished or groupings of services.

(2) Information on submitted charges and payments for services under such part.

(3) A unique identifier for the physician or other eligible professional that is available to the public, such as a national provider identifier.

(d) SEARCHABILITY.—The information made available under this section shall be searchable by at least the following:

(1) The specialty or type of the physician or other eligible professional.

(2) Characteristics of the services furnished, such as volume or groupings of services.

(3) The location of the physician or other eligible professional.

(e) INTEGRATION ON PHYSICIAN COMPARE.—Beginning with 2016, the Secretary shall integrate the information made available under this section on Physician Compare.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL; PHYSICIAN; SECRETARY.—The terms ''eligible professional'', ''physician'', and ''Secretary'' have the meaning given such terms in section 10331(i) of Public Law 111–148.

(2) PHYSICIAN COMPARE.—The term ''Physician Compare'' means the Physician Compare Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (or a successor website).

SEC. 105. EXPANDING AVAILABILITY OF MEDICARE DATA.

(a) EXPANDING USES OF MEDICARE DATA BY QUALIFIED ENTITIES.—

(1) ADDITIONAL ANALYSES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), to the extent consistent with applicable information, privacy, security, and disclosure laws (including paragraph (3)), notwithstanding paragraph (4)(B) of section 1874(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)) and the second sentence of paragraph (4)(D) of such section, beginning July 1, 2016, a qualified entity may use the combined data described in paragraph (4)(B)(iii) of such section received by such entity under such section, and information derived from the evaluation described in such paragraph (4)(D), to conduct additional non-public analyses (as determined appropriate by the Secretary) and provide or sell such analyses to authorized users for non-public use (including for the purposes of assisting providers of services and suppliers to develop and participate in quality and patient care improvement activities, including developing new models of care).

(B) LIMITATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ANALYSES.—

(i) EMPLOYERS.—Any analyses provided or sold under subparagraph (A) to an employer described in paragraph (9)(A)(iii) may only be used by such employer for purposes of providing health insurance to employees and retirees of the employer.

(ii) HEALTH INSURANCE ISSUERS.—A qualified entity may not provide or sell an analysis to a health insurance issuer described in paragraph (9)(A)(iv) unless the issuer is providing the qualified entity with data under section 1874(e)(4)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)(4)(B)(iii)).

(2) ACCESS TO CERTAIN DATA.—

(A) ACCESS.—To the extent consistent with applicable information, privacy, security, and disclosure laws (including paragraph (3)), notwithstanding paragraph (4)(B) of section 1874(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)) and the second sentence of paragraph (4)(D) of such section, beginning July 1, 2016, a qualified entity may—

(i) provide or sell the combined data described in paragraph (4)(B)(iii) of such section to authorized users described in clauses (i), (ii), and (v) of paragraph (9)(A) for non-public use, including for the purposes described in subparagraph (B); or

(ii) subject to subparagraph (C), provide Medicare claims data to authorized users described in clauses (i), (ii), and (v), of paragraph (9)(A) for non-public use, including for the purposes described in subparagraph (B).

(B) PURPOSES DESCRIBED.—The purposes described in this subparagraph are assisting providers of services and suppliers in developing and participating in quality and patient care improvement activities, including developing new models of care.

(C) MEDICARE CLAIMS DATA MUST BE PROVIDED AT NO COST.—A qualified entity may not charge a fee for providing the data under subparagraph (A)(ii).

(3) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an analysis or data that is provided or sold under paragraph (1) or (2) shall not contain information that individually identifies a patient.

(B) INFORMATION ON PATIENTS OF THE PROVIDER OF SERVICES OR SUPPLIER.—To the extent consistent with applicable information, privacy, security, and disclosure laws, an analysis or data that is provided or sold to a provider of services or supplier under paragraph (1) or (2) may contain information that individually identifies a patient of such provider or supplier, including with respect to items and services furnished to the patient by other providers of services or suppliers.

(C) PROHIBITION ON USING ANALYSES OR DATA FOR MARKETING PURPOSES.—An authorized user shall not use an analysis or data provided or sold under paragraph (1) or (2) for marketing purposes.

(4) DATA USE AGREEMENT.—A qualified entity and an authorized user described in clauses (i), (ii), and (v) of paragraph (9)(A) shall enter into an agreement regarding the use of any data that the qualified entity is providing or selling to the authorized user under paragraph (2). Such agreement shall describe the requirements for privacy and security of the data and, as determined appropriate by the Secretary, any prohibitions on using such data to link to other individually identifiable sources of information. If the authorized user is not a covered entity under the rules promulgated pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, the agreement shall identify the relevant regulations, as determined by the Secretary, that the user shall comply with as if it were acting in the capacity of such a covered entity.

(5) NO REDISCLOSURE OF ANALYSES OR DATA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an authorized user that is provided or sold an analysis or data under paragraph (1) or (2) shall not redisclose or make public such analysis or data or any analysis using such data.

(B) PERMITTED REDISCLOSURE.—A provider of services or supplier that is provided or sold an analysis or data under paragraph (1) or (2) may, as determined by the Secretary, redisclose such analysis or data for the purposes of performance improvement and care coordination activities but shall not make public such analysis or data or any analysis using such data.

(6) OPPORTUNITY FOR PROVIDERS OF SERVICES AND SUPPLIERS TO REVIEW.—Prior to a qualified entity providing or selling an analysis to an authorized user under paragraph (1), to the extent that such analysis would individually identify a provider of services or supplier who is not being provided or sold such analysis, such qualified entity shall provide such provider or supplier with the opportunity to appeal and correct errors in the manner described in section 1874(e)(4)(C)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)(4)(C)(ii)).

(7) ASSESSMENT FOR A BREACH.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a breach of a data use agreement under this section or section 1874(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)), the Secretary shall impose an assessment on the qualified entity both in the case of—

(i) an agreement between the Secretary and a qualified entity; and

(ii) an agreement between a qualified entity and an authorized user.

(B) ASSESSMENT.—The assessment under subparagraph (A) shall be an amount up to $100 for each individual entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under part A of title XVIII of the Social Security Act or enrolled for benefits under part B of such title—

(i) in the case of an agreement described in subparagraph (A)(i), for whom the Secretary provided data on to the qualified entity under paragraph (2); and

(ii) in the case of an agreement described in subparagraph (A)(ii), for whom the qualified entity provided data on to the authorized user under paragraph (2).

(C) DEPOSIT OF AMOUNTS COLLECTED.—Any amounts collected pursuant to this paragraph shall be deposited in Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t).

(8) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Any qualified entity that provides or sells an analysis or data under paragraph (1) or (2) shall annually submit to the Secretary a report that includes—

(A) a summary of the analyses provided or sold, including the number of such analyses, the number of purchasers of such analyses, and the total amount of fees received for such analyses;

(B) a description of the topics and purposes of such analyses;

(C) information on the entities who received the data under paragraph (2), the uses of the data, and the total amount of fees received for providing, selling, or sharing the data; and

(D) other information determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(9) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection and subsection (b):

(A) AUTHORIZED USER.—The term ''authorized user'' means the following:

(i) A provider of services.

(ii) A supplier.

(iii) An employer (as defined in section 3(5) of the Employee Retirement Insurance Security Act of 1974).

(iv) A health insurance issuer (as defined in section 2791 of the Public Health Service Act).

(v) A medical society or hospital association.

(vi) Any entity not described in clauses (i) through (v) that is approved by the Secretary (other than an employer or health insurance issuer not described in clauses (iii) and (iv), respectively, as determined by the Secretary).

(B) PROVIDER OF SERVICES.—The term ''provider of services'' has the meaning given such term in section 1861(u) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u)).

(C) QUALIFIED ENTITY.—The term ''qualified entity'' has the meaning given such term in section 1874(e)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)).

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

(E) SUPPLIER.—The term ''supplier'' has the meaning given such term in section 1861(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(d)).

(b) ACCESS TO MEDICARE DATA BY QUALIFIED CLINICAL DATA REGISTRIES TO FACILITATE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT.—

(1) ACCESS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—To the extent consistent with applicable information, privacy, security, and disclosure laws, beginning July 1, 2016, the Secretary shall, at the request of a qualified clinical data registry under section 1848(m)(3)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(m)(3)(E)), provide the data described in subparagraph (B) (in a form and manner determined to be appropriate) to such qualified clinical data registry for purposes of linking such data with clinical outcomes data and performing risk-adjusted, scientifically valid analyses and research to support quality improvement or patient safety, provided that any public reporting of such analyses or research that identifies a provider of services or supplier shall only be conducted with the opportunity of such provider or supplier to appeal and correct errors in the manner described in subsection (a)(6).

(B) DATA DESCRIBED.—The data described in this subparagraph is—

(i) claims data under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act; and

(ii) if the Secretary determines appropriate, claims data under the Medicaid program under title XIX of such Act and the State Children's Health Insurance Program under title XXI of such Act.

(2) FEE.—Data described in paragraph (1)(B) shall be provided to a qualified clinical data registry under paragraph (1) at a fee equal to the cost of providing such data. Any fee collected pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be deposited in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account.

(c) EXPANSION OF DATA AVAILABLE TO QUALIFIED ENTITIES.—Section 1874(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking ''MEDICARE''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by inserting after the first sentence the following new sentence: ''Beginning July 1, 2016, if the Secretary determines appropriate, the data described in this paragraph may also include standardized extracts (as determined by the Secretary) of claims data under titles XIX and XXI for assistance provided under such titles for one or more specified geographic areas and time periods requested by a qualified entity.''; and

(B) in the last sentence, by inserting ''or under titles XIX or XXI'' before the period at the end.

(d) REVISION OF PLACEMENT OF FEES.—Section 1874(e)(4)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk(e)(4)(A)) is amended, in the second sentence—

(1) by inserting '', for periods prior to July 1, 2016,'' after ''deposited''; and

(2) by inserting the following before the period at the end: '', and, beginning July 1, 2016, into the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account''.

SEC. 106. REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN AND OTHER PROVISIONS.

(a) MEDICARE PHYSICIAN AND PRACTITIONER OPT-OUT TO PRIVATE CONTRACT.—

(1) INDEFINITE, CONTINUING AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF OPT OUT ELECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 1802(b)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395a(b)(3)) is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking ''during the 2-year period beginning on the date the affidavit is signed'' and inserting ''during the applicable 2-year period (as defined in subparagraph (D))'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''during the 2-year period described in subparagraph (B)(ii)'' and inserting ''during the applicable 2-year period''; and

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

''(D) APPLICABLE 2-YEAR PERIODS FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF AFFIDAVITS.—In this subsection, the term 'applicable 2-year period' means, with respect to an affidavit of a physician or practitioner under subparagraph (B), the 2-year period beginning on the date the affidavit is signed and includes each subsequent 2-year period unless the physician or practitioner involved provides notice to the Secretary (in a form and manner specified by the Secretary), not later than 30 days before the end of the previous 2-year period, that the physician or practitioner does not want to extend the application of the affidavit for such subsequent 2-year period.''.

(B) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subparagraph (A) shall apply to affidavits entered into on or after the date that is 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ON OPT-OUT PHYSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS.—Section 1802(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395a(b)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (5), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) OPT-OUT PHYSICIAN OR PRACTITIONER.—The term 'opt-out physician or practitioner' means a physician or practitioner who has in effect an affidavit under paragraph (3)(B).'';

(B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

''(5) POSTING OF INFORMATION ON OPT-OUT PHYSICIANS AND PRACTITIONERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary shall make publicly available through an appropriate publicly accessible website of the Department of Health and Human Services information on the number and characteristics of opt-out physicians and practitioners and shall update such information on such website not less often than annually.

''(B) INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED.—The information to be made available under subparagraph (A) shall include at least the following with respect to opt-out physicians and practitioners:

''(i) Their number.

''(ii) Their physician or professional specialty or other designation.

''(iii) Their geographic distribution.

''(iv) The timing of their becoming opt-out physicians and practitioners, relative, to the extent feasible, to when they first enrolled in the program under this title and with respect to applicable 2-year periods.

''(v) The proportion of such physicians and practitioners who billed for emergency or urgent care services.''.

(b) PROMOTING INTEROPERABILITY OF ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD SYSTEMS.—

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACHIEVING WIDESPREAD EHR INTEROPERABILITY.—

(A) OBJECTIVE.—As a consequence of a significant Federal investment in the implementation of health information technology through the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs, Congress declares it a national objective to achieve widespread exchange of health information through interoperable certified EHR technology nationwide by December 31, 2018.

(B) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

(i) WIDESPREAD INTEROPERABILITY.—The term ''widespread interoperability'' means interoperability between certified EHR technology systems employed by meaningful EHR users under the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs and other clinicians and health care providers on a nationwide basis.

(ii) INTEROPERABILITY.—The term ''interoperability'' means the ability of two or more health information systems or components to exchange clinical and other information and to use the information that has been exchanged using common standards as to provide access to longitudinal information for health care providers in order to facilitate coordinated care and improved patient outcomes.

(C) ESTABLISHMENT OF METRICS.—Not later than July 1, 2016, and in consultation with stakeholders, the Secretary shall establish metrics to be used to determine if and to the extent that the objective described in subparagraph (A) has been achieved.

(D) RECOMMENDATIONS IF OBJECTIVE NOT ACHIEVED.—If the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that the objective described in subparagraph (A) has not been achieved by December 31, 2018, then the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report, by not later than December 31, 2019, that identifies barriers to such objective and recommends actions that the Federal Government can take to achieve such objective. Such recommended actions may include recommendations—

(i) to adjust payments for not being meaningful EHR users under the Medicare EHR incentive programs; and

(ii) for criteria for decertifying certified EHR technology products.

(2) PREVENTING BLOCKING THE SHARING OF INFORMATION.—

(A) FOR MEANINGFUL USE EHR PROFESSIONALS.—Section 1848(o)(2)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(o)(2)(A)(ii)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and the professional demonstrates (through a process specified by the Secretary, such as the use of an attestation) that the professional has not knowingly and willfully taken action (such as to disable functionality) to limit or restrict the compatibility or interoperability of the certified EHR technology''.

(B) FOR MEANINGFUL USE EHR HOSPITALS.—Section 1886(n)(3)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(n)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and the hospital demonstrates (through a process specified by the Secretary, such as the use of an attestation) that the hospital has not knowingly and willfully taken action (such as to disable functionality) to limit or restrict the compatibility or interoperability of the certified EHR technology''.

(C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to meaningful EHR users as of the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) STUDY AND REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A MECHANISM TO COMPARE CERTIFIED EHR TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS.—

(A) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a study to examine the feasibility of establishing one or more mechanisms to assist providers in comparing and selecting certified EHR technology products. Such mechanisms may include—

(i) a website with aggregated results of surveys of meaningful EHR users on the functionality of certified EHR technology products to enable such users to directly compare the functionality and other features of such products; and

(ii) information from vendors of certified products that is made publicly available in a standardized format.

The aggregated results of the surveys described in clause (i) may be made available through contracts with physicians, hospitals, or other organizations that maintain such comparative information described in such clause.

(B) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on mechanisms that would assist providers in comparing and selecting certified EHR technology products. The report shall include information on the benefits of, and resources needed to develop and maintain, such mechanisms.

(4) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term ''certified EHR technology'' has the meaning given such term in section 1848(o)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(o)(4)).

(B) The term ''meaningful EHR user'' has the meaning given such term under the Medicare EHR incentive programs.

(C) The term ''Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs'' means—

(i) in the case of the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, the incentive programs under section 1814(l)(3), section 1848(o), subsections (l) and (m) of section 1853, and section 1886(n) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395f(l)(3), 1395w–4(o), 1395w–23, 1395ww(n)); and

(ii) in the case of the Medicaid program under title XIX of such Act, the incentive program under subsections (a)(3)(F) and (t) of section 1903 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396b).

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

(c) GAO STUDIES AND REPORTS ON THE USE OF TELEHEALTH UNDER FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND ON REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING SERVICES.—

(1) STUDY ON TELEHEALTH SERVICES.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the following:

(A) How the definition of telehealth across various Federal programs and Federal efforts can inform the use of telehealth in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

(B) Issues that can facilitate or inhibit the use of telehealth under the Medicare program under such title, including oversight and professional licensure, changing technology, privacy and security, infrastructure requirements, and varying needs across urban and rural areas.

(C) Potential implications of greater use of telehealth with respect to payment and delivery system transformations under the Medicare program under such title XVIII and the Medicaid program under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(D) How the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services monitors payments made under the Medicare program under such title XVIII to providers for telehealth services.

(2) STUDY ON REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING SERVICES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study—

(i) of the dissemination of remote patient monitoring technology in the private health insurance market;

(ii) of the financial incentives in the private health insurance market relating to adoption of such technology;

(iii) of the barriers to adoption of such services under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act;

(iv) that evaluates the patients, conditions, and clinical circumstances that could most benefit from remote patient monitoring services; and

(v) that evaluates the challenges related to establishing appropriate valuation for remote patient monitoring services under the Medicare physician fee schedule under section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) in order to accurately reflect the resources involved in furnishing such services.

(B) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this paragraph:

(i) REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING SERVICES.—The term ''remote patient monitoring services'' means services furnished through remote patient monitoring technology.

(ii) REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING TECHNOLOGY.—The term ''remote patient monitoring technology'' means a coordinated system that uses one or more home-based or mobile monitoring devices that automatically transmit vital sign data or information on activities of daily living and may include responses to assessment questions collected on the devices wirelessly or through a telecommunications connection to a server that complies with the Federal regulations (concerning the privacy of individually identifiable health information) promulgated under section 264(c) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, as part of an established plan of care for that patient that includes the review and interpretation of that data by a health care professional.

(3) REPORTS.—Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress—

(A) a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1); and

(B) a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (2).

A report required under this paragraph shall be submitted together with recommendations for such legislation and administrative action as the Comptroller General determines appropriate. The Comptroller General may submit one report containing the results described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) and the recommendations described in the previous sentence.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), the development, recognition, or implementation of any guideline or other standard under any Federal health care provision shall not be construed to establish the standard of care or duty of care owed by a health care provider to a patient in any medical malpractice or medical product liability action or claim.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection:

(A) FEDERAL HEALTH CARE PROVISION.—The term ''Federal health care provision'' means any provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), title I or subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or title XVIII or XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq., 42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(B) HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.—The term ''health care provider'' means any individual, group practice, corporation of health care professionals, or hospital—

(i) licensed, registered, or certified under Federal or State laws or regulations to provide health care services; or

(ii) required to be so licensed, registered, or certified but that is exempted by other statute or regulation.

(C) MEDICAL MALPRACTICE OR MEDICAL PRODUCT LIABILITY ACTION OR CLAIM.—The term ''medical malpractice or medical product liability action or claim'' means a medical malpractice action or claim (as defined in section 431(7) of the Health Care Quality Improvement Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11151(7))) and includes a liability action or claim relating to a health care provider's prescription or provision of a drug, device, or biological product (as such terms are defined in section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321) or section 351 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262)).

(D) STATE.—The term ''State'' includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and any other commonwealth, possession, or territory of the United States.

(3) NO PREEMPTION.—Nothing in paragraph (1) or any provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), title I or subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or title XVIII or XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq., 42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) shall be construed to preempt any State or common law governing medical professional or medical product liability actions or claims.

TITLE II—MEDICARE AND OTHER HEALTH EXTENDERS

Subtitle A—Medicare Extenders

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF WORK GPCI FLOOR.

Section 1848(e)(1)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(e)(1)(E)) is amended by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''January 1, 2018''.

SEC. 202. EXTENSION OF THERAPY CAP EXCEPTIONS PROCESS.

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

(1) in paragraph (5)(A), in the first sentence, by striking ''March 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2017''; and

(2) in paragraph (6)(A)—

(A) by striking ''March 31, 2015'' and inserting ''December 31, 2017''; and

(B) by striking ''2012, 2013, 2014, or the first three months of 2015'' and inserting ''2012 through 2017''.

(b) TARGETED REVIEWS UNDER MANUAL MEDICAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR OUTPATIENT THERAPY SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1833(g)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(g)(5)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (C)(i), by inserting '', subject to subparagraph (E),'' after ''manual medical review process that''; and

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

''(E)(i) In place of the manual medical review process under subparagraph (C)(i), the Secretary shall implement a process for medical review under this subparagraph under which the Secretary shall identify and conduct medical review for services described in subparagraph (C)(i) furnished by a provider of services or supplier (in this subparagraph referred to as a 'therapy provider') using such factors as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

''(ii) Such factors may include the following:

''(I) The therapy provider has had a high claims denial percentage for therapy services under this part or is less compliant with applicable requirements under this title.

''(II) The therapy provider has a pattern of billing for therapy services under this part that is aberrant compared to peers or otherwise has questionable billing practices for such services, such as billing medically unlikely units of services in a day.

''(III) The therapy provider is newly enrolled under this title or has not previously furnished therapy services under this part.

''(IV) The services are furnished to treat a type of medical condition.

''(V) The therapy provider is part of group that includes another therapy provider identified using the factors determined under this subparagraph.

''(iii) For purposes of carrying out this subparagraph, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer, from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841, of $5,000,000 to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account for fiscal years 2015 and 2016, to remain available until expended. Such funds may not be used by a contractor

under section 1893(h) for medical reviews under this subparagraph.

''(iv) The targeted review process under this subparagraph shall not apply to services for which expenses are incurred beyond the period for which the exceptions process under subparagraph (A) is implemented.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply with respect to requests described in section 1833(g)(5)(C)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(g)(5)(C)(i)) with respect to which the Secretary of Health and Human Services has not conducted medical review under such section by a date (not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act) specified by the Secretary.

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF AMBULANCE ADD-ONS.

(a) GROUND AMBULANCE.—Section 1834(l)(13)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)(13)(A)) is amended by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''January 1, 2018'' each place it appears.

(b) SUPER RURAL GROUND AMBULANCE.—Section 1834(l)(12)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)(12)(A)) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''January 1, 2018''.

SEC. 204. EXTENSION OF INCREASED INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAYMENT ADJUSTMENT FOR CERTAIN LOW-VOLUME HOSPITALS.

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

(1) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''in fiscal year 2015 (beginning on April 1, 2015), fiscal year 2016, and subsequent fiscal years'' and inserting ''in fiscal year 2018 and subsequent fiscal years'';

(2) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking ''fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and fiscal year 2015 (before April 1, 2015),'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2011 through 2017,'' each place it appears; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and fiscal year 2015 (before April 1, 2015),'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2011 through 2017,''.

SEC. 205. EXTENSION OF THE MEDICARE-DEPENDENT HOSPITAL (MDH) PROGRAM.

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

(1) in clause (i), by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''; and

(2) in clause (ii)(II), by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

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

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''; and

(B) in clause (iv), by striking ''through fiscal year 2014 and the portion of fiscal year 2015 before April 1, 2015'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2017''.

(2) PERMITTING HOSPITALS TO DECLINE RECLASSIFICATION.—Section 13501(e)(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1395ww note) is amended by striking ''through the first 2 quarters of fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2017''.

SEC. 206. EXTENSION FOR SPECIALIZED MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS INDIVIDUALS.

Section 1859(f)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–28(f)(1)) is amended by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2019''.

SEC. 207. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR QUALITY MEASURE ENDORSEMENT, INPUT, AND SELECTION.

Section 1890(d)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395aaa(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''and $15,000,000 for the first 6 months of fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''and $30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2017''.

SEC. 208. EXTENSION OF FUNDING OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME PROGRAMS.

(a) ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS.—Subsection (a)(1)(B) of section 119 of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 1395b–3 note), as amended by section 3306 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), section 610 of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240), section 1110 of the Pathway for SGR Reform Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67), and section 110 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–93), is amended—

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

(2) by striking clause (v); and

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

''(v) for fiscal year 2015, of $7,500,000;

''(vi) for fiscal year 2016, of $13,000,000; and

''(vii) for fiscal year 2017, of $13,000,000.''.

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

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

(2) by striking clause (v); and

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

''(v) for fiscal year 2015, of $7,500,000;

''(vi) for fiscal year 2016, of $7,500,000; and

''(vii) for fiscal year 2017, of $7,500,000.''.

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

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

(2) by striking clause (v); and

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

''(v) for fiscal year 2015, of $5,000,000;

''(vi) for fiscal year 2016, of $5,000,000; and

''(vii) for fiscal year 2017, of $5,000,000.''.

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

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

(2) by striking clause (v); and

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

''(v) for fiscal year 2015, of $5,000,000;

''(vi) for fiscal year 2016, of $12,000,000; and

''(vii) for fiscal year 2017, of $12,000,000.''.

SEC. 209. EXTENSION AND TRANSITION OF REASONABLE COST REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACTS.

(a) ONE-YEAR TRANSITION AND NOTICE REGARDING TRANSITION.—Section 1876(h)(5)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395mm(h)(5)(C)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii), in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking ''For any'' and inserting ''Subject to clause (iv), for any'';

(2) in clause (iii)(I), by inserting ''cost plan service'' after ''With respect to any portion of the'';

(3) in clause (iii)(II), by inserting ''cost plan service'' after ''With respect to any other portion of such''; and

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

''(iv) In the case of an eligible organization that is offering a reasonable cost reimbursement contract that may no longer be extended or renewed because of the application of clause (ii), or where such contract has been extended or renewed but the eligible organization has informed the Secretary in writing not later than a date determined appropriate by the Secretary that such organization voluntarily plans not to seek renewal of the reasonable cost reimbursement contract, the following shall apply:

''(I) Notwithstanding such clause, such contract may be extended or renewed for the two years subsequent to 2016. The final year in which such contract is extended or renewed is referred to in this subsection as the 'last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract'.

''(II) The organization may not enroll a new enrollee under such contract during the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract (but may continue to enroll new enrollees through the end of the year immediately preceding such year) unless such enrollee is any of the following:

''(aa) An individual who chooses enrollment in the reasonable cost contract during the annual election period with respect to such last year.

''(bb) An individual whose spouse, at the time of the individual's enrollment is an enrollee under the reasonable cost reimbursement contract.

''(cc) An individual who is covered under an employer group health plan that offers coverage through the reasonable cost reimbursement contract.

''(dd) An individual who becomes entitled to benefits under part A, or enrolled under part B, and was enrolled in a plan offered by the eligible organization immediately prior to the individual's enrollment under the reasonable cost reimbursement contract.

''(III) Not later than a date determined appropriate by the Secretary prior to the beginning of the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract, the organization shall provide notice to the Secretary as to whether the organization will apply to have the contract converted over, in whole or in part, and offered as a Medicare Advantage plan under part C for the year following the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract.

''(IV) If the organization provides the notice described in subclause (III) that the contract will be converted, in whole or in part, the organization shall, not later than a date determined appropriate by the Secretary, provide the Secretary with such information as the Secretary determines appropriate in order to carry out section 1851(c)(4) and to carry out section 1854(a)(5), including subparagraph (C)(ii) of such section.

''(V) In the case that the organization enrolls a new enrollee under such contract during the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract, the organization shall provide the individual with a notification that such year is the last year for such contract.

''(v) If an eligible organization that is offering a reasonable cost reimbursement contract that is extended or renewed pursuant to clause (iv) provides the notice described in clause (iv)(III) that the contract will be converted, in whole or in part, the following shall apply:

''(I) The deemed enrollment under section 1851(c)(4).

''(II) The special rule for quality increase under section 1853(o)(4)(C).

''(III) During the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year for the contract and the year immediately preceding such year, the eligible organization, or the corporate parent organization of the eligible organization, shall be permitted to offer an MA plan in the area that such contract is being offered and enroll Medicare Advantage eligible individuals in such MA plan and such cost plan.''.

(b) DEEMED ENROLLMENT FROM REASONABLE COST REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACTS CONVERTED TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1851(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(c)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Such elections'' and inserting ''Subject to paragraph (4), such elections''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) DEEMED ENROLLMENT RELATING TO CONVERTED REASONABLE COST REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—On the first day of the annual, coordinated election period under subsection (e)(3) for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2017, an MA eligible individual described in clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (B) is deemed, unless the individual elects otherwise, to have elected to receive benefits under this title through an applicable MA plan (and shall be enrolled in such plan) beginning with such plan year, if—

''(i) the individual is enrolled in a reasonable cost reimbursement contract under section 1876(h) in the previous plan year;

''(ii) such reasonable cost reimbursement contract was extended or renewed for the last reasonable cost reimbursement contract year of the contract (as described in subclause (I) of section 1876(h)(5)(C)(iv)) pursuant to such section;

''(iii) the eligible organization that is offering such reasonable cost reimbursement contract provided the notice described in subclause (III) of such section that the contract was to be converted;

''(iv) the applicable MA plan—

''(I) is the plan that was converted from the reasonable cost reimbursement contract described in clause (iii);

''(II) is offered by the same entity (or an organization affiliated with such entity that has a common ownership interest of control) that entered into such contract; and

''(III) is offered in the service area where the individual resides;

''(v) in the case of reasonable cost reimbursement contracts that provide coverage under parts A and B (and, to the extent the Secretary determines it to be feasible, contracts that provide only part B coverage), the difference between the estimated individual costs (as determined applicable by the Secretary) for the applicable MA plan and such costs for the predecessor cost plan does not exceed a threshold established by the Secretary; and

''(vi) the applicable MA plan—

''(I) provides coverage for enrollees transitioning from the converted reasonable cost reimbursement contract to such plan to maintain current providers of services and suppliers and course of treatment at the time of enrollment for a period of at least 90 days after enrollment; and

''(II) during such period, pays such providers of services and suppliers for items and services furnished to the enrollee an amount that is not less than the amount of payment applicable for such items and services under the original Medicare fee-for-service program under parts A and B.

''(B) MA ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS DESCRIBED.—

''(i) WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.—An MA eligible individual described in this clause, with respect to a plan year, is an MA eligible individual who is enrolled in a reasonable cost reimbursement contract under section 1876(h) in the previous plan year and who is not, for such previous plan year, enrolled in a prescription drug plan under part D, including coverage under section 1860D–22.

''(ii) WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE.—An MA eligible individual described in this clause, with respect to a plan year, is an MA eligible individual who is enrolled in a reasonable cost reimbursement contract under section 1876(h) in the previous plan year and who, for such previous plan year, is enrolled in a prescription drug plan under part D—

''(I) through such contract; or

''(II) through a prescription drug plan, if the sponsor of such plan is the same entity (or an organization affiliated with such entity) that entered into such contract.

''(C) APPLICABLE MA PLAN DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'applicable MA plan' means, in the case of an individual described in—

''(i) subparagraph (B)(i), an MA plan that is not an MA–PD plan; and

''(ii) subparagraph (B)(ii), an MA–PD plan.

''(D) IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION OF DEEMED INDIVIDUALS.—Not later than 45 days before the first day of the annual, coordinated election period under subsection (e)(3) for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2017, the Secretary shall identify and notify the individuals who will be subject to deemed elections under subparagraph (A) on the first day of such period.''.

(2) BENEFICIARY OPTION TO DISCONTINUE OR CHANGE MA PLAN OR MA–PD PLAN AFTER DEEMED ENROLLMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 1851(e)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(e)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(F) SPECIAL PERIOD FOR CERTAIN DEEMED ELECTIONS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—At any time during the period beginning after the last day of the annual, coordinated election period under paragraph (3) in which an individual is deemed to have elected to enroll in an MA plan or MA–PD plan under subsection (c)(4) and ending on the last day of February of the first plan year for which the individual is enrolled in such plan, such individual may change the election under subsection (a)(1) (including changing the MA plan or MA–PD plan in which the individual is enrolled).

''(ii) LIMITATION OF ONE CHANGE.—An individual may exercise the right under clause (i) only once during the applicable period described in such clause. The limitation under this clause shall not apply to changes in elections effected during an annual, coordinated election period under paragraph (3) or during a special enrollment period under paragraph (4).''.

(B) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(i) PLAN REQUIREMENT FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT.—Section 1851(e)(6)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(e)(6)(A)) is amended by striking ''paragraph (1),'' and inserting ''paragraph (1), during the period described in paragraph (2)(F),''.

(ii) PART D.—Section 1860D–1(b)(1)(B) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–101(b)(1)(B)) is amended—

(I) in clause (ii), by adding ''and paragraph (4)'' after ''paragraph (3)(A)''; and

(II) in clause (iii) by striking ''and (E)'' and inserting ''(E), and (F)''.

(3) TREATMENT OF ESRD FOR DEEMED ENROLLMENT.—Section 1851(a)(3)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(a)(3)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following flush sentence: ''An individual who develops end-stage renal disease while enrolled in a reasonable cost reimbursement contract under section 1876(h) shall be treated as an MA eligible individual for purposes of applying the deemed enrollment under subsection (c)(4).''.

(c) INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 1851(d)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(d)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking ''NOTIFICATION TO NEWLY ELIGIBLE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS'' and inserting the following: ''NOTIFICATIONS REQUIRED.—

''(i) NOTIFICATION TO NEWLY ELIGIBLE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—''; and

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

''(ii) NOTIFICATION RELATED TO CERTAIN DEEMED ELECTIONS.—The Secretary shall require a Medicare Advantage organization that is offering a Medicare Advantage plan that has been converted from a reasonable cost reimbursement contract pursuant to section 1876(h)(5)(C)(iv) to mail, not later than 30 days prior to the first day of the annual, coordinated election period under subsection (e)(3) of a year, to any individual enrolled under such contract and identified by the Secretary under subsection (c)(4)(D) for such year—

''(I) a notification that such individual will, on such day, be deemed to have made an election with respect to such plan to receive benefits under this title through an MA plan or MA–PD plan (and shall be enrolled in such plan) for the next plan year under subsection (c)(4)(A), but that the individual may make a different election during the annual, coordinated election period for such year;

''(II) the information described in subparagraph (A);

''(III) a description of the differences between such MA plan or MA–PD plan and the reasonable cost reimbursement contract in which the individual was most recently enrolled with respect to benefits covered under such plans, including cost-sharing, premiums, drug coverage, and provider networks;

''(IV) information about the special period for elections under subsection (e)(2)(F); and

''(V) other information the Secretary may specify.''.

(d) TREATMENT OF TRANSITION PLAN FOR QUALITY RATING FOR PAYMENT PURPOSES.—Section 1853(o)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(o)(4)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) SPECIAL RULE FOR FIRST 3 PLAN YEARS FOR PLANS THAT WERE CONVERTED FROM A REASONABLE COST REIMBURSEMENT CONTRACT.—For purposes of applying paragraph (1) and section 1854(b)(1)(C) for the first 3 plan years under this part in the case of an MA plan to which deemed enrollment applies under section 1851(c)(4)—

''(i) such plan shall not be treated as a new MA plan (as defined in paragraph (3)(A)(iii)(II)); and

''(ii) in determining the star rating of the plan under subparagraph (A), to the extent that Medicare Advantage data for such plan is not available for a measure used to determine such star rating, the Secretary shall use data from the period in which such plan was a reasonable cost reimbursement contract.''.

SEC. 210. EXTENSION OF HOME HEALTH RURAL ADD-ON.

Section 421(a) of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–173; 117 Stat. 2283; 42 U.S.C. 1395fff note), as amended by section 5201(b) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–171; 120 Stat. 46) and by section 3131(c) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 428), is amended by striking ''January 1, 2016'' and inserting ''January 1, 2018'' each place it appears.

Subtitle B—Other Health Extenders

SEC. 211. PERMANENT EXTENSION OF THE QUALIFYING INDIVIDUAL (QI) PROGRAM.

(a) PERMANENT EXTENSION.—Section 1902(a)(10)(E)(iv) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(a)(10)(E)(iv)) is amended by striking ''(but only for premiums payable

with respect to months during the period beginning with January 1998, and ending with March 2015)''.

(b) ALLOCATIONS.—Section 1933(g) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396u–3(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking subparagraphs (A) through (H);

(B) in subparagraph (V), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (W), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(D) by redesignating subparagraphs (I) through (W) as subparagraphs (A) through (O), respectively; and

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

''(P) for the period that begins on April 1, 2015, and ends on December 31, 2015, the total allocation amount is $535,000,000; and

''(Q) for 2016 and, subject to paragraph (4), for each subsequent year, the total allocation amount is $980,000,000.'';

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''(P), (R), (T), or (V)'' and inserting ''or (P)''; and

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

''(4) ADJUSTMENT TO ALLOCATIONS.—The Secretary may increase the allocation amount under paragraph (2)(Q) for a year (beginning with 2017) up to an amount that does not exceed the product of the following:

''(A) MAXIMUM ALLOCATION AMOUNT FOR PREVIOUS YEAR.—In the case of 2017, the allocation amount for 2016, or in the case of a subsequent year, the maximum allocation amount allowed under this paragraph for the previous year.

''(B) INCREASE IN PART B PREMIUM.—The monthly premium rate determined under section 1839 for the year divided by the monthly premium rate determined under such section for the previous year.

''(C) INCREASE IN PART B ENROLLMENT.—The average number of individuals (as estimated by the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in September of the previous year) to be enrolled under part B of title XVIII for months in the year divided by the average number of such individuals (as so estimated) under this subparagraph with respect to enrollments in months in the previous year.''.

SEC. 212. PERMANENT EXTENSION OF TRANSITIONAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (TMA).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1925 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–6) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (f); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (f).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1902(e)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(1)) is amended to read as follows:

''(1) Beginning April 1, 1990, for provisions relating to the extension of eligibility for medical assistance for certain families who have received aid pursuant to a State plan approved under part A of title IV and have earned income, see section 1925.''.

SEC. 213. EXTENSION OF SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR TYPE I DIABETES AND FOR INDIANS.

(a) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR TYPE I DIABETES.—Section 330B(b)(2)(C) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c–2(b)(2)(C)) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

(b) SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS.—Section 330C(c)(2)(C) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254c–3(c)(2)(C)) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 214. EXTENSION OF ABSTINENCE EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 510 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 710) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(2) in subsection (d), by inserting ''and an additional $75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017'' after ''2015''.

(b) BUDGET SCORING.—Notwithstanding section 257(b)(2) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, the baseline shall be calculated assuming that no grant shall be made under section 510 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 710) after fiscal year 2017.

(c) REALLOCATION OF UNUSED FUNDING.—The remaining unobligated balances of the amount appropriated for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 by section 510(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 710(d)) for which no application has been received by the Funding Opportunity Announcement deadline, shall be made available to States that require the implementation of each element described in subparagraphs (A) through (H) of the definition of abstinence education in section 510(b)(2). The remaining unobligated balances shall be reallocated to such States that submit a valid application consistent with the original formula for this funding.

SEC. 215. EXTENSION OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION PROGRAM (PREP).

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

(1) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (4)(A) of subsection (a), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017'' each place it appears;

(2) in subsection (a)(4)(B)(i), by striking '', 2013, 2014, and 2015'' and inserting ''through 2017''; and

(3) in subsection (f), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 216. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR FAMILY-TO-FAMILY HEALTH INFORMATION CENTERS.

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

(1) by striking clause (vi); and

(2) by adding after clause (v) the following new clause:

''(vi) $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2017.''.

SEC. 217. EXTENSION OF HEALTH WORKFORCE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.

Section 2008(c)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397g(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 218. EXTENSION OF MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAMS.

Section 511(j)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 711(j)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and'' at the end of subparagraph (E);

(2) in subparagraph (F)—

(A) by striking ''for the period beginning on October 1, 2014, and ending on March 31, 2015'' and inserting ''for fiscal year 2015'';

(B) by striking ''an amount equal to the amount provided in subparagraph (E)'' and inserting ''$400,000,000''; and

(C) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

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

''(G) for fiscal year 2016, $400,000,000; and

''(H) for fiscal year 2017, $400,000,000.''.

SEC. 219. TENNESSEE DSH ALLOTMENT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2015 THROUGH 2025.

Section 1923(f)(6)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–4(f)(6)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(vi) ALLOTMENT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2015 THROUGH 2025.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, any other provision of law, or the terms of the TennCare Demonstration Project in effect for the State, the DSH allotment for Tennessee for fiscal year 2015, and for each fiscal year thereafter through fiscal year 2025, shall be $53,100,000 for each such fiscal year.''.

SEC. 220. DELAY IN EFFECTIVE DATE FOR MEDICAID AMENDMENTS RELATING TO BENEFICIARY LIABILITY SETTLEMENTS.

Section 202(c) of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (division A of Public Law 113–67; 42 U.S.C. 1396a note), as amended by section 211 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–93; 128 Stat. 1047) is amended by striking ''October 1, 2016'' and inserting ''October 1, 2017''.

SEC. 221. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS, THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS, AND TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS.

(a) FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS AND THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS.—

(1) COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.—Section 10503(b)(1)(E) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b–2(b)(1)(E)) is amended by striking ''for fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2017''.

(2) NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS.—Section 10503(b)(2)(E) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 254b–2(b)(2)(E)) is amended by striking ''for fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2017''.

(b) EXTENSION OF TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS PROGRAM.—Section 340H(g) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 256h(g)) is amended by inserting ''and $60,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017'' before the period at the end.

(c) APPLICATION.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to this section for fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2017 are subject to the requirements contained in Public Law 113–235 for funds for programs authorized under sections 330 through 340 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b–256).

TITLE III—CHIP

SEC. 301. 2-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM.

(a) FUNDING.—Section 2104(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (17), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (18)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

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

''(19) for fiscal year 2016, $19,300,000,000; and

''(20) for fiscal year 2017, for purposes of making 2 semi-annual allotments—

''(A) $2,850,000,000 for the period beginning on October 1, 2016, and ending on March 31, 2017; and

''(B) $2,850,000,000 for the period beginning on April 1, 2017, and ending on September 30, 2017.''.

(b) ALLOTMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2104(m) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)) is amended—

(A) in the subsection heading, by striking ''THROUGH 2015'' and inserting ''AND THEREAFTER'';

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2016''; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following new subparagraph:

''(B) FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND EACH SUCCEEDING FISCAL YEAR.—Subject to paragraphs (5) and (7), from the amount made available under paragraphs (16) through (19) of subsection (a) for fiscal year 2013 and each succeeding fiscal year, respectively, the Secretary shall compute a State allotment for each State (including the District of Columbia and each

commonwealth and territory) for each such fiscal year as follows:

''(i) REBASING IN FISCAL YEAR 2013 AND EACH SUCCEEDING ODD-NUMBERED FISCAL YEAR.—For fiscal year 2013 and each succeeding odd-numbered fiscal year (other than fiscal years 2015 and 2017), the allotment of the State is equal to the Federal payments to the State that are attributable to (and countable toward) the total amount of allotments available under this section to the State in the preceding fiscal year (including payments made to the State under subsection (n) for such preceding fiscal year as well as amounts redistributed to the State in such preceding fiscal year), multiplied by the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6) for such odd-numbered fiscal year.

''(ii) GROWTH FACTOR UPDATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014 AND EACH SUCCEEDING EVEN-NUMBERED FISCAL YEAR.—Except as provided in clauses (iii) and (iv), for fiscal year 2014 and each succeeding even-numbered fiscal year, the allotment of the State is equal to the sum of—

''(I) the amount of the State allotment under clause (i) for the preceding fiscal year; and

''(II) the amount of any payments made to the State under subsection (n) for such preceding fiscal year,

multiplied by the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6) for such even-numbered fiscal year.

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR 2016.—For fiscal year 2016, the allotment of the State is equal to the Federal payments to the State that are attributable to (and countable toward) the total amount of allotments available under this section to the State in the preceding fiscal year (including payments made to the State under subsection (n) for such preceding fiscal year as well as amounts redistributed to the State in such preceding fiscal year), but determined as if the last two sentences of section 2105(b) were in effect in such preceding fiscal year and then multiplying the result by the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6) for fiscal year 2016.

''(iv) REDUCTION IN 2018.—For fiscal year 2018, with respect to the allotment of the State for fiscal year 2017, any amounts of such allotment that remain available for expenditure by the State in fiscal year 2018 shall be reduced by one-third.'';

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting ''or 2017'' after ''2015'';

(D) in paragraph (6)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(ii) in the second sentence, by striking ''or fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2014, or fiscal year 2016'';

(E) in paragraph (8)—

(i) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''FISCAL YEAR 2015'' and inserting ''FISCAL YEARS 2015 AND 2017''; and

(ii) by inserting ''or fiscal year 2017'' after ''2015'';

(F) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (8) as paragraphs (5) through (9), respectively; and

(G) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

''(4) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017.—

''(A) FIRST HALF.—Subject to paragraphs (5) and (7), from the amount made available under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (20) of subsection (a) for the semi-annual period described in such paragraph, increased by the amount of the appropriation for such period under section 301(b)(3) of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, the Secretary shall compute a State allotment for each State (including the District of Columbia and each commonwealth and territory) for such semi-annual period in an amount equal to the first half ratio (described in subparagraph (D)) of the amount described in subparagraph (C).

''(B) SECOND HALF.—Subject to paragraphs (5) and (7), from the amount made available under subparagraph (B) of paragraph (20) of subsection (a) for the semi-annual period described in such paragraph, the Secretary shall compute a State allotment for each State (including the District of Columbia and each commonwealth and territory) for such semi-annual period in an amount equal to the amount made available under such subparagraph, multiplied by the ratio of—

''(i) the amount of the allotment to such State under subparagraph (A); to

''(ii) the total of the amount of all of the allotments made available under such subparagraph.

''(C) FULL YEAR AMOUNT BASED ON REBASED AMOUNT.—The amount described in this subparagraph for a State is equal to the Federal payments to the State that are attributable to (and countable towards) the total amount of allotments available under this section to the State in fiscal year 2016 (including payments made to the State under subsection (n) for fiscal year 2016 as well as amounts redistributed to the State in fiscal year 2016), multiplied by the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6) for fiscal year 2017.

''(D) FIRST HALF RATIO.—The first half ratio described in this subparagraph is the ratio of—

''(i) the sum of—

''(I) the amount made available under subsection (a)(20)(A); and

''(II) the amount of the appropriation for such period under section 301(b)(3) of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015; to

''(ii) the sum of the—

''(I) amount described in clause (i); and

''(II) the amount made available under subsection (a)(20)(B).''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.——

(A) Section 2104(c)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(c)(1)) is amended by striking ''(m)(4)'' and inserting ''(m)(5)''.

(B) Section 2104(m) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)), as amended by paragraph (1), is further amended—

(ii) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by striking ''paragraph (4)'' each place it appears in subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting ''paragraph (5)''; and

(II) by striking ''the allotment increase factor determined under paragraph (5)'' each place it appears and inserting ''the allotment increase factor determined under paragraph (6)'';

(iii) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''the allotment increase factor under paragraph (5)'' and inserting ''the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6)'';

(iv) in paragraph (3)—

(I) by striking ''paragraphs (4) and (6)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (5) and (7)'' each place it appears; and

(II) by striking ''the allotment increase factor under paragraph (5)'' and inserting ''the allotment increase factor under paragraph (6)'';

(v) in paragraph (5) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)(F)), by striking ''paragraph (1), (2), or (3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4)'';

(vi) in paragraph (7) (as redesignated by paragraph (1)(F)), by striking ''subject to paragraph (4)'' and inserting ''subject to paragraph (5)''; and

(vii) in paragraph (9), (as redesignated by paragraph (1)(F)), by striking ''paragraph (3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3) or (4)''.

(C) Section 2104(n)(3)(B)(ii) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(n)(3)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking ''subsection (m)(5)(B)'' and inserting ''subsection (m)(6)(B)''.

(D) Section 2111(b)(2)(B)(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1397kk(b)(2)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''section 2104(m)(4)'' and inserting ''section 2104(m)(5)''.

(3) ONE-TIME APPROPRIATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017.—There is appropriated to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $14,700,000,000 to accompany the allotment made for the period beginning on October 1, 2016, and ending on March 31, 2017, under paragraph (20)(A) of section 2104(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(a)) (as added by subsection (a)(1)), to remain available until expended. Such amount shall be used to provide allotments to States under paragraph (4) of section 2104(m) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(m)) (as amended by paragraph (1)(G)) for the first 6 months of fiscal year 2017 in the same manner as allotments are provided under subsection (a)(20)(A) of such section 2104 and subject to the same terms and conditions as apply to the allotments provided from such subsection (a)(20)(A).

(c) EXTENSION OF QUALIFYING STATES OPTION.—Section 2105(g)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ee(g)(4)) is amended—

(1) in the paragraph heading, by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(2) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

(d) EXTENSION OF THE CHILD ENROLLMENT CONTINGENCY FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 2104(n) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397dd(n)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)(ii)—

(I) by striking ''2010 through 2014'' and inserting ''2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016''; and

(II) by inserting ''and fiscal year 2017'' after ''2015''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking ''2010 through 2014'' and inserting ''2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2016''; and

(II) by inserting ''and fiscal year 2017'' after ''2015''; and

(B) in paragraph (3)(A), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''fiscal year 2009, fiscal year 2010, fiscal year 2011, fiscal year 2012, fiscal year 2013, fiscal year 2014, or a semi-annual allotment period for fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''any of fiscal years 2009 through 2014, fiscal year 2016, or a semi-annual allotment period for fiscal year 2015 or 2017''.

SEC. 302. EXTENSION OF EXPRESS LANE ELIGIBILITY.

Section 1902(e)(13)(I) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(13)(I)) is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 303. EXTENSION OF OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT PROGRAM.

Section 2113 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397mm) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(2) in subsection (g), by inserting ''and $40,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 and 2017'' after ''2015''.

SEC. 304. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

(a) CHILDHOOD OBESITY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—Section 1139A(e)(8) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9a(e)(8)) is amended by inserting '', and $10,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 and 2017'' after ''2014''.

(b) PEDIATRIC QUALITY MEASURES PROGRAM.—Section 1139A(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9a(i)) is amended in the first sentence by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and there is

appropriated for the period of fiscal years 2016 and 2017, $20,000,000 for the purpose of carrying out this section (other than subsections (e), (f), and (g))''.

SEC. 305. REPORT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF HHS ON USE OF EXPRESS LANE OPTION UNDER MEDICAID AND CHIP.

Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report that—

(1) provides data on the number of individuals enrolled in the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (referred to in this section as ''Medicaid'') and the Children's Health Insurance Program under title XXI of such Act (referred to in this section as ''CHIP'') through the use of the Express Lane option under section 1902(e)(13) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(e)(13));

(2) assesses the extent to which individuals so enrolled meet the eligibility requirements under Medicaid or CHIP (as applicable); and

(3) provides data on Federal and State expenditures under Medicaid and CHIP for individuals so enrolled and disaggregates such data between expenditures made for individuals who meet the eligibility requirements under Medicaid or CHIP (as applicable) and expenditures made for individuals who do not meet such requirements.

TITLE IV—OFFSETS

Subtitle A—Medicare Beneficiary Reforms

SEC. 401. LIMITATION ON CERTAIN MEDIGAP POLICIES FOR NEWLY ELIGIBLE MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.

Section 1882 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ss) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(z) LIMITATION ON CERTAIN MEDIGAP POLICIES FOR NEWLY ELIGIBLE MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, on or after January 1, 2020, a medicare supplemental policy that provides coverage of the part B deductible, including any such policy (or rider to such a policy) issued under a waiver granted under subsection (p)(6), may not be sold or issued to a newly eligible Medicare beneficiary.

''(2) NEWLY ELIGIBLE MEDICARE BENEFICIARY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'newly eligible Medicare beneficiary' means an individual who is neither of the following:

''(A) An individual who has attained age 65 before January 1, 2020.

''(B) An individual who was entitled to benefits under part A pursuant to section 226(b) or 226A, or deemed to be eligible for benefits under section 226(a), before January 1, 2020.

''(3) TREATMENT OF WAIVERED STATES.—In the case of a State described in subsection (p)(6), nothing in this section shall be construed as preventing the State from modifying its alternative simplification program under such subsection so as to eliminate the coverage of the part B deductible for any medical supplemental policy sold or issued under such program to a newly eligible Medicare beneficiary on or after January 1, 2020.

''(4) TREATMENT OF REFERENCES TO CERTAIN POLICIES.—In the case of a newly eligible Medicare beneficiary, except as the Secretary may otherwise provide, any reference in this section to a medicare supplemental policy which has a benefit package classified as 'C' or 'F' shall be deemed, as of January 1, 2020, to be a reference to a medicare supplemental policy which has a benefit package classified as 'D' or 'G', respectively.

''(5) ENFORCEMENT.—The penalties described in clause (ii) of subsection (d)(3)(A) shall apply with respect to a violation of paragraph (1) in the same manner as it applies to a violation of clause (i) of such subsection.''.

SEC. 402. INCOME-RELATED PREMIUM ADJUSTMENT FOR PARTS B AND D.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1839(i)(3)(C)(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(i)(3)(C)(i)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''IN GENERAL.—'' the following:

''(I) Subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), for years before 2018:''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(II) Subject to paragraph (5), for years beginning with 2018:

''If the modified adjusted gross income is:	**The applicable percentage is:**
More than $85,000 but not more than $107,000	35 percent
More than $107,000 but not more than $133,500	50 percent
More than $133,500 but not more than $160,000	65 percent
More than $160,000	80 percent.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1839(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395r(i)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by inserting ''(or, beginning with 2018, $85,000)'' after ''$80,000'';

(2) in paragraph (3)(A)(i), by inserting ''applicable'' before ''table'';

(3) in paragraph (5)(A)—

(A) in the matter before clause (i), by inserting ''(other than 2018 and 2019)'' after ''2007''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting ''(or, in the case of a calendar year beginning with 2020, August 2018)'' after ''August 2006''; and

(4) in paragraph (6), in the matter before subparagraph (A), by striking ''2019'' and inserting ''2017''.

Subtitle B—Other Offsets

SEC. 411. MEDICARE PAYMENT UPDATES FOR POST-ACUTE PROVIDERS.

(a) SNFS.—Section 1888(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395yy(e))—

(1) in paragraph (5)(B)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''clause (ii)'' and inserting ''clauses (ii) and (iii)'';

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting ''subject to clause (iii),'' after ''each subsequent fiscal year,''; and

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

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018.—For fiscal year 2018 (or other similar annual period specified in clause (i)), the skilled nursing facility market basket percentage, after application of clause (ii), is equal to 1 percent.''; and

(2) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking ''paragraph (5)(B)(ii)'' and inserting ''clauses (ii) and (iii) of paragraph (5)(B)'' each place it appears.

(b) IRFS.—Section 1886(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(j)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(C)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''clause (ii)'' and inserting ''clauses (ii) and (iii)'';

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''After'' and inserting ''Subject to clause (iii), after''; and

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

''(iii) SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018.—The increase factor to be applied under this subparagraph for fiscal year 2018, after the application of clause (ii), shall be 1 percent.''; and

(2) in paragraph (7)(A)(i), by striking ''paragraph (3)(D)'' and inserting ''subparagraphs (C)(iii) and (D) of paragraph (3)''.

(c) HHAS.—Section 1895(b)(3)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395fff(b)(3)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by adding at the end the following: ''Notwithstanding the previous sentence, the home health market basket percentage increase for 2018 shall be 1 percent.''; and

(2) in clause (vi)(I), by inserting ''(except 2018)'' after ''each subsequent year''.

(d) HOSPICE.—Section 1814(i) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395f(i)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(C)—

(A) in clause (ii)(VII), by striking ''clause (iv),,'' and inserting ''clauses (iv) and (vi),'';

(B) in clause (iii), by striking ''clause (iv),'' and inserting ''clauses (iv) and (vi),'';

(C) in clause (iv), by striking ''After determining'' and inserting ''Subject to clause (vi), after determining''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(vi) For fiscal year 2018, the market basket percentage increase under clause (ii)(VII) or (iii), as applicable, after application of clause (iv), shall be 1 percent.''; and

(2) in paragraph (5)(A)(i), by striking ''paragraph (1)(C)(iv)'' and inserting ''clauses (iv) and (vi) of paragraph (1)(C)''.

(e) LTCHS.—Section 1886(m)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(m)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''In implementing'' and inserting ''Subject to subparagraph (C), in implementing''; and

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

''(C) ADDITIONAL SPECIAL RULE.—For fiscal year 2018, the annual update under subparagraph (A) for the fiscal year, after application of clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A), shall be 1 percent.''.

SEC. 412. DELAY OF REDUCTION TO MEDICAID DSH ALLOTMENTS.

Section 1923(f) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396r–4(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (7)(A)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''2017 through 2024'' and inserting ''2018 through 2025'';

(B) by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following new clause:

''(ii) AGGREGATE REDUCTIONS.—The aggregate reductions in DSH allotments for all States under clause (i)(I) shall be equal to—

''(I) $2,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2018;

''(II) $3,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

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

''(IV) $5,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2021;

''(V) $6,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2022;

''(VI) $7,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;

''(VII) $8,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2024; and

''(VIII) $8,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2025.''; and

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

''(v) DISTRIBUTION OF AGGREGATE REDUCTIONS.—The Secretary shall distribute the aggregate reductions under clause (ii) among States in accordance with subparagraph (B).''; and

(2) in paragraph (8), by striking ''2024'' and inserting ''2025''.

SEC. 413. LEVY ON DELINQUENT PROVIDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 6331(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''30 percent'' and inserting ''100 percent''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to payments made after 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 414. ADJUSTMENTS TO INPATIENT HOSPITAL PAYMENT RATES.

Section 7(b) of the TMA, Abstinence Education, and QI Programs Extension Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–90), as amended by section 631(b) of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking '', 2009, or 2010'' and inserting ''or 2009''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

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

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

(iii) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii) make an additional adjustment to the standardized amounts under such section 1886(d) of an increase of 0.5 percentage points for discharges occurring during each of fiscal years 2018 through 2023 and not make the adjustment (estimated to be an increase of 3.2 percent) that would otherwise apply for discharges occurring during fiscal year 2018 by reason of the completion of the adjustments required under clause (ii).'';

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''shall be construed'' and all that follows through ''providing authority'' and inserting ''shall be construed as providing authority''; and

(B) by inserting ''and each succeeding fiscal year through fiscal year 2023'' after ''2017'';

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

(4) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

''(3) PROHIBITION.—The Secretary shall not make an additional prospective adjustment (estimated to be a decrease of 0.55 percent) to the standardized amounts under such section 1886(d) to offset the amount of the increase in aggregate payments related to documentation and coding changes for discharges occurring during fiscal year 2010.''.

TITLE V—MISCELLANEOUS

Subtitle A—Protecting the Integrity of Medicare

SEC. 501. PROHIBITION OF INCLUSION OF SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS ON MEDICARE CARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)) is amended—

(1) by moving clause (x), as added by section 1414(a)(2) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, 6 ems to the left;

(2) by redesignating clause (x), as added by section 2(a)(1) of the Social Security Number Protection Act of 2010, and clause (xi) as clauses (xi) and (xii), respectively; and

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

''(xiii) The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Security, shall establish cost-effective procedures to ensure that a Social Security account number (or derivative thereof) is not displayed, coded, or embedded on the Medicare card issued to an individual who is entitled to benefits under part A of title XVIII or enrolled under part B of title XVIII and that any other identifier displayed on such card is not identifiable as a Social Security account number (or derivative thereof).''.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—In implementing clause (xiii) of section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)), as added by subsection (a)(3), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall do the following:

(1) IN GENERAL.—Establish a cost-effective process that involves the least amount of disruption to, as well as necessary assistance for, Medicare beneficiaries and health care providers, such as a process that provides such beneficiaries with access to assistance through a toll-free telephone number and provides outreach to providers.

(2) CONSIDERATION OF MEDICARE BENEFICIARY IDENTIFIED.—Consider implementing a process, similar to the process involving Railroad Retirement Board beneficiaries, under which a Medicare beneficiary identifier which is not a Social Security account number (or derivative thereof) is used external to the Department of Health and Human Services and is convertible over to a Social Security account number (or derivative thereof) for use internal to such Department and the Social Security Administration.

(c) FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—For purposes of implementing the provisions of and the amendments made by this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide for the following transfers from the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund under section 1817 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i) and from the Federal Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund established under section 1841 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t), in such proportions as the Secretary determines appropriate:

(1) To the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Program Management Account, transfers of the following amounts:

(A) For fiscal year 2015, $65,000,000, to be made available through fiscal year 2018.

(B) For each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017, $53,000,000, to be made available through fiscal year 2018.

(C) For fiscal year 2018, $48,000,000, to be made available until expended.

(2) To the Social Security Administration Limitation on Administration Account, transfers of the following amounts:

(A) For fiscal year 2015, $27,000,000, to be made available through fiscal year 2018.

(B) For each of fiscal years 2016 and 2017, $22,000,000, to be made available through fiscal year 2018.

(C) For fiscal year 2018, $27,000,000, to be made available until expended.

(3) To the Railroad Retirement Board Limitation on Administration Account, the following amount:

(A) For fiscal year 2015, $3,000,000, to be made available until expended.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Clause (xiii) of section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)), as added by subsection (a)(3), shall apply with respect to Medicare cards issued on and after an effective date specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, but in no case shall such effective date be later than the date that is four years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) REISSUANCE.—The Secretary shall provide for the reissuance of Medicare cards that comply with the requirements of such clause not later than four years after the effective date specified by the Secretary under paragraph (1).

SEC. 502. PREVENTING WRONGFUL MEDICARE PAYMENTS FOR ITEMS AND SERVICES FURNISHED TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, INDIVIDUALS NOT LAWFULLY PRESENT, AND DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR THE SECRETARY TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND CLAIMS EDITS RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, INDIVIDUALS NOT LAWFULLY PRESENT, AND DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.—Section 1874 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) REQUIREMENT FOR THE SECRETARY TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND CLAIMS EDITS RELATING TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, INDIVIDUALS NOT LAWFULLY PRESENT, AND DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.—The Secretary shall establish and maintain procedures, including procedures for using claims processing edits, updating eligibility information to improve provider accessibility, and conducting recoupment activities such as through recovery audit contractors, in order to ensure that payment is not made under this title for items and services furnished to an individual who is one of the following:

''(1) An individual who is incarcerated.

''(2) An individual who is not lawfully present in the United States and who is not eligible for coverage under this title.

''(3) A deceased individual.''.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this section, and periodically thereafter as determined necessary by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, such Office shall submit to Congress a report on the activities described in subsection (f) of section 1874 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk), as added by subsection (a), that have been conducted since such date of enactment.

SEC. 503. CONSIDERATION OF MEASURES REGARDING MEDICARE BENEFICIARY SMART CARDS.

To the extent the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines that it is cost effective and technologically viable to use electronic Medicare beneficiary and provider cards (such as cards that use smart card technology, including an embedded and secure integrated circuit chip), as presented in the Government Accountability Office report required by the conference report accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113–76), the Secretary shall consider such measures as determined appropriate by the Secretary to implement such use of such cards for beneficiary and provider use under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.). In the case that the Secretary considers measures under the preceding sentence, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, and to the Committee on Finance of the Senate, a report outlining the considerations undertaken by the Secretary under such sentence.

SEC. 504. MODIFYING MEDICARE DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1834(a)(11)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(a)(11)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''the physician documenting that''; and

(2) by striking ''has had a face-to-face encounter'' and inserting ''documenting such physician, physician assistant, practitioner, or specialist has had a face-to-face encounter''.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may implement the amendments made by subsection (a) by program instruction or otherwise.

SEC. 505. REDUCING IMPROPER MEDICARE PAYMENTS.

(a) MEDICARE ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTOR IMPROPER PAYMENT OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—Section 1874A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk–1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as subparagraph (H); and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraph:

''(G) IMPROPER PAYMENT OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—Having in place an improper payment outreach and education program described in subsection (h).''; and

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

''(h) IMPROPER PAYMENT OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to reduce improper payments under this title, each medicare administrative contractor shall establish and have in place an improper payment outreach and education program under which the contractor, through outreach, education, training, and technical assistance or other activities, shall provide providers of services and suppliers located in the region covered by the contract under this section with the information described in paragraph (2). The activities described in the preceding sentence shall be conducted on a regular basis.

''(2) INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED THROUGH ACTIVITIES.—The information to be provided under such payment outreach and education program shall include information the Secretary determines to be appropriate, which may include the following information:

''(A) A list of the providers' or suppliers' most frequent and expensive payment errors over the last quarter.

''(B) Specific instructions regarding how to correct or avoid such errors in the future.

''(C) A notice of new topics that have been approved by the Secretary for audits conducted by recovery audit contractors under section 1893(h).

''(D) Specific instructions to prevent future issues related to such new audits.

''(E) Other information determined appropriate by the Secretary.

''(3) PRIORITY.—A medicare administrative contractor shall give priority to activities under such program that will reduce improper payments that are one or more of the following:

''(A) Are for items and services that have the highest rate of improper payment.

''(B) Are for items and service that have the greatest total dollar amount of improper payments.

''(C) Are due to clear misapplication or misinterpretation of Medicare policies.

''(D) Are clearly due to common and inadvertent clerical or administrative errors.

''(E) Are due to other types of errors that the Secretary determines could be prevented through activities under the program.

''(4) INFORMATION ON IMPROPER PAYMENTS FROM RECOVERY AUDIT CONTRACTORS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to assist medicare administrative contractors in carrying out improper payment outreach and education programs, the Secretary shall provide each contractor with a complete list of the types of improper payments identified by recovery audit contractors under section 1893(h) with respect to providers of services and suppliers located in the region covered by the contract under this section. Such information shall be provided on a time frame the Secretary determines appropriate which may be on a quarterly basis.

''(B) INFORMATION.—The information described in subparagraph (A) shall include information such as the following:

''(i) Providers of services and suppliers that have the highest rate of improper payments.

''(ii) Providers of services and suppliers that have the greatest total dollar amounts of improper payments.

''(iii) Items and services furnished in the region that have the highest rates of improper payments.

''(iv) Items and services furnished in the region that are responsible for the greatest total dollar amount of improper payments.

''(v) Other information the Secretary determines would assist the contractor in carrying out the program.

''(5) COMMUNICATIONS.—Communications with providers of services and suppliers under an improper payment outreach and education program are subject to the standards and requirements of subsection (g).''.

(b) USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS RECOVERED BY RACS.—Section 1893(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ddd(h)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''or paragraph (10)'' after ''paragraph (1)(C)''; and

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

''(10) USE OF CERTAIN RECOVERED FUNDS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—After application of paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall retain a portion of the amounts recovered by recovery audit contractors for each year under this section which shall be available to the program management account of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for purposes of, subject to subparagraph (B), carrying out sections 1833(z), 1834(l)(16), and 1874A(a)(4)(G), carrying out section 514(b) of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, and implementing strategies (such as claims processing edits) to help reduce the error rate of payments under this title. The amounts retained under the preceding sentence shall not exceed an amount equal to 15 percent of the amounts recovered under this subsection, and shall remain available until expended.

''(B) LIMITATION.—Except for uses that support claims processing (including edits) or system functionality for detecting fraud, amounts retained under subparagraph (A) may not be used for technological-related infrastructure, capital investments, or information systems.

''(C) NO REDUCTION IN PAYMENTS TO RECOVERY AUDIT CONTRACTORS.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall reduce amounts available for payments to recovery audit contractors under this subsection.''.

SEC. 506. IMPROVING SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL AND FRAUD REPORTING REWARDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall develop a plan to revise the incentive program under section 203(b) of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 1395b–5(b)) to encourage greater participation by individuals to report fraud and abuse in the Medicare program. Such plan shall include recommendations for—

(1) ways to enhance rewards for individuals reporting under the incentive program, including rewards based on information that leads to an administrative action; and

(2) extending the incentive program to the Medicaid program.

(b) PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.—The plan developed under subsection (a) shall also include recommendations for the use of the Senior Medicare Patrols authorized under section 411 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3032) to conduct a public awareness and education campaign to encourage participation in the revised incentive program under subsection (a).

(c) SUBMISSION OF PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress the plan developed under subsection (a).

SEC. 507. REQUIRING VALID PRESCRIBER NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIERS ON PHARMACY CLAIMS.

Section 1860D–4(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–104(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) REQUIRING VALID PRESCRIBER NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIERS ON PHARMACY CLAIMS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For plan year 2016 and subsequent plan years, the Secretary shall require a claim for a covered part D drug for a part D eligible individual enrolled in a prescription drug plan under this part or an MA–PD plan under part C to include a prescriber National Provider Identifier that is determined to be valid under the procedures established under subparagraph (B)(i).

''(B) PROCEDURES.—

''(i) VALIDITY OF PRESCRIBER NATIONAL PROVIDER IDENTIFIERS.—The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, shall establish procedures for determining the validity of prescriber National Provider Identifiers under subparagraph (A).

''(ii) INFORMING BENEFICIARIES OF REASON FOR DENIAL.—The Secretary shall establish procedures to ensure that, in the case that a claim for a covered part D drug of an individual described in subparagraph (A) is denied because the claim does not meet the requirements of this paragraph, the individual is properly informed at the point of service of the reason for the denial.

''(C) REPORT.—Not later than January 1, 2018, the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the procedures established under subparagraph (B)(i).''.

SEC. 508. OPTION TO RECEIVE MEDICARE SUMMARY NOTICE ELECTRONICALLY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1806 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395b–7) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) FORMAT OF STATEMENTS FROM SECRETARY.—

''(1) ELECTRONIC OPTION BEGINNING IN 2016.—Subject to paragraph (2), for statements described in subsection (a) that are furnished for a period in 2016 or a subsequent year, in the case that an individual described in subsection (a) elects, in accordance with such form, manner, and time specified by the Secretary, to receive such statement in an electronic format, such statement shall be furnished to such individual for each period subsequent to such election in such a format and shall not be mailed to the individual.

''(2) LIMITATION ON REVOCATION OPTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may determine a maximum number of elections described in paragraph (1) by an individual that may be revoked by the individual.

''(B) MINIMUM OF ONE REVOCATION OPTION.—In no case may the Secretary determine a maximum number under subparagraph (A) that is less than one.

''(3) NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that, in the most cost effective manner and beginning January 1, 2017, a clear notification of the option to elect to receive statements described in subsection (a) in an electronic format is made available, such as through the notices distributed under section 1804, to individuals described in subsection (a).''.

(b) ENCOURAGED EXPANSION OF ELECTRONIC STATEMENTS.—To the extent to which the

Secretary of Health and Human Services determines appropriate, the Secretary shall—

(1) apply an option similar to the option described in subsection (c)(1) of section 1806 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395b–7) (relating to the provision of the Medicare Summary Notice in an electronic format), as added by subsection (a), to other statements and notifications under title XVIII of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); and

(2) provide such Medicare Summary Notice and any such other statements and notifications on a more frequent basis than is otherwise required under such title.

SEC. 509. RENEWAL OF MAC CONTRACTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1874A(b)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk–1(b)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''5 years'' and inserting ''10 years''.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to contracts entered into on or after, and to contracts in effect as of, the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE TRANSPARENCY.—Section 1874A(b)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk–1(b)(3)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iv) CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE TRANSPARENCY.—To the extent possible without compromising the process for entering into and renewing contracts with medicare administrative contractors under this section, the Secretary shall make available to the public the performance of each medicare administrative contractor with respect to such performance requirements and measurement standards.''.

SEC. 510. STUDY ON PATHWAY FOR INCENTIVES TO STATES FOR STATE PARTICIPATION IN MEDICAID DATA MATCH PROGRAM.

Section 1893(g) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ddd(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) INCENTIVES FOR STATES.—The Secretary shall study and, as appropriate, may specify incentives for States to work with the Secretary for the purposes described in paragraph (1)(A)(ii). The application of the previous sentence may include use of the waiver authority described in paragraph (2).''.

SEC. 511. GUIDANCE ON APPLICATION OF COMMON RULE TO CLINICAL DATA REGISTRIES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue a clarification or modification with respect to the application of subpart A of part 46 of title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, governing the protection of human subjects in research (and commonly known as the ''Common Rule''), to activities, including quality improvement activities, involving clinical data registries, including entities that are qualified clinical data registries pursuant to section 1848(m)(3)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(m)(3)(E)).

SEC. 512. ELIMINATING CERTAIN CIVIL MONEY PENALTIES; GAINSHARING STUDY AND REPORT.

(a) ELIMINATING CIVIL MONEY PENALTIES FOR INDUCEMENTS TO PHYSICIANS TO LIMIT SERVICES THAT ARE NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1128A(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7a(b)(1)) is amended by inserting ''medically necessary'' after ''reduce or limit''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply to payments made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) GAINSHARING STUDY AND REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall submit to Congress a report with options for amending existing fraud and abuse laws in, and regulations related to, titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.), through exceptions, safe harbors, or other narrowly targeted provisions, to permit gainsharing arrangements that otherwise would be subject to the civil money penalties described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1128A(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a–7a(b)), or similar arrangements between physicians and hospitals, and that improve care while reducing waste and increasing efficiency. The report shall—

(1) consider whether such provisions should apply to ownership interests, compensation arrangements, or other relationships;

(2) describe how the recommendations address accountability, transparency, and quality, including how best to limit inducements to stint on care, discharge patients prematurely, or otherwise reduce or limit medically necessary care; and

(3) consider whether a portion of any savings generated by such arrangements (as compared to an historical benchmark or other metric specified by the Secretary to determine the impact of delivery and payment system changes under such title XVIII on expenditures made under such title) should accrue to the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act.

SEC. 513. MODIFICATION OF MEDICARE HOME HEALTH SURETY BOND CONDITION OF PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENT.

Section 1861(o)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(o)(7)) is amended to read as follows:

''(7) provides the Secretary with a surety bond—

''(A) in a form specified by the Secretary and in an amount that is not less than the minimum of $50,000; and

''(B) that the Secretary determines is commensurate with the volume of payments to the home health agency; and''.

SEC. 514. OVERSIGHT OF MEDICARE COVERAGE OF MANUAL MANIPULATION OF THE SPINE TO CORRECT SUBLUXATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(z) MEDICAL REVIEW OF SPINAL SUBLUXATION SERVICES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall implement a process for the medical review (as described in paragraph (2)) of treatment by a chiropractor described in section 1861(r)(5) by means of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation (as described in such section) of an individual who is enrolled under this part and apply such process to such services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, focusing on services such as—

''(A) services furnished by a such a chiropractor whose pattern of billing is aberrant compared to peers; and

''(B) services furnished by such a chiropractor who, in a prior period, has a services denial percentage in the 85th percentile or greater, taking into consideration the extent that service denials are overturned on appeal.

''(2) MEDICAL REVIEW.—

''(A) PRIOR AUTHORIZATION MEDICAL REVIEW.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the Secretary shall use prior authorization medical review for services described in paragraph (1) that are furnished to an individual by a chiropractor described in section 1861(r)(5) that are part of an episode of treatment that includes more than 12 services. For purposes of the preceding sentence, an episode of treatment shall be determined by the underlying cause that justifies the need for services, such as a diagnosis code.

''(ii) ENDING APPLICATION OF PRIOR AUTHORIZATION MEDICAL REVIEW.—The Secretary shall end the application of prior authorization medical review under clause (i) to services described in paragraph (1) by such a chiropractor if the Secretary determines that the chiropractor has a low denial rate under such prior authorization medical review. The Secretary may subsequently reapply prior authorization medical review to such chiropractor if the Secretary determines it to be appropriate and the chiropractor has, in the time period subsequent to the determination by the Secretary of a low denial rate with respect to the chiropractor, furnished such services described in paragraph (1).

''(iii) EARLY REQUEST FOR PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REVIEW PERMITTED.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent such a chiropractor from requesting prior authorization for services described in paragraph (1) that are to be furnished to an individual before the chiropractor furnishes the twelfth such service to such individual for an episode of treatment.

''(B) TYPE OF REVIEW.—The Secretary may use pre-payment review or post-payment review of services described in section 1861(r)(5) that are not subject to prior authorization medical review under subparagraph (A).

''(C) RELATIONSHIP TO LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary may determine that medical review under this subsection does not apply in the case where potential fraud may be involved.

''(3) NO PAYMENT WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.—With respect to a service described in paragraph (1) for which prior authorization medical review under this subsection applies, the following shall apply:

''(A) PRIOR AUTHORIZATION DETERMINATION.—The Secretary shall make a determination, prior to the service being furnished, of whether the service would or would not meet the applicable requirements of section 1862(a)(1)(A).

''(B) DENIAL OF PAYMENT.—Subject to paragraph (5), no payment may be made under this part for the service unless the Secretary determines pursuant to subparagraph (A) that the service would meet the applicable requirements of such section 1862(a)(1)(A).

''(4) SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION.—A chiropractor described in section 1861(r)(5) may submit the information necessary for medical review by fax, by mail, or by electronic means. The Secretary shall make available the electronic means described in the preceding sentence as soon as practicable.

''(5) TIMELINESS.—If the Secretary does not make a prior authorization determination under paragraph (3)(A) within 14 business days of the date of the receipt of medical documentation needed to make such determination, paragraph (3)(B) shall not apply.

''(6) APPLICATION OF LIMITATION ON BENEFICIARY LIABILITY.—Where payment may not be made as a result of the application of paragraph (2)(B), section 1879 shall apply in the same manner as such section applies to a denial that is made by reason of section 1862(a)(1).

''(7) REVIEW BY CONTRACTORS.—The medical review described in paragraph (2) may be conducted by medicare administrative contractors pursuant to section 1874A(a)(4)(G) or by any other contractor determined appropriate by the Secretary that is not a recovery audit contractor.

''(8) MULTIPLE SERVICES.—The Secretary shall, where practicable, apply the medical review under this subsection in a manner so as to allow an individual described in paragraph (1) to obtain, at a single time rather

than on a service-by-service basis, an authorization in accordance with paragraph (3)(A) for multiple services.

''(9) CONSTRUCTION.—With respect to a service described in paragraph (1) that has been affirmed by medical review under this subsection, nothing in this subsection shall be construed to preclude the subsequent denial of a claim for such service that does not meet other applicable requirements under this Act.

''(10) IMPLEMENTATION.—

''(A) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may implement the provisions of this subsection by interim final rule with comment period.

''(B) ADMINISTRATION.—Chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not apply to medical review under this subsection.''.

(b) IMPROVING DOCUMENTATION OF SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, in consultation with stakeholders (including the American Chiropractic Association) and representatives of medicare administrative contractors (as defined in section 1874A(a)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk–1(a)(3)(A))), develop educational and training programs to improve the ability of chiropractors to provide documentation to the Secretary of services described in section 1861(r)(5) in a manner that demonstrates that such services are, in accordance with section 1862(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395y(a)(1)), reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body member.

(2) TIMING.—The Secretary shall make the educational and training programs described in paragraph (1) publicly available not later than January 1, 2016.

(3) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use funds made available under paragraph (10) of section 1893(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ddd(h)), as added by section 505, to carry out this subsection.

(c) GAO STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the effectiveness of the process for medical review of services furnished as part of a treatment by means of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation implemented under subsection (z) of section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l), as added by subsection (a). Such study shall include an analysis of—

(A) aggregate data on—

(i) the number of individuals, chiropractors, and claims for services subject to such review; and

(ii) the number of reviews conducted under such section; and

(B) the outcomes of such reviews.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than four years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1), including recommendations for such legislation and administrative action with respect to the process for medical review implemented under subsection (z) of section 1833 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l) as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

SEC. 515. NATIONAL EXPANSION OF PRIOR AUTHORIZATION MODEL FOR REPETITIVE SCHEDULED NON-EMERGENT AMBULANCE TRANSPORT.

(a) INITIAL EXPANSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In implementing the model described in paragraph (2) proposed to be tested under subsection (b) of section 1115A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall revise the testing under subsection (b) of such section to cover, effective not later than January 1, 2016, States located in medicare administrative contractor (MAC) regions L and 11 (consisting of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Virginia).

(2) MODEL DESCRIBED.—The model described in this paragraph is the testing of a model of prior authorization for repetitive scheduled non-emergent ambulance transport proposed to be carried out in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

(3) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall allocate funds made available under section 1115A(f)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a(f)(1)(B)) to carry out this subsection.

(b) NATIONAL EXPANSION.—Section 1834(l) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(l)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(16) PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FOR REPETITIVE SCHEDULED NON-EMERGENT AMBULANCE TRANSPORTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Beginning January 1, 2017, if the expansion to all States of the model of prior authorization described in paragraph (2) of section 515(a) of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 meets the requirements described in paragraphs (1) through (3) of section 1115A(c), then the Secretary shall expand such model to all States.

''(B) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall use funds made available under section 1893(h)(10) to carry out this paragraph.

''(C) CLARIFICATION REGARDING BUDGET NEUTRALITY.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to limit or modify the application of section 1115A(b)(3)(B) to models described in such section, including with respect to the model described in subparagraph (A) and expanded beginning on January 1, 2017, under such subparagraph.''.

SEC. 516. REPEALING DUPLICATIVE MEDICARE SECONDARY PAYOR PROVISION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1862(b)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395y(b)(5)) is amended by inserting at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) END DATE.—The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to information required to be provided on or after July 1, 2016.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to information required to be provided on or after January 1, 2016.

SEC. 517. PLAN FOR EXPANDING DATA IN ANNUAL CERT REPORT.

Not later than June 30, 2015, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Finance of the Senate, and to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means of the House of Representatives—

(1) a plan for including, in the annual report of the Comprehensive Error Rate Testing (CERT) program, data on services (or groupings of services) (other than medical visits) paid under the physician fee schedule under section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) where the fee schedule amount is in excess of $250 and where the error rate is in excess of 20 percent; and

(2) to the extent practicable by such date, specific examples of services described in paragraph (1).

SEC. 518. REMOVING FUNDS FOR MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT FUND ADDED BY IMPACT ACT OF 2014.

Section 1898(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii(b)(1)), as amended by section 3(e)(3) of the IMPACT Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–185), is amended by striking ''$195,000,000'' and inserting ''$0''.

SEC. 519. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Except as explicitly provided in this subtitle, nothing in this subtitle, including the amendments made by this subtitle, shall be construed as preventing the use of notice and comment rulemaking in the implementation of the provisions of, and the amendments made by, this subtitle.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

SEC. 521. EXTENSION OF TWO-MIDNIGHT PAMA RULES ON CERTAIN MEDICAL REVIEW ACTIVITIES.

Section 111 of the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–93; 42 U.S.C. 1395ddd note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''the first 6 months of fiscal year 2015'' and inserting ''through the end of fiscal year 2015'';

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''March 31, 2015'' and inserting ''September 30, 2015''; and

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

''(c) CONSTRUCTION.—Except as provided in subsections (a) and (b), nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting the Secretary's authority to pursue fraud and abuse activities under such section 1893(h) or otherwise.''.

SEC. 522. REQUIRING BID SURETY BONDS AND STATE LICENSURE FOR ENTITIES SUBMITTING BIDS UNDER THE MEDICARE DMEPOS COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION PROGRAM.

(a) BID SURETY BONDS.—Section 1847(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(G) REQUIRING BID BONDS FOR BIDDING ENTITIES.—With respect to rounds of competitions beginning under this subsection for contracts beginning not earlier than January 1, 2017, and not later than January 1, 2019, an entity may not submit a bid for a competitive acquisition area unless, as of the deadline for bid submission, the entity has obtained (and provided the Secretary with proof of having obtained) a bid surety bond (in this paragraph referred to as a 'bid bond') in a form specified by the Secretary consistent with subparagraph (H) and in an amount that is not less than $50,000 and not more than $100,000 for each competitive acquisition area in which the entity submits the bid.

''(H) TREATMENT OF BID BONDS SUBMITTED.—

''(i) FOR BIDDERS THAT SUBMIT BIDS AT OR BELOW THE MEDIAN AND ARE OFFERED BUT DO NOT ACCEPT THE CONTRACT.—In the case of a bidding entity that is offered a contract for any product category for a competitive acquisition area, if—

''(I) the entity's composite bid for such product category and area was at or below the median composite bid rate for all bidding entities included in the calculation of the single payment amounts for such product category and area; and

''(II) the entity does not accept the contract offered for such product category and area,

the bid bond submitted by such entity for such area shall be forfeited by the entity and the Secretary shall collect on it.

''(ii) TREATMENT OF OTHER BIDDERS.—In the case of a bidding entity for any product category for a competitive acquisition area, if the entity does not meet the bid forfeiture conditions in subclauses (I) and (II) of clause (i) for any product category for such area, the bid bond submitted by such entity for such area shall be returned within 90 days of the public announcement of the contract suppliers for such area.''.

(b) STATE LICENSURE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1847(b)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3(b)(2)(A)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(v) The entity meets applicable State licensure requirements.''.

(2) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the amendment made by paragraph (1) shall be construed as affecting the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to require State licensure of an entity under the Medicare competitive acquisition program under section 1847 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3) before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) GAO REPORT ON BID BOND IMPACT ON SMALL SUPPLIERS.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study that evaluates the effect of the bid surety bond requirement under the amendment made by subsection (a) on the participation of small suppliers in the Medicare DMEPOS competitive acquisition program under section 1847 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3).

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the date contracts are first awarded subject to such bid surety bond requirement, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the study conducted under paragraph (1). Such report shall include recommendations for changes in such requirement in order to ensure robust participation by legitimate small suppliers in the Medicare DMEPOS competition acquisition program.

SEC. 523. PAYMENT FOR GLOBAL SURGICAL PACKAGES.

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

''(8) GLOBAL SURGICAL PACKAGES.—

''(A) PROHIBITION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RULE REGARDING GLOBAL SURGICAL PACKAGES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall not implement the policy established in the final rule published on November 13, 2014 (79 Fed. Reg. 67548 et seq.), that requires the transition of all 10-day and 90-day global surgery packages to 0-day global periods.

''(ii) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in clause (i) shall be construed to prevent the Secretary from revaluing misvalued codes for specific surgical services or assigning values to new or revised codes for surgical services.

''(B) COLLECTION OF DATA ON SERVICES INCLUDED IN GLOBAL SURGICAL PACKAGES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the Secretary shall through rulemaking develop and implement a process to gather, from a representative sample of physicians, beginning not later than January 1, 2017, information needed to value surgical services. Such information shall include the number and level of medical visits furnished during the global period and other items and services related to the surgery and furnished during the global period, as appropriate. Such information shall be reported on claims at the end of the global period or in another manner specified by the Secretary. For purposes of carrying out this paragraph (other than clause (iii)), the Secretary shall transfer from the Federal Supplemental Medical Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841 $2,000,000 to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services Program Management Account for fiscal year 2015. Amounts transferred under the previous sentence shall remain available until expended.

''(ii) REASSESSMENT AND POTENTIAL SUNSET.—Every 4 years, the Secretary shall reassess the value of the information collected pursuant to clause (i). Based on such a reassessment and by regulation, the Secretary may discontinue the requirement for collection of information under such clause if the Secretary determines that the Secretary has adequate information from other sources, such as qualified clinical data registries, surgical logs, billing systems or other practice or facility records, and electronic health records, in order to accurately value global surgical services under this section.

''(iii) INSPECTOR GENERAL AUDIT.—The Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall audit a sample of the information reported under clause (i) to verify the accuracy of the information so reported.

''(C) IMPROVING ACCURACY OF PRICING FOR SURGICAL SERVICES.—For years beginning with 2019, the Secretary shall use the information reported under subparagraph (B)(i) as appropriate and other available data for the purpose of improving the accuracy of valuation of surgical services under the physician fee schedule under this section.''.

(b) INCENTIVE FOR REPORTING INFORMATION ON GLOBAL SURGICAL SERVICES.—Section 1848(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(9) INFORMATION REPORTING ON SERVICES INCLUDED IN GLOBAL SURGICAL PACKAGES.—With respect to services for which a physician is required to report information in accordance with subsection (c)(8)(B)(i), the Secretary may through rulemaking delay payment of 5 percent of the amount that would otherwise be payable under the physician fee schedule under this section for such services until the information so required is reported.''.

SEC. 524. EXTENSION OF SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000.

(a) PAYMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 AND 2015.—

(1) PAYMENTS REQUIRED.—Section 101 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111) is amended by striking ''2013'' both places it appears and inserting ''2015''.

(2) PROMPT PAYMENT.—Payments for fiscal year 2014 under title I of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111 et seq.), as amended by this section, shall be made not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) REDUCTION IN FISCAL YEAR 2014 PAYMENTS ON ACCOUNT OF PREVIOUS 25- AND 50-PERCENT PAYMENTS.—Section 101 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7111) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) SPECIAL RULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014 PAYMENTS.—

''(1) STATE PAYMENT.—If an eligible county in a State that will receive a share of the State payment for fiscal year 2014 has already received, or will receive, a share of the 25-percent payment for fiscal year 2014 distributed to the State before the date of the enactment of this subsection, the amount of the State payment shall be reduced by the amount of that eligible county's share of the 25-percent payment.

''(2) COUNTY PAYMENT.—If an eligible county that will receive a county payment for fiscal year 2014 has already received a 50-percent payment for that fiscal year, the amount of the county payment shall be reduced by the amount of the 50-percent payment.''.

(4) SHARES OF CALIFORNIA STATE PAYMENT.—Section 103(d)(2) of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7113(d)(2)) is amended by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2015''.

(b) USE OF FISCAL YEAR 2013 ELECTIONS AND RESERVATIONS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 AND 2015.—Section 102 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7112) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) EFFECT OF LATE PAYMENT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 AND 2015.—The election otherwise required by subparagraph (A) shall not apply for fiscal year 2014 or 2015.'';

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''If such two-fiscal year period included fiscal year 2013, the county election to receive a share of the 25-percent payment or 50-percent payment, as applicable, also shall be effective for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''2013'' the second place it appears and inserting ''2015''; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by adding at the end of paragraph (1) the following new subparagraph:

''(E) EFFECT OF LATE PAYMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014.—The election made by an eligible county under subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) for fiscal year 2013, or deemed to be made by the county under paragraph (3)(B) for that fiscal year, shall be effective for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.''; and

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

''(C) EFFECT OF LATE PAYMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014.—This paragraph does not apply for fiscal years 2014 and 2015.''.

(c) SPECIAL PROJECTS ON FEDERAL LAND.—Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7121 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 203(a)(1) (16 U.S.C. 7123(a)(1)), by striking ''September 30 for fiscal year 2008 (or as soon thereafter as the Secretary concerned determines is practicable), and each September 30 thereafter for each succeeding fiscal year through fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''September 30 of each fiscal year (or a later date specified by the Secretary concerned for the fiscal year)'';

(2) in section 204(e)(3)(B)(iii) (16 U.S.C. 7124(e)(3)(B)(iii)), by striking ''each of fiscal years 2010 through 2013'' and inserting ''fiscal year 2010 and fiscal years thereafter'';

(3) in section 207(a) (16 U.S.C. 7127(a)), by striking ''September 30, 2008 (or as soon thereafter as the Secretary concerned determines is practicable), and each September 30 thereafter for each succeeding fiscal year through fiscal year 2013'' and inserting ''September 30 of each fiscal year (or a later date specified by the Secretary concerned for the fiscal year)''; and

(4) in section 208 (16 U.S.C. 7128)—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2018''.

(d) COUNTY FUNDS.—Section 304 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7144) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''2013'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2018''.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 402 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7152) is amended by striking ''for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2013''.

SEC. 525. EXCLUSION FROM PAYGO SCORECARDS.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 15 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1015

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, sponsored by Congressman BURGESS of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2, the bill I just referenced. Four years ago, upon taking leadership of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, I made it one of my goals to end the patchwork of doc fixes and repeal the sustainable growth rate.

Now, we are here on the floor of the House with a bipartisan policy and a bipartisan set of pay-fors. There are many who thought that this day would never come.

We are replacing the SGR, once and for all, with a system that allows greater freedom for physicians to practice medicine. We do this without threatening access to health care for seniors. Instead of unrealistic price controls, we are instituting a cooperative process to make our healthcare dollars go farther.

We are also replacing a portion of the projected savings with real entitlement reforms, reforms that could reduce spending by $295 billion in the coming decades.

Let's not make the mistake of saying that this is saving Medicare. The bill makes important reforms that put the program on a better path, but there is much work to do before we achieve that goal.

Future generations of Americans have understandable doubts about whether Medicare will be there when they retire. They pay into the program just as my generation did, but the current system of funding the program will not deliver on that promise for them. The extraordinary progress represented by the bill before us today is the result of a vision for the future and years of hard work.

That vision was wholeheartedly supported by Speaker BOEHNER, and there are many more to thank: Chairman UPTON, for his persistence in leadership; current Ranking Member PALLONE and former Ranking Member Waxman for working with us to get a policy we could all agree on; also Dr. BURGESS, the primary sponsor of today's bill and the vice chairman of the Health Subcommittee in the two past Congresses.

I would especially like to thank the dedicated staff that spent countless hours and sacrificed weekends to make this happen: Dr. John O'Shea, Robert Horne, Josh Trent, Clay Alspach, Michelle Rosenberg, Heidi Stirrup, and Monica Volente, on my personal staff.

Finally, we should see this bill as a first step toward strengthening and saving Medicare. This can't be the end of the road.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

For more than 10 years, Congress has had to temporarily fix the flawed sustainable growth rate, SGR, nearly 20 times since it was enacted. Well, today is the last time I will have to talk about the broken SGR. The House has come together to fix it once and for all.

This bill is the result of a lot of hard work by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees and our leadership. Many of our Members have made important contributions to this bill, and I want to thank them all for being so diligent.

This bill not only repeals the SGR, it replaces it with a reformed system that pays providers based on quality and value. It rewards health outcomes. It allows providers to give more focus to their patients, and most importantly, it provides stability and predictability to the Medicare Program for years to come. This is good for doctors, and it is good for seniors.

This bill also extends critical funding for programs that improve the health and welfare of millions of children, families, and seniors. It makes permanent the qualified individual program which helps low-income seniors pay their Medicare part B premiums.

It makes permanent the Transitional Medical Assistance program, which allows low-income families to maintain their Medicaid coverage for up to 1 year as they transition from welfare to work.

It includes $8 billion in funding for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and teaching health centers. This funding will help serve 28 million patients, and all three, together, strengthen access to primary and preventative health care in communities throughout America.

The bill includes a fully funded 2-year extension of CHIP, maintaining all of the improvements in the Affordable Care Act, but this is not just a 2-year extension; it is a robust extension. It keeps the promise made to States by maintaining the 23 percent bump in Federal matching rates and ensures that States, in turn, keep their promise to CHIP kids by leaving maintenance of effort requirements for child enrollment through 2019 untouched.

This bill is not perfect. I wish my Republican colleagues would have agreed to fund CHIP for 4 years. I also remain concerned about the provisions that affect Medicare beneficiaries, but such is the nature of compromise.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work of my committee and of both of our leaderships. This agreement took courage from both sides, but what we have accomplished is truly significant. It is balanced and a thoughtful product, and I urge Members to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER), an outstanding member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and a good advocate on health issues.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act represents years of bipartisan effort to eliminate the fatally flawed sustainable growth rate formula and implement new payment and delivery models that will promote higher-quality care while reducing costs.

In addition to stabilizing the Medicare Program for our Nation's seniors, the bill addresses the healthcare needs of children and low-income Americans, while promoting the long-term sustainability of the Medicare Program through significant structural reforms to the Medicare Program.

There is no question, Medicare must be modernized in order to avoid the program's projected financial shortfalls. Republicans and Democrats have worked together to advance a blueprint to begin to place Medicare programs on a sound financial footing for both today's and future retirees.

Now is the time to end this failed policy once and for all and protect access to care for seniors. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), the ranking member of our House Subcommittee.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding to me, and I appreciate his leadership on this issue and many others in our committee.

I rise in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. As an original cosponsor of this landmark legislation, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

H.R. 2 will reform the flawed Medicare physician payment system that will reward quality and value over volume, make reforms to slow the growth of healthcare costs, and extend other critical programs, including the Children's Health Insurance Program and

the funding for community health centers.

Since 2003, Congress has intervened 17 times to prevent steep payment cuts caused by the flawed SGR formula in order to preserve seniors' access to care.

Repealing the SGR is the responsible choice, both fiscally and logically. More money has now been spent on short-term patches than the full cost of the permanent repealing of the SGR.

We are closer than we have ever come to repealing the flawed SGR formula and enacting meaningful reform that will strengthen the Medicare system for generations to come.

I want to highlight the additional 2 years of funding for the community health centers program included in the package. These dedicated mandatory funds will avert an impending fiscal cliff set to take place in September. Without this extension, funding for health centers would be slashed by 70 percent, and 7.4 million patients would lose access to care.

Also included in the agreement are funding for the National Health Service Corps and the teaching health center program. Both programs further the goals of improving and strengthening access to primary and preventative care in our communities.

Like any good bipartisan compromise, the legislation strikes a balance and offers a set of viable solutions that should have broad bipartisan support.

I want to thank Speaker BOEHNER, Leader PELOSI, and my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee and Ways and Means Committee for their leadership in working across the aisle to craft this commonsense, landmark legislation.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), a member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, today is a great day for America's seniors. After years of flawed Medicare policy, we are finally creating a stable system that ensures Medicare patients will have access to their doctors.

This new policy will move our Medicare system to one that is based on quality of care that is provided to our Nation's seniors. In fact, for the first time in decades, we actually achieve real structural reforms in the program that will help save this critical program for future seniors.

I would also like to highlight that this legislation repeals CMS' policy to eliminate bundled surgical payments. Eliminating surgical payment bundles would force doctors to spend more time billing CMS that could be used for caring for patients.

I would like to thank Chairman PITTS, and I would also like to congratulate Speaker BOEHNER, Minority Leader PELOSI, Chairman UPTON, and Ranking Member PALLONE for putting politics aside and putting America's seniors first.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. SCHRADER).

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am proud to be here today to support real bipartisan compromise to finally repeal and replace this flawed SGR formula.

I would like to give my congratulations to Congressman BURGESS and, frankly, former Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz also worked very hard for many years to make this thing a reality.

This long-term solution is going to bring stability to Medicare, so seniors will actually be able to continue to see their doctors. Meanwhile, the bill also allows physicians to focus on value and quality of care rather than quantity of care and extends, of course, the vital CHIP program aiding so many children in this country.

Now, though I would prefer to see this bill completely paid for, like many others in this Chamber, I recognize the nature of compromise means you don't get everything you want, whether you are a House Member or a Senate Member.

I am glad, however, that it has been pointed out that at least part of the cost of this bill is covered by implementing crucial reforms to Medicare that will help improve its solvency for future generations, certainly compared to our current policy.

I congratulate my colleagues on the both sides of the aisle for coming together on this agreement. It is long overdue and will greatly improve our system. I hope we vote for this bill.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the vice chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman PITTS for the work that he has done on this, as well as the other members of our committee.

I do rise today in support of H.R. 2.

I think every one of us have constituents who are Medicare enrollees who tell us the stories and the stress that comes with not being able to see a doctor because they are no longer taking Medicare patients.

What this does is go to the heart of the problem, the SGR, the sustainable growth rate. It was a big part of the problem—the sword of Damocles, if you will—because doctors never knew if they were going to get paid or what they were going to get paid or if it was going to be a double-digit or a single-digit cut. Let's get that off the table and provide some certainty.

H.R. 2 is finally going to eliminate the flawed SGR. It will be replaced with commonsense legislation which will provide healthcare providers with the predictability that is necessary to meet the needs of Medicare enrollees.

In addition, H.R. 2 takes an important step to rein in healthcare spending, incentivizing doctors on quality, as opposed to quantity, getting at part of the problem of our entitlement programs.

I congratulate all involved. I encourage a ''yes'' vote.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

□ 1030

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2.

I have always believed that our physician workforce deserves to be fairly compensated. The flawed SGR formula has failed to do this for over a decade, and it isn't right that physicians have faced looming Medicare cuts year after year. Therefore, I am pleased that House Democrats and Republicans have come together to craft a fair, bipartisan compromise to this longstanding and expensive problem.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want us to end gridlock. They want us to meet in the middle, and we are doing that today. I want to commend Speaker BOEHNER and Leader PELOSI. And while I would have liked to have seen a 4-year extension of CHIP funding and I am upset that unnecessary Hyde language has been attached to much-needed community health center funding, overall, this is a good agreement.

Medicare beneficiaries, their physicians, children, and our entire health care system will benefit from seeing CHIP and health center funding extended, SGR repealed, and quality-based physician reimbursement incentivized.

So I urge my colleagues both here in the House and in the Senate to support this compromise legislation, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), the chairman of the Doctors Caucus, who should be recognized for his tireless efforts to build support for this bill.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H.R. 2, which will permanently repeal the flawed SGR formula and replace it with meaningful reform that will ensure seniors' access to Medicare.

This agreement is one of the most important things we have accomplished since I have been in Congress, and I couldn't be prouder of the work done by the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees, along with the GOP Doctors Caucus.

I want to give a special thank-you to Speaker JOHN BOEHNER and Leader NANCY PELOSI, without whose leadership this agreement would never have happened.

This bill will ensure Medicare recipients have access to quality care and helps pave the way for entitlement reform by making important structural changes to the program. That is an important point. People over the years

have referred to this as the ''doc fix,'' but it really should be called the ''senior fix.'' The cuts required by SGR were so severe that, had they been allowed to go into effect, seniors' access to a Medicare physician almost assuredly would have been curtailed.

After 12 years, 17 patches, and $170 billion spent to keep a flawed formula from doing lasting damage to Medicare, we are finally acting in a responsible manner, in a way that should give the American people renewed confidence in Congress' ability to act on important matters.

I thank all involved.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), our Democratic leader, and I thank her for what she accomplished here today working with the Speaker.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I thank Mr. PALLONE and Mr. LEVIN, our ranking members on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, for their leadership and cooperation on this issue, as well as Chairman RYAN of the Ways and Means Committee and Chairman UPTON of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

This is a day that we really have to salute our staff. They have worked so hard. It was my honor to work with Speaker BOEHNER on this important issue to do what we came here to do—to legislate. We are the legislative branch. We are legislating. We are working together to get the job done for the American people.

From Speaker BOEHNER's staff, I especially want to thank Charlotte Ivancic, who was extremely knowledgeable about health policy and was smart and fair about all of this. Wendell Primus of my staff was a strong voice for the concerns of seniors and children and the rest in those discussions.

Ed Grossman and his team at House Legislative Counsel—for all the ideas that Members churned up, Legislative Counsel had to translate that into what the possibility was for legislative language. They worked 24/7, weekends included.

Megan O'Reilly, Bridget Taylor, and the technical teams at CMS and HHS worked 24/7 for many days.

Holly Harvey and Tom Bradley and the team at the Congressional Budget Office, having to score every change of idea that we may have had.

Again, the staff both at the Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee on both sides of the aisle, I take the time to recognize them because in recognizing them, I really want to recognize the work that is done by staff on all that we do here.

All of these individuals, again, have been working 18-hour days for the past few weeks, and we thank them for their tireless hard work.

This package includes many important victories for low-income seniors, children, and families. There are many reasons to support this bill, four of which I would like to point out:

We are strengthening the quality of care for many older Americans with additional funding for initiatives that help low-income seniors pay their Medicare part B premiums.

We have added almost $750 million for training more urgently needed nurses and physicians.

We have secured the health care of poor children with a 2-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program at the same rates set by the Affordable Care Act. Many people wanted more, as did I. That does not diminish the importance of the 2-year extension.

Lastly, we have secured critical funding for community health centers over the next 2 years, expanding a vital investment in underserved communities.

I am proud to rise in support of this historic, bipartisan package. It represents bold, necessary progress for our country. And it is not just about enabling our seniors to see their doctors, which was the original purpose of the bill. It is about how we can increase performance and lower cost; it is about value, not volume of service; it is about quality, not quantity of procedures; and this legislation is transformative in how it rewards the value, not the volume. So I am proud to support it.

At long last, we will replace the broken SGR formula and transition Medicare away from a volume-based system toward one that rewards values, ensures the accuracy of payments, and improves the quality of care.

With this legislation, we give America's seniors confidence that they will be able to see the doctors they need and the doctors they like, liberating them and their families from the shadow of needless, annual crises.

And as a woman, during Women's History Month, I am very proud of what the legislation means to women and their health issues.

So for these and other reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote ''aye.''

It was my privilege to work with the Speaker in a bipartisan way on this legislation. I hope it will be a model of things to come.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I join in thanking the minority leader for her role in achieving this bipartisan compromise. It is really historic. I think it is appropriate that this is happening on her birthday, and I join my colleagues in wishing her a happy birthday today.

Mr. Speaker, could I inquire of the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 8 minutes remaining. The gentleman from New Jersey has 7½ minutes remaining.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), another member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 2, to repeal and replace the SGR.

This bill will replace the SGR with the Merit-Based Incentive Payment System, or MIPS. MIPS means physicians are practicing better medicine to keep their patients healthier. Healthier people utilize less health care, which means a lower cost to the taxpayer.

Nearly 150,000 seniors live in my district. This bill gives them certainty that their doctor will see them. It provides seniors with better care.

H.R. 2 includes a 2-year extension for community health centers funding, which is very important to my constituents. This bill is pro-senior, pro-doctor, and pro-patient.

This is a historic moment, nearly 20 years in the making. We have a chance to make a huge difference for seniors. The benefits of repealing the SGR are clear. Support this bill.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this important, bipartisan, landmark bill.

Our parents and grandparents who rely on Medicare and the doctors that take care of them can breathe easier today because of this bill. Medicare will be stronger, and it will be more efficient. We are going to put ''modern'' into modern medicine by transitioning the Medicare health system into one that focuses on quality rather than quantity.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Chairman UPTON and Ranking Member PALLONE, Mr. PITTS and Mr. GREEN, and Speaker BOEHNER and Minority Leader PELOSI for also adding into this important package new assurance for children across America, for our community health centers. The State Children's Health Insurance Program now gets a very significant boost, along with our health centers that take care of so many of our neighbors.

Thanks again to the professional staff, to the great public servants in the Obama administration.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on this important, landmark bill.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield at this time 1 minute to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS), another valued member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I just want to extend my thanks to all of the members who have worked so hard, both on the Energy and Commerce Committee, but my Democratic colleagues across the aisle, those who we are working with in the Senate.

I just want to say to the American people, don't look now, but we are actually governing. And this is what the American people want to see.

I have a speech here to read, but I am actually going to go offline and tell you from my heart what this means for our seniors.

This is about certainty. This is about governing. This is about giving solutions to a problem. Yes, it comes with

a price tag. But when we continuously look at things from a one-dimensional perspective on something so important as health care—it is so multidimensional—we can't stop ourselves from moving forward.

Imagine a year from now where we will be when we are not trying to come up with another billion-dollar bandaid to continue the SGR failed formula, when we can actually be looking forward for solutions in health care, continuing our work on 21st century cures, and showing our seniors and every American family in this country how important it is in the work that we are doing.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

Mr. Speaker, this is a good day for medical providers and for our seniors. This is also a good day for the House of Representatives. This is bipartisanship at its best.

With the passage of H.R. 2, seniors will no longer have to worry about losing their physicians. Providers will have the certainty to continue to serve their Medicare patients.

But this bill, Mr. Speaker, is about more than fixing Medicare. It also includes a 2-year extension of the CHIP program, which is children's health insurance, and funding for community health centers that is set to expire this fall. Both programs are vital to the low-income vulnerable and rural communities that I represent in North Carolina.

The CHIP program covers more than 8 million children across the country, including many in my State. It helps provide health coverage to children who are not eligible for Medicaid but cannot afford other insurance.

The community health center program funds 1,300 health centers across the country. Without this extension, the program would expire, and care for 7.4 million patients would be jeopardized.

Supporting this bill is about providing access to care for the most vulnerable Americans. I urge my colleagues in the House and the Senate to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 2.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), our Speaker, who deserves a lot of credit in coming up with this bipartisan compromise.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague from Pennsylvania for yielding.

Let me say a big thank you to Chairman UPTON, Chairman RYAN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. LEVIN, and their staffs for all of the work that has gone into this product. Also, I want to thank Wendell Primus with Leader PELOSI's staff; Charlene MacDonald with Mr. HOYER's staff; and, of course, Charlotte Ivancic on my team, all who have worked together to create this product that we have today. Thanks to their hard work and the work of this House, we expect to end the so-called doc fix once and for all.

Many of you know that we have patched this problem 17 times over the last 11 years, and I decided about a year ago that I had had enough of it. In its place, we will deliver for the American people the first real entitlement reform in nearly two decades. I think this is good news for America's seniors, who will benefit from a more stable and reliable system for seeing their doctor.

□ 1045

It is good news for hard-working families who will benefit from a stronger Medicare program to help care for their elderly parents. It is good news for the taxpayers who, according to the CBO and a number of other fiscal experts, will save money now and well into the future. That means it is especially good news for our kids and grandkids, because today it is about a problem much bigger than any doc fix or any deadline. It is about beginning the process of solving our spending problem, and it is about strengthening and saving Medicare, which is at the heart of that problem.

Normally, we would be here to admit that we are just going to kick the can down the road one more time. But today, because of what we are doing here, we are going to save money 20, 30, and 40 years down the road. Not only that, we are strengthening Medicare's ability to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

As was mentioned earlier, this bill also extends the Children's Health Insurance Program for another 2 years and extends the authorization for community health centers for another 2 years.

My colleagues, this is what we can accomplish when we are focused on finding common ground. But we can't become complacent. We know more serious entitlement reform is needed. It shouldn't take another two decades to do it, and, frankly, I don't think we have got that much time. But I am here today to urge all of our Members to begin that process, and the process begins by voting ''yes'' on H.R. 2 today.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act.

As this legislation was under negotiation, several of our colleagues tried to add unnecessary language that would have expanded the Hyde amendment to embed this harmful policy into the Affordable Care Act and the Public Health Services Act. Thanks to the commitment of leaders for women's health care rights, we secured important changes to this language. Current appropriation policies concerning the use of funds at community health centers will not change, and when the funding in this bill for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and teaching health centers expires, so will the funding restrictions. Also, this language is freestanding, and it does not amend the Affordable Care Act or the Public Health Services Act.

Let me be clear. I oppose the Hyde amendment. It is backwards policy because it denies full reproductive coverage to poor women who need it the most of everybody in this society; but this bill does not restrict their access any further than current law, and the Pro-Choice Caucus will continue to fight for health parity in this country for all women.

In the meantime, we have a bill here that has real advances in finally fixing the physician reimbursement, extending the important Children's Health program, extending the special diabetes fund that helps so many Americans, and gives $7 billion to extend the important community health centers for the next 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work we did in a bipartisan way. I want to thank the majority, and I want to thank my colleagues on my side of the aisle for working together and only showing, as the Speaker just said, what we can do when we really do the job that Congress is supposed to do. I urge support of this legislation.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), the prime sponsor of the legislation, who deserves a great deal of credit for where we are today.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health on Energy and Commerce. Mr. Speaker, I omitted one of the people that should have been thanked earlier in my remarks from the House Legislative Counsel, Michelle Vanek, who worked so hard on the language that is before us today.

Mr. Speaker, a year ago I came to this floor, we had a similar vote, and I talked about how important it was to send a positive message, because last year it was the key that would get us through the door. Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker. This year, not only will the key get us through the door; we are going to knock the darned door down.

We do need a strong vote today. We saw it evidenced on the rule. I urge all of my colleagues to get behind this legislation. It may not have been everything you want, it may not have been what you would have done if you had done it by yourself, but this is a collaborative body. This is the work of a collaborative body. Now we need to send it over to the world's greatest deliberative body. Let them deliberate for only a short period of time because of the thunderous approval that has come from the people's House.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end the SGR. Let us never speak of this issue again.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as an aside, I was inclined to get up and ask that the gentleman's words be taken down. Of course, when we do that, we do it in a different context. With those words, we ought to all be happy today. Whether we are for or against, the Congress is working today as the American people would have the Congress work.

Speaker BOEHNER, Leader PELOSI, our extraordinary staffs on both sides of the aisle, and Members have come together and dealt with some difficult issues. As the gentleman, Dr. BURGESS indicated—and I have worked with him on SCHIP for a very, very long period of time as I recall—we are making progress. We are not where we all want to be, but we are making progress.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and thank the Democratic leader as well as Speaker BOEHNER, Ranking Members PALLONE and LEVIN, and the chairman of the committee, Mr. PITTS, and others for getting us to where we are today.

This bill will permanently replace the broken Medicare sustainable growth rate formula that, frankly, I have been working to get rid of for almost a decade, if not longer, which has created uncertainty and instability in the Medicare program for over a decade. I am pleased that the parties were able to come together and craft a bipartisan bill that will ensure seniors' access to their doctors and incentivize high-quality, high-value care.

I am also glad that this bill includes a robust reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, known as CHIP, which has been a bipartisan success story. This is an issue, Mr. Speaker, I worked hard on when I was majority leader, and I am glad that we are moving forward today in a bipartisan way that recognizes how important the CHIP program is for children and for families.

Another major component of this bipartisan compromise is the $7.2 billion in funding for community health centers. These centers serve some of our most needy citizens. These centers, in my home State of Maryland and throughout our country, provide essential health services for millions of underserved families. That is good for all of us.

This, of course, as I said, is not a perfect bill. No compromise is ever perfect from everybody's perspective. There are some parts I and other Democrats would have liked to see improved, just as there are some parts my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would change, but this compromise will provide much-needed relief and certainty to seniors, children, and families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this effort. It will be a good day for the Congress of the United States, and it will be a good day for America. I thank all of those whose leadership—Members and staff—who got us to this point for the work that they have done.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself my 30 seconds remaining.

I want to recognize one person in particular, Ira Burney, a career civil servant who, for more than 30 years, has worked tirelessly on Medicare issues at CMS. There is not one Medicare bill in this time that he has not been a part of. His hard work and technical knowledge have been instrumental in supporting our work here in Congress.

So I want to thank Ira and all those on both sides of the aisle who worked so hard to make this day possible. This is an important and incredibly significant bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the distinguished majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman, and I yield to my friend on the other side of the aisle, Mr. HOYER.

Mr. HOYER. I thank my friend, who has a magic minute that I dearly miss. I forgot to articulate, and I should have articulated, I want to congratulate FRED UPTON.

FRED UPTON is my friend. FRED UPTON is the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee. FRED UPTON is one of those Members in this House who represents this institution so well because he is committed to working in a bipartisan fashion. We find ourselves sometimes not able to do that. But I want to say thank you to Mr. UPTON from Michigan for his leadership and his commitment to making sure this institution works as the American people want it to work.

I thank my friend, the majority leader, for yielding.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words, and I hope all that are watching today see that this is a pattern of what works inside Washington.

In Washington, Mr. Speaker, there is a common cycle: you have a problem, you kick the can down the road; you hit a cliff, then you rush to a short-term fix that doesn't actually fix the problem; then the cycle starts all over again.

This isn't a good way to govern. With this cycle, problems usually get worse, and a lot of times the short-term fixes get packed with add-ons that increase the size of government and cost people more and more. We have seen this with this doc fix again and again, 17 times over the last decade. Every single year I have served in this body, less than a decade, that has been the solution, to kick the can down the road. But today the House will vote on a bipartisan bill to end the cliff for good, stop the cycle, and, most importantly, provide stability to the Medicare program for the seniors and their doctors.

Mr. Speaker, this is a big moment for Congress, and I think we should all realize it. The bill before us today will, once and for all, repeal and replace the flawed Medicare physician payment system. It will move us away from volume-based care to care based on quality, value, and accountability.

Everyone knows that we need to reform programs like Medicare to save it for the future, but for so long, nothing has been done in this House—that is until today. Today marks the first step of what I hope will be many more to save our safety nets from collapse and to ensure it for a future generation. These reforms are permanent, they are bipartisan, and they lay the foundation for a Medicare that lasts.

We wouldn't be here to make all these big reforms without a lot of hard work.

First, I want to thank the Doctors Caucus. There are many times I was in a meeting with frustration wanting to find a solution, and the first place to find a solution is policy. They spent their time together to find that policy. Then it was: How are we going to pay for it and how are we going to move forward? That is where the leadership of chairmen come through in FRED UPTON and PAUL RYAN. They not only helped build with the Doctors Caucus, they led their own committees.

Today, when this vote is taking place, it is going to be different from others. People aren't going to sit and watch the sides to wonder whether it gets there and how close does it pass? People are going to watch how big the overall vote is going to be.

After this vote today, we will go back to our districts. We will go back to our districts, hopefully in a different thought and a different time, that yes, we can solve a problem; yes, we can pick a problem that has lasted over a decade, that every Congress before it has kicked it down the road, but no, we found common ground. We found the ability to come together to solve something that many believed we could not.

We hope the Senate will see the same value. Today is a good day, but today should not be the last day. We should look for the other problems—and there are many—and ways that we can solve them permanently like we will do today.

□ 1100

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased at this time to yield such time as he may consume to close to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the chair of the Energy and Commerce, a master of bipartisan compromise who deserves a great deal of credit for being here today.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, it couldn't be bipartisan if we didn't have good people on both sides of the aisle to get things done. I appreciate all the leadership on this side and this side to really get this to a finish point today.

Today, we do come together, we really do—Republicans and Democrats—to

finally, finally fix Medicare's broken payment system, protect seniors' access to care, and, yes, strengthen Medicare and extend the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For way too long, the so-called SGR has been an axe over Medicare physicians and the seniors that they care for. It has sparked crisis after crisis for nearly 20 years, forcing this Congress to pass some 17 temporary measures to undo its faulty math and protect seniors' access to their trusted doctors. Those 17 patches also served as a ready-made vehicle for bigger government. Today, we put a stop to that gravy train, leave the SGR in the past, and begin to put Medicare on the right track.

This bill is good for seniors and for doctors who treat them. We repeal the flawed SGR formula and replace it with a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on a new system that promotes innovation and higher quality care. It removes the hassle and worry that so many seniors and physicians face from the cycle of repeated patches.

We also take steps to strengthen Medicare for current and future seniors with structural reforms, which will not only provide cost savings today, but the CBO has confirmed those savings will grow over time. And the budget that we passed last night fully accounts for the cost of those permanent reforms.

This package also extends benefits for millions of low-income families and children by extending the Children's Health Insurance Program for 2 years. This program provides high-quality, affordable coverage for roughly 8 million children and pregnant women and has been an example of sound bipartisan success.

I want to thank the bill's sponsor, Dr. BURGESS, for his leadership on this issue from day one. He came to Congress to solve this problem and, today, we have a bill with his name on it to do just that.

I also commend the great subcommittee chair, JOE PITTS. Four years ago, we embarked together on this effort to end the SGR, and that hard work has brought us to this point.

I want to thank the full committee and the Health Subcommittee ranking members, Mr. PALLONE, my good friend, and Mr. GREEN, for working, again, across the aisle from day one. We wouldn't be standing here together if we hadn't started together.

Also, a big thanks to the folks at the House Legislative Counsel, CBO, and the committee staff: Clay Alspach, Robert Horne, Josh Trent, Paul Edattel, and Noelle Clemente.

Finally, I want to thank my friends on the Ways and Means Committee and our leadership on both sides, from JOHN BOEHNER and KEVIN MCCARTHY to NANCY PELOSI and STENY HOYER. We are, together, getting this done.

This is a long time coming. Most of us came to Congress to fight for our Nation's kids, seniors, and their families. Today's vote is a defining moment for this Congress and for Medicare. Those who vote ''no'' are not only voting against seniors but against the future of the critical safety net. That is why we all need to vote ''yes.''

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise on behalf of Chairman PAUL RYAN, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, in support of H.R. 2, a bill led by Dr. MICHAEL BURGESS, and I am joined by many of our colleagues, both here in the House and throughout the country.

This bill is critical because of this problem. Imagine you are a senior. You desperately need to see a doctor, but you learn that there are no local doctors who can treat you because they simply can't afford to treat Medicare patients. Or they have been throughout the years faced each year with a 10, 20, 30 percent cut in their reimbursements and, as the sole practitioner or as a small business, have rethought their relationship with Medicare and are no longer, frankly, able to do that. That scenario has been played out across this country for far too long. If there is any group in America who needs to see doctors they know and who know them, it is our seniors.

This bill takes the first real permanent step to ensuring our seniors can see local doctors when they need to see them, and it takes the first real step in saving Medicare not just for these seniors, not just for the next generation, but for generations to come.

I commend the work that has been done by the leaders of the Ways and Means Committee; Chairman RYAN; Chairman FRED UPTON of the Energy and Commerce Committee; our physicians caucus, led by Dr. PHIL ROE and Dr. JOHN FLEMING; as well as those in this Chamber who have come together to make this historic step today.

So this is about helping our seniors. This is about taking those first reforms permanently to save Medicare. And it really is about ending a formula and a reimbursement that simply works against our seniors.

The flawed—they call it the ''sustainable growth rate,'' it dictates huge cuts to our physicians through Medicare. Congress had to intervene 17 times in recent years to stave off these cuts with short-term fixes. This flawed formula regularly threatens access to care for seniors and really distracts Congress from making real reforms that are needed.

The bipartisan agreement that we face today would repeal that SGR once and for all and replace it with a value-based system that provides certainty to our seniors and, really, finally reimburses doctors not on the number of procedures but on the quality they provide, and determined not by Washington but by our local physicians and practitioners themselves.

This reform alone, if that was the only thing this did, is significant. It begins to move its way from that flawed fee-for-service system. And it does in a way. The sole practitioner in rural Pennsylvania, as well as a doctor in a major institution in downtown Houston, can both practice to their highest capability and continue to practice until they decide to retire, not until Medicare or some flawed formula encourages them to retire early.

In addition, this bill has two important reforms, and I think critical reforms, to strengthen the Medicare Program and offset the costs of this measure. Similar reforms have been included in the House Republican budget for years. This is a bipartisan effort to work together with absolute dedication to make sure Medicare is around for our seniors.

First, it restricts first dollar coverage in Medigap plans. These are bipartisan recommendations experts believe will help reduce unnecessary costs and really strengthen programs over the years.

Second, the agreement includes increased means testing for premiums in Medicare parts B and D, our doctors, and our medicines, with the wealthiest seniors paying higher premiums. And then there are savings from a broad range of other healthcare providers.

I want to make clear, this bipartisan reform alone will not save Medicare, but it takes us in the right direction for the very important first step, and the savings from this will grow over the long term.

The alternative we refuse to pass is yet another cycle of short-term fixes, leaving behind bipartisan structural reforms to Medicare and delaying the opportunity to actually save this program for our seniors.

So, today, we end the SGR, we begin the important reform, and we stand up for seniors who need to see doctors.

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

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

Well, this is, indeed, a rare event. It was an event really waiting to happen because, a year ago, our committee, Ways and Means, chaired by Dave Camp, alongside the Energy and Commerce and Senate Finance Committees, reached a bipartisan, bicameral agreement to move the physician reimbursement system to one based more on quality, not quantity. This helped pave the way for the package in front of us today, negotiated with the key help of the Speaker and our Leader.

The SGR has been hanging over our heads for more than a decade. We have paid close to $170 billion in short-term patches. With each patch, it becomes harder to find offsets, putting seniors in our healthcare system increasingly at risk. This is being done—and I emphasize that—while maintaining the

basic structure of Medicare. Talk otherwise is mistaken.

Our approach to paying for this reform is a reasonable one. We are paying for additional benefits, but not to dig out of the hole created by the flawed budget formula.

This package includes a number of improvements across the healthcare landscape. It fully funds a 2-year extension of CHIP at the increased level of funding that we included in the Affordable Care Act. It permanently extends the qualifying individual program that pays Medicare premiums for low-income seniors. It permanently extends the transitional Medicare Medical Assistance Program, which helps Medicaid beneficiaries transitioning back to work to keep their insurance. It secures $7.2 billion in funding for community health centers, ensuring that 7 million Americans who depend on these establishments for care can get it. And it makes progress in fighting fraud and abuse in Medicare.

What I would like to do—it will take a little more time—is to thank the staff. We don't do that enough. So I want to thank Wendell Primus, Charlene MacDonald, Clay Alspach, and Matt Hoffmann. And, of course, the Ways and Means Committee health staff, particularly Amy Hall and Erin Richardson.

And we need to thank the excellent drafters from the House Legislative Counsel Office, led by Ed Grossman, who I think is here today, along with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Office of Legislation, particularly Ira Burney, who is known for his deep knowledge of Medicare and who helped put the package together in a technically sound manner. And the CBO health team led by Tom Bradley, who worked expeditiously to meet our timetable.

And I want to close my remarks by paying tribute to a Member who is not with us today, who worked for years on these issues, John Dingell of Michigan, for the years he put in protecting and strengthening Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP, including trying to fix SGR.

We are fixing SGR today, and we are strengthening Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP. This is a day where there was common ground, and today we stand on it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), a successful small business person who has provided health care to his more than 100 employees for years, a key leader of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

We rise today. Really, this is not so much a doc fix as a senior fix. And while our lives are usually defined by wins and losses, I would think that really in our lives we remember the losses far more than we remember the wins. And the reason I say that is, I have been there for the birth of my four children, and I have celebrated the birth of our 10 grandchildren. Those are great moments. But I have also sat by the bedside of my mother, my sister, and my father as they lay dying and were transitioning.

□ 1115

Those losses are things that you can never truly regain. Those are the times when, if you just had 1 minute left with those folks, wouldn't you love to have that? Wouldn't you love to be there with them to give them peace of mind? This bill gives them peace of mind, Mr. Speaker. That is what this bill does. This is a senior fix.

I will tell you, when I have watched people as they have passed—both friends and family—what they have wanted at their bedsides at that time is to have their faith with them so that they know they are surrounded by their God, so that they know that where they are going is best, and so that they know that somehow their futures are going to be okay.

They also want the comfort of knowing that their families are there with them, helping them to get through the toughest parts of their lives, when they are at their most vulnerable, whenever they need the most help.

Lastly, they want their doctors. They want to know that that person who has guided them through the last several months and through their lives—the person they have always gone to for their health care—is going to be there and is not going to be taken away because of some government program that didn't work.

I would say, as we sit in America's House, whether we are Republicans or Democrats—and our gallery is filled with people—we are people who are representing people and the best interests of people.

This piece of legislation today is truly a senior fix, but it is a fix for the most vulnerable. I can think of nothing that we could do that is more important than giving peace of mind to those who have given so much to us as families, as States, and as a country. This is a brilliant piece of legislation.

While it may not satisfy all, it serves the needs of so many.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), who is the ranking member on the Health Subcommittee.

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today is, in a sense, an historic event. We are finally putting to rest a problem that has festered around here for as long as I have been here.

Every year, as the deadline approached, providers faced draconian cuts, and Congress passed an eleventh hour patch that delayed the implementation of SGR. Doctors, patients, Congress—nobody—liked it. Nevertheless, 17 times, we have made temporary fixes. We have spent $174 billion in inadequate ways in dealing with the real problem that SGR was all about, which is cost control.

This is a first step today. We can celebrate, but we have to go on because cost control is still a question, and we have replaced SGR with a system that we hope will make Medicare pay for value rather than for volume. That is not an issue that is for sure. We know that we are trying it.

I thought of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who once said:

> I will try something. If it doesn't work, I will stop it and try something else.

That is really where we are today, looking at the future of cost control in health care.

The most important thing today, though, is that we have gotten back to regular order. The Republicans put this in 16 years ago. Some of us voted ''no'' because we knew it wouldn't work, but we had all of our 17 years. Now, we come together to fix it together, and we have to fix things together in this House. Compromise is the essence of what we have here.

For my friends on the other side, just so you understand, I have already had a phone call from a group in Washington State who told me they are going to take me off the board if I vote for this.

It isn't as though this is a nice thing for one side or the other side. It is a compromise, where some people get what they want and where some people don't get what they want. Some people think it is not enough, and some think it is too much.

That is the essence of compromise, and that is how the Congress has to work. It is what is going to have to work with the ACA, the Affordable Care Act. It is going to have to work on transportation. It is going to have to work on a whole series of issues if we, as a Congress, are going to function on behalf of the American people.

This is a great day. This ought to be a unanimous vote today. When you look at all of the things that are in it and at all of the things we have dealt with, it ought to be unanimous. My view is that, when you reach a compromise, that is the kind of thing you can expect because nobody in this House ever gets all he wants. Nobody has the right to say: it is my way or the highway.

When we do that, we damage the American people. We have been damaging the healthcare system with these patches, spending all of that money, and not getting what we want. We hope this is the start of a better day for cost control in health care. Everyone should vote for this.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN), who is a champion in health care and whose district has a large number of seniors.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

This is the product of several years of sustained bipartisan work, and, today, we can finish the job. This is a critically important piece of legislation for seniors because it is going to strengthen and preserve the Medicare Program, and it is going to put an end to the perennial drills that threaten seniors' access to high-quality care, the care that they deserve.

H.R. 2 is a result of bipartisan compromise. I am sure my friends on both sides of the aisle can agree, as my good friend from Oregon identified, that it isn't perfect, but I am pleased that they will also extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program. Just like our seniors, we need to make sure that our kids have access to high-quality, affordable care. We also continue to support community health centers, which provide quality care for those of lesser means.

Since 2002, Congress has passed 17 patches to avert the SGR's draconian cuts. These patches avoid crisis, but they don't do anything to preserve or improve the Medicare Program for current and future seniors, so I am delighted that, together, we can finally forge a lasting solution.

This isn't just good for seniors' care and for our healthcare workforce; it is a sign that partisan differences in Washington can be bridged to address our biggest challenges. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I hope the Senate will send it to the President and get it signed quickly.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, how much time is there, please, on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 8 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Texas has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), a distinguished member of our committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy, as I appreciate his leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, I have sat on the floor for the entire debate—of both the Commerce and Ways and Means Committees—and it is really exciting. I was one of those people who didn't vote for the balanced budget agreement back in the day, but I have been frustrated by this as much as anybody. I had legislation that would just simply reset the baseline, but, actually, this is better.

It is better because we have had Ways and Means, Commerce, and Finance Committees come together for several years and develop a reform that will strengthen opportunities for better payment. It is better because we have seen the minority leader and the Speaker of the House come together to empower the committees to do their job.

I was struck by the words of Majority Leader McCarthy when he said this was a good day, and he thinks that this will not be the last such day. I sincerely hope that that is the case, that it signals opportunities for us all to go forward.

I like the fact that we have added things in here like the SCHIP. We have even gotten Secure Rural Schools, funding extended which makes a big difference for people in the West, especially Oregon.

I am hopeful that we can step forward. We have got another cliff that is facing us in 2 months: the transportation cliff. People are talking about 17 SGR fixes here when we have had 23 short term extensions for the transportation system.

I would hope that we could take the same spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship and listen to people in the outside world—organized labor, the AFL–CIO, the U.S. chamber, contractors, local government, environmentalists—who are all speaking with one voice: Congress, get your act together; give us funding to be able to fund the transportation bill for the first time in years and rebuild and renew America, to put people to work—and to show the same sort of bipartisan cooperation that I find really invigorating today.

I hope the next thing we do is have the Ways and Means Committee, the committee of jurisdiction, step forward to solve the transportation problem. It is even easier than the SGR.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), who has spent more than 40 years in health care as a nurse and as a small-business owner.

She is a member of the Doctors Caucus here and is a key leader in health care on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mrs. BLACK. I thank my colleague, who is someone who has worked tirelessly on this issue and who is a leader on our healthcare committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

This bipartisan legislation offers a permanent solution to strengthen the Medicare Program that our Nation's seniors and their doctors rely on. It would repeal the flawed SGR formula that dictates draconian cuts to Medicare reimbursements, and it would do so in a fiscally responsible way that would provide important offset savings.

Since 2003, Congress has spent $170 billion on short-term fixes that has staved off these cuts without making the real reforms that are needed, and this cycle has done nothing to address the real problems of our entitlement spending.

I have been a nurse for more than 40 years, as has been said, and I know that you can't put a bandaid on a problem that needs to be corrected by surgery. The problems impacted and affected by these looming cuts were my patients and my colleagues.

I urge this body to end the SGR crisis once and for all. Adopt these structural reforms, and help us move forward together to strengthen Medicare for today's seniors and tomorrow's retirees.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), a very vocal member of our committee.

Mr. PASCRELL. I have got to say this to Chairman BRADY and to our leader, Mr. LEVIN: you guys did a great job in keeping us together, and I think the words that I will take away are what Dr. BURGESS said about this being a collaborative effort.

Mr. Speaker, if someone came down from Mars today into this Chamber, he would be shocked by the camaraderie. This is great. This is a good feeling. You have got to admit it is a good feeling. I know it is before Palm Sunday, but I have got a good feeling today, on Thursday.

This effort, I think, establishes a very good precedent for revitalizing the integrity of this Congress, of this institution. We here, Mr. BRADY and Mr. LEVIN, got out of our echo chambers. We love to hear ourselves. You know that. It is part of the DNA of being a Congressperson.

We got out of those echo chambers, and we actually listened to each other. That is shocking. If we can rise above our own attempts to be ideologues, we can accomplish a hell of a lot here for the people of the United States. They deserve no less.

The repeal and the replacement of SGR ends the constant looming of deep payment cuts to Medicare physicians, which, as we have heard, jeopardizes the participation in the program and jeopardizes seniors' access to their doctors. As a result of this law, our Medicare payment system will finally be rooted in the quality of services provided as opposed to the quantity, results rather than fee for service.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation. It is good for America.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO), a new Member of Congress who is passionate about health care, reforming Medicare, and helping seniors.

□ 1130

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, and I would like to thank the Committee on Ways and Means and Committee on Energy and Commerce for taking bold leadership on such a critical issue.

Sustainable growth rate is a budget cap on physician services passed into law in 1997 to control spending. Unfortunately, the SGR formula is fundamentally broken. Since 2003, Congress has spent nearly $150 billion in 17 separate short-term patches to prevent significant Medicare reimbursement rate cuts. This uncertainty is detrimental to providing our seniors and our doctors with the confidence that they deserve.

This bill before us today repeals the outdated SGR formula and replaces it with a new permanent system that rewards quality and value and guarantees stability to Medicare beneficiaries and the physicians providing their treatment.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our leaders for allowing us to have this special moment. Today, the American people have the Congress that they deserve, a Congress that is focused on advancing an agenda that can make the American people proud. Let us continue walking down this path together.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), another active member of our committee.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of time, energy, effort, hard work, and study to become a physician. I think they ought to be adequately compensated for the services they provide, especially when they serve the most needy health population in our country—our senior citizens.

We call this the doctor fix, but it is really not about the doctor fix. It is about fixing health care. It is about CHIP. It is about community health centers that serve more than 23 million low- and moderate-income citizens each and every year. It is about the National Health Service Corps training physicians. It is about the home visiting program.

I represent a district that has 24 hospitals, four outstanding medical schools, and so we train and educate many doctors, nurses, and other health personnel.

This is not just a good day for the doctors; it is a good day for health care, and it is a good day for America.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 is a bill that determines how doctors get adequate pay for providing medical services to Medicare recipients. For the past 12 years, the Medicare sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula has impeded stability in the Medicare program for providers and beneficiaries. Seventeen times Congress have done short term fixes, known as patches, that range from 3 to 12 months. Physicians should and deserve equitable reimbursement and not a lower reimbursement rate for the services they provide to our seniors. This is one of the leading reasons why physicians are leaving their practice or not accepting Medicare patients. We should repeal SGR and establish a legislative long-term fix that offers payment stability for our doctors. H.R. 2 will do just that and allow doctors to develop long-term strategic planning for their practice and time to invest in electronic health information technology and other medical systems to improve access and quality care for their patients.

Now is the time to capitalize on the lower offset now projected for the permanent repeal of the SGR formula otherwise failure to do so may cause problems for many providers to see Medicare patients. Ten thousand new enrollees enter Medicare each day. Access to physicians will suffer for the Medicare population as the gap between payments and practice costs continue to grow.

H.R. 2 fully fund the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two years. CHIP is a partnership between the federal government and the States to provide healthcare coverage for over eight million children. Also, this legislation extends funding for two years to Community Health Centers to avoid draconian cuts to their services and operations in their communities. Community health centers play a critical role in the delivery of care to our most financially and medically vulnerable populations, and thus play an instrumental role in efforts to achieve health equity. Health centers serve one in seven Medicaid beneficiaries, one in seven uninsured, and one in three individuals living below poverty. African Americans, Asians/Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and persons with multi-racial and ethnic backgrounds account for 36 percent of all health center patients. Approximately 34 percent of health center patients are Hispanic/Latino, and health centers serve one in four racial and ethnic minorities living in poverty.

Community health centers are a local solution to the delivery of primary care—which is precisely how care works best—and services that are tailored to meet local needs, specific to each community. Health centers save the health care system money by keeping patients out of costlier health care settings, coordinating care amongst providers of different health disciplines, and effectively managing chronic conditions. Recent independent research shows that health centers currently save the health care system $24 billion annually in reduced emergency, hospital, and specialty care costs, including an estimated $6 billion annually in combined state and federal Medicaid savings. Despite serving traditionally at-risk populations, community health centers meet or exceed national practice standards for chronic condition treatment and ensure that their patients receive more recommended screening and health promotion services than patients of other providers. Health centers also have a substantial and positive economic impact on their communities. In 2009 alone, health centers across the country generated $20 billion in total economic benefit and produced 189,158 jobs in the nation's most economically challenged neighborhoods.

H.R. 2 includes the MIECHV home visiting program, which I worked in a bipartisan and bicameral way in Congress to establish a national program that serves approximately 115,000 parents and children. Under this legislation this program will be extended to improve child health, child development, and readiness to learn.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 2 and encourage all my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I include in the RECORD a list of over 100 healthcare organizations throughout America—and growing—who support the passage of this legislation today. I would like to point out that these represent physicians and healthcare providers who truly want to treat our seniors, to see them when they need to see them, but can't today because of the way Medicare pays them.

So we start with a fresh start, and I enter into the RECORD this list.

Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM); AMDA The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI); American Academy of Dermatology Association; American Academy of Family Physicians; American Academy of Neurology (AAN); American Academy of Ophthalmology; American Academy of Pediatrics; American Action Forum; American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD); American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE); American Association of Neurological Surgeons/Congress of Neurological Surgeons; American Association of Nurse Anesthetists; American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP); American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons; American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI); American College of Cardiology (ACC); American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST); American College of Physicians (ACP); American College of Radiology.

American College of Rheumatology (ACR); American College of Surgeons; American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Gastroenterological Association (AGA); American Geriatrics Society (AGS); American Health Care Association; American Hospital Association; American Medical Association; American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM); American Osteopathic Association (AOA); American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (ASBMT); American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE); American Society for Radiation. Oncology (ASTRO); American Society of Clinical Oncology; American Society of Hematology (ASH); American Society of Nephrology (ASN); American Thoracic Society (ATS); Americans for Tax Reform; Association of Departments of Family Medicine; Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors.

Aurora Health Care; Billings Clinic; Bipartisan Policy Center; California Medical Association; Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); College of American Pathologists; Digestive Health Physicians Association; Endocrine Society (ES); Essentia Health; Federation of American Hospitals; Grace Marie Turner for the Galen Institute; Greater New York Hospital Association; Gundersen Health System; HealthCare Association of New York State; Healthcare Leadership Council; Healthcare Quality Coalition; HealthPartners; HealthSouth; Hospital Sisters Health System; Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA).

Iowa Medical Society; Let Freedom Ring; Louisiana Rural Health Association; LUGPA; March of Dimes; Marshfield Clinic Health System; Mayo Clinic; McFarland Clinic PC; Medical Group Management Association; Mercy Health; Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); Minnesota Hospital Association; Minnesota Medical Association; National Association of Community Health Centers; National Association of Spine Specialists; National Association of Urban Hospitals; National Coalition on Health Care; National Retail Federation; North American Primary Care Research Group; Novo Nordisk.

Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems; PhRMA; Premier Inc.; Renal Physicians Association; Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative; Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM); Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM); Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM); Society of Teachers of Family Medicine; Tennessee Medical Association; Texas Medical Association; The 60 Plus Association; The American College of Gastroenterology; The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania; The Iowa Clinic; The Society

of Interventional Radiology; ThedaCare; Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality; Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority; Wisconsin Hospital Association; Wisconsin Medical Society.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Michigan and my friend from Texas, and what a celebration of Members coming together, Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, I stand on this floor to ensure and insist that I am here to protect seniors and to ensure that the vote taken today does not undermine the protection of Medicaid and Medicare, in particular Medicare for our seniors, and that any vote does not in any way hinder those and provide a burden for those who cannot pay.

This provides a pathway for providing for our medical providers with the SGR fix; it provides seniors with quality healthcare services so they can go to the doctor they want; and, yes, it provides quality funding for our children and for our low-income families.

It supports our federally qualified health clinics, and coming from the city of Houston with the Texas Medical Center, there are a lot of doctors. Those doctors serve the poor and they serve seniors, and I want to make sure they are able to do so. The CHIP program will be protected that has been a vital program to provide for those families for our children to be healthy.

Let me agree with my colleague, brother PASCRELL, this is good for America. I am delighted to support this, and we are going to help physician-owned hospitals and look forward to a better day.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2, the "Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015," and the underlying bill.

H.R. 2 repeals and replaces the Medicare Physician Payment System and incentivizes quality care for seniors, children and low income-families.

I thank Chairman RYAN and Ranking Member LEVIN for their work in shepherding this legislation, which enjoys bipartisan support to the floor.

I support the bill before us because it protects our seniors, our children, low-income families, and equitably compensates physicians who provide critically needed health services.

This bipartisan legislation represents a significant achievement because it reforms Medicare's payment system and maintains critical funding for health care for millions of seniors, low-income children, and families.

Compensating our medical providers adequately to enable them to continue providing much needed services to our seniors is a moral imperative.

Assuring that our seniors receive quality health services is a moral imperative.

Providing critical healthcare funding for children and low income families is also a moral imperative.

Physicians from my congressional district in Texas, and others across the country, serve and provide remarkable healthcare to our seniors, children, and low income families.

The 70,000 seniors in my congressional district are entitled to the security that comes from knowing that healthcare will be available to them when they need it the most.

The 4.4 million low income families and children in the state of Texas and the 130,000 children in Harris County will benefit from this bill because it provides the resources needed to improve their quality of health.

It is important that physicians who are willing to serve our seniors, children, and low income families not have to go broke doing so.

Mr. Speaker, let me briefly list several of the more important aspects of this bill which I wholeheartedly support:

For our seniors, the bill repeals the sustainable growth rate (also known as SGR) formula and phases in a value based payment system for physicians serving Medicare patients for the quality of care they provide.

For our seniors, children and low-income families, the new payment incentives in the bill encourage physicians to move towards alternative payment models such as bundled payment and shared savings which foster alignment of high-quality and cost effective healthcare.

This bill extends the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, for two years.

Over 928,000 children are in CHIP in Texas, and 130,000 in Harris County, will benefit from this bill.

For our children, "clean" extensions in the bill maintain policies and funding that does not include detrimental policies or cuts.

This funding supports evidence-based programs that have been proven to reduce health care costs, improve school readiness, and increase family self-sufficiency and economic security.

This bill extends the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program for two years.

This bill extends funding for 1,300 federally funded community health centers located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and six U.S. territories, distributed evenly between urban and rural areas, that serve 28 million patients.

A third of those patients are children, and 93 percent of patients served have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.

The vast majority of the 90 million patient visits to community health centers were for primary medical care.

Without the funding, 7.4 million low-income patients—including 4.3 million women provided by this bill would lose access to health care.

This bill extends the Qualifying Individual Program—which subsidizes Medicare premiums for low-income beneficiaries—permanently.

This bill permanently corrects Medicare payments to physicians an provides much-needed certainty and stability to the Medicare program.

Importantly, the bill provides financial incentives to reinforce the country's path toward a health care system that rewards value and quality of care.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan legislation is a step in the right direction in Medicare payment reform and ensures continued funding that improves the health and welfare of millions of seniors, children, and families.

H.R. 2 is important because it reforms our flawed Medicare physician payment system; incentivizes quality and value for our seniors; and extends coverage for our children and low income families.

For all these reasons, I strongly support this bill and urge my colleagues to likewise.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. LEVIN has additional speakers, so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important moment. As I look back, it has been decade after decade of a struggle for health care for all Americans, a real struggle.

Today, we have legislation that covers kids from infancy through seniors, for seniors throughout their years. That is the importance, really, of these provisions. I simply want to express, I think, the feeling of so many of us on this side. So we have this moment of coming together, and I hope in the days ahead that these notes of harmony will not be disturbed by notes of dissonance. We owe more, and all the bodies, all the institutions owe it to the people of this country to continue on this path so what should be a right is a reality.

I don't think anybody in this institution can imagine going to bed any night worried about having health care, and the same for their families, their kids, and their grandchildren. I hope we will take these few minutes when we come together and reassert the importance in this country of joining together so that everybody from birth until their last days has the ability to have what is so precious—the ability to have access to health care. I hope that is the significance of this vote. I hope, as a result, it will be a very strong vote, and I think it is a vote for health care for every American.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with being passionate about your ideas and principles, and nowhere is that more evident than in health care. When you can find, though, common ground on those principles that help our seniors, encourage our doctors to treat them, and make the first reforms to really save Medicare for the long term, we ought to do that. That is what this bill does.

But it just isn't a common ground as far as our lawmakers. We have dedicated staff who came together to work out the tough issues for us as well. On behalf of the Committee on Ways and Means Chairman PAUL RYAN and myself, I would like to thank our staff on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health—Matt Hoffmann, Brett Baker, Amy Hall, and Erin Richardson—for their tremendous work.

The Speaker and former Speaker PELOSI also led the effort to find this

common ground, and for Speaker BOEHNER, Charlotte Ivancic, and for Leader PELOSI, Wendell Primus, we thank you, as well as legislative counsel; and for the Congressional Budget Office, Tom Bradley and Holly Harvey contributed greatly to this day.

The other day, my neighbor, who has just retired from Continental, now United, walked over to my front porch and told me that after years of seeing his local doctor, his local doctor can't see him anymore because he can't afford to treat Medicare patients.

The other day—it was a tough winter for illnesses—I had an ear infection, and my local doctor I have known since he started his practice snuck me in at 6 at night. His staff had been there since 8 in the morning working and just looked frazzled. He just said, look, he doesn't drive a fancy car, doesn't live in a fancy home; he doesn't have a fancy office; he just wants to help treat patients. But this formula just makes it harder and harder for him. My main physician, who is 66, told me the other day that he would like to practice for 5 more years. He said: I think probably just 1 more year. He said: I can't handle the way Medicare pays today.

Look, we can't allow that to continue. Today, a simple question on this bill: Will you stand with our seniors, who need to see a local doctor and a doctor they know? Will you stand with our doctors, who want to treat our seniors, who don't want to retire early or sell out to larger institutions? Will you take the first real step to save Medicare for the long term? That is the question we face today.

On behalf of Chairman RYAN and those who have come together on this bill, I urge a ''yes'' vote on this measure.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, here's what it all comes down to: This is a step toward patient-centered health care.

And what that means is, we're starting to focus on what's best for patients.

Medicare is supposed to help seniors get the best health care possible.

And the way to do that is to reward what works.

Reward the doctors who help you recover faster and live longer.

Reward the doctors who put seniors and their health first.

That's what it means to have a patient-centered system. That's how you strengthen Medicare.

And that's what this bill does. This bill changes how Medicare pays doctors.

Right now, you get paid for every single treatment you perform—no matter how effective you are.

So what we say to doctors is, ''From now on, we're going to reward quality work. Do a good job, make people better, keep them out of the hospital, and you'll get paid more.''

I think we all can agree that's better than just paying for the amount of care.

And we can all agree that's better than one more year of a manufactured crisis.

Now I want to add that we make a couple of other good reforms in this bill.

These reforms will save money. And those savings will build up over time.

We ask the wealthy to contribute more to their care.

We discourage unnecessary doctor visits with some insurance reforms.

And we tell Medicare to share data with experts to help providers figure out what works.

You all know I think we have a long way to go to save Medicare.

I think this is just a start.

But this is a firm step in the right direction.

It's a firm step toward a patient-centered system.

And I ask all my colleagues to support it.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 20, 2015.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN UPTON: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1021, Protecting the Integrity of Medicare Act of 2015, which was ordered reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on February 26, 2015. I appreciate your decision to facilitate prompt consideration of the bill by the full House. I understand that by foregoing a mark-up of the bill, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is not waiving its interest in the provisions within its jurisdiction.

Per your request, I will include a copy of our exchange of letters with respect to H.R. 1021 in the Congressional Record during House consideration of this bill. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to working with you as this bill moves through the Congress.

Sincerely,

PAUL RYAN,
Chairman.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my disappointment that Hyde Amendment language was included in H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

The Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding for abortion, has prevented women from accessing needed reproductive health care for decades. While the Hyde Amendment remains in law through the yearly appropriations process, every attempt to insert Hyde Amendment language into other legislation damages efforts to protect women's health.

It is unfortunate that today's historic bipartisan deal—which will strengthen Medicare for millions of Floridians—was used as a vehicle to chip away at women's access to reproductive health care. Every woman deserves the right to make her own personal health decisions.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank our leaders for working so tirelessly to find a compromise to fix the SGR. For too many years this arbitrary budget device has worked to upend Medicare doctors and patients alike, creating turmoil when what was needed was common sense. Thankfully, today common sense wins out.

But I have to say as well that I am disappointed that the bill includes unnecessary language on restricting women's reproductive rights. The inclusion of a statutory reference to the Hyde amendment is bothersome in the least and very possibly a dangerous precedent-setting salvo by anti-choice opponents to codify the Hyde language.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why Hyde had to be referenced at all in this bill. Everyone already knows that community health centers are already subject to Hyde restrictions. Including it in this SGR bill is redundant. Unfortunately, it is all too typical of this Tea Party-infused Congress to sow discord rather than accommodation. Adding the Hyde language to the bill only causes heartburn in a bill that could much more easily have satisfied our hunger for bipartisanship.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. This legislation is a long overdue remedy to the flawed Medicare physician payment formula known as the Sustainable Growth Rate, or SGR. I look forward to putting an end to the temporary patches that Congress has repeatedly passed in place of a permanent fix.

Replacing the SGR and bringing predictability to Medicare will encourage more providers to enter and remain in the program, which in turn will improve health care access and affordability for seniors. Additionally, H.R. 2 marks an important shift from fee-for-service payments to a system that rewards quality outcomes.

This bill also includes several important reauthorizations to crucial programs, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Qualifying Individual program, and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. Although I would have supported a longer authorization of CHIP, which would bring more certainty to our states and the children and families they serve through the program, I hope we can work together during the next two years to develop a strong authorization before it expires in two years.

I am also very pleased that this legislation includes an extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. Hundreds of jurisdictions across the country—including timber-dependent counties all across Oregon—rely on this essential funding for their schools, government services, and law enforcement.

Lastly, H.R. 2 provides continued authorization for Community Health Centers, which provide important services in underserved communities. Although support for community health centers will prevent millions of patients from losing access to primary care, the funding will unfortunately remain subject to the Hyde Amendment—a harmful provision that undermines women's health. I am deeply troubled with the continuation of this public law.

I am also troubled by the precedent set in this bill where we will begin charging some seniors more for their premiums. Medicare, like Social Security, is an earned benefit paid for over a lifetime.

Despite these serious objections, I will support this bipartisan legislation. Congress must preserve access to primary care for vulnerable individuals

and bring long sought stability to Medicare for our seniors. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this comprehensive legislation and permanently fix the SGR.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, this week the House has an opportunity to make historic reforms to Medicare that will provide certainty to doctors and patients across the country.

I spent 30 years practicing as a heart surgeon, fighting to save lives on the operating table every day.

I know firsthand that the cycle of temporary patches and extensions injects tremendous uncertainty into the process, making it much more difficult to run a successful practice.

Last week, I stood with a bipartisan group of Representatives and Senators to introduce the replacement legislation under consideration.

This bill repeals the unworkable SGR, consolidates duplicative programs, and improves transparency for patients and doctors. It is a historic solution to a problem that has plagued doctors and providers for over a decade.

But no solution is one hundred percent perfect.

I believe we must continue working toward full repeal of the unworkable Medicare outpatient therapy cap, something I've introduced legislation to address and will continue to work with my colleagues to make this law.

That's something I'll continue to fight for.

But today, it's time for Congress to do what we are elected to do: come together, find common ground, and pass a solution.

This is the first meaningful opportunity to fix this broken system in years—let's not bypass this moment.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this permanent doc fix.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, which repeals once and for all the flawed Medicare physician reimbursement formula, known as the SGR, and replaces it with a payment system based on quality of care, value and accountability.

Since 2003, Congress has spent nearly $170 billion on short-term patches to temporarily avoid cuts under the SGR. This bipartisan, bicameral agreement will finally stabilize payments for medical providers and remove the persistent threat of rate cuts that have jeopardized access to care for our seniors.

Also contained in this legislation is a crucial two-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Although I would have preferred to see CHIP extended for four years, this measure allows us to take immediate action instead of waiting until the program expires in September, providing certainty to states like Rhode Island that are preparing their budgets for next year, while ensuring that over eight million children continue receiving the health coverage they need at increased funding levels set forth under the Affordable Care Act.

I am also pleased to see the inclusion of over $7 billion for community health centers that provide front line care to millions of families across the country, as well as $620 million for the National Health Service Corps and $120 million for Teaching Health Centers.

Of course, this legislation is not perfect. It includes provisions I do not support, such as reforms to Medigap deductibles for new Medicare beneficiaries beginning in 2020. However, this measure seeks to protect our most vulnerable citizens by permanently extending the Qualifying Individual (QI) program that helps low-income seniors pay their Medicare Part B premiums, and the Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) program that assists families on Medicaid maintain their coverage for one year as they transition from welfare to work.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will end the decade-long cycle of annual SGR patches, restore certainty Medicare providers, and extend vital health care programs our constituents depend on. I am pleased that members on both sides of the aisle have come together to address this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and provide continued health security for our seniors, children and families

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act.

I came to Congress because Washington was in the midst of a culture of excess—excessive spending, excessive regulation and excessive government.

Today, we have the opportunity to repeal and replace Medicare's SGR, an outdated reimbursement system that for over a decade Congress has passed patch after patch to fix the flawed formula while hiding the true state of Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will take crucial steps to change spending and improve health care for America.

Today, we are voting to enact policy and reforms that generate savings and finally incentivize quality of care over quantity.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2, Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act. This bill is not perfect but on its whole, it extends critical funding to ensure that kids in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) don't lose access to health insurance and to keep community health centers open to serve hardworking American families. It funds the successful Home Visiting Program, makes permanent a program to assist low-income seniors afford their Medicare premiums, and supports families on Medicaid who are transitioning to work. On top of preventing massive cuts to these programs, the legislation replaces a flawed payment system that wasn't working for people in Medicare, their physicians, or taxpayers.

In some areas—specifically in extending funding for CHIP for two years—I don't think the bill goes far enough. As a longtime supporter of CHIP, I advocated to extend funding for four years and included a four-year extension in the budget I offered in the House. House Democratic leadership fought for a four-year extension but was met with resistance from Republicans who have made quite clear that they would rather roll back coverage for kids in CHIP. Despite the two-year compromise, I'm pleased that the legislation funds CHIP at current levels and maintains the safeguards we set in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to ensure coverage for every eligible child in the nation. Failure to pass this bill and fund CHIP would cause millions of kids to become uninsured or lose access to services, or would cause their parents to face higher out-of-pocket costs.

The bill also includes two years of additional funding for community health centers which provide primary care to families, seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans in Maryland and across the nation. Health centers keep people healthy and working by responding to the unique needs of their communities, create good-paying jobs, and train the next generation of the health care workforce. Without this bill, funding for health centers would be cut by 70 percent and over 7 million Americans could be at risk of losing critical health services. Not funding very cost-effective health providers is irresponsible and unfair to hardworking American families.

It comes as no surprise that my Republican colleagues would have liked to hijack this bill for their arsenal in their unending assault on women's health. If you need any evidence, just look at what Republicans did in the Senate trying to use the human trafficking bill to expand the Hyde amendment to permanent funds and non-taxpayer funds. I applaud the Democratic Senators blocking that Republican anti-choice effort. Let me be clear; this bill does not do that. I worked with Leader PELOSI and the co-chairs of the House Pro-Choice Caucus, of which I am a member, to counter attempts to codify the Hyde amendment. As a result, this bill continues the current policy for funding for community health centers. Just like the Hyde language included in annual appropriations bills, the provision is limited to taxpayer funds and temporary—terminating when the funding expires in 2017. I strongly share the ongoing concerns of the reproductive health community and I remain deeply committed to protecting a woman's fundamental right to choose her health care.

Finally, the bill repeals and replaces a deeply flawed physician payment system for paying physicians that basically penalizes doctors for participating in Medicare. For more than ten years, doctors have faced the threat of steep rate cuts required by a mindless formula in the law. Congress has repeatedly adopted short-term patches to prevent these cuts from taking effect. This crisis-driven approach to paying physicians makes it difficult for doctors to participate in Medicare, which ultimately is unfair to their patients—the seniors and disabled workers who rely on Medicare for access to the health care services they need. The bill rights this wrong with a smarter physician payment system that improves quality of care for people with Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, today's bill is not perfect but Congress must move forward with this bipartisan agreement to protect the health of America's families, children and seniors. I urge support H.R. 2.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization Act, H.R. 2.

I commend Energy and Commerce Chairman FRED UPTON and ranking member FRANK PALLONE as well as Ways and Means Chairman PAUL RYAN and ranking member SANDER LEVIN for their hard work in putting this bill together.

The sustainable growth rate (SGR) was part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 but has proven to be far less than sustainable.

In fact, according to the Congressional Research Service, since 2003 Congress passed 17 laws overriding the SGR-mandated reductions in the Medicare physician fee schedule.

This bill may not be perfect but it seems to strike enough compromises that many of us are willing to support a good bill rather than hold out for a perfect one.

I am particularly pleased that the bill includes a two year extension of the Health Center Fund, which will provide an additional $3.6 billion per year to the nation's community health centers.

Created under the Affordable Care Act to expand the health centers program and increase access to care, the fund is set to expire after 2015.

Should it expire, health centers would be facing a 70% cut in funding which would force devastating reductions and closures at many of the more than 9,000 health centers nationwide.

We simply cannot allow that to happen.

Community health centers are critical to the health care equation, meeting the needs of approximately 23 million people every year. They provide access to primary and preventative health services that keep patients from seeking or eventually needing more costly care. And that benefits all of us.

The 1,300 federally funded health centers are located in every corner of our country and are distributed evenly between urban and rural areas. I am fortunate in my own district to have 7 community health centers treating more than one hundred thousand patients every year. In fact, as we recognize the 50th anniversary of our health centers, I am proud to acknowledge that the first community health center in the United States, Geiger Gibson, is located in my district.

Health centers serve all our constituents, Democrat and Republican, young and old, black, white or brown. they are vital to all our communities, and that is why this program has strong bipartisan support.

Whether you supported the Affordable Care Act or not, I think we all can agree that access to affordable health care helps to keep health costs down. Our community health centers provide that access. They are doing a terrific job for people across the nation.

That is why I strongly support our health centers and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 173, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on passage of the bill will be followed by a 5-minute vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 392, nays 37, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 144]

YEAS—392

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Boehner
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guinta
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—37

Amash
Blum
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Cooper
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Garrett
Gohmert
Graves (GA)
Grothman
Huelskamp
Hultgren
Issa
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
King (IA)
Labrador
Loudermilk
Lummis
Marchant
Massie
McClintock
Meadows
Mulvaney
Nadler
Palmer
Ratcliffe
Sanford
Schakowsky
Schweikert
Sensenbrenner
Visclosky

NOT VOTING—4

Hinojosa
Payne
Ruiz
Smith (WA)

□ 1207

Messrs. MULVANEY and SCHWEIKERT changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

□ 1215

THE MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, moments ago, the House

passed a historic piece of bipartisan legislation that will put an end to the flawed Medicare sustainable growth rate, the so-called doc fix, and extend the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For more than a decade, Congress has used a bandaid to address the sustainable growth rate, rather than offering permanent reforms. Having served in a nonprofit health care setting for nearly three decades, I experienced firsthand the uncertainty and the anxiety that patients and their providers experienced annually, wondering if draconian cuts to reimbursements would occur. This bipartisan, permanent solution will replace the sustainable growth rate with a more stable system that will ensure our seniors do not lose access to their healthcare providers.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is by no means perfect, but it is a move in the right direction for children, seniors, and our medical providers.

VOTING RIGHTS

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, we just passed a bipartisan bill that addressed an issue, as the previous speaker said, that needed to be addressed.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court handed down a decision in Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v. Alabama which ought to give every Member pause regarding the position that Federal voting protections are no longer needed to ensure that all Americans can register and vote.

The Court found that Alabama legislators may have drawn congressional districts after the last census in a manner that diluted the voting strength of African American citizens. The Court raised disturbing questions, Mr. Speaker, about how African Americans are represented in Alabama's congressional districts and returned the case to a lower court for further consideration.

Mr. Speaker, we are a nation that prides itself on its unflinching willingness to confront its sins of segregation and voter suppression that kept millions of Americans from participating equally for generations.

On the same day the Court ruled, we marked the 50th anniversary of the Selma marchers finally reaching Montgomery. Such anniversaries are reminders of how much—or how little progress—we have made to realize the principles and rights embodied in our Constitution.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I urge us to proceed, as we did today, in a bipartisan fashion to restore the Voting Rights Act to its full force and effect to protect all Americans. And I urge my colleagues to work together to bring the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendment Act to the floor and restore the full power of the Voting Rights Act without delay.

We acted in a bipartisan fashion today. Let's do it tomorrow on the Voting Rights Act.

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Brain Awareness Week.

Last week, neuroscientists from around the world reached out to students and the public with educational activities that helped illustrate the wonders of the human brain. Since 1996, organizations around the world have come together during Brain Awareness Week to inform us about brain research and brain awareness, about brain disorders and diseases that affect nearly 100 million Americans.

The National Science Foundation has supported a number of projects that have led to discoveries in neuroscience. These projects include gene editing that allows scientists to understand the biological origins of complex brain disorders and provide new potential treatments. On another front, increasing the resolution of optical microscopes has allowed scientists to view the brain in more detail and helped them understand Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Brain Awareness Week and to support researchers in their own districts who are working to improve public health worldwide.

HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, we just witnessed an opportunity that should not be singular, and that is the coming together of Members of the United States Congress to address some very important issues.

I have already spoken on the importance of providing for the Children's Health Insurance Program that this legislation, H.R. 2, has provided for and securing Medicare for our seniors and ensuring funding for our federally qualified health clinics, the very clinics that I advocated for so many years ago. And we have seen a growth in them. The ones that are in my congressional district, they opened their doors to low-income and those without insurance in years past.

We are trying to get in front of the issue and the crisis of health care in America. But I want to make sure that as we pass this legislation, we do not forget physician-owned hospitals, which are prevalent in the State of Texas, and there are many in my neighborhood. These are doctors who have sacrificed to open the doors of hospitals in low-income areas. It is important for CMS to make sure that their applications are expeditiously and efficiently reviewed and that they have the opportunity to expand. This is language that we have put into the Affordable Care Act so the doors of these hospitals can remain open to the sick and those who are in neighborhoods where access to health care is not strong.

I ask my colleagues to continue to push forward on good health care in America and to help physician-owned hospitals in the way that they should be under the Affordable Care Act.

REMEMBERING MARY EDWARDS

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a longtime friend, Mary Edwards, a State Democratic executive committeewoman and board member for Tarrant County Stonewall Democrats.

Mary was born in Clarksville, a little town next to Paris, and moved to Fort Worth with her family when she was a kid.

She dedicated her time to helping others and making a difference to anyone she came across. I can personally attest to the leadership and activism she displayed throughout the years in the Fort Worth community, as well as when she worked alongside longtime former State Representative Lon Burnam.

Mary also served in various roles in the community. She was very active in the LGBT community and was very proud of her work. She was also a member of the Communications Workers of America. And she was very active in the neighborhood that she lived in.

My heartfelt sympathies goes out to her younger brother, Longe, and her niece, whom she greatly adored.

I can tell you, personally, that it is going to be sad to go to the Democratic meetings and pull up into the parking lot and not see Mary's big red truck there. But I can attest to you that while Mary was here, on this side, she did everything she could to make life better for others and truly, truly cared for the community.

MISCONDUCT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL TODD ZINSER, COMMERCE DEPARTMENT

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Congress relies upon inspectors general, IGs, as a key component of the Federal accountability community. When IGs themselves engage in illegal, unethical, or inappropriate behavior, Congress has an obligation to investigate them.

In the last Congress, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology launched a bipartisan investigation of

the Department of Commerce Inspector General Todd Zinser. The evidence the committee obtained regarding Mr. Zinser's personal misconduct and professional mismanagement of his office is overwhelming.

Any one of the multiple issues highlighted in my extended remarks would be sufficient to justify the removal of this IG. This serious step is made necessary by the abundant and deeply disturbing evidence that I am making public today. It gives me no pleasure to provide this account to the Congress, but I believe it is my obligation to report on what we have found.

Todd J. Zinser has been the Inspector General of the Department of Commerce (DOC) since December 2007. Prior to his present post, he served as Acting IG and Deputy IG at the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG). He has had a thirty year career in the federal accountability community.

Our Committee relies on the Commerce IG's office to identify and investigate issues of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement within agencies under the Committee's jurisdiction, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which encompasses the National Weather Service (NWS) and National Hurricane Center, as well as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The Committee also has wide-ranging oversight jurisdiction over all non-military research and development, which touches upon other components of the Department of Commerce.

Issues relating to Mr. Zinser's conduct in office first came to the attention of the Committee in 2012. As some of you may recall, the Chief Financial Officer at the National Weather Service was removed after it was found that he had established an improper and illegal process for moving tens of millions of dollars across appropriated accounts at NWS in violation of the Anti-deficiency Act. Subsequently, the then-head of the NWS also retired as a result of this scandal. The Committee learned of this improper conduct the same way the rest of the world did: we read about it in the Washington Post on May 28, 2012.

However, Inspector Generals are required by the Inspector General Act to notify Congress when they become aware of significant problems in their agency. The Inspector General Act of 1978 as amended says very clearly that it is a purpose of the establishment of inspector generals that they are "to provide a means for keeping the head of the establishment and the Congress fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of" that agency.

That act also directs that "[e]ach Inspector General shall report immediately to the head of the establishment involved whenever the Inspector General becomes aware of particularly serious or flagrant problems, abuses, or deficiencies relating to the administration of programs and operations of such establishment. The head of the establishment shall transmit any such report to the appropriate committees or subcommittees of Congress within seven calendar days, together with a report by the head of the establishment containing any comments such head deems appropriate." Mr. Zinser never suggested that he had followed this provision and there is no evidence that the IG ever communicated any report to the Secretary of Commerce regarding ongoing violations of the Anti-deficiency Act within the National Weather Service.

In this case, Mr. Zinser did not notify our Committee by any means that NWS had been running a huge, illegal accounting scam. That failure to notify came as a grave disappointment to me and to other Members of the Committee. When staff met with Mr. Zinser to understand what had happened in this case, and the role of his office in the investigation, they were astonished to learn that in November 2011 the IG had concluded that a violation of the Anti-deficiency Act had likely occurred. That meant that the IG went six months without mentioning this significant matter to the Congress, letting us instead learn of the issue in the press.

In that meeting with staff, Mr. Zinser disclosed that he had no idea that his office had received multiple tips regarding financial misconduct at NWS. He admitted that his office had actually misplaced some of these allegations. The Commerce OIG received its first of several Hotline complaints about this issue in June 2010. Mr. Zinser also claimed he had no idea that his audit staff were conducting an examination of these allegations until a memorandum on the topic—eleven months in the making—hit his desk on November 18, 2011. It seemed impossible that, with his years of experience, he would have established a system for receiving whistleblower tips that could actually lose those tips. It also seemed impossible that he could not know that his staff was conducting a "preliminary audit" on matters involving possible illegal activity by one of the top officials at the NWS.

At the time, his office only had about 120 employees and misconduct at the National Weather Service would be a very, very high profile matter. Even if Mr. Zinser's account is true—and my staff have gathered significant evidence that Mr. Zinser is actually a micromanager who has been personally involved in assignments of hotline complaints and held weekly reviews of ongoing work at the time, back in 2011—such failings suggest an extraordinary lack of personal engagement in the work of his office and a serious lack of competence in Mr. Zinser's management of significant, potentially criminal, allegations.

Most surprising of all the things staff learned in this meeting was that Mr. Zinser declined to conduct a formal investigation into these financial improprieties even after he said he became aware of them. Instead, the IG gave the investigation back to the agency. Given the vast scope of the financial shenanigans that occurred at NWS over many years, it is reasonable to question whether others in the agency knew about this conduct or played some role in allowing it to go on. In letting the agency essentially investigate itself on this violation of the law, the IG created a situation where there could have been a cover-up. In the end, the agency's report on this incident found only one official—the NWS Chief Financial Officer—to have been responsible for years of illegal accounting practices.

IGs exist to carry out investigations precisely when allegations of illegal activity have been made. Members and staff found it impossible to understand why the IG had failed in what can only be described as a "core responsibility" to investigate this misconduct and to keep the Congress informed. My staff has posed this scenario to several other IGs who work at agencies in our jurisdiction, every one of them has said they would never have given such an investigation back to the agency. Such a decision is inexplicable.

These failures to investigate a violation of law, to inform the Congress of significant issues at his agency, or to effectively manage his own office led to doubts among Committee Members regarding Mr. Zinser's reliability as an IG. As a result, our staff began to examine the work of Mr. Zinser's office in more detail.

Let me be clear: Mr. Zinser came to our attention because of Mr. Zinser's own misconduct. We know from sources on other Committees as well as correspondence he has sent, that he has tried to explain away our interest in his conduct as the result of former IG staff with an ax to grind coming to us with false stories, or even that my own Committee staff are personally hostile to Mr. Zinser. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Zinser has only himself to blame for drawing our attention to him.

In the wake of a hearing in which Members heard directly from Mr. Zinser regarding his mishandling of the NWS Anti-Deficiency Act violations, my staff began looking into the IG's hotline system. How could tips involving illegal activity and the potential waste of millions of dollars get set aside without any action? While the staff and Members were wondering how this bizarre conduct on the NWS could be explained, another item in the Washington Post caught our eye. Mr. Zinser's office was the subject of a whistleblower retaliation complaint that had been taken up by the Office of Special Counsel (OSC)—the Federal government's whistleblower protection office.

On December 3, 2012 the Washington Post reported on this case because the OSC had to take the extraordinary step of issuing instructions that Inspector General Zinser vacate a gag agreement with the complainants. This gag agreement, which OSC ultimately found had been essentially extorted from the complainants, had barred them from communicating about their experiences in Mr. Zinser's office to the press, OSC or Congress.

This press account was every bit as shocking as the revelations Mr. Zinser had made to the Committee regarding his mishandling of the NWS case. It seemed impossible that an IG, or his top aides, would establish a gag order to silence former staff from talking to the press, the OSC, or Congress. That such a gag order was the result of retaliation for suspected whistleblowing conduct by the former employees made this situation even more disturbing. By law, IG offices are to be a safe haven for whistleblowers. That an IG, or his senior staff, would attempt to punish and silence whistleblowers within their own office flies in the face of everything we expect of an IG.

This story opened up new lines of communication between whistleblowers remaining in Mr. Zinser's office and our staff. For the remainder of the 113th Congress we worked to understand how the office operated and why so many problems seemed to emerge from the IG's office. Over time, this initiative expanded from work done solely by the Minority staff of the Committee to become a fully bipartisan investigation with participation by the Majority as well. My friend from Wisconsin, the then-Vice Chairman of the Committee, Representative SENSENBRENNER, was particularly

important in driving the investigation forward and forging a bipartisan effort. Mr. SENSENBRENNER has a long history of taking action to protect whistleblowers.

I want to touch on some of the most outrageous things that we uncovered during the two years of our work. I may depart from a chronological treatment in an effort to bring the most disturbing elements to the attention of the House in the most expeditious way.

For those who wonder how I know what I am saying is true, let me share a summary of the work our staff engaged in.

The staff interviewed more than 70 officials who have worked for or with Mr. Zinser, including more than 60 current or former Commerce OIG employees. The Committee has also obtained thousands of pages of supporting documentation, court records and other evidence from informed sources. Most of the material that has informed our investigation has come to the staff through whistleblowers sharing materials. Despite two bipartisan document request letters in the last Congress, Mr. Zinser provided very little responsive material, particularly to our second request in August 2014 that specifically focused on the conduct of Mr. Zinser and some of his senior most officials targeting whistleblowers in his own office.

Coincidentally, and I will discuss this in more detail later, six days—let me repeat, six days—after Mr. Zinser received the Committee's bipartisan document request regarding efforts to identify and retaliate against whistleblowers in his office, he was seen using his personal hand-cart to remove two bankers boxes of materials from his office to his car on a holiday weekend. Although we don't know what was in those boxes, the timing of this removal is extremely suspicious.

Committee staff has built a network of sources that provided accurate, contemporaneous insights into actions within the office. The stories and documents these whistleblowers provided paint a deeply disturbing picture of an IG's office ruled by fear and intimidation, where unethical conduct is rewarded at the top, while the line staff are largely prevented from conducting the good work expected of an IG's office.

Let me start by acknowledging two apparent public successes of Mr. Zinser's: he produced two reports in 2014 on misconduct at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) that received extensive press coverage and inspired a joint hearing by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the House Judiciary Committee. Each of these seeming successes, though, points to core problems in the credibility of Mr. Zinser and the work of his office.

On July 8, 2014, Mr. Zinser's office released an investigative report about the conduct of Deborah Cohn, the Commissioner for Trademarks at PTO. The report found that Commissioner Cohn violated several federal laws regarding federal officials using their public office for an individual's private gain (5 C.F.R. 2635.702 and 702(a)), providing preferential treatment to an applicant (5 U.S.C. 2302(b), and 5 C.F.R. 2635.101(b)(8)), and violating federal ethics violations (5 C.F.R. 2635.501(a)). What was Ms. Cohn's offense? She had intervened in a hiring decision to assist her daughter's fiancé in getting a job.

In September, in the wake of the report, Deborah Cohn announced plans to retire by the end of 2014. According to her online biography, she worked at PTO for over 30 years, and retired in January, 2015. At the time of the release of the report, IG Zinser was quoted in the press as saying the OIG investigation found Ms. Cohn exerted ''undue influence in the hiring process'' and ''intervened and created an additional position specifically for the applicant.'' The Commerce OIG report also said that beyond the letter of the law, the PTO official's actions ''reflected poor judgment.'' The take away quote for the press: ''As a long-term senior manager in the federal government, she should have known about the federal laws governing hiring and should have steered clear of any appearance of impropriety,'' the report said.

Ms. Cohn was wrong to have intervened in this hiring case in the manner that she did, but she is to be congratulated for choosing to retire in the face of these significant findings that called her judgement into question. But as my staff learned, Mr. Zinser is really not in a very credible position to lecture anyone on hiring irregularities.

Mr. Zinser has his own rather astounding record of inappropriate hiring in the Commerce IG's office. For example, since coming to the IG post in December of 2007, he personally intervened to save the career of one of his closest friends as it was imploding at the Department of Transportation due to mismanagement issues. This person is one of the same people who ultimately had the OSC complaint lodged against him that I referenced above. Mr. Zinser also personally intervened to get his own son's friend an internship position in the OIG and then directed his senior staff to push the Department of Commerce Security Office to issue credentials for the young man when a security issue arose. The friend of Mr. Zinser's son was eventually hired into a permanent position in the OIG with a starting salary of more than $42,000.

Most disturbingly, Mr. Zinser hired a woman that substantial evidence and witness testimony reveals was involved in a ''romantic'' relationship with Mr. Zinser at the time he hired her in August 2010. At that time, she was in the middle of her probationary year as a candidate for the Senior Executive Service (SES) at an office within the Department of Commerce. Notified by her managers that she would be removed from her SES probationary position immediately due to significant conduct problems, she asked her supervisor if she could have an extra day because ''Todd Zinser'' would hire her. Mr. Zinser then personally intervened to have her detailed to his office within days. This required a frantic push among all levels of his office to get the paperwork done and signed before her SES position at DOC was vacated—which would have washed her out of the SES probationary program.

Witnesses in the Commerce IG's office who had been involved in the transfer say there was an extreme, personal urgency in Mr. Zinser's actions to have this employee detailed to his office. In addition, the Committee has confirmed that Mr. Zinser never contacted this woman's former supervisors at the other DOC agency where she worked to ascertain why she was in the process of being removed from her SES position. This would seem to have been a reasonable action for anyone hiring a person into an SES position, even more so for an IG who routinely handles sensitive personal information and criminal investigations.

The morning before the Department of Commerce ''officially'' approved her detail to the IG's office, she was provided with a window office, desk, computer and phone in the Commerce Office of Inspector General, according to former OIG employees and contemporaneous emails. In the wake of this effort, the then-Director of Human Resources in the IG's office e-mailed the Counsel to the IG: ''you can add illegal appointments to my annual performance discussion. With [Todd's son's friend] and this one, I am going to be an entire series in the Washington post [sic].''

Within five weeks of being brought to the OIG on detail, Mr. Zinser appointed his friend to the position of Assistant Inspector General for Administration—a SES position that paid $150,000 a year. Subsequently, Mr. Zinser directly approved three SES Performance Bonuses for her from January 2011 to October 2012 totaling $28,199.

Let me be clear, I am not making any comment on the qualifications or skills of the woman hired by Mr. Zinser, and I am attempting to limit my comments about the broader situation of their relationship out of sensitivity for the feelings of innocent parties. However, Mr. Zinser's personal conduct in this case is deplorable. His conduct undermined the integrity of the SES process and the Federal hiring system more generally.

It is clear that he hired this intimate friend to do her a favor given her difficult professional circumstances. No one interviewed by the Committee staff who worked in the IG's office at the time of her detail or subsequent appointment believes that she was hired because there was a pressing need for someone with her skill set. The universal reaction among the staff was that this behavior was highly irregular, and right from the beginning there were some in the office who had knowledge of his relationship with this person. The result was that rumors began immediately regarding this person's special status. Witnesses indicate she wielded unusual authority in the office due to the close nature of her relationship to Mr. Zinser. This is the kind of personnel action that destroys the effectiveness of an organization and that IGs themselves often investigate.

The Committee has no more interest in Mr. Zinser's private affairs than the Congress would have in Ms. Cohn's daughter's fiancé. However, Todd Zinser just as blatantly entangled his personal affairs with his public duties as Ms. Cohn had done when he used his position of trust to advance a romantic partner's position. This has created not simply ethically troubling behavior on his part but potential violations of federal law. His actions to further the career of a romantic interest compromises the credibility of the IG and his office to investigate inappropriate hiring by others, even when justified.

Mr. Zinser's press comment about Ms. Cohn applies to him as well: ''As a long-term senior manager in the federal government, (h)e should have known about the federal laws governing hiring and should have steered clear of any appearance of impropriety.'' It should go without saying that such a statement is even more true of a person who the Congress has placed in a law enforcement position. The difference between Cohn and Zinser is that there is no IG to hold Mr. Zinser

accountable. That is a job for the Congress and the President.

There is one more twist in this tale. In January 2011, an anonymous complaint about Mr. Zinser's inappropriate hiring of the Assistant IG for Administration was received by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). The complaint went to their Integrity Committee to investigate. On February 22, 2011, CIGIE's Integrity Committee wrote to Mr. Zinser regarding the complaint asking that he respond within 30 days. On April 11, 2011, Mr. Zinser provided a written response completely denying that there was anything improper in his hiring of this woman. He told CIGIE that he had a critical need to hire someone with her skills. In the letter Mr. Zinser wrote, ''. . . her assignment was based solely on business necessity, not on a personal relationship.''

As I mentioned, no one interviewed by Committee staff who worked in the Commerce IG's office at the time believes she was hired because there was a pressing need for someone with her skill set. The position of Assistant IG for Administration had been vacant in the Commerce OIG for over two years before it was given to Mr. Zinser's romantic interest, and numerous former OIG employees recall that Zinser had refused to fill that position on a number of occasions claiming he did not see a need for it. Not until his close friend was in desperate need of a job did Mr. Zinser discover a necessity to fill the post.

In addition, not a single record provided by the Commerce IG in response to our Committee's July 2014 document request regarding records related to Mr. Zinser's hiring of this person supports IG Zinser's declaration to CIGIE that he hired her into the position of Assistant IG for Administration ''based solely on business necessity, not a personal relationship.'' There is no contemporaneous record confirming that Mr. Zinser had been pushing for filling that position prior to the quick detail of his intimate friend to the office.

In his written response to CIGIE, Mr. Zinser acknowledged that he did have a personal relationship with his new Assistant Inspector General for Administration, and that they were ''avid long distance runners and trained together on a fairly regular basis.'' ''Contrary to the insinuations of the anonymous complaint,'' he wrote, ''our relationship is neither romantic nor sexual in nature,'' and while he said there are no rules ''against maintaining personal friendships with colleagues or subordinates, to minimize any potential appearance of impropriety, we curtailed our running together'' after she came to his office. It may be true that their running relationship was ''curtailed'', but the staff has convincing evidence that other aspects of their relationship, more pertinent to the allegation, continued outside of the work place after her hiring and were ongoing at the time of the CIGIE inquiry.

In his response Mr. Zinser also suggested to CIGIE that the anonymous complaint they received was from his friend's husband who was attempting to use the complaint ''as a tool to gain advantage in divorce proceedings.'' It is true that this woman's husband filed for divorce in March 2011—the divorce was granted in January 2012—but it is not true that her now-former husband was the source of the CIGIE complaint. Despite Zinser's speculation, designed to throw the CIGIE Integrity Committee off his trail, Committee staff has spoken at length on multiple occasions to the individual who filed the anonymous complaint. The complainant is a person in the IG community not related to either Zinser's girlfriend or her former husband. This counter-allegation by Mr. Zinser fits with a long pattern of behavior he has displayed in trying to deflect criticism or questions by making assertions about the motivations or integrity of those who question or challenge him.

As to the relationship between Mr. Zinser and his Assistant IG for Administration, The Washington Post asked Mr. Zinser about it for an article they wrote about him on July 17, 2014. According to that article, ''Zinser said there was nothing improper about him hiring a highly qualified manager who was a close personal friend. He said the romantic nature of their relationship predated her coming to work for him.'' Mr. Zinser seems to have forgotten that he told CIGIE that there was no romantic element to their relationship.

The combination of misleading claims Mr. Zinser made to CIGIE regarding both his relationship with the close friend he hired and the ''business'' necessity of hiring her into his office appears to be an intentionally false narrative spun by Mr. Zinser to cover up his own unethical behavior. CIGIE's Integrity Committee accepted Mr. Zinser's explanation on April 28, 2011 and closed the complaint without further investigation. The Integrity Committee was operating in the dark regarding the extensive evidence my own Committee's staff has obtained that this hiring was improper and that Mr. Zinser was misleading them as to the real facts of his conduct.

What have we learned from this case? That Mr. Zinser has corrupted the Federal hiring process and the Senior Executive Service appointment process. That Mr. Zinser was willing to make false allegations about another to avoid having to answer for his own actions. That Mr. Zinser was willing to mislead the Integrity Committee of CIGIE, a body established to investigate questionable activities or mismanagement of IGs. That Mr. Zinser was willing to lecture another senior official for conduct that is no more disturbing than his own. All in all, this does not sound like the conduct we should expect from an Inspector General. We also have learned that Ms. Cohn was willing to act with accountability for her actions—she retired in the wake of the IG's report—while Mr. Zinser clings to his position in the face of substantial evidence that he is not fit to serve.

The second 2014 PTO report by the DOC IG's office to capture public attention involved abuse of time and attendance practices. In July 2014, the DOC OIG released a report entitled, ''Review of Waste and Mismanagement at the Patent Trial and Appeal Board,'' OIG Case 13–1077–I, U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, July 28 2014. In a memorandum dated the same day, Zinser wrote to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property regarding their findings. Mr. Zinser's summary of findings said, ''Our investigation uncovered waste in the PTAB that persisted for more than four years (2009–13) and resulted in the misuse of federal resources totaling more than $5 million. The bulk of the wasted resources related to PTAB's paralegals, who had insufficient workloads and considerable idle time during those years.''

According to the July 2014 OIG report as many as 95% of the PTAB paralegals were involved in the PTO's Patent Hoteling Program (PHP), the agency's largest telework program.

This apparent successful report takes on a different light when one realizes that in February 2012 the Commerce OIG released an audit of the PTO's Patent Hoteling Program that labelled it a great success. The title of the IG's audit report, ''The Patent Hoteling Program Is Succeeding as a Business Strategy,'' and news headlines at the time reporting on the IG's findings described how the IG audit praised the PTO's telework program: ''Teleworking PTO employees process more patents, less expensive,'' declared one headline.

It is difficult to know how auditors from the IG's office could have so completely missed the signs of waste, fraud and abuse that have now been widely identified in this program. Just as hard to explain is why Mr. Zinser initially turned these allegations over to the agency to investigate, just as he had in the NWS financial misconduct case. Again, there may have been violations of law, and the sums of money involved were not insignificant.

On November 18, 2014 the House Oversight and Government Reform and Judiciary Committees held a joint congressional hearing about the PTO's telework program. During his sworn testimony Mr. Zinser was asked by my friend, Ms. Lofgren of California, why his office turned the PTAB investigation back to the PTO. His response was because ''none of those allegations made specific allegations against specific individuals that would warrant us opening up a criminal investigation,'' he said.

Mr. Zinser's statement was not accurate, however. One complaint that the IG's office received on its Hotline in February 2013 identified ONE DOZEN specific individuals at the U.S. Patent Trial and Appeal Board (PTAB) by name, including the chief judge of the Board and two administrators, who were knowingly approving non-production time of PTO employees, according to the allegation. Despite the fact that ''specific allegations'' were made ''against specific individuals'' this complaint was referred to PTO by the Commerce OIG, which requested PTO conduct an administrative inquiry.

The Committee has learned that the PTO did a thorough evaluation of the PTAB time and attendance issues, substantiated the allegations, concluded that there were problems with time and attendance reporting, and that steps should be taken to clean up the system with significant savings possible.

The IG's staff received the PTO's audit report of the PTAB time and attendance issues, and senior leadership at the IG's office realized they could not claim the significant monetary savings, in the millions of dollars, associated with the PTO report because they can only claim savings associated with their own work. To attempt to take credit for those savings, the OIG launched an audit that re-did the PTO's work. That OIG report was released in July 2014 and received widespread media coverage with story titles such as ''IG uncovers substantial waste at USPTO, says paralegals 'paid to do nothing,' '' and ''This May Be The Worst Abuse of Federal Telework Ever.'' Thus, to claim savings already identified by the agency, the IG wasted staff time and resources on a repetitive audit, and then worked the press to claim the credit for finding the

problem. All this while conveniently forgetting that nearly 2½ years earlier, the IG was praising the very same telework program that he later said had wasted money during that same time period.

What does this case teach us? That Mr. Zinser was willing to spend taxpayer dollars to get the credit for saving taxpayer dollars. It also shows that he was willing to mislead a senior Member of the House regarding why he had initially passed on carrying out this investigation. Finally, Mr. Zinser promised to provide documentation in response to Ms. Lofgren's questions, but in his submission for the record he went back on that promise by saying he would only provide those materials if he received a letter from the Chairman of the Committee.

Identifying savings is important for this IG because, on balance, Mr. Zinser is one of the least productive IGs in the federal government. According to the GAO, which is working to report on this office's productivity based on my request, the average Cabinet-level IGs recovered $22.64 for each dollar they spent from 2011 to 2013. By comparison, the Commerce OIG recovered just $4.18 for each dollar it spent. In addition, 95% of the Commerce OIG's savings came from joint investigations with other federal law enforcement agencies, and so much of these savings were claimed on work that may have been led by another IG or office.

Now, let me return to the story that gave additional momentum to our investigative activities: the fate of the whistleblower retaliation case before OSC. As I said, I learned of that case through reading of it in the press in December of 2012. Much of my staff's subsequent work was about getting more information regarding that case, which was being investigated by OSC. Everyone in this institution knows that the Congress relies on whistleblowers to do our oversight work. IGs are in the same position: they must be trusted by whistleblowers or they will not learn of problems in their agency. Congress feels so strongly about this that there is an entire section in the IG Act, Section 7, which addresses the role of IGs in receiving allegations and in protecting whistleblowers from retaliation. The idea that senior officials in the IG's office would retaliate against whistleblowers is inconceivable, but that is what the OSC case suggested happened in Mr. Zinser's office.

To its credit, OSC worked that case very, very diligently. The OSC issued a report in September 2013 that found Mr. Zinser's two closest aides—his legal counsel and the Principal Assistant Inspector General for Investigations and Whistleblower Protection—had engaged in what amounted to a coordinated effort to gag whistleblowers in the IG's own office from reporting misconduct to the OSC, the Congress or the press.

The OSC's ''Report on Prohibited Personnel Practices'' concluded: ''In this matter, OSC's investigation uncovered willful, concerted acts of retaliation that necessitate disciplinary action. Holding management accountable for engaging in prohibited personnel practices is essential to assuring employees that they can blow the whistle or engage in other protected activity without fear of reprisal.''

According to the OSC report: ''The record is also replete with evidence establishing that PAIGI [Rick] Beitel retaliated against the whistleblowers by drafting their unfounded failing interim performance appraisals. . . . The evidence demonstrates that PAIGI Beitel was motivated to retaliate against the whistleblowers for their engagement in protected activity and/or their perceived whistleblowing. . . . PAIGI Beitel's behavior is particularly egregious based on his position as the OIG's expert on whistleblower protection,'' the OSC determined.

While the OSC could find no ''documentary evidence'' that Mr. Zinser was involved in the case, every member of Mr. Zinser's staff that the Committee staff has spoken with who had experience of Mr. Zinser's management practices indicates that he rarely writes his directions down, instead relying on face-to-face meetings and oral directions. These witnesses also indicate that the PAIGI, Mr. Beitel, would never act on something this significant without clearing it with the IG. This is the same close, personal friend whose career Mr. Zinser saved by bringing him in from the Department of Transportation. The two had worked together since the early 1990s and were perceived by staff across both IG offices to have a very close working relationship of a mentor and mentee. In court documents unrelated to their federal employment Rick Beitel acknowledged that Todd Zinser was his ''close friend and personal confidant'' and that they routinely socialize with one another outside of work.

Mr. Zinser took no significant steps to punish either his good friend Rick Beitel or the other Commerce OIG official after receiving the OSC report. As a result of the OSC investigation and findings IG Zinser agreed to take twelve minimal actions, including the destruction of the coerced ''interim performance appraisals'' the whistleblowers were forced into signing, Mr. Beitel was removed from ''supervisory'' duties for one year, both officials were required to take ''performance counseling,'' and the Commerce OIG was required to hire an ''employee relations'' specialist.

But two officials who had used their position to threaten to destroy the professional careers of whistleblowers if they did not agree to gag orders denying them access to the Congress or the OSC should really not be in senior leadership positions in any office of the government, and especially not in an IG's office. That is my strong view, and I am not alone in thinking so.

After receiving a copy of this report and learning that no significant punishment had been meted out by Mr. Zinser, all seven Members of our Subcommittee on Oversight—four Republicans and three Democrats—wrote to Mr. Zinser on April 1, 2014. The real driving force in pushing this letter was my friend, Mr. Sensenbrenner. The letter said that Mr. Zinser should ''immediately terminate'' the two senior Commerce OIG officials who were found by OSC to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices against whistleblowers in his office.

Mr. Zinser responded on April 15, 2014, expressing doubts about the credibility of OSC's work and the legal basis for their findings. Incredibly, Mr. Zinser reiterated all of the knowingly inaccurate claims about the whistleblowers—essentially repeating the lies that OSC had found Mr. Beitel to have concocted to damage their careers and reputations. OSC thoroughly documented those claims to be inappropriate, misleading and simply false. Nevertheless, Mr. Zinser knowingly used those false claims again, further defaming his former employees.

This was not the first time Mr. Zinser had used these false, derogatory allegations to protect his office from tough questions. On January 7, 2013, Mr. Zinser wrote a 52 page letter to then Congressman Frank Wolf, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations. Mr. Wolf had raised questions regarding the OSC investigation that was then underway.

Mr. Zinser's letter defended the actions of his two top aides and reiterated the false allegations they had made against whistleblowers in the IG's office as if those claims were unshakable truths. For someone who claimed to OSC that he knew nothing about his aides' actions, Zinser seemed very comfortable defending their behavior and attacking the victims.

It is important to note that even after the OSC report found that there was no merit to any of these allegations, Mr. Zinser continued to leave his letter to Chairman Wolf up on his public web site, perpetuating false claims that defamed innocent former employees, and standing as a warning sign to other whistleblowers that their reputations were at risk should they challenge Mr. Zinser.

After this spirited defense of his closest staff and his refusal to take any noteworthy steps to punish them for their significant misdeeds even in the wake of OSCs findings, Mr. Zinser suddenly changed direction in August 2014 when he announced that both officials were to be placed on leave and a decision about termination would be made within 30 days. In the end, Mr. Zinser's legal counsel was terminated and his PAIGI—and close friend—was allowed to retire. This was a dramatic 180 degree turn from his previous public statements about the actions of these top aides.

Despite his outrageous conduct and botched management choices, Mr. Zinser was not found by OSC in their 2013 report to have known about the treatment of the whistleblowers. The OSC, however, was careful to say they found no ''documentary evidence'' regarding Mr. Zinser's knowledge of the actions of his two senior most staff. This lack of documentation saved him from any personal consequences as a result of the OSC report.

However, I believe it is important to tell my colleagues that Mr. Zinser had been named in a prior OSC report. That earlier report found he had personally engaged in retaliation against a whistleblower in his office. The similarities between the 1996 case and this 2013 case—both built around a concocted tissue of lies to remove or silence a whistleblower—are striking enough to suggest that perhaps OSC should have looked harder for evidence of Mr. ZinserIs involvement in the more recent case.

The Committee has uncovered a 1996 case in which Todd Zinser, then the Deputy Assistant IG for Investigations at the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General (DOT OIG), personally retaliated against Mr. John Deans. We have all the relevant filings and my staff has even spoken with Mr. Deans. Retired from law enforcement now, at the time of this case Mr. Deans was a former FBI agent working as a DOT OIG GS–12 Special Agent, criminal investigator. Deans was assigned to the Denver office, and while there he found what he believed to be compelling evidence that federal funding for the Denver International Airport was being illegally redirected to support local projects.

Deans briefed Mr. Zinser and two other DOT OIG officials on his case. Importantly, Deans suggested to others that very senior Federal officials may have been aware of this possible diversion of federal funds.

Mr. Zinser travelled to Denver a few days after he learned of Deans' comments about the potential knowledge of senior Federal officials regarding this alleged diversion. Soon after, Mr. Zinser flew to San Francisco to see if the Special-Agent-in-Charge (SAC) of the San Francisco office of the DOT OIG would be willing to have Deans detailed to his office. It is not clear what Zinser told the Special Agent in Charge about Deans but the Special Agent advised Zinser to have an ''impartial investigator'' look into the allegations against Deans. Instead, Mr. Zinser decided to investigate the Deans matter himself. Zinser had Mr. Deans transferred to San Francisco, then had him placed on administrative leave and ultimately had him fired.

In response to Mr. Zinser's actions, Deans appealed to the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), which supported his complaint that this was retaliation for his work. OSC sought a stay of the transfer of Deans to San Francisco. On the same day the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) ordered that Mr. Deans be returned to his post in Denver, Mr. Zinser placed Deans on administrative leave.

Todd Zinser's behavior was considered so outlandish by the OSC that the Office filed a ''Petition for Enforcement'' against Todd Zinser with MSPB. OSC asked that, ''The [Merit Systems Protection] Board should order Zinser to immediately assign Deans the duties of his former GS–12 special agent, criminal investigator, position. Moreover . . . the Board should order that Todd Zinser not receive payment for service as an employee from May 23, 1996, until Deans is returned to his former position, i.e., until the agency complies with the Board's May 23, 1996, Opinion and Order.''

What did OSC think of the substance of the case Mr. Zinser had made against Deans to justify his actions? They thoroughly investigated Mr. Zinser's claims—reinterviewed witnesses, collected documents and deposed the principal players. OSC found, ''(A)s addressed in detail below, the evidence established that the specific charges that formed the basis for Deans' removal are unsupportable. . . . The evidence does not support any of these allegations. On the other hand, it is clear that Deans' removal was ordered at the behest of Deputy Assistant Inspector General (DAIG) for Investigations Tod[d] Zinser, who strongly objected to Deans' protected conduct.'' OSC investigators in 1996 concluded that Mr. Zinser's actions towards Deans were ''draconian in nature'' and ''motivated by animus.'' They determined Mr. Zinser took these actions because Deans ''discovered violations and politically embarrassing information about high-level government officials and community leaders.''

As a result of these findings against Mr. Zinser, Deans had to be rehired and restored to a post in Denver. Deans was repaid almost a year of back pay and benefits. On top of this, the government had to pay over $10,000 in Mr. Deans' attorney fees. In short, the taxpayer had to pay the bill for Mr. Zinser's outrageous and indefensible conduct towards this whistleblower.

Mr. Speaker, it is reasonable for Members to wonder how someone with this kind of history of abuse against a whistleblower could possibly have been confirmed by the Senate to the post of Inspector General. I wondered that too. It turns out, based on witness testimony and extant documents, that Mr. Zinser never disclosed the OSC case to either the White House or the Senate during his confirmation process.

The Senate routinely submits questionnaires to potential IGs with questions that must be filled out. That questionnaire asks about legal, ethical or other cases that the Committee should be aware of in considering his nomination. In response to that specific question Mr. Zinser wrote, ''I have never been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics.'' The questionnaire also asked: ''Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination.'' Mr. Zinser wrote simply ''None.''

None? A potential IG does not think it is relevant to the confirmation process to acknowledge that he was found to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices? Mr. Zinser was asked by a Washington Post reporter why he did not disclose this case during his confirmation. In a story on Mr. Zinser published by the Washington Post on July 17, 2014, Mr. Zinser told the Post that he did not disclose the case because, ''I just never thought of myself as a subject [of the investigation], although maybe I was''.

More recently, in January 2015, Mr. Zinser responded to a Question For the Record (QFR) from my friend, Ms. LOFGREN, regarding the same matter. In that response, Mr. Zinser gave a lawyerly answer, ''it is my understanding that the subject [of the investigation] was the Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General.'' Technically that is true because under the law, cases filed with the OSC name the office that is responsible for the alleged misconduct, not the individual. Similarly, lawsuits filed against an agency name the head of the agency in their official capacity regardless of whether that official has any personal knowledge of the matter or not. However, this artful response suggests that the case had nothing to do with Mr. Zinser. Let me be clear: The case only existed because of Mr. Zinser's personal misconduct, and he was squarely the subject of the allegations of prohibited personnel practices.

The OSC's key document in the John Deans case—the OSC's ''request for stay''—refers to Todd Zinser BY NAME 53 separate times in a 26-page report. In addition, this document makes it exceedingly evident that Todd Zinser was the sole individual in the Department of Transportation IG's office who was believed to have retaliated against John Deans. Looking at the OSC records, it is evident that the Office found Mr. Zinser personally investigated Deans, personally constructed unsupported findings against Deans to be used to justify adverse employment actions, personally ordered those actions, and personally resisted setting things right when OSC and the MPRB ordered the DOT OIG to do so. Of all the employees at the DOT OIG's office, only Todd Zinser was singled out by OSC for punishment by way of seeking that his salary be withheld.

The 1996 case was specifically built on Mr. Zinser's misconduct just as the 2013 report by OSC is specifically about misconduct by Mr. Zinser's two closest (now former) aides. Had Mr. Zinser divulged his role in the Deans case at the time of his confirmation, it is highly unlikely he would have been confirmed as the Commerce Inspector General. The actions taken by Mr. Zinser in the John Deans case, and described in detail in the OSC documents, are all antithetical to the behavior and ethical grounding that the public deserves and that Congress expects of an Inspector General. He showed no remorse about his conduct at that time. Similarly, he showed no sympathy for the victims of his aides' abuse in 2013. His initial reaction to the 2013 report was to protect those officials from the consequences of their actions as documented in the OSC report. He maintained that position for months, even under pressure from the Committee on Science, Space & Technology where I am the Ranking Member.

For any IG to be associated with two whistleblower retaliation cases of this kind would be an indelible stain on their reputation. However, as my staff talked to more employees of the IG's office, we learned that these two cases do not mark the end of whistleblower retaliation at his office. We know of other recent instances of Mr. Zinser expressing his belief that specific individuals that he personally named were cooperating with our Committee or making protected complaints to OSC. We also know that these individuals were targeted in different ways for adverse actions in order to convince them to leave or to remove them from the office. Separately, one senior OIG official was placed on ''Administrative Leave'' immediately after they contacted the Office of Special Counsel. That individual has since left the IG's office for another federal agency. We also know that the current Deputy Inspector General had, as of several months ago, obtained and retained the entire email records of two former and one current high level IG staff, including two of her predecessors—all of whom were viewed by Mr. Zinser as disloyal to him or untrustworthy with the secrets of his office. One of those predecessors is a sitting, Senate-confirmed Inspector General at another Federal agency.

There is no legitimate reason to have collected and then retained the emails of those three senior staff, including two former Deputy IGs. There is certainly no justification for the current Deputy IG, widely viewed as being the closest current personal aide to Mr. Zinser, to be carrying those records on her laptop computer's hard drive. What would such records be used for? It is impossible to know, but we do know that there was a search and analysis of one of those former Deputy IG's email records. A memorandum was prepared based on that search documenting the exchanges between the former-Deputy and a woman who had applied for a position within the OIG, who was a family friend. Mr. Zinser was clearly aware of this relationship since the woman was a reference for the former Deputy IG who was called as a reference by Mr. Zinser when the former Deputy IC applied for his job.

Based on information obtained by Committee staff it seems clear that Mr. Zinser was simply searching for anything he might uncover in his former Deputy's emails that Mr. Zinser might be able to use against him, since the former Deputy had fallen out of favor with Mr. Zinser.

When employee emails are to be pulled, there is a policy in place at the DOC Office of Inspector General that requires Mr. Zinser to personally sign a memorandum to the Chief

Information Officer requesting specific materials be produced. This policy has been in place since October 2012. However, in the last year, in particular, this policy has been largely set aside, permitting other OIG staff in Mr. Zinser's chain of command to authorize the collection of Commerce OIG employees' e-mails invoking Zinser's authority and with his clear knowledge and, in some cases, specific direction but without his actual signature. That occurred in the case of the former Deputy IG.

The IT staff in the IG's office has had to comply with these requests even though they violate a policy Mr. Zinser himself put in place. This is an example of a long-standing issue in Mr. Zinser's management style—he establishes policies and then ignores or stretches them without any warning to those who work for him. This creates an environment where it is easy for the IG to claim someone has violated policy if he wants to punish them because the policy environment is constantly and mysteriously shifting.

The pulls of email records, the targeting of suspected whistleblowers, the adverse employee actions taken in retaliation for protected disclosures are all widely known and discussed by employees within the Department of Commerce OIG's office. We have heard from many whistleblowers that they fear that if Mr. Zinser is not removed, there will be—in the words of more than one of these individuals—''a bloodbath''—in the office. As soon as Mr. Zinser believes no one is looking, he will begin to take steps to invent allegations against individuals he wants to retaliate against—as he did against Mr. Deans and as his close aides did against OIG investigative staff in 2011—the case which led to the 2013 OSC report—and then take steps to remove them. People are frightened, and given Mr. Zinsers prior conduct they have good reason to fear him and his potential actions.

The last whistleblower issue I wish to raise, Mr. Speaker, is that Mr. Zinser has let his office fall out of compliance with the U.S. Code 33 specifically, 5 U.S. Code § 2302 (prohibited personnel practices). That provision establishes the Office of Special Counsel's (OSC's) 2302(c) Certification Program and requires that Federal agency managers participate in training regarding the rights of whistleblowers and their right to make protected disclosures.

Last year the White House directed agencies to take affirmative steps to complete the OSC certification program. According to the Commerce OIG's own web-site ''That provision charges '[t]he head of each agency' '' with responsibility for ''ensuring (in consultation with the Office of Special Counsel) that agency employees are informed of the rights and remedies available to them'' under the prohibited personnel practice and whistleblower retaliation protection provisions of Title 5.'' As the head of the IG's office it is Todd Zinser's responsibility to ensure his office is certified under this program. The Commerce OIG website currently states ''OIG has been certified by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) for conducting training and promoting awareness of provisions of the Whistleblower Protection Act, 5 U.S.C. § 2302(c).''

However, the OSC has confirmed to Committee staff that the Commerce OIG's whistleblower protection certification required under 5 U.S. Code § 2302 lapsed in September 2014. Six months later the Commerce IG's office still has made no attempts to recertify. According to multiple Commerce OIG sources as well as documentary evidence obtained by the Committee, Mr. Zinser's new Deputy IG Morgan Kim has specifically directed multiple OIG staff not to attempt to recertify.

I wish that I could provide more definitive accounts of all the misconduct that has been going on in Mr. Zinser's office, but the truth is that Mr. Zinser refused to comply with the Committee's document requests. Mr. Zinser and his Deputy IG actively worked to obstruct the Committee's investigation. These two top officials have been behind a campaign to intimidate staff into not cooperating with the Committee by pushing some to get lawyers, even though they were not the target of the investigation, and by reminding people that if they say something quotable during interviews with the Committee it may end up in the Washington Post or a Committee Report.

One individual widely known within the office to be particularly close to Mr. Zinser pressured OIG staff to call the Committee to report the ''positive'' aspects of Mr. Zinser's management. Several individuals have told the Committee they felt this was both completely inappropriate and an attempt to coerce individuals into taking part in these efforts to obstruct the Committee's investigation.

IG Zinser has also attempted to ''paper'' the Committee with a voluminous production of materials wildly unresponsive to our document requests. Since the Committee's August 2014 request letter, the Committee has received less than two boxes of responsive materials and 17 boxes of completely unresponsive material. Some material provided showed a complete lack of concern for their contents for they included sensitive personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers of Commerce OIG employees, private phone numbers and birthdates.

Meanwhile, we know that the materials we were seeking were going through an extraordinarily slow search and review process within the OIG. None of that material was ever delivered to the Committee. Committee investigators cannot recall any comparable example of such a complete failure to comply with a document request—even from private parties—across a quarter century of Committee investigations. The idea that an Inspector General, who has an obligation to cooperate with Congress that goes beyond that expected of any other Executive branch official, would fail to comply with a request from a Committee of the House is simply unfathomable.

The Committee sent two bipartisan document request letters to IG Todd Zinser on July 16, 2014 and August 26, 2014. The July letter requested documents related to Mr. Zinser's inappropriate hiring of the former Assistant IG for Administration and Rick Beitel, including copies of relevant records from his personal work journals. The letter warned Mr. Zinser: ''These journals represent official records and we remind you that such records should not be removed from the office nor tampered with in any way. The Committee intends to continue to examine the conduct and productivity of your office, and we consider your journals to be important evidence in that effort,'' the letter said. On August 26th the Committee sent a second letter to IG Zinser demanding documents concerning multiple allegations that Mr. Zinser was inappropriate collecting and monitoring his employees' e-mails in a hunt for potential whistleblowers in his office.

Six days after IG Todd Zinser received that second letter informing him of the Committee's knowledge that he was hunting for whistleblowers in his own office, the Inspector General was seen using his personal hand-truck to remove two banker's boxes of materials to his car. This occurred on Labor Day, Monday, September 1, 2014, a federal holiday when few witnesses would have been on site at the Department of Commerce. Furthermore, the Committee has evidence that IG Zinser conducted his removal of this materiel with great haste. He was in and out of his office with his two boxes of material inside of 30 minutes. Although there is no way to know what Mr. Zinser removed from his office over Labor Day weekend, the timing of his actions is highly suspicious and raises serious questions about his efforts to obstruct the Committee's investigation.

The Committee is aware of at least one more incident where records were removed from his office and destroyed. Since he is under a microscope, actions of removing or destroying records cannot help but be seen as obstructionist in nature and his cavalier disregard for the effects of this on his reputation and the opinion of others—even senior members of a Committee with broad jurisdiction over his Department—highlights the serious mismatch between Mr. Zinser and the ethical and professional requirements of serving as an Inspector General.

Mr. Zinser also invoked attorney-client privilege to prevent witnesses from fulfilling their obligation to speak to the Committee, and to withhold materials responsive to our request. As a common law, non-Constitutionally derived concept, attorney-client privilege is not recognized by Congress as a legitimate reason to withhold information during Congressional inquiries. While I understand that private parties sometimes have a particular concern with defending this privilege, I cannot fathom how a Senate-confirmed government employee, using government lawyers paid with tax dollars, can think that the work of those attorneys could be considered privileged from review by Congress.

Never in the last quarter century of Committee investigations has an official in a statutorily-established Federal office attempted to withhold materials or testimony using this claim of attorney-client ''privilege.'' The usual accommodation is for an agency to provide the records or testimony, while noting that they believe the materials should be treated with care. Frankly, OIG attorneys are routinely released from this privilege in order to cooperate with OSC and EEO investigations. The Congress should not be treated any less cooperatively than those offices, but Mr. Zinser would not release the attorneys to answer questions. His former counsel, who had been found by OSC to have engaged in prohibited personnel practices, very much wanted to speak with the Committee as he believed he had evidence that might exonerate him as well as implicate Mr. Zinser. IG Zinser specifically intervened to prevent this former employee from talking to Committee staff about illegal activities that he believes he had witnessed during his work for Mr. Zinser. This misuse of attorney-client privilege, with a hidden threat to seek punishment by the Bar if an attorney decided their obligation to the Constitution outweighed Mr. Zinser's personal desire, is clearly abusive and appears motivated by a desire

to hide evidence of his misconduct from the Congress.

I have not reached the end of the account of failed management and misconduct by Mr. Zinser. Just last month, the Department of Commerce's Office of Civil Rights issued its findings in an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO case related to age discrimination and retaliation filed by a former Commerce OIG employee. The detailed 282-page report found that the Commerce OIG discriminated against the complainant in violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and retaliated against him for filing his EEOC complaint " in violation of non-retaliation provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and "in violation of the EEOC regulations prohibiting retaliation." In sworn testimony to EEOC investigators regarding the monitoring and examination of the former employee's e-mails and files, the EEOC also found that Mr. Zinser's "testimony does not fully mesh with the documentary evidence. . . ."

The Commerce OIG has been ordered to compensate the employee for "backpay to remedy the change to lower grade he took due to the hostile work environment" in the IG's office; expunge its official files of the inaccurate interim performance appraisal the employee was coerced into signing and any related document; provide all supervisors in the Commerce OIG, including the IG and Deputy IG, with at least 8 hours of EEO training and require IG Todd Zinser to sign and post (for 60 days) a notice to all OIG employees that the office has been found in violation of age discrimination and retaliated against former Commerce OIG employee. The notice states that the OIG will abide by federal requirements, equal employment opportunity laws and will not retaliate against employees who file EEO complaints in the future. The notice is supposed to be placed in center within the IG's office or on the OIG intranet and is required to be signed by IG Zinser. Mr. Zinser refused for two solid weeks to sign that notice. Only after my friend, Mr. Honda, asked IG Zinser about this matter during an appearance before the Appropriations Committee did Mr. Zinser finally sign the notice on February 25.

Not for the first time, Mr. Zinser is going to rely on the taxpayer to cover the costs of his misconduct. There are more claims out there that will also cost the taxpayer to defend against and settle. In fact, during the last two years six employees in the IG's office have filed complaints of retaliation with the Office of Special Counsel. The Department of Energy's OIG, which is nearly twice as large as the Commerce IG's office has had zero complaints of retaliation filed with OSC during this same period. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) OIG, which has a staff of more than 1,200 people and is nearly seven times the current size of the Commerce OIG had a single alleged case of retaliation filed with OSC in the same time frame.

The issues I have identified reveal an endemic failing in Mr. Zinser's leadership. There is a sustained pattern of misconduct and malfeasance that would be unacceptable in any senior federal official but is particularly troubling for an Inspector General. Based on the exhaustive work by Committee staff, as well as Mr. Zinser's representations to other Members, we have convincingly shown that:

During his Senate confirmation for the Commerce IG post, Mr. Zinser failed to disclose a significant case against him involving his personal retaliation against a whistleblower;

Over a period of many years, Mr. Zinser and his closest staff have engaged in efforts to identify and retaliate against whistleblowers in his office;

Mr. Zinser has repeatedly misled the Congress about his conduct, and took steps to obstruct the Committee's investigation into allegations of misconduct;

Mr. Zinser has been disingenuous in his official correspondence with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) regarding inappropriate hiring in his office;

Mr. Zinser has failed to conduct himself by ethical standards expected of an Inspector General;

Mr. Zinser has engaged in inappropriate hiring practices that undermine the integrity of federal hiring; and,

Mr. Zinser has failed to establish policies and procedures in his office that would guarantee accountability and efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, how can this person still hold a high position of public trust? His continued presence in Federal service stands as a blot on our record, in that we have tolerated such conduct by an IG. We could impeach him, and I believe there is adequate information to justify that. However, it would be time consuming and expensive, and while we worked through that process, the taxpayer would still be paying the senior leadership of DOC OIG, and whistleblowers would still be legitimately worried for their careers. That is unacceptable.

We could ask CIGIE to redo the investigation my staff and the Committee did in the 113th Congress. I respect the CIGIE, but the cold truth is that CIGIE's Integrity Committee is slow moving, and their prior failure to do diligent work into a serious allegation against Mr. Zinser leads me to question their responsiveness—or at least the responsiveness they displayed four years ago. And as with impeachment, it would be slow and expensive and whistleblowers would stand in danger every day the process dragged on.

The law provides that the President can remove an IG without any requirement that CIGIE has first done an investigation. If an IG conducts themselves in an outrageous and disreputable way, it would be irresponsible to leave them in office once that has been established. I believe that Mr. Zinser's wide-ranging misconduct, supported by just a tiny coterie of current senior staff, is sufficient in and of itself to justify immediate removal. I intend to ask the President to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have established the need for immediate change in the senior leadership of this office. The current leadership must be replaced with individuals who can serve as beacons of integrity and stewards of appropriate and diligent federal oversight. If any Member wants a fuller recounting of the evidence in this case, I will be happy to provide them with additional information.

That information provides as much documentation for my account as we can provide without compromising the position of whistleblowers whose careers still stand at risk so long as Mr. Zinser and his closest senior leaders remain in their positions. I will extend that same offer to the President as I believe that his role under law complements my own obligations as a Member to reveal significant violations of law that I believe we have uncovered.

THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH RATE

(Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I haven't been in this office very long, but it doesn't take long to pick up certain patterns of my Republican colleagues. They find a way to hamstring immigration reform or prevent women from getting the right to choose at every possible opportunity. In the case of the SGR fix, a very important bill that I am proud to have also voted for, Republicans have chosen the latter.

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, Mr. Speaker, this is 2015. We can talk to our TV remotes. We have phones that show us in 3–D the nearest restaurants, and printers that print prosthetic limbs.

In 1973, Motorola gave us the world's first mobile phone. But 1973 was also the last time there was any question of whether or not a woman had the right to make her own decisions about her health, according to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am not the youngest Member of Congress, but I am one of the newest. So I would like to take this opportunity to invite my Republican colleagues to join me in the 21st century. Moving forward, I urge my colleagues to stop waging war on women's right to make their own choices.

194TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 194th anniversary of Greek independence, to recall the day that the Greek people established modern Greece as a free and independent nation.

America's Founding Fathers drew upon the example of the ancient Greeks in forming our constitutional Republic. The relationship between Greece and the United States is based on shared democratic values and respect for individual freedom. The spirit that guided the Greek people in securing their freedom nearly 200 years ago resides with them still.

Today Greece faces tremendous challenges. We all acknowledge that. But I am confident that Greece will ultimately overcome its economic and humanitarian crisis and thrive again. A strong Greece will be able to take full advantage of new opportunities that are emerging in the eastern Mediterranean and move forward as a vital economic and cultural resource for a critical region of the world.

As we say each year when celebrating Greek Independence Day, long live Greece, long live America, long live freedom—Zito Ellada, Zito Ameriki, Zito Eleftheria.

BOKO HARAM

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, April 14 will mark 1 year since Boko Haram kidnapped over 200 Nigerian schoolgirls. Since the schoolgirls' kidnapping, Boko Haram has continued to torment and commit atrocities.

Boko Haram has declared its allegiance to ISIS. They are beheading, raping, and stoning their victims, ramping up their use of social media, and making surprise attacks to inflict maximum casualties and spread fear.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning, ABC News reported that Boko Haram is using hundreds of civilians as human shields, and the terrorist group reportedly abducted another 500 women and children just 48 hours before the Nigerian Presidential elections. Nigerian officials remain very concerned about Boko Haram's impact on Saturday's Presidential election. President Obama issued a statement calling for calm in Nigeria.

We cannot stand by, Mr. Speaker, while Boko Haram aligns itself with ISIS. Mr. Speaker, I call on my fellow Members of the House to join me in condemning the actions of Boko Haram.

We will be watching what happens in Nigeria closely. And by tweeting #bringbackourgirls, #joinrepwilson, the world will know we have not forgotten.

Tweet, tweet, tweet.

PROVIDING FOR THE REAPPOINTMENT OF DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN AS A CITIZEN REGENT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 10) providing for the reappointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RATCLIFFE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 10

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in accordance with section 5581 of the Revised Statutes (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, occurring by reason of the expiration of the term of David M. Rubenstein of Maryland on May 7, 2015, is filled by the reappointment of the incumbent. The reappointment is for a term of 6 years, beginning on May 8, 2015, or the date of the enactment of this joint resolution, whichever occurs later.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1230

ELECTING MEMBERS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY AND THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of H. Res. 171, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 171

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY AND JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING.

(a) JOINT COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS ON THE LIBRARY.—The following Members are hereby elected to the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library, to serve with the chair of the Committee on House Administration and the chair of the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch of the Committee on Appropriations:

(1) Mr. Harper.
(2) Mr. Brady of Pennsylvania.
(3) Ms. Zoe Lofgren of California.

(b) JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING.—The following Members are hereby elected to the Joint Committee on Printing, to serve with the chair of the Committee on House Administration:

(1) Mr. Harper.
(2) Mr. Rodney Davis of Illinois.
(3) Mr. Brady of Pennsylvania.
(4) Mr. Vargas.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a concurrent resolution and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 31

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Thursday, March 26, 2015, through Friday, April 10, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Monday, April 13, 2015, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Speaker or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a concurrent resolution and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 32

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Friday, March 27, 2015, through Monday, March 30, 2015, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, April 13, 2015, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, after concurrence with the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time as he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate recesses or adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand recessed or adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015, TO MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2015

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

when the House adjourns today on a motion offered pursuant to this order, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. on Monday, March 30, 2015, unless it sooner has received a message from the Senate transmitting its concurrence in H. Con. Res. 31, in which case the House shall stand adjourned pursuant to that concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO COMMISSION TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL CREATION OF A NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 3056 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113–291), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following individuals on the part of the House to the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum:

Mrs. Kathy Wills Wright, Arlington, Virginia

The Honorable Marilyn Musgrave, Fort Morgan, Colorado

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to sections 5580 and 5581 of the revised statutes (20 U.S.C. 42–43), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution:

Mr. SAM JOHNSON, Texas

Mr. COLE, Oklahoma

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BRITISH-AMERICAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. CRENSHAW, Florida, Chairman

Mr. LATTA, Ohio

Mr. ADERHOLT, Alabama

Mr. HOLDING, North Carolina

Mr. WHITFIELD, Kentucky

Mr. ROE, Tennessee

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE HONOR TO SERVE THE 18TH DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHOCK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago, I entered this Chamber and raised my right arm to take the oath of office as a Member of the United States House of Representatives. I remember feeling so excited about the opportunity that lay ahead. I remember vividly this Chamber and all that it meant to me and to the country: the men and women debating the big issues of the day, not always agreeing, but always fighting without apology for what they believe in.

Over the past 6 years, I have come to understand that this institution is far bigger than any one person, and that freedom itself is even more important than this institution. Some of the world's greatest debates have occurred right here in this Chamber, for what happens here affects more than just the people of my district or even my country.

Over those 6 years, I have done my best to contribute constructively to the process and to serve the people of my district and my country. My guiding principle has always been rooted in the belief that Washington should only do what people cannot do for themselves.

I fought and opposed the billion-dollar surplus bill, the government takeover of our health care, and the massive new regulations put on small businesses. But, more importantly, I fought for the people of my district so that their voice would be heard and respected by my colleagues, for I heard that voice in every vote that I have cast.

But I also knew that being in the majority was key to making a difference. So I am proud of the work I have done to contribute to a Republican majority here in Congress—to begin to scale back the overreaches of a bloated Federal Government and to begin to bend the curve on out-of-control spending. That has only happened because of a Republican majority, and I am proud to have played a role in building it.

During this time, I saw how slow the Federal Government can be and how frustrating Congress can get, but I also learned that one man can make a difference. Working with my Republican colleagues and across the aisle with my Democrat friends, we have been able to pass legislation that helped businesses across America create millions of jobs. Some of them have been located in my home district, but many more across this great country. There was, is, and will be so much to do, and I am honored to have played a small part in making a real difference.

But these accomplishments come with some frustrations as well, that this body doesn't move quickly enough or as efficiently as it could to confront the challenges facing our country. I regret that I won't be here when we finally pass a smarter, simpler Tax Code so that every hard-working taxpayer in my district and across the country will know that Washington not only cares about them, but respects them and their sacrifice. And I will miss joining my colleagues in saving and strengthening Social Security and Medicare that will directly improve the quality of life for millions of Americans for generations to come.

To my constituents back home, the good, hard-working taxpayers whom I have been lucky enough to call friends, I will never be able to thank you enough for the opportunity you have given me to serve. Together we have tackled some of the big problems at home, like economic development projects, helping businesses expand, improving our locks and dams along our riverways, and so much more, projects that have helped improve the quality of life in our community.

We have also tackled some small problems, but big problems to the people who have been facing them—folks looking for help adopting children overseas or simply trying to get answers from an unresponsive bureaucracy here in D.C. Solving those individual cases has been extremely fulfilling.

I am particularly grateful to have played a role in helping so many veterans get the respect they deserve and the benefits that they earned.

I am proud of the good work that my team has delivered to the tens of thousands of constituents who have turned to our office in their time in need. My staff delivered for me because they delivered for you every day, 24/7.

I was never more excited than the day I walked into this Chamber 6 years ago. I leave here with sadness and humility. For those whom I have let down, I will work tirelessly to make it up to you.

I know that God has a plan for my life. The Good Book tells us that before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. I also know that every person faces adversity in life. Abraham Lincoln held this seat in Congress for one term, but few faced as many defeats in his personal, business, and public life as he did. His continual perseverance in the face of these trials, never giving up, is something all of us Americans should be inspired by, especially when going through a valley in life.

I believe that through life's struggles, we learn from our mistakes, and we learn more about ourselves. And I know that this is not the end of a story but, rather, the beginning of a new chapter.

Thank you for the honor to serve. I look forward to keeping in touch with my friends in this Chamber and my friends across the 18th District. May God continue to bless this awesome institution and the important role that it plays for America and the rest of the world.

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

BUDGET WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I would like to start our time tonight by yielding to my friend from Florida (Ms. WILSON).

WE BROUGHT BACK FIVE OF THE KIDNAPPED GIRLS

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Thank you, Representative WOODALL, for this honor and this pleasure. I am indebted to you forever. Thank you.

I just finished making a speech about Boko Haram and girls who were kidnapped in Nigeria. Five of them are in the gallery today, and I thought it not robbery to recognize them and ask you who are listening to please tweet #bringbackourgirls and tweet #joinrepwilson. These young ladies were kidnapped, and they had the courage—the courage—to come to America to continue their education. They are right there in the gallery.

Thank you, Representative WOODALL.

Mr WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is the conclusion of budget week here. I sit on the Budget Committee. I enjoy budget week. It is a statement of our values as a nation. Where you put your money is where you are putting your emphasis. A lot of folks don't want to put their money where their mouth is. We have a lot of mouths in this town. This is the week where everybody gets to put their money where their mouth is.

One of those issues that we have been struggling with has been the issue of transportation funding. I come from a very conservative district in Georgia, Mr. Speaker, and one of the counties—I only represent two—one of those counties, Forsyth County, just voted to tax itself with a $200 million bond initiative to widen a highway. Because we are the fastest growing county in the State, we sit in traffic hour upon hour upon hour.

It is not that conservatives don't want to tax themselves. It is that conservatives don't want to tax themselves and then throw that money down a rat hole. If we can develop a trust that, if you tax a family a dollar that they will get a dollar's worth of services—needed services, desired services—for that dollar, we would have a very different relationship with the Federal Government.

□ 1245

Mr. Speaker, I have up here a reference to article I, section 8, clause 7 of the United States Constitution which says:

> The Congress shall have the power to establish post offices and post roads.

Commerce, at the time of the writing of our Constitution, Mr. Speaker, took place through the post office and those post roads. There was an obligation that our Founding Fathers recognized to develop routes of commerce so that goods could travel, so that messages could travel, so that people could travel.

I say that because too often the conversation in Washington devolves into: Should we spend money at all, or should we spend obscene amounts of it that we have to borrow from our children? That is not the conversation we are having. We have a constitutional obligation to maintain, establish and maintain the post roads, those corridors of commerce around this Nation. The Federal Government took that responsibility on in one of the great building projects of our history, building the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System.

I want to build things, Mr. Speaker. So often this Congress gets involved in doing things that my community is doing just fine back home, that my county is doing just fine back home, that my State is doing just fine back home. And for some reason we think when the 435 of us gather together, we are going to come up with a better idea about how to better serve my community back home than my community back home has about how to serve my community. I think we get off track there. I think we get into those unconstitutional uses of power. Establishing post roads—one of those things our Founding Fathers asked the government to do, because, quite simply, no one else can build an interstate highway system. It does no good for Georgia to have 12 lanes running to the Alabama border if Alabama doesn't have a road when we get there. This is a collaborative decision, and rightfully so.

So how do we fund these highways, Mr. Speaker? We fund them primarily through what is called the highway trust fund, and the highway trust fund is funded through taxes on users of the highway system. I am a huge fan of user fees. If you don't like to sit in traffic every morning, if you want to build an extra lane on your highway, as we are in Forsyth County, you should pay to build that extra lane on your highway. You shouldn't ask somebody in Wyoming to pay to build the road in Georgia. We should build the road in Georgia. Users of the roads should pay for the roads. So that is what we do.

What you can't see here, Mr. Speaker, is a graph of how the highway trust fund is funded. Primarily, it is through a gas tax. It is 18.4 cents that comes out of every gallon of gas that Americans buy. That gas tax is primarily the funding mechanism.

But we also tax diesel, so all the truckers who are on the road, every time you are driving down that two-lane highway and you wish the guy in front of you was going a little bit faster, just know that he is paying a lot in taxes while he is on that road. He is helping to build that road. Diesel taxes are higher than gasoline taxes, but because there are fewer diesel vehicles on the road, bring in less revenue.

We also have a tax on all trucks and trailers. We have a tax in this blue line on heavy vehicles, and we have a tax on tires. Again, all of these taxes come together not to tax one group of people to pay for another, but to tax users of our roads to pay for our roads. It has been a system that has served us fairly well in this Nation.

But we haven't raised that gas tax since the early 1990s. In the early 1990s, we set the gas tax at 18.4 cents a gallon, and we haven't raised it since. Mr. Speaker, I am not in favor of raising taxes. I am in favor of paying less taxes. I am in favor of taking on more of that responsibility back home.

But, again, in the case of post roads, we have to take on this responsibility. And the reason I am having this Special Order tonight, Mr. Speaker, is because the highway trust fund expires in May. We have about 2 months to sort out all of the challenges of how do we fund the Interstate Highway System going forward.

And for folks who say, Well, we have been funding it with an 18.4 cent gas tax for 25 years, why isn't that good enough today? the answer is, it may be, it may be good enough today. But understand that the buying power that we are getting out of that 18.4 cents has declined each and every year. Of course it has. The price of a Big Mac has gone up over the past 20 years, the price of a car has gone up over the past 20 years, the price of a home has gone up, the price of building roads has gone up, so the purchasing power that we are getting for our gas tax has gone down and down and down and down. Right now we are getting about 60 percent of the value out of that gas tax that we were getting when it was last changed in the early 1990s.

Now, what is the impact of that? Well, it is not just that the value of the purchasing power is going down; the mileage we are getting in our cars is going up.

My first car, Mr. Speaker—I don't know what your first car was—mine was a 1971 Volkswagen camper. I had 59 horsepower in the back of that camper to drive me anywhere I wanted to go. If I coasted downhill and only used the accelerator a little bit uphill, I would max out about 35 miles an hour. But I could get 14 miles a gallon if I tried. If I tried to drive that camper as efficiently as I could, I could get 14 miles to the gallon.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am driving a Chevy Volt. Most of my driving is free. It is coming off the battery. I am not paying any gas taxes at all. When I do have to turn on the electric generator in that Chevy Volt, I am getting 40 miles to the gallon. Just in my lifetime, the fuel efficiency is either triple, based on an engine, or no gas tax at all because I am using electricity.

This is what has happened. You go back to 1975, Mr. Speaker, this is the average miles per gallon that passenger cars and light trucks were getting. You get into the last half of the last decade,

you see that fuel efficiency is driving sharply forward, and the Obama administration wants to drive that fuel efficiency even higher. I am in favor of using private industry to create more efficient solutions. I am in favor of being able to reduce the fuel costs of families across this country. But what that is going to do as families are buying fewer and fewer gallons of gasoline is that the highway trust fund is going to get smaller and smaller and smaller.

Take a look at what has happened with the highway trust fund, Mr. Speaker. Beginning back in, I would say, the early 1990s, when folks were buying lots of gasoline and fuel costs were relatively low, the economy was doing well. We were running a trust fund surplus. Again, all of this gas tax money is coming in from all of these sources. We were spending it on those priorities that we have in the Interstate Highway System. Some of those priorities were building new interstate highways, some of those priorities were maintaining old interstate highways, some of those priorities were simply widening part of the Interstate Highway System. But we operated with a bit of a surplus in the transportation trust fund.

The reason this conversation has to happen today, Mr. Speaker, is that folks are returning to their districts for 2 weeks, where they are going to be hearing from folks who are sitting in that traffic, where they are going to be hearing from folks whose contracts to build those highways are about to expire. They are going to hear from their Governors and their state legislators who are no longer able to let the contracts for needed projects. Why? Because the money is expiring in 2 months. We are starting to run a trust fund deficit. There is not enough money coming in to meet the current needs.

Mr. Speaker, I don't really enjoy talking about the current needs. I didn't run for Congress to be in the maintenance business. I ran for Congress to be in the transformation business. I am more than a little embarrassed that what we are talking about here is, How do we maintain and improve the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System. Eisenhower was long gone from office before I was even born.

We are talking about how to maintain this infrastructure. I would like to be in the driverless car infrastructure business. I would like to be in the hypersonic jet infrastructure business. But where we are, because the calendar dictates it, is: How do we continue to maintain safe highways just 2 months from now?

You can't see these tick marks, Mr. Speaker, but we are talking about in the ballpark of $50 billion a year that goes into this effort, thousands and thousands and thousands of miles of interstate highways around the country, about $50 billion a year. The deficits are running down ultimately, by the end of our 10-year budget window, to almost $130 billion in highway deficits. We have to find a way to meet those needs.

We had a hearing in our committee just the other day, the Transportation Committee, Mr. Speaker, and I want to quote the mayor of Salt Lake City. He was there on behalf of the National League of Cities. This is not a notoriously conservative organization. Mayors are a practical bunch by nature. They have to respond to the needs of all of their citizens. They are a relatively liberal bunch by nature. But he says this:

I can tell you as someone who has spent a career working as a NEPA planner and lawyer that what has happened with what I view as an absolutely great environmental law, the National Environmental Policy Act, is truly unfortunate. We have gone from processes that should be a year or year and a half to processes that are 5 to 7 years in many big transportation projects.

NEPA is the Environmental Policy Act. That is what federally regulates all environmental decisions across the country, particularly as it relates to construction.

Time is money, Mr. Speaker, in transportation projects. There is not a Member in this Chamber who wants to see environmental degradation in this country. There is not a Member in this Chamber who wants to see the sky is less blue or the grass less green. Every Member in this Chamber cares about children and grandchildren and the next generation.

But here we have an advocate for the environmental protection laws that are available to us in this country and he says: Something has gone awry. We wrote this wonderful law in order to protect our environment, but now, instead of being able to complete needed projects in a year or 18 months, with litigation, special interest groups, these processes get dragged on for 5, 6, or 7 years, and that time means more money out of the highway trust fund in order to complete that project.

So what are we going to do, Mr. Speaker, about these coming trust fund deficits? Well, one thing we can do is help to address the policy failures that are delivering less than a dollar's worth of value to my constituents and your constituents for their dollar's worth of gas tax. If I could build a project today with that dollar, I could get a dollar's worth of value out of it, if I have to litigate the issue for 7 years, the value of that dollar is going to erode. I am going to have to waste that dollar on litigation costs.

We can change the law, and we can do so in a bipartisan way that absolutely respects all of our commitments to environmental protection but allows us to complete these needed taxes. Because I will tell you what doesn't help global warming, Mr. Speaker, and that is folks sitting on Atlanta highways for an hour every day not moving. If you are concerned about the use of fossil fuels in this country, I promise you that having people move slower in Atlanta is not helping. We need those folks to be able to move more quickly to their goal. We will reduce emissions as a result.

What else can we do, Mr. Speaker, as a body? What I have here—and I just chose the State of Georgia because it is that area that I know best—these are the Georgia statewide designated freight corridors. I live right up here, just outside of Atlanta, Mr. Speaker. I am right off I–85. That is Interstate 85, Federal Interstate 85, and that is designated as a freight corridor.

Our use of the roads is not just to get to and from the grocery store, of course, not just to get to and from school, but for farmers to get their produce from Iowa to our grocery store, for manufacturers to get their products from the computer factory in California to our schools. We had a national interest in these freight corridors.

One of these freight corridors runs out I–16. It runs out to the Port of Savannah. The Port of Savannah, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you know, it is the fastest-growing container port in the country, a container port being those ports that specialize in getting those 18-wheeler cargo containers off the ships, onto a chassis, delivering goods to where they need to go. Fastest-growing container port in the country, it sits out here at the end of I–16. We have major construction projects to get all the product off those ships out across the southeastern United States.

So this map of red lines, Mr. Speaker, represents not only interstate highways, but also some major Federal roads. I have got U.S. 1 listed here. U.S. 1, Mr. Speaker, as you may know, runs about, golly, about 2½ miles from this building. About 2½ miles west from this building you are going to hit U.S. 1.

□ 1300

U.S. 1 runs all the way down the eastern coast, from the great Northeast all the way down to Florida. It is a Federal transportation corridor. What is not on this list, Mr. Speaker, for example, is U.S. Highway 29. It runs right past my house in Gwinnett County.

It is a U.S. highway, and it consumes U.S. transportation dollars. While once upon a time it was a major corridor for moving nationally important equipment—freight, produce—today, it has become a sidebar.

My question is: If we are limited with our dollars, can we be more discriminating in choosing which roads have national importance?

I told you the tale of Forsyth County, which I represent, Mr. Speaker, and of its having the $200 million bond initiative to expand its major highway. Georgia 400 is its major highway. We don't need the Federal Government to take care of every single square inch of pavement in this country.

When we talked about establishing postal roads in 1787, there was kind of

the understanding that—of course, they had not contemplated pavement at all—if this were going to be a major maintained thoroughfare, we might have a Federal interest in it—not so anymore.

I talked about U.S. 1, Mr. Speaker. U.S. 1 is right out here, about 2½ miles away, but it is just between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. The Federal Government, with Federal tax dollars that are collected from all across the Nation, maintains three separate Federal roads.

We maintain the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, which is a National Park Service road. We take care of U.S. 1, and we take care of Interstate 95. Those roads are never more than 5 miles from each other; yet, because tradition dictates it, we are spending national dollars to maintain three relatively duplicative pieces of highway.

We have got to have that conversation. Maybe there is a reason unbeknownst to me why it is we can't just maintain one of those roads and why we have to maintain them all.

The Federal Government doesn't have to do everything for everybody, Mr. Speaker. We just have to make sure that those interstate corridors are being maintained, that those primary nationally designated freight corridors are being maintained.

It is okay to leave the rest for communities and States to handle. I want to give you an example. I am not picking on anybody in particular. These projects go on all across the country, Mr. Speaker.

You can see someone's home right here. They have got some holly bushes out in front and a little maple tree here that has been planted on the right-of-way. What you see here are brand-new curbs and sidewalks and about a 3½-foot bike lane that we spent a million Federal dollars to build.

Now, assuming this family wants a giant curb and a big sidewalk and a bike lane in their front yard, I am glad they were able to get it. I am glad that we are planting maple trees in the right-of-way there. We are not quite mowing the grass in that space, but I hope the community is going to take on that challenge.

This is not a major freight corridor. This is not an Interstate Highway System. This is a small, small road somewhere in America that $1 million worth of Federal taxpayer dollars are going to in order to beautify a street.

Mr. Speaker, it comes from a program called the Transportation Alternatives Program. Over the last 2 years, that has been more than $1 billion going towards these kinds of projects, almost $2 billion.

Let me tell you what kinds of big, important Federal projects are kind of rising to that constitutional level of building post roads for commerce.

Anything that you build that relates to a sidewalk counts. Anything that you create relating to bicycle infrastructure counts. Traffic calming techniques—I don't know what a traffic calming technique is, but if you can identify one, Mr. Speaker, we can pay for it out of this multibillion-dollar trust fund.

The construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas—Mr. Speaker, you do not want to be behind me when I am riding through a national park. You do not want to be behind me while I am going down that beautiful highway in Virginia that is running all the way down to the great State of Georgia because I am driving slowly, sucking it all in, and am turning in to every turnout along the way and am taking pictures.

I love a good drive, particularly in the fall, but I promise you I do not need one taxpayer dollar paying for one turnout on one highway so that I can get a better picture. We have got an entire Georgia transportation and tourism board, Mr. Speaker.

If we need a turnout in the great State of Georgia, if it is going to bring more tourist traffic to our area, if it is going to allow us to put in a small restaurant where folks can stop and eat and enjoy our beautiful scenery, we will build that because tourists will demand it, and it will grow our economy.

At a time when trust fund dollars have been eroded by inflation, at a time when we know we don't have enough money coming in to maintain our current Interstate Highway System, at a time that we are talking about raising taxes on the American consumer in order to provide those resources, isn't it also time to end the non-Federal priority spending that is currently embedded in the Federal gas tax, like turnouts?

Mr. Speaker, one of the projects that was built with that multibillion-dollar trust fund was down in the great State of Georgia. It is called the Silver Comet Trail. The truth is that we only have one really good, long bike trail in the entire metropolitan Atlanta area. It is the Silver Comet Trail, and it is fabulous. It is absolutely fabulous.

If you go out there on any beautiful day, you are going to have joggers; you are going to have walkers; you are going to have bike riders; folks are going to be pushing strollers. It is a festival of humanity there on that bike trail. It is a wonderful, wonderful way to spend your day. We spent 3.7 million Federal dollars so that my neighbors and I could have a fabulous biking and walking trail in our backyard. It was not my idea. I was not in Congress at the time.

We have got to ask ourselves: Is it worth raising taxes on the American driver and on American industry, which uses our roads, so that more local communities can build more fabulous bike trails in their own backyards?

I don't ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, whether bike trails are valuable or not. I believe them to be so. I ask my colleagues whether or not metropolitan Atlanta, which is the most prosperous major metropolitan city in the entire Southeastern United States, can afford to build its own bike trails or whether or not we need to call on the rest of the Nation to aid us in that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I have got another project here. It was only $60,000. Isn't that sad when we get to this place where we start talking about projects that are only thousands and thousands of dollars? When you are managing a $3.8 trillion budget, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to keep track of the thousands. That is why we don't want a big Federal budget. We don't want to be in the business of wasting money.

$60,000 went to a project called Ped Flag. Now, this is in a small downtown area out West, and there is a crosswalk going across the street, and folks are concerned about pedestrian safety. There are pedestrian tragedies every year in this country and every year in my community. We certainly want to do everything we can to stop them.

The $60,000 Ped Flag program goes to each end of a crosswalk, and it puts yellow flags in big buckets on each end of the crosswalk, Mr. Speaker, so that, when you are prepared to walk across the street, you can grab one of these flags, and you can wave it as you cross the street.

The street is two lanes, but you can wave it as you cross those two lanes to make sure that drivers coming down that low speed limit thoroughfare don't run into you. I think that is fabulous. I like a good parade, Mr. Speaker, and I love waving flags.

My question to you is: With all of the challenges facing this Chamber—we have got Social Security that is going bankrupt; we have got Medicare that is going bankrupt; we live in a dangerous world with ISIS and Russia and Iran—is it the priority for the tax dollars that we have been entrusted with—really, that we have confiscated from the American people—to spend 60,000 of those tax dollars to have buckets of flags on both sides of a two-lane street so that pedestrians can wave them as they cross?

If folks love parades as much as I do, Mr. Speaker, that local community can put those flags in place. A Federal grant program is not necessary to do so.

I have got an article here, Mr. Speaker, from just last month. It is talking about this program that allows these grant dollars to go out for all of these non-high-priority Federal purposes. They cite a $112,000 grant for a white squirrel sanctuary.

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing against white squirrels. I will slow down when I am driving as the gray squirrels in my community cross the street, but I have no interest in confiscating Federal tax dollars that were intended to maintain a critically important national highway infrastructure and having a local community who views that as free money spend it to create a white squirrel sanctuary.

Mr. Speaker, these dollars are going to build boardwalks in our beach communities. They are going to resurface bike trails. They are even going to buy driving simulators at car museums because that is kind of peripherally related to transportation.

In my day, Mr. Speaker, it was just that Atari 2600 on which you could do the night driving program. Today, we can spend 198,000 Federal gas tax dollars to buy driving simulators to go into museums so that, when folks come by—after they have driven on the ratty roads that were unmaintained to get to the museum—they can have a wonderful driving experience inside the federally taxpayer paid simulator.

Mr. Speaker, I don't fault museums for wanting simulators. I don't fault communities for wanting bike trails. I don't fault communities for wanting flag-waving crosswalks. I fault this Congress for facing a fiscal challenge of: How do we complete our constitutional responsibility to maintain our roads and to even have the discussion of raising tax dollars before we have completed making the current accounts more effective, more efficient, and more accountable?

Mr. Speaker, I do not value Members who simply talk about everything that is wrong and who make no recommendations about how to fix it. We need to narrow the number of roads that qualify for Federal support. We need to prioritize what are those roads that fall into that constitutional responsibility and which ones, obviously, do not. Prioritize that spending. Take care of only those mission critical roads. Leave the rest to local communities.

Two, deal with our environmental regulations that are slowing needed construction, not abolish our environmental regulations, not ignore our environmental stewardship responsibilities, but recognize that advocates for the environment, advocates for the NEPA Act—as the mayor of Salt Lake City suggested, even those advocates realize we have gone far afield from what was intended as we have years of expense and delay for projects that we ought to be able to complete in a year and in 18 months. Let's streamline that. That is two.

Three, take all of these feel-good projects that every one of us has heard of in our districts—those projects that don't have anything to do with major national thoroughfares, those projects that don't have anything to do with our constitutional responsibility to maintain our interstate corridors—and abolish those altogether.

□ 1315

Mr. Speaker, they did a poll the other day amongst young people in this country. Young people, of course, when you get your first job at 16, you get that paycheck, you thought you were making $8 an hour. It turns out after the government gets its share you are only making about $5 an hour. We find out we get lots of new voters when they get their first paycheck because folks realize the importance of having your voice heard.

The largest tax that 80 percent of American families pay, Mr. Speaker, is that payroll tax that is taken out of that paycheck before you even see it, that FICA line in your paycheck. The largest tax that 80 percent of American families pay, it goes to fund Social Security and Medicare; and yet in a recent poll among young people, more American young people believed they would see a UFO in their lifetime than believed they would see a Social Security check in their lifetime. Mr. Speaker, you cannot break promises to taxpayers in that way.

We have serious responsibilities in this Chamber. They do not include feel-good projects in local communities. They do not include squirrel sanctuaries, flag-waving projects, and boardwalk resurfacings. What they include is maintaining those mission-critical interstate corridors.

As we gather together to reauthorize the surface transportation bill, as we gather together to sort out the diminishing value of the highway trust fund, let us come together to restore some of that faith with the American taxpayer that we will be accountable, that we will be efficient, and that we will be effective in the use of every one of their taxpayer dollars. We cannot ask them for more until we have proven to them that we have used responsibly what they sent to us yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked transportation on the surface level. I want to briefly talk transportation at a port level.

I mentioned the port of Savannah, Mr. Speaker, that fastest growing container port in the world. You can't see it here on the map, but I have got one of those container ships coming into the port of Savannah, just loaded full. These giant cranes, it is amazing how quickly they can load and unload these giant container ships.

Funding for these kind of nationally important projects, these kind of projects that deliver value to the American taxpayer, that allow them to get the goods and products that they want from around the globe into their local markets for a lower cost—we are dredging the Savannah River right now in order to expand the Savannah harbor, this port, so that it can handle the New Panamax ships that are going to come through the new Panama Canal. These ships are giant, Mr. Speaker. If you haven't been to see them, you should take a look. They can bring in the order of three times more cargo in one ship. When you are taking a multiweek voyage across the Pacific Ocean, that is a big deal.

This project is going to cost $706 million, and it will benefit the entire eastern seaboard in greater value and lower costs. But it is going to benefit Georgia more than it is going to benefit most places. Why? Because we are going to have workers there, because our rest stops are going to be full, because our gasoline stations are going to be full. So the State of Georgia, even though this is a nationally significant project, is funding 40 percent of it out of our local coffers. We believe it is important to put your money where your mouth is.

Thinking about those delays that run up costs, we first started talking about doing this in the late 1990s, Mr. Speaker. We finally got Federal approval to begin last year. This was not a $700 million project 17 years ago when we wanted to begin it, but we couldn't begin it 17 years ago. We have only been able to begin it now. About $100 million is going to go out the door, Mr. Speaker, to get this project under way. If all goes well, we can finish this in about 5 years, but we are going to have to have that Federal-State partnership. For these projects that are not uniquely Federal, for these projects that are not uniquely State, we need both entities putting skin in the game to make these projects successful.

Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is about $100 million from the State coming this year, about $100 million from the Feds coming next year. What I want to ask my colleagues, as we talk about how to prioritize funding, how can we get together to squeeze out those projects that are of local import—and leave those to local dollars and local concerns—and include these projects that are of national import to make sure we get them done on time and under budget?

Mr. Speaker, back-of-the-envelope calculating that folks doing the construction at the port have done tell us that it is about $174 million annually in lost benefits as this project is delayed—lost benefits on the one hand, added costs on the other. I am always skeptical when somebody says: ROB, if you will only spend $1 on this project, I will get you $18 in return. I say: Good news. We have got an $18 trillion Federal debt. Let me give you $1 trillion for your project this year; you can give me back $18 trillion next year.

A lot of funny numbers go on in this Washington, D.C., math game that folks play.

But, undeniably, if we cannot compete at a local level, if American products begin to cost more to export relative to their foreign competitors because we can't handle the big Panamax ships, American workers will lose; American consumers will lose. These are national priorities that bring people together.

I want to set expectations, Mr. Speaker, on how we are going to get this done. Again, I want to go back. 1996 was when we first had this conversation, completed the very first study of getting this done; the very first conditional approval at the Federal level, 1999. In 2012, folks finally made the decision; South Carolina and Georgia sorted out their issues in May of 2013; final project permits came out

in July of 2013; State of Georgia, Johnny on the spot, funding it with $266 million. Another round of bond initiatives will go out this summer.

Mr. Speaker, 2019 is when this project is expected to be done. A project that could have started in 1997, a project that could have been done by 2003, a project that could have been a nation-leading project so that American goods could get out to the world in a competitive way as the new Panama Canal comes on line for us to be ready to go as a nation, what could have been a story of planning ahead and of success has become a story of decades-long delay and being behind.

Mr. Speaker, those are not academic conversations. Those are conversations that are represented with dollars and cents. It is American jobs lost; it is American productivity lost; it is international competitiveness lost. Item after item after item after item. We are in the midst of a surface transportation reauthorization bill and our highway trust fund; we are in the midst of an FAA reauthorization bill and our aviation funding mechanisms. Hopefully, we will be back to a water resources development bill again, as we were last year, dealing with developing our water resources.

The question in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, is never will we be involved in generating American productivity or will we not. The question is we will be involved, but on what and how. Let us move these low-priority projects off of the Federal budget, off of the Federal taxpayer, and back into local hands, where they can be accomplished more quickly and more efficiently at a lower dollar cost. Before we decide to raise taxes on the American people, let us ensure that every single dollar that we raise today is giving a dollar's worth of value for a dollar's worth of tax.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. We have big things in store for this year. They will be collaborative things. These are not Republican concerns; these are not Democratic concerns; these are American concerns. These are concerns of America's most deliberative and engaging body, the United States House of Representatives.

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

UPLIFTING STORIES FROM THE CINCINNATI AREA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROUZER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. CHABOT. I will not take that much time.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a lot of bad news these days and negative stories, but I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some uplifting stories from the Cincinnati area, the area that I happen to represent here in the United States Congress.

First, I would like to congratulate a Cincinnati broadcasting legend on a storied career. A week from tomorrow, Friday, April 3, Cincinnati will say good-bye to a longtime morning show host, Jim Scott, who is retiring after 47 years on the radio in Cincinnati.

Over the years, Mr. Scott has been synonymous with mornings, as hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Cincinnatians started their day listening to him cover the topics of the day. From politics and local news to entertainment and sports, Jim Scott covered every story in a style uniquely his own. His excellence was recognized back in 2002 when he won the Marconi Award for large market personality of the year.

Jim Scott has also been a pillar of the community, helping out with numerous charities and community service organizations, activities I am sure that he will continue. He has become a staple of the opening day parade for the Cincinnati Reds, who I hope have a great year this year.

I want to congratulate Jim Scott on his retirement and his outstanding career. Mornings in Cincinnati will not be the same without him.

Mr. Speaker, Cincinnati has also been blessed by the inspiring stories of two young ladies battling pediatric cancer, and I would like to take a moment to thank each of them for the example that they have provided and the hope that they have given to millions.

First, I would like to talk about Lauren Hill. For those who haven't heard Lauren's story, there really aren't words to describe her courage and resiliency in the face of insurmountable odds. Lauren loves to play basketball, a sport she had planned to play throughout her college years at Mount St. Joseph University. Unfortunately, Lauren was diagnosed with a rare form of inoperable, terminal brain cancer, DIPG, and doctors really weren't sure how long she would live.

For most people, the story would end there, but not for Lauren. She was determined to play in a college basketball game, and back on November 2, she joined her teammates on the court, and in front of a sold-out crowd at Xavier University's Cintas Center, she scored the opening basket.

That wasn't enough for Lauren. She also wanted to dedicate her remaining time to raising awareness of pediatric cancer. Through Layup 4 Lauren and other charitable efforts, she has helped raise over $1 million for research to combat pediatric cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I like to believe that each one of us is put on this Earth for a reason, and it is clear to me that Lauren's purpose was to inspire a city and a nation and to raise awareness for a terrible disease, a purpose she has fulfilled with a dignity and grace that is an inspiration to me and countless others. I am deeply grateful for Lauren's spirit and the example that she has provided for our community and for our Nation.

□ 1330

Our thoughts and prayers are with Lauren and her family.

But Lauren is not the only young lady with Cincinnati ties inspiring our Nation. We have also been blessed to learn the story of Leah Still, the 4-year-old daughter of Cincinnati Bengals' defensive lineman Devon Still.

Last year, Leah was also diagnosed with a rare form of pediatric cancer. Faced with this devastating news, Devon Still was determined to help his little girl in whatever way he could. Part of his effort was to use their story to help raise money to combat pediatric cancer and give hope to other families facing the same struggle they were.

The Cincinnati Bengals and the NFL joined Mr. Still in his efforts by agreeing to donate the proceeds of sales of Devon's number 75 Bengals jersey to Cincinnati Children's Hospital, which, by the way, is the number one children's hospital in the Nation in combating pediatric cancer. Together, they also raised over $1 million for pediatric cancer research.

While that is certainly great news, the story has an even happier ending. Yesterday, I, along with millions of others, was thrilled to learn that Leah's cancer was in remission.

Leah still has treatments ahead of her, and she should remain in our thoughts and prayers. But that was wonderful news, and a reason to be grateful.

May God bless all three of the remarkable people that I have just talked about.

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

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to address this. The bill we passed today is something that needed to be addressed. It was a problem that has been growing for about 16 years, or so.

The cut that was put into law has been changed 17 times in the last 16 or so years. It made cuts to healthcare providers. We have caused some healthcare providers to retire early.

It was $716 billion that ObamaCare took from Medicare in order to, supposedly, fund 30 million or so that we were told didn't have insurance. Now we have cost millions their health insurance policy they liked. And I say ''we.'' Not a single Republican voted for that bill. It has cost Americans, millions of Americans, the doctor that they wanted to use.

We have seen promise after promise that was made about ObamaCare that was broken. It absolutely wasn't true. Then we find out that there were advisers around the White House who were

advising all along: They are not going to be able to keep their insurance policy. They are not going to be able to keep their doctors.

Maybe we want to change the way that kind of thing is said. It did major damage—and continues to do major damage—to health care.

So, on top of that overlay, we had these ongoing cuts to the healthcare providers. If we didn't step in each year and temporarily pause them, it would have put so many healthcare providers out of business and made it extremely difficult for Americans to get the health care they need, even more than it already is, even more than ObamaCare has jeopardized. So something needed to be done.

My friend, Dr. MIKE BURGESS, had pushed through a fix, a remedy, last year of 63 pages. It was very well thought out. He is a very bright, terrific doctor, a great Congressman, and a friend. We have spent a lot of time this week talking about the fix to the cuts to reimbursement for physicians.

And the bill today, on the good side, provided a permanent fix. If this becomes law, if the Senate passes what we did, it stops the slow deletion of some healthcare providers' efforts and work.

This provides a framework from which Medicare can be reformed for the future. It is valued at $175 billion. And the best estimate we have gotten is that $140 billion of the $175 billion is not offset with any cuts anywhere else. This would be a straight addition of $140 billion to our children's and grandchildren's enormous debt—what some refer to as ''intergenerational theft.''

It does have Henry Hyde language protecting against Federal funds being used for abortion. I have always thought the world of Henry Hyde and was honored to overlap with him 2 years. His work in standing for the unborn children, the most innocent among us, is just an extraordinary life's work that he did.

I don't know that Federal funds for abortions for people on Medicare is as big an issue as some might think. Anyway, the Hyde language is in there. It puts it in the Tax Code. That is a big deal. Some of my Democratic friends were not big on that.

There is also reauthorization for CHIP. There are the secure rural schools. Our rural schools, especially those in national parks, have been cheated for many years from the income that they were supposed to have by giving up land they couldn't tax any more, by giving up other sources of revenue from the land.

They agreed to allow land to be used or become national forests, and they were to be reimbursed by proceeds from the sale of timber. But we have a Forest Service administration—not just this one; it has been going for a while—where production has either slowed dramatically or completely been eliminated, even though pine trees where I live are an entirely renewable resource. You plant them, and you are ready to harvest them in 15, 20 years. We are not talking sequoias. We are just talking a renewable resource. It is well managed in east Texas and other places around the country.

But since production has stopped and we are buying so much lumber from other countries now, it is not good for America, not good for our trade imbalance, but it has been a Federal Government policy. And it has put schools in an extremely detrimental position, especially in rural areas, especially in areas where there have been national forests.

So it is nice to have another bandaid, so to speak, to address that issue. It should have been in here. It should have been done before now.

But, on the other side, getting back to $140 billion that is not offset by cuts anywhere else, adding it into the intergenerational theft—and it also concerns me, we had 212 Republicans today that voted for this SGR fix. It would have been so easy to have enough of an adjustment into this bill that we could add six more Republicans, and it would have been able to pass without any Republican leader begging for support from the Democrats, without coming to support from conservatives.

With the vote on DHS funding, we saw 167 Republicans voted against it because it didn't keep our promise to stop the illegal, unconstitutional amnesty that DHS had done, as ordered by the President; and there were 75 Republicans, some of whom are very conservative, but they did vote with the Speaker on that bill and with the majority of Democrats to pass that funding.

But I think that gives us an indication that out of the Republican Conference—the massive portion of the Republican Conference represents very conservative districts, and there are Republicans that, thank God, we have that are from more moderate areas, but somewhere between one-fourth and one-third, perhaps.

It just seems like this bill today was one of those bills where we would be better off if we negotiated a deal among the Republicans and go through regular order. That is what we promised. You put us in the majority; we will go through regular order. We will have hearings on this entire bill. There will be open opportunities to discuss it, to amend it, to have legislative hearings, before you even do the votes on it in committee. We didn't do that.

The bill was filed 2 days ago, on the 24th. We had a couple of days with this bill. That is not adequate for something this important.

It does add some means testing for seniors. It appears very clear it is going to cause healthcare providers to have to add more clerical workers—people that don't do health care; they just do paperwork. So there will be more costs.

So we didn't have a chance to adequately investigate the terminology of this bill and the long-term effects it will have on health care. It is kind of important.

This also came 1 day after we voted for a budget that was important to get to the point where we could have reconciliation that let us deal with important issues like ObamaCare. We passed the budget easily, and we had a number of different budgets we could vote for. I thought TOM PRICE did a good job of marshalling the efforts on that.

But the point is most of us were so focused on the budget through the vote yesterday that we really had one night to prepare on this SGR with the actual language that was filed on Tuesday.

I was good with the 63 pages Dr. BURGESS had used last year, but there were over 200 pages. I really don't know the long-term effects of what we did; and that is why, though I have been clamoring for an SGR fix, I couldn't vote for it.

This isn't how we do things. We are supposed to first do no harm. We don't know what harm we may have done in that bill. We know we did some good, but we don't know what harm. We should have had some more time to analyze this and take the language back to our physicians, our healthcare providers, and say: You're the one doing this, you're the one trying to save lives, enhance lives, what will this do to you? What will this language do to you? Then come back and have the vote.

So I appreciate the work for those that have been spending so much time on what is often referred to as the ''doctor fix.'' We definitely needed that as another fix. This is more permanent. We don't know what the Senate will do, and that is another one of our problems.

There is some rather breathtaking news that has come out today about what the Obama administration has done in the way of damage to the nation of Israel—it sounds like this action was extremely petty—in an effort to slap Israel, without proper regard for the fact that they are the most important ally we have anywhere in the Middle East and one of the very most important allies we have in the world.

□ 1345

It is just breathtaking what was done. Actually, to put this in perspective, this article, March 23, from Joel Pollak, says, ''Obama's Chief of Staff Fires up J Street: Israel's Occupation Must End.''

The article says:

> White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough earned raucous cheers from the leftwing activists gathered at J Street's fifth annual conference in Washington on Monday when he attacked Israel's occupation of the West Bank. ''An occupation that has lasted almost 50 years must end.''
>
> J Street was founded to disrupt the close U.S.-Israel alliance and to serve as an alternative to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the powerful pro-Israel group.

Well, that is interesting. If we use Mr. McDonough's rationale about the

Israel occupation and how it must end, then that would mean that, at the turn of the 20th century, if he had been around clamoring for, on behalf of this President—were he President around the end of the 1800s—he would have been saying: it is time to end America's occupation of Texas.

Had he been around in, say, 1823, speaking for President Obama back then, had he been President then, if he used this same reasoning, he would have been saying: it is time for the occupation of our Thirteen Colonies to stop, and we give all the land back to England. This is no time for the Thirteen Colonies to continue to occupy what we are calling the United States.

It is time to give that back to England. It was theirs originally. The French had some at one time. There were differing claims, but basically time to quit occupying the United States and give this all back to England.

It is time to give the West of the United States, you might have heard him say, if he had been around in the early 20th century, time to give back all the West to whoever had it before, whether it was Mexico, Spain, whoever may have been claiming it; we have been occupying it.

That is not the way the world works. That is not the way the United States worked. Native American tribes were constantly taking each other on, different parts of the country, taking over others' land. That has gone on around the world.

When you have a group of people living in the nation of Israel saying, We refuse to ever recognize Israel's right to exist, we want to wipe the Jewish people off the map, we want to wipe Israel off the map, then that is not a nation that you sit down with.

Then when you have a nation like Iran, that is doing—they make clear, even as of last week, that the top leaders in Iran want death to America. Well, apparently, when this administration hears a religious fanatic that has killed American soldiers, killed American civilians, has really been at the lead of killing Americans wherever they could find them and have an opportunity to kill them and want to wipe Israel off the map, as the Little Satan, and wipe America off the map, as the Great Satan—they have continued to pursue nuclear weapons, and while this administration was rushing and continue to rush to talk to the leaders in Iran, it leaves some of us aghast at how blind the administration can be as to who is our friend and who is our enemy.

It was Denis McDonough, this article talks about, speaking to the group, according to this article, that was founded to disrupt the close relationship between U.S. and Israel, and he fired them up, saying the occupation that lasted almost 50 years must end.

It reminded me, oh, yeah, I remember another speech he gave, and this transcript is from the White House Web site. This was March 6 of 2011, and Denis McDonough, the same guy that thinks we need to run Israel out of the land of Israel, he said this—and I am quoting from the speech from the White House Web site.

''Thank you, Imam Magid, for your very kind introduction and welcome. I know that President Obama was very grateful that you led the prayer at last summer's Iftar dinner at the White House which, as the President noted, is a tradition stretching back more than two centuries to when Thomas Jefferson hosted the first Iftar at the White House. Thank you also for being one of our''—I might parenthetically interject here into Mr. McDonough's speech, glowing praise for Imam Magid, that actually this is Imam Magid who was president of the Islamic Society of North America.

The Islamic Society of North America, a little background on them, they were named as a coconspirator to fund terrorism in the largest prosecution in the United States history for funding of terrorism—this was in a United States district court in Dallas—in short, referred to as the Holy Land Foundation trial. They were the main defendant, their principals.

The list of unindicted coconspirators from that trial included the Council on American Islamic Relations, CAIR; the Islamic Society of North America, ISNA; and the North American Islamic Trust, NAIT. These coconspirators were not tried in the first round of prosecutions in Dallas under the Bush administration, but in November of 2008, all five defendants were convicted on a massive number of charges of supporting terrorism.

The evidence utilized in the first round of the prosecutions, some that participated anticipate would be used in another trial against other named coconspirators if they were successful in getting the first convictions, which they did.

However, before the convictions were finalized, there was an election. President Obama was elected President, and we got a new Attorney General, and they decided, despite what the evidence showed, despite what the courts had found, they are not going to prosecute the Islamic Society of North America and CAIR—CAIR has a very lovely building just down the street from us here. I can see CAIR from my window.

In the case in Dallas, CAIR, NAIT, ISNA, they filed pleadings demanding that the judge remove their names as coconspirators in supporting terrorism. The judge reviewed all the evidence, had the hearing, and he ruled that their names would not be struck as coconspirators because there was plenty of evidence to support them as coconspirators supporting terrorism.

They appealed that to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals for the United States, and the fifth circuit, in their order, confirmed that there was a prima facie case made that the entities, CAIR, NAIT, ISNA, those associations have strong associations with the Muslim Brotherhood, namely Hamas, its Palestinian branch, which was specifically designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. Government.

Anyway, the organization here that the Federal courts found had plenty of evidence to make a case against them, as supporters of terrorism, have become partners with this administration, and that is why Denis McDonough, who was getting the acclaim for demanding Israel leave part of Israeli territory, he was there back in 2011, giving praise to Imam Magid, thanking him for his wonderful prayers at the White House.

This is a guy that is president of what two Federal courts have said had plenty of evidence to show they are coconspirators in supporting terrorism.

This business about, oh, the long tradition going back to Thomas Jefferson of Iftar at the White House, Iftar is the celebration during the month of August—or after the fasting during the month of August for the religious observance of Muslims, and Iftar is the feast after the fasting.

If you go back to what they say was the first Iftar under Thomas Jefferson, it doesn't appear to me that Jefferson realized he was having an Iftar dinner. He wanted to have a dinner with a Muslim leader, and he couldn't do it until the fasting was over, and so when he could eat, they had a meal.

It is kind of like hearing people say: Well, Thomas Jefferson, having a copy of the Koran shows how open-minded it was.

No, it shows the fact that he had been a diplomat negotiating with radical Islamists called Barbary pirates as to why they kept capturing United States Navy—not Navy—but seamen and holding them for ransom.

They had so many of our sailors that they held in captivity, we were paying a massive part of our budget for ransom to get these back. Jefferson was one of those that went over and negotiated and apparently asked: Why do you keep attacking us? We don't even have a navy. Why you are attacking us? We are not a threat to you.

He was reportedly told: In our religion, we believe that if we die while attacking you, an infidel, we go to paradise.

Jefferson was so well read, he couldn't believe there was a religion that thought you could go to paradise if you die killing innocent people, so he got his own English translation of the Koran.

His ultimate action was to create and send a new thing called United States Marines to the shores of Tripoli because he realized there is not going to be any negotiation that is adequate to deal with these radical Islamists. There is only one way to beat them, and that is to physically beat them in a fight to the finish. It kept them off our backs for some time.

Well, that is Denis McDonough, speaking for the President in 2011 and

now. Then we know that the White House is doing everything it can to bend over backwards, the State Department: Oh, Iran, what can we do for you?

Okay. Now, we find out today they are going to let them have centrifuges spinning in their secret facility they didn't even disclose until we found out about it, and they are going to let them keep having centrifuges spin there.

Look, they will almost do anything to get them to sign some kind of agreement, bending over backwards; but they can't spare a minute to meet with the leader of Israel, can't spare the President, Vice President, or one of the Cabinet to come listen to Netanyahu—oh, no.

Then, today, this outrage has come to light, that the United States, the Obama administration, has declassified a document that reveals Israel's nuclear program to the world, especially to Iran and to those who want to destroy Israel, so they will know exactly what they are after, what they are up against.

□ 1400

What has happened, what has come to light today of this administration declassifying a document, obviously, it is a slap at Netanyahu. It is a slap at the Israeli people for coming out in droves to support a group of representatives that this President doesn't approve of.

We are betraying this great ally of ours: Israel. If you believe the Bible, judgment will be coming down on our country for what our elected officials and appointed officials have done in betraying Israel. There will be problems for this.

If you don't believe the Bible, then just use common sense. When you betray your most trusted ally in this torn-apart Middle East, then you are going to have problems galore.

I have talked with leaders in those countries. I can't now because the Speaker won't let me go talk to them overseas anymore. That is what you call retribution if you don't support the Speaker. I get that. I am fine with that. As a result of him canceling my trip this weekend, I get to be on FOX News. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Somebody needs to be friendly to our allies and stand up against our enemies, and this administration is not doing it.

This betrayal is going to do more damage in the world than the snotty little act that was intended to slap at Netanyahu and the Israeli voters than we could possibly imagine. This is just unbelievable.

Now, if you believe that there are lessons worth noting in the Bible, you could go back to King Hezekiah, who entertained the Babylonian leaders. If you believe the account in the Bible, God sent Isaiah to Hezekiah and asked him: What have you done?

He already knew; but Hezekiah said, in effect—and this is Texas paraphrase—well, we met with these lovely, wonderful leaders from Babylon, and we showed them all of our treasure.

In the most correct translation, he adds: And we showed them all of the defenses we have in our arsenal.

Isaiah basically says: Because you have done that, you fool, you will lose the country.

This is the kind of thing that brings down nations. It was petty, and it was a betrayal, and people need to be called to account for it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. PAYNE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of foot surgery.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, March 26, 2015.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to clause 2(a) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I submit the Rules of the Committee on Homeland Security for the 114th Congress for publication in the Congressional Record. On January 21, 2015, the Committee on Homeland Security met in open session and adopted these Committee Rules by unanimous consent, a quorum being present; on March 26, 2015, the Committee agreed to modify the Committee Rules, by voice vote, a quorum being present. Attached are the Rules of Committee on Homeland Security for the 114th Congress, as amended.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

Enclosure.

Adopted January 21, 2015
Modified March 26, 2015

RULE I.—GENERAL PROVISIONS.

(A) *Applicability of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives.*—The Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives (the ''House'') are the rules of the Committee on Homeland Security (the ''Committee'') and its subcommittees insofar as applicable.

(B) *Applicability to Subcommittees.*—Except where the terms ''Full Committee'' and ''subcommittee'' are specifically mentioned, the following rules shall apply to the Committee's subcommittees and their respective Chairmen and Ranking Minority Members to the same extent as they apply to the Full Committee and its Chairman and Ranking Minority Member.

(C) *Appointments by the Chairman.*—Clause 2(d) of Rule XI of the House shall govern the designation of a Vice Chairman of the Full Committee.

(D) *Recommendation of Conferees.*—Whenever the Speaker of the House is to appoint a conference committee on a matter within the jurisdiction of the Full Committee, the Chairman shall recommend to the Speaker of the House conferees from the Full Committee. In making recommendations of Minority Members as conferees, the Chairman shall do so with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee.

(E) *Motions to Disagree.*—The Chairman is authorized to offer a motion under clause 1 of Rule XXII of the Rules of the House whenever the Chairman considers it appropriate.

(F) *Committee Website.*—The Chairman shall maintain an official Committee web site for the purposes of furthering the Committee's legislative and oversight responsibilities, including communicating information about the Committee's activities to Committee Members, other Members, and the public at large. The Ranking Minority Member may maintain a similar web site for the same purposes. The official Committee web site shall display a link on its home page to the web site maintained by the Ranking Minority Member.

(G) *Activity Report.*—Not later than January 2 of each odd numbered year, the Committee shall submit to the House a report on the activities of the Committee. After adjournment *sine die* of the last regular session of a Congress, or after December 15 of an even-numbered year, whichever occurs first, the Chair may file the report with the Clerk at any time and without approval of the Committee provided that a copy of the report has been available to each Member of the Committee for at least seven calendar days and the report includes any supplemental, minority, additional, or dissenting views submitted by a Member of the Committee.

RULE II.—COMMITTEE PANELS

(A) *Designation.*—The Chairman of the Full Committee, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, may designate a panel of the Committee consisting of Members of the Committee to inquire into and take testimony on a matter or matters that warrant enhanced consideration and to report to the Committee.

(B) *Duration.*—No panel appointed by the Chairman shall continue in existence for more than six months after the appointment.

(C) *Party Ratios and Appointment*—The ratio of Majority to Minority Members shall be comparable to the Full Committee, consistent with the party ratios established by the Majority party, with all Majority members of the panels appointed by the Chairman of the Committee and all Minority members appointed by the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee. The Chairman of the Committee shall choose one of the Majority Members so appointed who does not currently chair another Subcommittee of the Committee to serve as Chairman of the panel. The Ranking Minority Member of the Committee shall similarly choose the Ranking Minority Member of the panel.

(D) *Ex Officio Members.*—The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee may serve as ex-officio Members of each committee panel but are not authorized to vote on matters that arise before a committee panel and shall not be counted to satisfy the quorum requirement for any purpose other than taking testimony.

(E) *Jurisdiction.*—No panel shall have legislative jurisdiction.

(F) *Applicability of Committee Rules.*—Any designated panel shall be subject to all Committee Rules herein.

RULE III—SUBCOMMITTEES.

(A) *Generally.*—The Full Committee shall be organized into the following six standing subcommittees and each shall have specific responsibility for such measures or matters as the Chairman refers to it:

(1) Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence;

(2) Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security;

(3) Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection and Security Technologies;

(4) Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency;

(5) Subcommittee on Transportation Security; and

(6) Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications.

(B) *Selection and Ratio of Subcommittee Members.*—The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee shall select their respective Members of each subcommittee. The ratio of Majority to Minority Members shall be comparable to the Full Committee, consistent with the party ratios established by the Majority party, except that each subcommittee shall have at least two more Majority Members than Minority Members.

(C) *Ex Officio Members.*—The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee shall be *ex officio* members of each subcommittee but are not authorized to vote on matters that arise before each subcommittee. The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee shall only be counted to satisfy the quorum requirement for the purpose of taking testimony and receiving evidence.

(D) *Powers and Duties of Subcommittees.*—Except as otherwise directed by the Chairman of the Full Committee, each subcommittee is authorized to meet, hold hearings, receive testimony, mark up legislation, and report to the Full Committee on all matters within its purview. Subcommittee Chairmen shall set hearing and meeting dates only with the approval of the Chairman of the Full Committee. To the greatest extent practicable, no more than one meeting and hearing should be scheduled for a given time.

(E) *Special Voting Provision.*—If a tie vote occurs in a Subcommittee on the question of forwarding any measure to the Full Committee, the measure shall be placed on the agenda for Full Committee consideration as if it had been ordered reported by the Subcommittee without recommendation.

RULE IV.—TIME OF MEETINGS.

(A) *Regular Meeting Date.*—The regular meeting date and time for the transaction of business of the Full Committee shall be at 10:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday that the House is in Session each month, unless otherwise directed by the Chairman.

(B) *Additional Meetings.*—At the discretion of the Chairman, additional meetings of the Committee may be scheduled for the consideration of any legislation or other matters pending before the Committee or to conduct other Committee business. The Committee shall meet for such purposes pursuant to the call of the Chairman.

(C) *Consideration*—Except in the case of a special meeting held under clause 2(c)(2) of House Rule XI, the determination of the business to be considered at each meeting of the Committee shall be made by the Chairman.

RULE V.—NOTICE AND PUBLICATION.

(A) *Notice.*—

(1) Hearings.—Pursuant to clause 2(g)(3) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Committee shall make public announcement of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing before the Full Committee or subcommittee, which may not commence earlier than one week after such notice. However, if the Chairman of the Committee, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, determines that there is good cause to begin the hearing sooner, or if the Committee so determines by majority vote, a quorum being present for the transaction of business, the Chairman shall make the announcement at the earliest possible date. The names of all witnesses scheduled to appear at such hearing shall be provided to Members no later than 48 hours prior to the commencement of such hearing.

(2) Meetings.—The date, time, place and subject matter of any meeting, which could be a briefing, other than a hearing or a regularly scheduled meeting, may not commence earlier than the third day on which Members have notice thereof except in the case of a special meeting called under clause 2(c)(2) of House Rule XI. These notice requirements may be waived if the Chairman with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, determines that there is good cause to begin the meeting sooner or if the Committee so determines by majority vote, a quorum being present for the transaction of business.

(a) At least 48 hours prior to the commencement of a meeting for the markup of legislation, or at the time of announcement of the meeting, if less than 48 hours under Rule V(A)(2), the text of such legislation to be marked up shall be provided to the Members, made publicly available in electronic form, and posted on the official Committee web site.

(b) Not later than 24 hours after concluding a meeting to consider legislation, the text of such legislation as ordered forwarded or reported, including any amendments adopted or defeated, shall be made publicly available in electronic form and posted on the official Committee web site.

(3) Publication—The meeting or hearing announcement shall be promptly published in the Daily Digest portion of the Congressional Record. To the greatest extent practicable, meeting announcements shall be entered into the Committee scheduling service of the House Information Resources.

RULE VI.—OPEN MEETINGS AND HEARINGS; BROADCASTING.

(A) *Open Meetings.*—All meetings and hearings of the Committee shall be open to the public including to radio, television, and still photography coverage, except as provided by Rule XI of the Rules of the House or when the Committee, in open session and with a majority present, determines by recorded vote that all or part of the remainder of that hearing on that day shall be closed to the public because disclosure of testimony, evidence, or other matters to be considered would endanger the national security, compromise sensitive law enforcement information, tend to defame, degrade or incriminate a witness, or violate any law or rule of the House of Representatives.

(B) *Broadcasting.*—Whenever any hearing or meeting conducted by the Committee is open to the public, the Committee shall permit that hearing or meeting to be covered by television broadcast, internet broadcast, print media, and still photography, or by any of such methods of coverage, in accordance with the provisions of clause 4 of Rule XI of the Rules of the House. Operation and use of any Committee operated broadcast system shall be fair and nonpartisan and in accordance with clause 4(b) of Rule XI and all other applicable rules of the Committee and the House. Priority shall be given by the Committee to members of the Press Galleries. Pursuant to clause 2(e) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, provide audio and video coverage of each hearing or meeting in a manner that allows the public to easily listen to and view the proceedings and shall maintain the recordings of such coverage in a manner that is easily accessible to the public.

(C) *Transcripts.*—A transcript shall be made of the testimony of each witness appearing before the Committee during a Committee hearing. All transcripts of meetings or hearings that are open to the public shall be made available.

RULE VII.—PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS AND HEARINGS.

(A) *Opening Statements.*—At any meeting of the Committee, the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member shall be entitled to present oral opening statements of five minutes each. Other Members may submit written opening statements for the record. The Chairman presiding over the meeting may permit additional opening statements by other Members of the Full Committee or of that subcommittee, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member.

(B) *The Five-Minute Rule.*—The time any one Member may address the Committee on any bill, motion, or other matter under consideration by the Committee shall not exceed five minutes, and then only when the Member has been recognized by the Chairman, except that this time limit may be extended when permitted by unanimous consent.

(C) *Postponement of Vote.*—The Chairman may postpone further proceedings when a record vote is ordered on the question of approving any measure or matter or adopting an amendment. The Chairman may resume proceedings on a postponed vote at any time, provided that all reasonable steps have been taken to notify Members of the resumption of such proceedings, including circulation of notice by the Clerk of the Committee, or other designee of the Chair. When proceedings resume on a postponed question, notwithstanding any intervening order for the previous question, an underlying proposition shall remain subject to further debate or amendment to the same extent as when the question was postponed.

(D) *Contempt Procedures.*—No recommendation that a person be cited for contempt of Congress shall be forwarded to the House unless and until the Full Committee has, upon notice to all its Members, met and considered the alleged contempt. The person to be cited for contempt shall be afforded, upon notice of at least 72 hours, an opportunity to state why he or she should not be held in contempt prior to a vote of the Full Committee, with a quorum being present, on the question whether to forward such recommendation to the House. Such statement shall be, in the discretion of the Chairman, either in writing or in person before the Full Committee.

(E) *Record.*—Members may have 10 business days to submit to the Chief Clerk of the Committee their statements for the record, and, in the case of a hearing, additional questions for the hearing record to be directed towards a witness at the hearing.

RULE VIII.—WITNESSES.

(A) *Questioning of Witnesses.*—

(1) Questioning of witnesses by Members will be conducted under the five- minute rule unless the Committee adopts a motion permitted by clause 2(j)(2) of House Rule XI.

(2) In questioning witnesses under the five-minute rule, the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member shall first be recognized. In a subcommittee meeting or hearing, the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee are then recognized. All other Members who are present before the commencement of the meeting or hearing will be recognized in the order of seniority on the Committee, alternating between Majority and Minority Members. Committee Members arriving after the commencement of the hearing shall be recognized in order of appearance, alternating between Majority

and Minority Members, after all Members present at the beginning of the hearing have been recognized. Each Member shall be recognized at least once before any Member is given a second opportunity to question a witness.

(3) The Chairman, in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, or the Committee by motion, may permit an extension of the period of questioning of a witness beyond five minutes but the time allotted must be equally apportioned to the Majority party and the Minority and may not exceed one hour in the aggregate.

(4) The Chairman, in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, or the Committee by motion, may permit Committee staff of the Majority and Minority to question a witness for a specified period of time, but the time allotted must be equally apportioned to the Majority and Minority staff and may not exceed one hour in the aggregate.

(B) *Minority Witnesses.*—Whenever a hearing is conducted by the Committee upon any measure or matter, the Minority party Members on the Committee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman by a majority of those Minority Members before the completion of such hearing, to call witnesses selected by the Minority to testify with respect to that measure or matter during at least one day of hearing thereon.

(C) *Oath or Affirmation.*—The Chairman of the Committee or any Member designated by the Chairman, may administer an oath to any witness.

(D) *Statements by Witnesses.*—

(1) Consistent with the notice given, and to the greatest extent practicable, witnesses shall submit a prepared or written statement for the record of the proceedings (including, where practicable, an electronic copy) with the Clerk of the Committee no less than 48 hours in advance of the witness's appearance before the Committee. Unless the 48 hour requirement is waived or otherwise modified by the Chairman, after consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, the failure to comply with this requirement may result in the exclusion of the written testimony from the healing record and/or the barring of an oral presentation of the testimony. The Clerk of the Committee shall provide any such prepared or written statement submitted to the Clerk prior to the hearing to the Members of the Committee prior to the commencement of the hearing.

(2) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vita and a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the current calendar year or either of the two preceding calendar years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing. Such disclosures shall include the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing, and the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter jurisdiction of the hearing originating with a foreign government. Such statements, with the appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

RULE IX.—QUORUM.

Quorum Requirements.—Two Members shall constitute a quorum for purposes of taking testimony and receiving evidence. One-third of the Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for conducting business, except for (1) reporting a measure or recommendation; (2) closing Committee meetings to the public, pursuant to Committee Rule IV; (3) any other action for which an actual majority quorum is required by any rule of the House of Representatives or by law. The Chairman's staff shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member's staff when scheduling meetings and hearings, to ensure that a quorum for any purpose will include at least one Minority Member of the Committee.

RULE X.—DECORUM.

(A) *Breaches of Decorum.*—The Chairman may punish breaches of order and decorum, by censure and exclusion from the hearing; and the Committee may cite the offender to the House for contempt.

(B) *Access to Dais.*—Access to the dais before, during, and after a hearing, markup, or other meeting of the Committee shall be limited to Members and staff of the Committee. Subject to availability of space on the dais, Committee Members' personal staff may be present on the dais during a hearing if their employing Member is seated on the dais and during a markup or other meeting if their employing Member is the author of a measure or amendment under consideration by the Committee, but only during the time that the measure or amendment is under active consideration by the Committee, or otherwise at the discretion of the Chairman, or of the Ranking Minority Member for personal staff employed by a Minority Member.

(C) *Wireless Communications Use Prohibited.*—During a hearing, mark-up, or other meeting of the Committee, ringing or audible sounds or conversational use of cellular telephones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the Committee room.

RULE XI.—REFERRALS TO SUBCOMMITTEES.

Referral of Bills and Other Matters by Chairman.—Except for bills and other matters retained by the Chairman for Full Committee consideration, each bill or other matter referred to the Full Committee shall be referred by the Chairman to one or more subcommittees within two weeks of receipt by the Committee. In referring any measure or matter to a subcommittee, the Chair may specify a date by which the subcommittee shall report thereon to the Full Committee. Bills or other matters referred to subcommittees may be reassigned or discharged by the Chairman.

RULE XII.—SUBPOENAS.

(A) *Authorization.*—The power to authorize and issue subpoenas is delegated to the Chairman of the Full Committee, as provided for under clause 2(m)(3)(A)(i) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives. The Chairman shall notify the Ranking Minority Member prior to issuing any subpoena under such authority. To the extent practicable, the Chairman shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member at least 24 hours in advance of a subpoena being issued under such authority, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays. The Chairman of the Full Committee shall notify Members of the Committee of the authorization and issuance of a subpoena under this rule as soon as practicable, but in no event later than one week after service of such subpoena.

(B) *Disclosure.*—Provisions may be included in a subpoena with the concurrence of the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member of the Full Committee, or by the Committee, to prevent the disclosure of the Full Committee's demands for information when deemed necessary for the security of information or the progress of an investigation, including but not limited to prohibiting the revelation by witnesses and their counsel of Full Committee's inquiries.

(C) *Subpoena duces tecum.*—A subpoena *duces tecum* may be issued whose return to the Committee Clerk shall occur at a time and place other than that of a regularly scheduled meeting.

RULE XIII.—COMMITTEE STAFF.

(A) *Generally.*—Committee staff members are subject to the provisions of clause 9 of House Rule X and must be eligible to be considered for routine access to classified information.

(B) *Staff Assignments.*—For purposes of these rules, Committee staff means the employees of the Committee, detailees, fellows, or any other person engaged by contract or otherwise to perform services for, or at the request of, the Committee. All such persons shall be either Majority, Minority, or shared staff. The Chairman shall appoint, supervise, where applicable determine remuneration of, and may remove Majority staff The Ranking Minority Member shall appoint, supervise, where applicable determine remuneration of, and may remove Minority staff. In consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, the Chairman may appoint, supervise, determine remuneration of and may remove shared staff that is assigned to service of the Committee. The Chairman shall certify Committee staff appointments, including appointments by the Ranking Minority Member, as required.

(C) *Divulgence of Information.*—Prior to the public acknowledgement by the Chairman or the Committee of a decision to initiate an investigation of a particular person, entity, or subject, no member of the Committee staff shall knowingly divulge to any person any information, including non-classified information, which comes into his or her possession by virtue of his or her status as a member of the Committee staff, if the member of the Committee staff has a reasonable expectation that such information may alert the subject of a Committee investigation to the existence, nature, or substance of such investigation, unless authorized to do so by the Chairman or the Committee.

RULE XIV.—COMMITTEE MEMBER AND COMMITTEE STAFF TRAVEL.

(A) *Approval of Travel.*—Consistent with the primary expense resolution and such additional expense resolutions as may have been approved, travel to be reimbursed from funds set aside for the Committee for any Committee Member or Committee staff shall be paid only upon the prior authorization of the Chairman. Travel may be authorized by the Chairman for any Committee Member or Committee staff only in connection with official Committee business, such as the attendance of hearings conducted by the Committee and meetings, conferences, site visits, and investigations that involve activities or subject matters under the general jurisdiction of the Full Committee.

(1) *Proposed Travel by Majority Party Committee Members and Committee Staff.*—In the case of proposed travel by Majority party Committee Members or Committee staff, before such authorization is given, there shall be submitted to the Chairman in writing the following: (a) the purpose of the travel; (b) the dates during which the travel is to be made and the date or dates of the event for which the travel is being made; (c) the location of the event for which the travel is to be made; (d) the estimated total cost of the travel; and (e) the names of Members and staff seeking authorization. On the basis of that information, the Chairman shall determine whether the proposed travel is for official Committee business, concerns a subject matter under the jurisdiction of the Full Committee, and is not excessively costly in

view of the Committee business proposed to be conducted.

(2) *Proposed Travel by Minority Party Committee Members and Committee Staff.*—In the case of proposed travel by Minority party Committee Members or Committee staff, the Ranking Minority Member shall provide to the Chairman a written representation setting forth the information specified in items (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of subparagraph (1) and his or her determination that such travel complies with the other requirements of subparagraph (1).

(B) *Foreign Travel.*—Committee Member and Committee staff requests for foreign travel must include a written representation setting forth the information specified in items (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of subparagraph (A)(1) and be submitted to the Chairman and, absent extenuating circumstances, to the Ranking Minority Member, not fewer than ten business days prior to the start of the travel. Within thirty days of the conclusion of any such foreign travel authorized under this rule, there shall be submitted to the Chairman a written report summarizing the information gained as a result of the travel in question, or other Committee objectives served by such travel. The requirements of this section may be waived or abridged by the Chairman.

(C) *Compliance with Committee Travel Policy and Guidelines.*—Travel must be in accordance with the Committee Travel Policy and Guidelines, as well as with House Rules, the Travel Guidelines and Regulations and any additional guidance set forth by the Committee on Ethics and the Committee on House Administration. Committee Members and staff shall follow these rules, policies, guidelines, and regulations in requesting and proceeding with any Committee-related travel.

RULE XV.—CLASSIFIED AND CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

(A) *Security Precautions.*—Committee staff offices, including Majority and Minority offices, shall operate under strict security precautions administered by the Security Officer of the Committee. A security officer shall be on duty at all times during normal office hours. Classified documents and controlled unclassified information (CUI—formerly known as sensitive but unclassified (SBU) information—may be destroyed, discussed, examined, handled, reviewed, stored, transported and used only in an appropriately secure manner in accordance with all applicable laws, executive orders, and other governing authorities. Such documents may be removed from the Committee's offices only in furtherance of official Committee business. Appropriate security procedures, as determined by the Chairman in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member, shall govern the handling of such documents removed from the Committee's offices.

(B) *Temporary Custody of Executive Branch Material.*—Executive branch documents or other materials containing classified information in any form that were not made part of the record of a Committee hearing, did not originate in the Committee or the House, and are not otherwise records of the Committee shall, while in the custody of the Committee, be segregated and maintained by the Committee in the same manner as Committee records that are classified. Such documents and other materials shall be returned to the Executive branch agency from which they were obtained at the earliest practicable time.

(C) *Access by Committee Staff.*—Access to classified information supplied to the Committee shall be limited to Committee staff members with appropriate security clearances and a need-toknow, as determined by the Chairman or Ranking Minority Member, and under the direction of the Majority or Minority Staff Directors.

(D) *Maintaining Confidentiality.*—No Committee Member or Committee staff shall disclose, in whole or in part or by way of summary, to any person who is not a Committee Member or authorized Committee staff for any purpose or in connection with any proceeding, judicial or otherwise, any testimony given before the Committee in executive session except for purposes of obtaining an official classification of such testimony. Classified information and controlled unclassified information (CUI) shall be handled in accordance with all applicable laws, executive orders, and other governing authorities and consistently with the provisions of these rules and Committee procedures.

(E) *Oath.*—Before a Committee Member or Committee staff may have access to classified information, the following oath (or affirmation) shall be executed:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will not disclose any classified information received in the course of my service on the Committee on Homeland Security, except as authorized by the Committee or the House of Representatives or in accordance with the Rules of such Committee or the Rules of the House.

Copies of the executed oath (or affirmation) shall be retained by the Clerk of the Committee as part of the records of the Committee.

(F) *Disciplinary Action.*—The Chairman shall immediately consider disciplinary action in the event any Committee Member or Committee staff member fails to conform to the provisions of these rules governing the disclosure of classified or unclassified information. Such disciplinary action may include, but shall not be limited to, immediate dismissal from the Committee staff, criminal referral to the Justice Department, and notification of the Speaker of the House. With respect to Minority staff, the Chairman shall consider such disciplinary action in consultation with the Ranking Minority Member.

RULE XVI.—COMMITTEE RECORDS.

(A) *Committee Records.*—Committee Records shall constitute all data, charts and files in possession of the Committee and shall be maintained in accordance with clause 2(e) of House Rule XI.

(B) *Legislative Calendar.*—The Clerk of the Committee shall maintain a printed calendar for the information of each Committee Member showing any procedural or legislative measures considered or scheduled to be considered by the Committee, and the status of such measures and such other matters as the Committee determines shall be included. The calendar shall be revised from time to time to show pertinent changes. A copy of such revisions shall be made available to each Member of the Committee upon request.

(C) *Members Right To Access.*—Members of the Committee and of the House shall have access to all official Committee Records. Access to Committee files shall be limited to examination within the Committee offices at reasonable times. Access to Committee Records that contain classified information shall be provided in a manner consistent with these rules.

(D) *Removal of Committee Records.*—Files and records of the Committee are not to be removed from the Committee offices. No Committee files or records that are not made publicly available shall be photocopied by any Member.

(E) *Executive Session Records.*—Evidence or testimony received by the Committee in executive session shall not be released or made available to the public unless agreed to by the Committee. Such information may be made available to appropriate government personnel for purposes of classification. Such information Members may examine the Conunittee's executive session records, but may not make copies of, or take personal notes from, such records.

(F) *Availability of Committee Records.*—The Committee shall keep a complete record of all Committee action including recorded votes and attendance at hearings and meetings. Information so available for public inspection shall include a description of each amendment, motion, order, or other proposition, including the name of the Member who offered the amendment, motion, order, or other proposition, and the name of each Member voting for and each Member voting against each such amendment, motion, order, or proposition, as well as the names of those Members present but not voting. Such record shall be made available to the public at reasonable times within the Committee offices and also made publicly available in electronic form and posted on the official Committee web site within 48 hours of such record vote.

(G) *Separate and Distinct.*—All Committee records and files must be kept separate and distinct from the office records of the Members serving as Chairman and Ranking Minority Member. Records and files of Members' personal offices shall not be considered records or files of the Committee.

(H) *Disposition of Committee Records.*—At the conclusion of each Congress, non-current records of the Committee shall be delivered to the Archivist of the United States in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House.

(I) *Archived Records.*—The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with Rule VII of the Rules of the House. The Chairman shall notify the Ranking Minority Member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3(b)(3) or clause 4(b) of the Rule, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on the written request of any member of the Committee. The Chairman shall consult with the Ranking Minority Member on any communication from the Archivist of the United States or the Clerk of the House concerning the disposition of noncurrent records pursuant to clause 3(b) of the Rule.

RULE XVII.—COMMITTEE RULES.

(A) *Availability of Committee Rules in Electronic Form.*—Pursuant to clause 2(a) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee shall make its rules publicly available in electronic form and posted on the official Committee web site and shall submit such rules for publication in the Congressional Record not later than 30 days after the Chairman of the Committee is elected in each odd-numbered year.

(B) *Changes to Committee Rules.*—These rules may be modified, amended, or repealed by the Full Committee provided that a notice in writing of the proposed change has been given to each Member at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which action thereon is to be taken and such changes are not inconsistent with the Rules of the House of Representatives.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of today, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.),

under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, March 30, 2015, at 1 p.m., unless it sooner has received a message from the Senate transmitting its adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 31, in which case the House shall stand adjourned pursuant to that concurrent resolution.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

856. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a letter notifying the Congress that the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 114-4) does not breach the current discretionary spending limits, pursuant to Sec. 254(g) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985; to the Committee on Appropriations.

857. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's 2015 Major Automated Information System Annual Reports, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2445b(a); to the Committee on Armed Services.

858. A letter from the Staff performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals for the proposed legislation titled ''National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

859. A letter from the Under Secretary, Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on Training of Special Operations Forces for the period ending September 30, 2014, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2011(e); to the Committee on Armed Services.

860. A letter from the Principal Deputy, Reserve Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for Fiscal Year 2016, in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 10541; to the Committee on Armed Services.

861. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, OUSD(AT&L) DPAP/DARS, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Deletion of Text Implementing 10 U.S.C. 2323 (DFARS Case 2011-D038) (RIN: 0750-AH45) received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

862. A letter from the Acting Director, Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, OUSD(AT&L) DPAP/DARS, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's interim rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Use of Military Construction Funds (DFARS Case 2015-D006) (RIN: 0750-AI52) received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Armed Services.

863. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Housing Trust Fund (RIN: 2590-AA73) received March 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

864. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report on discretionary appropriations legislation for the Department of Homeland Security Appropriation Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 114-4), pursuant to Sec. 251(a)(7) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended; to the Committee on the Budget.

865. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Acquisition Regulation: Technical and Administrative Changes to Department of Energy Acquisition Regulation (RIN: 1991-AC07) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

866. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's FY 2014 Performance Report to Congress for the Medical Device User Fee Amendments of 2012; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

867. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Advisory Committee; Antiviral Drugs Advisory Committee; Termination [Docket No.: FDA-2012-N-0218] received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

868. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Technical Amendments to Regulation Listing Substances Temporarily Controlled under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act [Docket No.: DEA-406] received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

869. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — 2-Propanoic acid, 2-methyl-, 2-methylpropyl ester, homopolymer; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0677; FRL-9924-33] received March 24 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

870. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Mexico; Albuquerque/Bernalillo County; Revisions to Emission Inventory Requirements, and General Provisions [EPA-R06-OAR-2008-0636; FRL-9925-11-Region 6] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

871. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Plan Approval and Operating Permit Fees [EPA-R03-OAR-2014-0634; FRL-9925-17-Region 3] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

872. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Reasonably Available Control Technology for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R06-OAR-2013-0804; FRL-9925-13-Region 6] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

873. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval, Disapproval, and Limited Approval and Disapproval of Air Quality Implementation Plans; California; Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District; Stationary Source Permits [EPA-R09-OAR-2014-0746; FRL-9924-49-Region 9] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

874. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Deltamethrin; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0209; FRL-9924-60] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

875. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — National Priorities List [EPA-HQ-SFUND-2014-0624, 0625; FRL-9924-32-OSWER] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

876. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Placer County Air Pollution Control District and the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District [EPA-R09-OAR-2015-0083; FRL-9924-73-Region 9] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

877. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Tennessee: Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revisions [EPA-R04-RCRA-2014-0712; FRL-9924-83-Region 4] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

878. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Thiram; Pesticide Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0632; FRL-9924-86] received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

879. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Withdrawal of Partial Exemption for Certain Chemical Substances [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2014-0809; FRL-9924-84] (RIN: 2070-AK01) received March 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

880. A letter from the Chief of Staff, Mobility Division, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Amendment of Part 90 of the Commission's Rules [WP Docket No.: 07-100] received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

881. A letter from the Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Laboratory Investigations of Soils and Rocks for Engineering Analysis and Design of Nuclear Power Plants [Regulatory Guide RG 1.138, Revision 3] received March 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

882. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Revisions to Support Document Requirements for License Applications under the Export Administration Regulations [Docket No.: 131018874-5199-02] (RIN: 0694-AG00) received March 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

883. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department

of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: DDTC 14-140); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

884. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: DDTC 14-121); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

885. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: DDTC 14-147); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

886. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: DDTC 14-153); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

887. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: DDTC 14-151); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

888. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: 14-141); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

889. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (Transmittal No.: 14-110); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

890. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting consistent with Title II of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2002 (Pub. L. 107-115), Executive Order 12163, as amended by Executive Order 13346, and further delegations of authority, the Deputy Secretary has extended the waiver of Sec. 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act, Pub. L. 102-511, with respect to the Government of Azerbaijan; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

891. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's annual International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, prepared in accordance with Sec. 489 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

892. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting two reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

893. A letter from the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled ''Oversight Improvements Must Continue to Ensure Accountability in Use of Public Funds by D.C. Public Charter Schools''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

894. A letter from the Co-Chief Privacy Officers, Federal Election Commission, transmitting the Commission's Sec. 522 Privacy Report for FY 2014, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000ee-2; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

895. A letter from the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, transmitting the 2014 management reports for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, pursuant to Sec. 306 of the Chief Financial Offers Act of 1990 (31 U.S.C. 9106); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

896. A letter from the Counsel to the Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General, General Services Administration, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

897. A letter from the Chairman and General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting the Board's annual report, pursuant to the Buy American Act (Pub. L. 108-447, Sec. 641); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

898. A letter from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting the National Science Foundation's FY 2014 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

899. A letter from the Director, Office of Economic Impact and Diversity, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's annual report for FY 2014 prepared in accordance with the Office of Personnel Management regulation 5 CFR Sec. 724.302: No FEAR Act; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

900. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Prevailing Rate Systems; Redefinition of Certain Appropriated Fund Federal Wage System Wage Areas (RIN: 3206-AN10) received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

901. A letter from the Chief Human Resources Officer and Executive Vice President, Postal Service, transmitting the Service's annual report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2014, in compliance with the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-174, Sec. 203); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

902. A letter from the Chairman, Labor Member, and Management Member, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting a report in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(j), the annual report for Calendar Year 2014, of the United States Railroad Retirement Board, in compliance with the Government in the Sunshine Act, Pub. L. 94-409, as amended; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

903. A letter from the Director, Government Publishing Office, transmitting the annual report of the U.S. Government Publishing Office for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014; to the Committee on House Administration.

904. A letter from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mississippi Abandoned Mine Land Plan [SATS No.: MS-024-FOR; Docket No.: OSM-2014-0005; S1D1SSS08011000SX066A00067F154S180110; S2D2SSS08011000SX066A00033F15XS501520] received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

905. A letter from the Division Chief, Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Oil and Gas; Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands (RIN: 1004-AE26) received March 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

906. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Big Skate in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 130925836-4174-02] (RIN: 0648-XD761) received March 20, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

907. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XD813) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

908. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands; 2015 and 2016 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish [Docket No.: 141021887-5172-02] (RIN: 0648-XD587) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

909. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Gulf of Alaska; Final 2015 and 2016 Harvest Specifications for Groundfish [Docket No.: 140918791-4999-02] (RIN: 0648-XD516) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

910. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Expansion of Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, and Regulatory Changes [Docket No.: 130405335-4999-02] (RIN: 0648-BD18) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

911. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries Regulations on Introduced Species [Docket No.: 120809321-4999-03] (RIN: 0648-BC26) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

912. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Regulations; Correction [Docket No.: 140903747-4747-01] (RIN: 0648-BE48) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

913. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Increase [Docket No.: 101206604-1758-02] (RIN: 0648-XD790) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

914. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern

United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer [Docket No.: 140117 052-4402-02] (RIN: 0648-XD778) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

915. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2015 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Golden Tilefish Longline Component [Docket No.: 120404257-3325-02] (RIN: 0648-XD735) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

916. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region; Amendment 20B; Correction [Docket No.: 131211999-5045-02] (RIN: 0648-BD86) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

917. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Vessels Using Jig Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 140918791-4999-02] (RIN: 0648-XD800) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

918. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Aleutian Islands Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD803) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

919. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office Protected Resources Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan; Sea Turtle Conservation; Modification to Fishing Activities [Docket No.: 110812495-4999-03] (RIN: 0648-BB37) received March 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

920. A letter from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting the Conference's Article III judgeship recommendations and corresponding draft legislation for the 114th Congress; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

921. A letter from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes to Implement the Hague Agreement Concerning International Registration of Industrial Designs [Docket No.: PTO-P-2013-0025] (RIN: 0651-AC87) received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

922. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the report on the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended for the six months ending June 30, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

923. A letter from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting the Conference's bankruptcy judgeship recommendations and corresponding draft legislation for the 114th Congress; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

924. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting the Administration's Major final rule — Submission of Evidence in Disability Claims [Docket No.: SSA-2012-0068] (RIN: 0960-AH53) received March 23, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

925. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services; Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Annual Report on the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program for FY 2014, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395i of the Social Security Act; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

926. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report to Congress on counter-ISIL train and equip program and regional strategy, pursuant to Sec. 1209(b)(2) of Pub. L. 113-291; jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Armed Services.

927. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting additional legislative proposals that the Department of Defense requests be enacted during the first session of the 114th Congress; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services, Education and the Workforce, and Oversight and Government Reform.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. GUTHRIE (for himself, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. WALDEN, and Ms. ESHOO):

H.R. 1641. A bill to amend the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act to provide incentives for the reallocation of Federal Government spectrum for commercial use, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JONES (for himself and Mr. BUTTERFIELD):

H.R. 1642. A bill to designate the building utilized as a United States courthouse located at 150 Reade Circle in Greenville, North Carolina, as the ''Randy D. Doub United States Courthouse''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. SMITH of Texas (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona):

H.R. 1643. A bill to promote neutrality, simplicity, and fairness in the taxation of digital goods and digital services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia (for himself, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):

H.R. 1644. A bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to ensure transparency in the development of environmental regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. VEASEY:

H.R. 1645. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to urbanized area formula grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H.R. 1646. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to research how small and medium sized unmanned aerial systems could be used in an attack, how to prevent or mitigate the effects of such an attack, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 1647. A bill to recognize States' authority to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 1648. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Interior to establish the Ronald Reagan Birthplace National Historic Site in Tampico, Illinois, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 1649. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Defense to enter into partnerships with Israel and other allies of the United States to develop technology to detect tunnels, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia (for himself, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. BUCSHON):

H.R. 1650. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a Medicare payment option for patients and eligible professionals to freely contract, without penalty, for Medicare fee-for-service items and services, while allowing Medicare beneficiaries to use their Medicare benefits; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE (for himself, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. STEWART, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SIMPSON, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. LABRADOR, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico):

H.R. 1651. A bill to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. KILMER, Ms. LEE, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. NEAL, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. JONES, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 1652. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to provide for the purchase of paper United States savings bonds with tax refunds; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 1653. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the exclusion of Medicare coverage for hearing aids and examinations therefor, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROYCE (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. NUNES, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. MENG, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. COOK, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. PERRY, Mr. MARINO, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. TURNER, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. POLIS, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 1654. A bill to authorize the direct provision of defense articles, defense services, and related training to the Kurdistan Regional Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. HANNA, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT, and Mr. BARLETTA):

H.R. 1655. A bill to amend the Community Services Block Grant Act to reauthorize and modernize the Act; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 1656. A bill to provide for additional resources for the Secret Service, and to improve protections for restricted areas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 1657. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent claims of the earned income tax credit by individuals receiving work authorizations pursuant to deferred action programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia (for himself, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. LONG, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. HENSARLING, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. ROSS, Mr. LATTA, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. SALMON):

H.R. 1658. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to limit the circumstances in which official time may be used by a Federal employee; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FINCHER (for himself and Mr. DELANEY):

H.R. 1659. A bill to amend certain provisions of the securities laws relating to the treatment of emerging growth companies; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ROTHFUS (for himself and Mr. HIMES):

H.R. 1660. A bill to amend the Home Owners' Loan Act to allow Federal savings associations to elect to operate as national banks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ROTHFUS (for himself, Mr. STIVERS, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 1661. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to allow mutual capital certificates to satisfy capital requirements for mutual depositories; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. LEE, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia):

H.R. 1662. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to replace the mortgage interest deduction with a nonrefundable credit for indebtedness secured by a residence, to provide affordable housing to extremely low-income families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1663. A bill to greatly enhance America's path toward energy independence and economic and national security, to rebuild our Nation's aging roads, bridges, locks, and dams, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, the Judiciary, Rules, the Budget, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CULBERSON:

H.R. 1664. A bill to authorize health insurance issuers to continue to offer for sale current group and individual health insurance coverage in satisfaction of the minimum essential health insurance coverage requirement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana (for himself, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. THORNBERRY, and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 1665. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to equalize the excise tax on liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. TIBERI):

H.R. 1666. A bill to require the use of two-phase selection procedures when design-build contracts are suitable for award to small business concerns; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. LUMMIS (for herself, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia):

H.R. 1667. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to require publication of the basis for determinations that species are endangered species or threatened species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCCLINTOCK:

H.R. 1668. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide for suspension of application of the Act to water releases by Federal and State agencies in river basins that are affected by drought, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. STEWART (for himself and Mr. BURGESS):

H.R. 1669. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for transparency of payments made from the Judgment Fund; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LYNCH (for himself, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. JONES, Mr. KEATING, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LANCE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Ms. TSONGAS):

H.R. 1670. A bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place in the United States Capitol a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. MULVANEY (for himself, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. YODER, Mr. SALMON, Mr. GOSAR, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. TROTT, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. WALKER, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. WOMACK):

H.R. 1671. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FATTAH (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. CUMMINGS):

H.R. 1672. A bill to provide for the sealing or expungement of records relating to Federal nonviolent criminal offenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 1673. A bill to amend the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act of 1992 to establish a secondary reserve fund for a housing enterprise under conservatorship to protect taxpayers against loss in the event of a housing downturn, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. SWALWELL of California):

H.R. 1674. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to modify the dischargeability of debts for certain educational payments and loans; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HULTGREN (for himself, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 1675. A bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise its rules so as to increase the threshold amount for requiring issuers to provide certain disclosures relating to compensatory benefit plans; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. TITUS (for herself, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RUSH, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MOORE, and Mrs. LAWRENCE):

H.R. 1676. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a weekend and holiday feeding program to provide nutritious food to at-risk school children on weekends and during extended school holidays during the school year; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GOSAR (for himself, Mr. SALMON, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. BABIN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. JONES, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. YOHO, Mr. FARR, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CLAY,

Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. GRIFFITH):

H.R. 1677. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to ensure health care coverage value and transparency for dental benefits under group health plans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GARAMENDI (for himself, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. LOBIONDO):

H.R. 1678. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to establish a backup for the global positioning system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 1679. A bill to ensure the safe transportation of Bakken crude oil by rail, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida (for herself, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mrs. LAWRENCE):

H.R. 1680. A bill to establish a pilot grant program to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in purchasing body-worn cameras for law enforcement officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 1681. A bill to extend the authorization for the major medical facility project to replace the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to manage the construction of such project, to transfer the authority to carry out future major medical facility projects of the Department from the Secretary to the Army Corps of Engineers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. COHEN, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. RICHMOND, and Ms. LEE):

H.R. 1682. A bill to preserve knowledge and promote education about jazz in the United States and abroad; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COURTNEY (for himself, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. HIMES, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LANCE, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. POCAN, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. WALZ, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. TONKO, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. FORBES, Mr. COLE, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. HARPER, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. ROSS, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. WELCH, Ms. ESTY, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HONDA, Mr. PALAZZO, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. LAMBORN, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. BUSTOS, Ms. TSONGAS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. JONES, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. DENT, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. LATTA, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. HAHN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. COOPER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. LONG, Mr. VISCLOSKY, and Mr. WITTMAN):

H.R. 1683. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the United States Coast Guard; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. SIRES, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 1684. A bill to amend the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to impose penalties and provide for the recovery of removal costs and damages in connection with certain discharges of oil from foreign offshore units, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. BOST, and Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois):

H.R. 1685. A bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. DEGETTE (for herself and Mr. WHITFIELD):

H.R. 1686. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the occurrence of diabetes in Medicare beneficiaries by extending coverage under Medicare for medical nutrition therapy services to such beneficiaries with pre-diabetes or with risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. RUSH):

H.R. 1687. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, to dedicate the revenues from such tax to the prevention, treatment, and research of diet-related health conditions in priority populations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DENHAM:

H.R. 1688. A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to designate 20 graduate medical education residency positions specifically for the study of optometry; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DESANTIS (for himself, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Mr. SALMON, and Mr. PERRY):

H.R. 1689. A bill to prohibit the provision of certain foreign assistance to countries receiving certain detainees transferred from United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1690. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 700 Grant Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as the "Joseph F. Weis Jr. United States Courthouse"; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DUFFY (for himself, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. NEWHOUSE):

H.R. 1691. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit an institution of higher education located in the United States from participating in student assistance programs under title IV of such Act if the institution bans the display of the flag of the United States on its campus; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. EDWARDS (for herself and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 1692. A bill to require public employees to perform the inspection of State and local surface transportation projects, and related essential public functions, to ensure public safety, the cost-effective use of transportation funding, and timely project delivery; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina:

H.R. 1693. A bill to rescind unobligated amounts for White House salaries and expenses; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 1694. A bill to amend MAP-21 to improve contracting opportunities for veteran-owned small business concerns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. LATTA, Mr. JONES, and Mr. OLSON):

H.R. 1695. A bill to provide for parental notification and intervention in the case of an unemancipated minor seeking an abortion; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. GRAHAM (for herself and Mr. MILLER of Florida):

H.R. 1696. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to extend the tariff preference level on imports of certain cotton and man-made fiber, fabric, apparel, and made-up goods from Bahrain under the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. HAHN:

H.R. 1697. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the tax credit for electric vehicle recharging property; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan (for himself and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York):

H.R. 1698. A bill to amend design and content requirements for certain gold and silver coins, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 1699. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require Federal Prison Industries to compete for its contracts minimizing its unfair competition with private sector firms and their non-inmate workers and empowering Federal agencies to get the best

value for taxpayers' dollars, to provide a five-year period during which Federal Prison Industries adjusts to obtaining inmate work opportunities through other than its mandatory source status, to enhance inmate access to remedial and vocational opportunities and other rehabilitative opportunities to better prepare inmates for a successful return to society, to authorize alternative inmate work opportunities in support of non-profit organizations and other public service programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JEFFRIES (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. LEE, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 1700. A bill to amend section 292 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to require the Attorney General to appoint counsel for unaccompanied alien children and aliens with serious mental disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JORDAN:

H.R. 1701. A bill to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 1702. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that for purposes of computing the annuity of certain law enforcement officers, any hours worked in excess of the limitation applicable to law enforcement availability pay and administratively uncontrollable overtime shall be included in such computation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. LANGEVIN (for himself, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. CÁRDENAS):

H.R. 1703. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to create protected credit reports for minors and protect the credit of minors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 1704. A bill to establish a nation data breach notification standard, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 1705. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to assist municipalities and regional sewer authorities that would experience a significant hardship raising the revenue necessary to finance projects and activities for the construction of wastewater treatment works, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. NORTON, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. NADLER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. ADAMS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. TITUS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. FARR, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 1706. A bill to provide for the overall health and well-being of young people, including the promotion of comprehensive sexual health and healthy relationships, the reduction of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and the prevention of dating violence and sexual assault, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LOEBSACK (for himself, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KIND, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. MCCOLLUM, and Mr. ELLISON):

H.R. 1707. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mr. RANGEL):

H.R. 1708. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a program of research regarding the risks posed by the presence of dioxin, synthetic fibers, chemical fragrances, and other components of feminine hygiene products; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCNERNEY (for himself, Ms. MATSUI, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 1709. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide for the assessment and management of the risks of drought to drinking water, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCNERNEY (for himself, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. HONDA):

H.R. 1710. A bill to amend the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 to provide additional financing options for water infrastructure projects carried out in States in which the Governor of the State has issued a state of drought emergency declaration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MEADOWS (for himself, Mr. SALMON, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. YOHO, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1711. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to employee protective arrangements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:

H.R. 1712. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to exempt providers of broadband Internet access service from Federal universal service contributions; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PETERS:

H.R. 1713. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from Federal income taxation certain employer-provided student loan assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PITTS (for himself, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GOODLATTE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. DOLD, Ms. KUSTER, Ms. FOXX, Mr. RUSH, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. HANNA, Mr. STEWART, Mr. LATTA, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. WOMACK, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DENT, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER):

H.R. 1714. A bill to reform the Federal sugar program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE (for himself, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. WALKER, Mr. PALMER, Mr. BABIN, and Mr. BRAT):

H.R. 1715. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to carry out certain immigration-related memoranda, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROHRABACHER (for himself, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. JONES, Mr. LATTA, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. POMPEO, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. LUETKEMEYER):

H.R. 1716. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to exclude from creditable wages and self-employment income wages earned for services by aliens illegally performed in the United States and self-employment income derived from a trade or business illegally conducted in the United States; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. BASS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HOYER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. KEATING, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SIMPSON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ):

H.R. 1717. A bill to provide for programs and activities with respect to the prevention of underage drinking; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. LONG, Mr. HANNA, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 1718. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SIMPSON:

H.R. 1719. A bill to expand geothermal production, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. SINEMA (for herself, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. HANNA, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mrs. BUSTOS):

H.R. 1720. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the exclusion for employer-provided dependent care assistance; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER (for herself, Mr. HANNA, Mr. TONKO, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. REED):

H.R. 1721. A bill to reauthorize appropriations for the National Women's Rights History Project Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. TAKANO (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. TSONGAS, and Mr. TED LIEU of California):

H.R. 1722. A bill to require a demonstration program on the accession as Air Force officers of candidates with auditory impairments; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. WAGNER (for herself and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama):

H.R. 1723. A bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise Form S-1 so as to permit smaller reporting companies to use forward incorporation by reference for such form; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. WESTERMAN:

H.R. 1724. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to reduce Federal spending on surface transportation programs by limiting State and local taxation on purchases of construction materials made with funds made available from the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. WHITFIELD (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 1725. A bill to amend and reauthorize the controlled substance monitoring program under section 399O of the Public Health Service Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. WHITFIELD (for himself, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. REED):

H.R. 1726. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to diabetes self-management training by authorizing certified diabetes educators to provide diabetes self-management training services, including as part of telehealth services, under part B of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WHITFIELD (for himself and Ms. DEGETTE):

H.R. 1727. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage, as supplies associated with the injection of insulin, of containment, removal, decontamination and disposal of home-generated needles, syringes, and other sharps through a sharps container, decontamination/destruction device, or sharps-by-mail program or similar program under part D of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself and Mr. LARSEN of Washington):

H.R. 1728. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1729. A bill to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to exempt certain Alaskan Native articles from prohibitions against sale of items containing nonedible migratory bird parts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1730. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Alexander Creek, Alaska, is and shall be recognized as an eligible Native village under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARINO:

H.J. Res. 39. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit the number of consecutive terms that a Member of Congress may serve; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARINO:

H.J. Res. 40. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to end the practice of including more than one subject in a single law by requiring that each law enacted by Congress be limited to only one subject and that the subject be clearly and descriptively expressed in the title of the law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE (for himself and Mr. BABIN):

H.J. Res. 41. A joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. JONES):

H. Con. Res. 30. Concurrent resolution supporting the designation of the year of 2015 as the International Year of Soils and supporting locally led soil conservation; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H. Con. Res. 31. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H. Con. Res. 32. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RIBBLE (for himself, Mr. WALZ, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BLUM, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Ms. ESTY, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. HANNA, Mr. KATKO, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. MEADOWS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SCHRADER, and Mr. WALKER):

H. Con. Res. 33. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Federal excise tax on heavy-duty trucks should not be increased; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. VEASEY:

H. Res. 175. A resolution expressing support for designation of March 2015 as ''National Cheerleading Safety Month''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. ESTY, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H. Res. 176. A resolution recognizing the significance of women in education; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. REICHERT, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Ms. GABBARD):

H. Res. 177. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that specialty crops are a vital part of agriculture in the United States, and that Congress should fund programs that support specialty crops as a growing and important part of agriculture in the United States; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. CÁRDENAS (for himself, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GALLEGO, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. SABLAN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. SIRES, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H. Res. 178. A resolution honoring the accomplishments and legacy of César Estrada Chávez; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. POLIS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. VEASEY, and Mr. TAKANO):

H. Res. 179. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Secretary of Defense should review section 504 of title 10, United States Code, for purposes related to enlisting certain aliens in the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H. Res. 180. A resolution congratulating the University of Kansas for 150 years of outstanding service to the State of Kansas, the United States, and the world; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. LOBIONDO, and Mr. LANCE):

H. Res. 181. A resolution calling for the immediate extradition or rendering to the United States of convicted felon William Morales and all other fugitives from justice who are receiving safe harbor in Cuba in order to escape prosecution or confinement for criminal offenses committed in the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. SPEIER, and Mr. FARR):

H. Res. 182. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H. Res. 183. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week of April 13, 2015 through April 17, 2015 as National Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Awareness Week; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PETERS:

H. Res. 184. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require the House to meet 5 days a week for 39 weeks each year; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. MARINO):

H. Res. 185. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to provide for the consideration of reported bills or joint resolutions that have not been considered by the House within 60 calendar days; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. MOORE, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. MARINO, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. HANNA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GIBSON, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. COFFMAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Ms. SPEIER):

H. Res. 186. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD (for herself, Ms. LEE, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. VELA, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H. Res. 187. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Health Week; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TURNER (for himself, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. COHEN, Mr. GUTHRIE, Ms. MENG, Mr. MARINO, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia):

H. Res. 188. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives with respect to promoting energy security of European allies through the opening of the Southern Gas Corridor; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. GUTHRIE:

H.R. 1641.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

By Mr. JONES:

H.R. 1642.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 17

By Mr. SMITH of Texas:

H.R. 1643.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution—known as the Commerce Clause, and Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment.

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:

H.R. 1644.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 18

By Mr. VEASEY:

H.R. 1645.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Commerce Clause (Art. 1. sec. 8 cl. 3)

Necessary and Proper Clause (Art.1 Sec. 8 cl. 18)

By Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN:

H.R. 1646.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. FLORES:

H.R. 1647.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 4, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 1648.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 and Article IV, Section 3.

By Mr. LAMBORN:

H.R. 1649.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution

By Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia:

H.R. 1650.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Medicare is a health care program under current law that is operated by the federal government. This bill would improve the efficiency, accessibility and fairness of the operations of this federal program, especially the purchase of services and freedom to contract between doctors and Medicare recipients. This bill directly affects interstate commerce, which Congress has the power to regulate under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. NEWHOUSE:

H.R. 1651.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: ''The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state.''

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 1652.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 2: The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

By Mrs. DINGELL:

H.R. 1653.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 1654.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 1655.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. GOODLATTE:

H.R. 1656.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The authority to enact this bill is derived from, but may not be limited to, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MARCHANT:

H.R. 1657.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 1, under the ''Power To lay and collect Taxes'';

Amd. 16, under the ''power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration'';

Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 4, under the power ''To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization''; and

Art. I Sec. 8 cl. 18, under the power to ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia:

H.R. 1658.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution states ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution states ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof''

By Mr. FINCHER:

H.R. 1659.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 1660.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States ''[t]o regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. ROTHFUS:

H.R. 1661.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States ''[t]o regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1662.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 7, Clause 1 and Section 8, Clause 1.

By Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1663.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to the Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CULBERSON:

H.R. 1664.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The 10th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

By Mr. YOUNG of Indiana:

H.R. 1665.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debt and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 1666.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

''. . . and provide for the . . . general welfare of the United States . . . ''

''. . . to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers . . .''

This legislation seeks to reform federal government contracting procedures under Section 3309 of title 41, U.S. Code.

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 1667.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 18 of the United States Constitution: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. McCLINTOCK:

H.R. 1668.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (the Property Clause), which confers on Congress the power to make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. STEWART:

H.R. 1669.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution gives Congress the authority to enact this legislation.

By Mr. LYNCH:

H.R. 1670.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 section 8 Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MULVANEY:

H.R. 1671.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The authority to enact this bill is derived from, but may not be limited to, Article I, Section 8, Clausel of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FATTAH:

H.R. 1672.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, the Congress shall have the power ''[t]o regulate commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

H.R. 1673.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 1674.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. HULTGREN:

H.R. 1675.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, as this legislation regulates commerce between the states.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, providing Congress with the authority to enact legislation necessary to execute one of its enumerated powers, such as Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 1676.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 1677.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This legislation is being introduced in order to amend ERISA—which was passed based on a combination of Article 1 Section 8 Clause 3 (commerce clause) and Article 1 Section 8 Clause 18 (the necessary and proper clause).

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 1678.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GARAMENDI:

H.R. 1679.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida:

H.R. 1680.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The United States Constitution:

Article I Section VIII

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 1681.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CONYERS:

H.R. 1682.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. I Sec. 8

By Mr. COURTNEY:

H.R. 1683.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: Congress shall have the Power to . . . coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures . . .

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 1684.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: Commercial Activity Regulation

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 1685.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper Clause. The bill is constitutionally authorized under the Necessary and Proper Clause, which supports the expansion of congressional authority beyond the explicit authorities that are directly discernible from the text.

By Ms. DeGETTE:

H.R. 1686.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, clauses 3 and 18.

By Ms. DeLAURO:

H.R. 1687.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. DENHAM:

H.R. 1688.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. DeSANTIS:

H.R. 1689.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1690.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the United States Constitution: To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of Particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 1691.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof

By Ms. EDWARDS:

H.R. 1692.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress is authorized to enact this legislation under the Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, ''to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.'' Additionally, Congress has the authority to enact this legislation pursuant to the Preamble of the Constitution, ''to promote the general welfare.''

By Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina:

H.R. 1693.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18:

''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States:''

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carry into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 1694.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 1695.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States.'' The Parental Notification and Intervention Act specifically establishes a federal nexus in that it applies to ''any person or organization in or affecting interstate commerce.''

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law.''

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: ''The Congress shall have Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

The Parental Notification and Intervention Act also establishes a federal nexus in that it specifically applies ''any person or organization . . . who solicits or accepts federal funds.'' The power to appropriate money and make laws to execute this power, gives Congress the authority to make laws affecting persons or entities that accept federal funds.

By Ms. GRAHAM:

H.R. 1696.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. HAHN:

H.R. 1697.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article 1: Section 8: Clause 18: of the United States Constitution, seen below, this bill falls within the Constitutional Authority of the United States Congress.

Article 1: Section 8: Clause 18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 1698.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8—To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures

By Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan:

H.R. 1699.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3—To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

Amendment X—Nothing in the Constitution authorizes the Federal government to do anything other than those things enumerated (coin money, enter into treaties, conduct a Census—which are inherently governmental). Thus, under Amendment X, the right to carry out commercial activities is reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people.

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 1700.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 4 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. JORDAN:

H.R. 1701.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KING of New York:

H.R. 1702.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress shall have Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 1703.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States grant Congress the authority to enact this bill.

By Mr. LANGEVIN:

H.R. 1704.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. LATTA:

H.R. 1705.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes

By Ms. LEE:

H.R. 1706.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mr. LOEBSACK:

H.R. 1707.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York:

H.R. 1708.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8. Clause 3, which reads: to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and within Indian Tribes.

By Mr. McNERNEY:

H.R. 1709.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. McNERNEY:

H.R. 1710.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 1711.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution, which states, ''The Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia:

H.R. 1712.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 & Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. PETERS:

H.R. 1713.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the US Constitution

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 1714.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have

Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE:

H.R. 1715.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution provides that Congress shall have power to ''establish a uniform rule of naturalization.''

By Mr. ROHRABACHER:

H.R. 1716.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD:

H.R. 1717.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H.R. 1718.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have the power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States

By Mr. SIMPSON:

H.R. 1719.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 2 of section 3 of article IV of the Constitution (''The Congress shall have the Power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States . . .'').

By Ms. SINEMA:

H.R. 1720.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I. Section 8.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER:

H.R. 1721.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. TAKANO:

H.R. 1722.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mrs. WAGNER:

H.R. 1723.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. WESTERMAN:

H.R. 1724.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7

By Mr. WHITFIELD:

H.R. 1725.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. WHITFIELD:

H.R. 1726.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 1

The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United

States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

AND

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

The Congress shall have Power *** To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. WHITFIELD:

H.R. 1727.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

The Congress shall have Power *** To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1728.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1729.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. YOUNG of Alaska:

H.R. 1730.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. MARINO:

H.J. Res. 39.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the United States Constitution: The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution . . . which . . . shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof.

By Mr. MARINO:

H.J. Res. 40.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the United States Constitution: The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution . . . which . . . shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof.

By Mr. RATCLIFFE:

H.J. Res. 41.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the Constitution, which grants Congress the authority, whenever two thirds of both Houses deem it necessary, to propose amendments to the Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 20: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 24: Mr. GOWDY.

H.R. 121: Mr. Russell.

H.R. 131: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 156: Mr. SALMON.

H.R. 160: Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana.

H.R. 167: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 200: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 232: Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 235: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. FORBES, Mr. DUFFY, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. COLE, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. DENT.

H.R. 267: Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 292: Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 313: Miss RICE of New York, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. COHEN, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 413: Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 423: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 463: Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. FINCHER, and Mr. BRADY of Texas.

H.R. 465: Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 472: Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 511: Mr. PEARCE and Mr. MULVANEY.

H.R. 542: Mr. WALZ and Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 546: Mr. LIPINSKI and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 572: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 592: Mr. PETERS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 594: Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 597: Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.

H.R. 612: Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 625: Mr. RIGELL and Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 628: Mr. WHITFIELD.

H.R. 650: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 656: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 661: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 681: Mr. GUINTA.

H.R. 685: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 696: Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 703: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.

H.R. 704: Mr. LOBIONDO and Mr. CURBELO of Florida.

H.R. 711: Mr. GOHMERT.

H.R. 712: Mr. GOHMERT.

H.R. 723: Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 727: Mrs. CAPPS and Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 735: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. POLIS, and Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 738: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. FARR, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California.

H.R. 766: Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 767: Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, and Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 797: Ms. NORTON, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. MENG, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. ENGEL, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 816: Mr. MICA, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 824: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 845: Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 893: Mr. STEWART, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. HILL, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. ROSS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. MICA, Mr. TURNER, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. DENT, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. COOPER, Mr. PETERS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 903: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 911: Mr. COOK.

H.R. 928: Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. EMMER of Minnesota, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BOST, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 973: Mr. DEUTCH and Mr. BERA.

H.R. 981: Mr. SCALISE.

H.R. 985: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. DENT.

H.R. 990: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 999: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. JORDAN.

H.R. 1002: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 1062: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H.R. 1088: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. FARR, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HIMES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. RICHMOND, Ms. SINEMA, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.

H.R. 1089: Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 1091: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 1095: Ms. ESTY.

H.R. 1101: Mr. LEWIS and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 1105: Mrs. ROBY, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. DOLD, and Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 1139: Mr. HOYER.

H.R. 1143: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio and Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 1148: Mr. BABIN and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

H.R. 1174: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1192: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. POMPEO, Mrs. BUSTOS, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 1194: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 1195: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1199: Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1215: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.

H.R. 1218: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.

H.R. 1221: Mr. HASTINGS and Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 1247: Mr. RIGELL and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 1250: Mr. GOHMERT and Mr. FORTENBERRY.

H.R. 1266: Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. FLORES, Mr. BARTON, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. OLSON, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. HURD of Texas, and Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 1269: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. FORBES.

H.R. 1288: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 1295: Mr. REED.

H.R. 1298: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ZINKE, and Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 1300: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 1301: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. BARLETTA.

H.R. 1314: Mr. REED.

H.R. 1323: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 1331: Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 1338: Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. KLINE, and Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 1342: Mr. JOYCE, Mr. HANNA, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. JONES, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 1344: Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 1346: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1365: Mr. BABIN, Mr. PALMER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. JONES, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. LATTA, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 1387: Mr. MCHENRY and Mr. ABRAHAM.

H.R. 1391: Ms. HAHN.

H.R. 1397: Mr. BLUM.

H.R. 1413: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. LATTA.

H.R. 1427: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1435: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1462: Mr. BARR, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. KEATING, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE, Ms. TSONGAS, and Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 1466: Mr. CAPUANO.

H.R. 1470: Mr. BENISHEK.

H.R. 1479: Mr. GRIFFITH and Mrs. WAGNER.

H.R. 1492: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1500: Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 1506: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 1511: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1529: Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 1530: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 1538: Ms. NORTON, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. HANNA.

H.R. 1545: Mr. PIERLUISI.
H.R. 1548: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 1552: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 1553: Mr. BLUM and Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 1559: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. STIVERS, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 1567: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 1585: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 1594: Mrs. COMSTOCK and Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 1599: Mr. LONG, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 1619: Mr. CLAY, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. PIERLUISI.
H.R. 1622: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 1627: Mr. WITTMAN.
H. Con. Res. 26: Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. ROSKAM.
H. Res. 28: Mr. SIRES, Ms. GABBARD, and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H. Res. 54: Ms. GABBARD.
H. Res. 102: Mr. HASTINGS.
H. Res. 122: Mr. PERRY.
H. Res. 154: Mr. WALZ.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

7. The SPEAKER presented a petition of the City of Robbinsdale, Minnesota, relative to Resolution No. 7402, opposing the proposed CP-BNSF connection because of the significant impact it would have to public safety, commerce, and quality of life; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015 No. 51

Senate

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.

Master of our hopes and dreams, who constantly works for the good of those who love You, teach us to strive to be faithful. As we anticipate a long and challenging day, remind us that You call us not to success but to faithfulness.

Give our Senators and the members of their staffs the wisdom to make the commitment to be true to You and to serve Your purposes. Let not discordant notes destroy the melody of their labors as they seek Your counsel and wisdom.

Lord, guide our great Nation. Help it to be a lighthouse to a dark and turbulent world. Prosper the works of our hands until the kingdoms of this world become the springboard for Your eternal reign.

We pray in Your Holy 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.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for years, the Democrat-led Senate refused to pass a balanced budget. It usually failed to produce any budget at all. Maybe this made the special interests happy, but it was infuriating for many in the middle class. These Americans called for change.

Today, a Senate under new management is delivering that change. The new Senate is prepared to pass a balanced budget with ideas that could boost jobs, raise annual wages by as much as $5,000 per family, and drive economic growth for hard-working Americans. That is what the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office tells us, and it is no wonder.

This balanced budget would embrace the energy revolution and allow for more environmentally responsible innovations. It would repeal unfair taxes such as those in ObamaCare and set the table for more comprehensive replacement of the outdated Tax Code with one that is simpler and more effective. And it would provide tools finally to repeal and replace ObamaCare itself, leaving the law's higher costs and broken promises where they belong—in the past—in favor of a fresh start and the opportunity for real health reform.

So while this balanced budget might upset special interests, that is OK, because it is focused on the middle class instead. It is focused on helping the most vulnerable too.

Here is what we know about important programs such as Medicare. We can make commonsense improvements to save these programs today or we can allow draconian cuts to fall on the most vulnerable in the years ahead. These are essentially our only two options. We can't tax the problem away. Denying the facts won't help either.

So we invite all of our friends to join us as positive reformers, not insensitive deniers. Let's work together to improve Medicaid as this balanced budget proposes. While our balanced budget cannot solve every challenge, it will move us further down the path of positive reform. It will make government more efficient, more effective, and more accountable to the middle class.

The budget also contains a good-faith compromise to begin the legislative process for the Defense authorization bill we will consider later this year, when additional OCO funds can be prudently reallocated against the actual procurement and modernization needs of our military, if only for the coming fiscal year. This is the best strategy, short of revising the BCA, for keeping faith with our armed services, and it is the best option we currently have for leaving the next President in a better position to face global challenges.

So I wish to thank Chairman ENZI for all of his good work in putting this balanced budget together. It certainly wasn't easy. It is a good balanced budget that everyone should want to support.

That is especially true when we compare it to the other alternatives here. It is the only alternative, actually, since our friends still don't seem to be in the habit of producing a budget of their own.

The alternative on offer was the budget we voted on Tuesday from President Obama. Someone called it the left's dream budget. But that dream ended up being so unserious and embarrassing that not more than a single Democrat could muster the courage to vote for it. In a way, it is hard to blame our friends. It would be pretty embarrassing and insensitive to support a budget that contains trillions more in overspending, almost $2 trillion more in taxes, and hardly any serious ideas to save the programs for the most vulnerable.

No wonder this budget went down in flames 98 to 1—98 to 1. That was the vote on the President's budget. That 98, by the way, was against the President's budget.

So only one budget remains. It is a balanced budget that will focus on growth, common sense, and the middle class. It isn't perfect, but it does represent honest compromise and the promise of a better tomorrow.

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

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If Senators would prefer to amend it, they will have that opportunity this evening. Members of both parties will be able to offer amendments. I know many of our friends across the aisle are eager to do that. Republicans will have their chance too. There is a lot we expect to consider.

For instance, do Senators want to be seen supporting a policy that costs up to a million jobs or will they stand tall for American jobs instead? Will Senators support more tired tax hikes or will they support the jobs those higher taxes threaten to destroy? And do Senators want to raise the cost of energy or do they want to see the American people reap benefits of our energy revolution?

So tonight, the American people will have their voices heard again in the Senate under new management. They will see a new Congress that is back to work again and on their behalf. After considering all of these amendments, we will take a vote. When the budget passes, we will conference with the House. That is how this process has worked historically. It is what the American people have a right to expect now, and that is what we hope to see again shortly.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

THE VOTE-ARAMA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before the Republican leader leaves, in the weather reports today, they forecast snow starting late today. Maybe that will calm down the generosity of the offering of amendments today, because snow is going to continue until tomorrow.

Mr. McCONNELL. I would say to my friend, the Democratic leader, the history of this exercise is that the lateness of the evening affects the number of amendments we have, and we will finish the process just as early as Members would like to finish the process.

I know the Democratic leader and I both look forward to it.

THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate the cooperation between Senator SANDERS and Senator ENZI in our arriving at the point we are now. The Republicans have a totally different vision of what the country is and should be than we have, but the debate between these two good Senators has been civil. It has been very polite. It is the way things should happen around here. So I appreciate that very much.

The Republican budget makes clear the priorities of the Republicans. Republicans would get two-thirds of their cuts from low-income Americans, but they would not plug one single loophole for corporations or the rich—and I mean the mega rich—not a penny. They would double down on harmful sequestration, which is when automatic cuts occur across the board. We know how disastrous this has been.

For the 1 year it was in effect—take, for example, the National Institutes of Health—almost $2 billion they lost that 1 year.

On the floor is the senior Senator from the State of Illinois. I have heard him speak here on the floor about what a difficult time the people at NIH are having because they don't have enough money to do basic research. The sequestration that was put upon us last time caused the NIH to stop their research on a universal flu vaccine. Hundreds of thousands of people die around the world every year, and tens of thousands of people die every year in the United States because of flu. They were close to having a universal flu vaccine that would take care of this.

Sequestration is awful. It is part of the Republican budget. They are doubling down on this harmful sequestration on health, education, and even national defense.

Talk about a gimmick. This is a doozy, what they are trying to do with defense, to try to pretend they are going to put $38 billion more in the Defense budget. But it is pretend, because even looking at the Republican budget, it is not possible to do. Once even the Republican hawks look at this, they will say: Well, maybe we are not going to get that $38 billion.

So their budget has lots of gimmicks—lots of gimmicks. It has been written about all over the country in editorials from east to west and from north to south.

Fortunately for the country, the Republican budget will not become law.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

Pending:

Enzi (for Kirk) amendment No. 545, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reimposing waived sanctions and imposing new sanctions against Iran for violations of the Joint Plan of Action or a comprehensive nuclear agreement.

Rounds/Inhofe amendment No. 412, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from engaging in closed-door settlement agreements that ignore impacted States and counties.

Rubio modified amendment No. 423, to increase new budget authority fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050).

Daines amendment No. 388, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the designation of national monuments.

Daines amendment No. 389, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget.

Moran amendment No. 356, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing health care to veterans who reside more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides the care sought by the veteran.

Roberts/Flake amendment No. 352, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Federal employee performance awards.

Roberts amendment No. 462, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to over-the-counter medications.

Vitter amendment No. 515, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to requiring the Federal Government to allow states to opt out of Common Core without penalty.

Vitter amendment No. 811, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ending Washington's illegal exemption from Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Gardner amendment No. 443, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting privately held water rights and permits.

Coats/Warner amendment No. 595, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to improve cybersecurity.

Coats amendment No. 368, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing States the Medicaid flexibility they need to implement innovative reforms to improve care and enhance access for our Nation's most vulnerable.

Daines amendment No. 465, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Second Amendment rights.

Daines amendment No. 387, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to postal reform.

Wyden/Crapo amendment No. 434, to provide for an adjustment to committee allocations for wildfire suppression funding.

Paul amendment No. 940, to increase new budget authority for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050) with offsets.

Sanders (for Murray/Alexander) amendment No. 697, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation that reforms and strengthens elementary and secondary education.

Sanders (for Murray) amendment No. 798, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation to allow Americans to earn paid sick time.

Sanders (for Cantwell) amendment No. 800, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to a comprehensive approach to crude-by-rail safety.

Sanders (for Murray) amendment No. 812, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide women with affordable access to comprehensive health care, including preventative services (such as contraception and breast cancer screenings), improve maternal health, and ensure that a woman has

the same benefits and services no matter what part of the United States she lives in, all of which is critical to improving the health and well-being of women, children, their families, and society as a whole, and is an essential part of a woman's economic security and opportunity.

Sanders (for Murray) amendment No. 951, to establish and fund a new Federal-State partnership to expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families, offset with revenue from closing loopholes.

Sanders (for Durbin/Coons) amendment No. 345, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing funding for Federal investments in biomedical and basic scientific research.

Sanders (for Durbin) amendment No. 817, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide tax benefits to patriot employers that invest in American jobs and provide fair pay and benefits to workers and to eliminate tax benefits for corporations that ship jobs or profits overseas.

McCain/Flake amendment No. 360, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to deterring the migration of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Wyden/Bennet amendment No. 708, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to simplifying and expanding tax incentives for higher education to boost student attendance and completion.

Wyden amendment No. 791, to strike reconciliation instructions to the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Finance and require regular order.

Wyden amendment No. 870, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to extending tax provisions expiring in 2013 or 2014 for 2 years, such as those contained in the EXPIRE Act of 2014.

Heller amendment No. 453, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of Transportation prioritizes the construction of projects that are of national and regional significance and projects in high priority corridors on the National Highway System, which will improve the safe, secure, and efficient movement of people and goods through the United States and facilitate economic development and create jobs in the United States.

Heller amendment No. 452, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of the Interior enters into candidate conservation agreements with each of the relevant 11 Western States before the United States Fish and Wildlife Service makes a listing determination on the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Heller amendment No. 457, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibition of Veterans Benefits Administration executive bonuses until the backlog of disability claims for veterans is eliminated.

Heller amendment No. 456, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs meet the privacy, dignity, and safety needs of women veterans.

Coons/Bennet amendment No. 343, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preserving mandatory appropriations for agricultural conservation programs.

Coons amendment No. 391, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the expansion of access to the income tax credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers.

Coons/Rubio amendment No. 392, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting the use of college savings accounts while students are in elementary school and secondary school.

Coons amendment No. 394, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to special treatment of the income tax credit for research expenditures for startup companies.

Coons amendment No. 802, to offset the costs of the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Baldwin amendment No. 432, to provide additional resources to create the opportunity for more Americans to obtain a higher education and advanced job skills by supporting two free years of community college paid for by raising revenue through requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share.

Baldwin amendment No. 436, to preserve the point of order against the reconciliation legislation that would increase the deficit or reduce a surplus.

Manchin amendment No. 694, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in advanced fossil energy technology research and development.

Manchin amendment No. 578, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to addressing methamphetamine abuse in the United States.

Whitehouse amendment No. 700, to ensure high-income earners pay a fair share in taxes and to use the revenue to invest in repairing our Nation's bridges, coastal infrastructure, and damage from wildfires.

Whitehouse/Udall amendment No. 867, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to making it more difficult for corporations and billionaires to secretly influence elections by making unlimited undisclosed campaign expenditures, and to prevent such entities from evading campaign finance law, including through making false statements to government agencies.

Whitehouse amendment No. 895, to prohibit budget resolutions that support cutting over $1,000,000,000,000 in spending without identifying specific programmatic effects.

Casey amendment No. 632, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers.

Casey amendment No. 633, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enhancing the child and dependent care tax credit.

Merkley/Coons amendment No. 842, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to consumer financial protection.

Merkley amendment No. 843, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to restoring reductions in the Republican budget to the Stafford loan program that would mandate that students currently in college pay interest on their loans before they have received their education benefits, to make college more affordable, to reduce the debt burden of students, and to help graduates afford to pay back student loans.

Merkley/Brown amendment No. 952, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a more level playing field in trade agreements.

Merkley amendment No. 953, to save student financial aid and reduce the student loan debt levels in the Republican budget by 15 percent by eliminating new mandated interest charged while students are still in school.

Blumenthal amendment No. 825, to expand the deficit-neutral reserve fund for veterans and servicemembers.

Cassidy amendment No. 341, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the promotion of United States offshore energy production.

Cassidy amendment No. 539, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving Medicaid based on successful and bipartisan State demonstration projects.

Cassidy amendment No. 795, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to authorizing Federal permitting for manufacturing and energy construction projects relating to national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for ozone lower than a certain existing standard.

Coons (for Bennet) amendment No. 715, to create clean energy jobs through predictable and fair incentives for renewable energy.

Murkowski (for Thune) amendment No. 607, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to allow for the permanent elimination of the Federal estate tax.

Murkowski (for Thune) amendment No. 743, to reduce funding for the General Services Administration by $1,000,000 until 50 percent of counties in nonattainment for the 1997 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone as of January 30, 2015, achieve the air quality standard set forth in the 1997 NAAQS, and direct those funds to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of helping municipalities reach attainment with the 2008 NAAQS for ground-level ozone, acknowledging that (1) given limited State and Federal resources and the delay of the Administrator in issuing to States implementation guidance for the 2008 ground-level ozone NAAQS, priority should be given to achieving the 2008 standard, (2) the Administrator has not sufficiently implemented that standard, (3) focusing by the Administrator on the most polluted areas that are in nonattainment with that standard would benefit public health, and (4) promulgating a lower standard at this time would impose undue costs on the economy and workforce of the United States.

Murkowski/Sullivan amendment No. 838, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the disposal of certain Federal land.

Murkowski amendment No. 770, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the construction of Arctic polar icebreakers.

Gardner (for Ayotte) amendment No. 485, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide equity in the tax treatment of public safety officer death benefits.

Gardner (for Ayotte) amendment No. 490, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to address the disproportionate regulatory burdens on community bankers.

Gardner (for Ayotte) amendment No. 852, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing small business regulatory relief and preventing duplicative regulations for investment advisors.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this has been an important week for the Senate as we work to set spending goals for our Nation. Before this year, the Senate has only been able to pass two budgets in the past 6 years. Now that Congress is under new management, we are on track to pass a budget after only 3 months.

The reason we are working so hard is to restore the trust of the American people, who want and deserve more effective and efficient government. This week, as part of the Senate's regular order, we have been debating and offering amendments and have actually voted more than a dozen times on how best to set spending limits and make government live within its means, including votes to protect property rights of all Americans and to save Medicare.

The spending goals and limits we have set are why passing a budget is so

important to our Nation. They let congressional policymakers who actually allocate the dollars get to work by following our spending limits. Without that, they are delayed.

We have had that situation for a number of years, in which the fiscal year actually ends and we don't have the spending bills done. That is what happens with government shutdowns. That is what happens with extending its ability to operate without having a budget. That shouldn't happen.

So we want to get a budget passed by April 15 so that the spending committees can get busy looking at their areas of jurisdiction, their specific areas of interest, to come up with the best policies possible that have a total spending package that will keep government operating and meeting its objectives as the people expect.

But today is the day for which we all have been waiting. Today the Senate will begin voting on many amendments offered this week by way of what is affectionately known as a vote-arama. We will start voting early this afternoon, and we will continue until we are exhausted, until we are done, until people think their amendments have been covered sufficiently. That is the way we do it in the Senate.

The Senate debate on this balanced budget demonstrates that Congress is doing its part to deliver a healthy economy for each and every American. The important first steps we have taken this week will help deliver a government that is more accountable, which is absolutely essential for strong job growth and job creation. This budget will help every American who wants to find a good-paying job and a fulfilling career.

I am incredibly proud of my colleagues who are working together to deliver real solutions, real results, and real progress for hard-working taxpayers.

I find this a little bit stressful. I am an accountant. I have found a way to escape some of that tension. I have been reading the Tax Code, and it is time for us to reform the Tax Code. There are hundreds of pages on minor decisions, on different ways of calculating it, and I am excited that we are going to do that. One of the things both sides of the aisle have talked about is speculation on tax reform. Tax reform needs to be done in a bipartisan way. I know the chairman of the Finance Committee and the ranking member on the Finance Committee have already been working on it. We have subgroups set up to solve different parts of the Tax Code, and I am confident we can do that. There are general instructions in the budget bill that allow some latitude to the Finance Committee in a number of different ways, and I am hoping we can wind up with a simpler Tax Code, one that will not take care of my frustrations in future years, but will ease the frustrations of the American people as to taxes.

There has been a lot of speculation on where budget cuts are being made. I know there is a lot of frustration on the other side. Our budget sets limits for the different spending groups. It doesn't get into the details. The people who know the details in those areas are on the committees, and they can make better decisions than we as the Budget Committee can make. I do point out frequently that part of my discovery during this process was that there are 260 programs whose authorizations have expired. That means the specific committees that came up with the idea for these programs haven't looked at them for some time, and that didn't stop us from going ahead and funding them anyway. They have expired, but in some cases we are spending four times as much as what was originally envisioned for that particular program. Does it amount to much money? It amounts to $293 billion a year—$293 billion a year. If the committees do their work, there is a lot of money available for the areas outside of defense.

Defense has its authorization done every year, so they are in a different category from all of the rest of the Federal Government programs. So if you are thinking there are a lot of hands tied on what can be done, there is $293 billion out there that is being spent that has expired and ought to be looked at. In businesses, they have to look at their expenses every single year and see where they can cut in order to continue the business. Around here one of those programs hasn't been looked at since 1983.

So there is a lot of work for us to do. It is all included in the budget. I hope we can finish the budget tonight and put everybody to work on these extra tasks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I heard my friend from Wyoming say he is relieving his stress over the budget by reading the Tax Code. In my religion, when you go to confession, you are given a penance for your sins. I cannot think of a more awesome penance than reading the Tax Code. I certainly hope it gives my friend from Wyoming a good frame of mind as he attacks this vote-arama.

I am going to be brief because our ranking member on the budget has arrived on the floor, but I do want to say this: Budgets make choices, and there are one or two choices—certainly more than one or two but one or two that I would like to highlight that I think are worrisome.

The Republican budget eliminates health insurance for 27 million Americans. That is 9 percent of people in America who would lose their health insurance protection because of the Republican budget. Part of it is the passionate refusal of the Republicans to accept the Affordable Care Act, which now in itself protects 15 to 16 million Americans. We have said to them, if you don't like the Affordable Care Act, give us an alternative, and they have yet to do so—and, frankly, because it is fairly difficult, as it was passing this bill. But to take health insurance away from 27 million Americans and say that is going to make a better life for working families? No, it will not. It will make a bigger challenge for these families which will be extremely difficult.

Secondly, I am worried and I think other Members from both sides of the aisle share concerns about sequestration cuts when it comes to areas such as biomedical research. How in the world can we justify cutting research from the National Institutes of Health to find cures for diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes—the list goes on. If we believe we are making a better America by cutting back research and innovation, particularly biomedical research, it is extremely shortsighted. When I take a look at the 200 or so pending amendments on budget resolution, it looks like there are 10 of them—including one I am going to offer—relative to medical research. Democrats and Republicans are saying spare this area of Federal spending. I would like to propose that all of us who share this goal on both sides of the aisle join in an effort to make sure this is treated differently in our budget. It shouldn't be subject to mindless and deep cuts in biomedical research, which will deny to a lot of suffering people the hope they need and deny cures that will not only save lives but save dramatic amounts of money.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, when we look at budgets, we look essentially at two things. First off, we look at what the budget actually does, because it is a set of priorities, and we look at what the budget does not do.

Any sensible group of people, whether it is a family, whether it is local government, State government, whether it is a business—people sit around the table and say, OK, these are our needs, this is what we have to address or this is no longer relevant or this is wasteful and we have to get rid of it. That is what a budget process is about.

When you examine the Republican budget, it almost seems they turn that equation upside down and they do everything we should not be doing and they don't do what we should be doing. The overall reality of America that most people understand is the middle class of this country for the last 40 years has been shrinking. Yes, we are in a lot better shape today than we were when President Bush left office, but real unemployment is 11 percent. We have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world. Despite the modest gains to the Affordable Care Act, 35 million Americans still have no health insurance. Millions of families—whether it is in Nevada or Vermont—are wondering how in God's name they are going to be able to send their kids to college when school is so expensive. What happens to those

young people when they leave school deeply in debt?

People are working in Vermont, in Nevada, in Wyoming for horrendously low wages because we have a minimum wage of $7.25 an hour, and people are wondering why it is that they work 40 hours a week and still have to go to the emergency food shelf to put food on the table. Those are some of the issues the American people are talking about and they are thinking about, and they wonder, How does it happen that while they are working longer hours for low wages, the people on top and the large profitable corporations are doing phenomenally well? How does it happen that in the last 2 years, 14 of the wealthiest people in this country have seen a $157 billion increase in their wealth? How does it happen that one family, the Walton family, owns more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of the American people? How does it happen that 99 percent of all new income generated in America since the Wall Street crash goes to the top 1 percent?

Those are the issues the American people are wondering about. Why, with an increase in productivity, am I working longer hours for lower wages? Why, if I am a woman worker, do I make 78 cents on the dollar compared to a male worker? Those are the questions.

Then you look at the Republican budget. The Republican budget does nothing to address the real problems except to make them worse. One of the problems, to be very frank, and works to the Republicans' advantage—and I have to say this, frankly—the Republican budget is so outrageous that when we explain it, people don't believe what we are saying. Senator DURBIN made the point—no debate here—if I am wrong, somebody jump up and correct me. The Republican budget eliminates the Affordable Care Act, right? It does that, and 16 million Americans lose their health insurance—16 million people have no health insurance. But that is not enough. The Republican budget cuts over $400 billion in Medicaid. That is another 11 million people losing their health insurance—16 plus 11 is 27 million people losing health insurance.

Does anybody in America think that makes any sense at all? These are men, women, children. You cut Medicaid and you throw people off. These are pregnant women who need to go to the doctor to make sure the baby they are carrying is healthy or little babies who are born. That is what they do.

But meanwhile, here is something they do not do. When they get up there and say this budget does not include any tax increases, they are right. I can see that. They are right. But what they are really saying is: We will not—we will never ask the billionaires in this country to pay a nickel more in taxes. We will not ask the one out of four major corporations that pay nothing in taxes to start paying their fair share of taxes. We will make it harder for kids to go to college, we will throw people off of health insurance, but we will not ask the rich and the powerful to pay more in taxes.

That is what this budget debate is about, and I hope the American people pay attention to that.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 689

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment No. 689.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN] proposes an amendment numbered 689.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the dynamic scoring provision)

On page 104, line 16, after ''shall provide'' insert '', in addition to the estimate of budgetary effects without macroeconomic effects, an estimate of the budgetary effects from changes in economic output, employment, capital stock, interest rates, and other macroeconomic variables resulting from the major legislation and''

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, we had an energetic discussion this morning about the budget that is before us. The amendment I am going to offer will help us have a better process to get to pro-growth tax reform to actually get this economy growing.

My colleague, Senator SANDERS, talked about the fact that real unemployment is far higher than the numbers that are officially reported. I agree with him on that. I agree with him that the economy is not out of the woods, and I agree with him that a lot of people are left behind and will continue to be until we get this economy growing the way you normally see an economy grow during a recovery. It is the weakest economic recovery, economists tell us, since the Great Depression; that is, measured in terms of economic growth, GDP, and in terms of job growth.

So what this budget does is it puts in place the process for us to actually get pro-growth on policies: yes, on health care; yes, on taxes, on regulations, and so on to be able to move the economy forward. It was President John F. Kennedy who said that ''a rising tide lifts all boats.'' Now, some people get stuck on the shoals and we need to take care of them too. That is why this budget also has a strong safety net necessary to get economic growth—not sufficient but necessary. That is what this budget does.

By the way, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office—not the Republicans, not I—the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office looks at this budget and says, you know what. By balancing the budget in 10 years—balancing the budget—therefore, reducing the amount of deficits and the huge debt overhang—a record level of debt we have in our country right now—that will result in more economic growth and more jobs. That is what the Congressional Budget Office said. So this notion that somehow by actually dealing with the debt and deficit and by actually having a balanced budget is bad for the economy—it is just the opposite. This is a first but incredibly important step to getting this economy back on track and to bringing back these jobs.

By the way, this is about not just economic growth but about better jobs, about rising wages, and it is about getting to a situation where instead of having wages going down—which is what has been happening over the last 6 years—we can actually see wages go up. On average, wages have gone down about 8 percent. So for working families in Ohio and around this country, we have seen wages go down 8 percent. By the way, half of that reduction in wages came during the so-called recovery. So something is not working. Part of what is not working is running these hundreds of billions of dollars of deficit every year and spending more than this place takes in every year and building up these levels of debt that are unprecedented—over $18 trillion.

We did vote on the President's budget yesterday. It is the only alternative we have to be able to compare what this side of the aisle wants to do and what the other side of the aisle wants to do. In the budget the President put out, there was an $8 trillion increase—increase—in the debt over the next 10 years. That is adding to the over $7 trillion of debt that has been added over the last 6 years under the Obama administration. That may be why not a lot of people voted for the budget that the President presented. In fact, only one person did—1 out of 100. The reason is, it adds so much more debt and so much more in annual deficits that it actually puts that wet blanket over the economy and doesn't enable us to see the economic growth we want.

So one element of growth, as the chairman of the Budget Committee talked about this morning, is tax reform. I think everybody acknowledges that our Tax Code is antiquated. It is out of date. It is inefficient. It does not let us compete around the world. So workers in Ohio are competing with one hand tied behind their backs because our Tax Code is so inefficient that it does not let them compete effectively around the world.

So let's reform the Tax Code. Everybody who looks at it—economists right, left, or center—agrees the Tax Code does not work. They have different ideas on how to fix it, but they all say: if you could fix this Tax Code, you would see more growth.

By the way, you would see not just more jobs but better jobs. If you look

at the issue of business tax reform—there is actually a lot of similarity between what the administration is talking about and what Members of Congress on my side of the aisle are talking about. The economic analysis there is that the No. 1 impact of having the highest business tax rate in all the developed world is on wages and benefits. The No. 1 beneficiary will be workers because they are going to see their wages go up and they are going to see their benefits go up. These are the middle-class jobs we want to create in this country.

So let's have this tax reform. Let's make sure it is pro-growth.

Now back to this amendment and why it is so important to that. This is an amendment that says: Let's require the Joint Committee on Taxation—that is the group who handles scoring those tax reform proposals—to give us the right analysis so we can come up with pro-job, pro-growth tax reform that will actually enable us to bring back these good middle-class jobs. That is what this amendment says. It requires them to provide us what is called macroeconomic scoring.

Right now, unbelievably, when you provide a tax reform proposal on the floor of the Senate, what you get back is just a static score that has no relationship to what the impact will be on the economy. It assumes there will be zero impact on the economy. Now, nobody believes that. Everyone knows tax changes will have some impact on the economy—good, bad, indifferent—yet we do not have that information to be able to ensure that we are writing the right tax reform to get to the result we all want. It seems absurd, I know, but that is the current situation.

What this amendment says is, let's have a requirement that the Joint Committee on Taxation provide to the Senate a dynamic score, a macroeconomic score. By the way, they already do it. They already have a model to do it. They just do not provide it to us. Would there be a so-called static score, too, that shows no economic changes? Yes, you would have that too. I cannot imagine that any Member of this body, Republican or Democrat, would not want to have that information, would not want to know what the actual impact is on the economy.

Think about this: If McDonald's raises the price of its Big Mac to $10 or $12, what is going to happen? Under a static score, it would say: McDonald's will get more revenue. We know what will happen. We will not go to McDonald's and our kids will not go to McDonald's because it is too expensive. The revenue will go down.

We need to have that kind of commonsense analysis here on the floor of the Senate so we can, indeed, put forward tax reform that makes sense for the economy and makes sense to the American people and helps to do precisely what Senator SANDERS talks about, which is to get that unemployment number down and provide better jobs, higher paying jobs. If we do not do that, we are letting down the people we are elected to represent.

I hope this amendment No. 689 is supported by Democrats and Republicans alike as a commonsense approach to this. Let's apply macroeconomic analysis to anything that is a tax reform proposal over $15 billion. That is the right level. The House has similar analysis in their legislation, so this could actually end up being something on which the House and Senate can agree.

Let's ensure that we have the information we need to write the right kind of legislation to get this economy moving and to deal with both sides of the coin. One, spending restraint—and we all know that has to happen—and two, growth, get this economy moving. If we do that, we will see more gross revenues and be able to make this objective we have set out in this budget, which is to actually, for the American people, who cannot understand why we cannot do it, balance this budget. They have to balance their budgets. We have to in our families. We have to in our businesses. We have to in our States. We ought to do it here in the Congress as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from West Virginia.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 415 AND 416 EN BLOC

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up amendments Nos. 415 and 416 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 415

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to a requirement that any new environmental agreement signed by the United States with any foreign country or countries not result in serious harm to the economy of the United States)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO A REQUIREMENT THAT ANY NEW ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY NOT RESULT IN SERIOUS HARM TO THE ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a requirement that any new environmental agreement signed by the United States with any foreign country or countries not result in serious harm to the economy of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 416

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the reliability of the electricity grid)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING THE RELIABILITY OF THE ELECTRICITY GRID.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to prohibiting the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or issuing any regulation that would reduce the reliability of the electricity grid by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I wish to briefly address these two amendments. The first amendment simply says that the United States should not sign an international environmental agreement that would do serious harm to our own economy. That commonsense principle passed the Senate by a vote of 95 to 0 in 1997.

Last year, the administration announced the climate agreement with China. That agreement requires significant short-term carbon emission reductions here in the United States, but China is allowed to continue increasing its carbon emissions until 2030. That disparity could place the United States at a significant economic disadvantage. In November, global talks began in Paris on a broader international agreement.

My amendment simply states what every Senator who voted in 1997 said: No agreement should cause serious harm to the American economy.

My second amendment protects the reliability of our electricity grid. North American Electric Reliability Corporation released a report that found that the targets set forward in the President's Clean Power Plan will be difficult if not impossible to achieve without degrading the reliability of the grid.

We all want to have our lights turn on and our heat and air-conditioning work. This is in peril. My amendment simply makes sure families and businesses have the reliable electricity they expect by blocking the EPA from finalizing, proposing, or issuing any regulation that would reduce the reliability of the electricity grid.

I ask my colleagues to support these amendments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

AMENDMENT NO. 437

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up Peters amendment No. 437.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. PETERS] proposes an amendment numbered 437.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enhancing and improving the United States Patent and Trademark Office in order to reduce the patent application backlog)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENHANCING AND IMPROVING THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE APPLICATION BACKLOG.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhancing and improving the United States Patent and Trademark Office in order to reduce the patent application backlog by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, the amendment that I have just called up that is pending before the Senate deals with what I think is a critical issue for this country; that is, making sure we can continue to move forward with innovation to grow the economy.

There certainly are many debates that are going to be held as to how we get the productivity in this country to increase, how we create more middle-class jobs and grow the economy from the top to the bottom. But I think there is broad consensus that what has really driven our economy—really through the centuries but certainly most recently in the United States—has been innovation. It is about innovation, creating the next big thing, the big products that transform people's lives. In order to do that, companies that come up with these ideas need to have patent protection so that the effort they put into that product, the money they put into that product, they are able to protect as they market that product and get a return on their investments. Unfortunately, however, the backlog of patent applications at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has become completely unacceptable.

The America Invents Act made a number of very important changes to our patent system that targeted the reducing of the backlog and driving innovation. At the time that act was passed, there were more than 700,000 patent applications at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Those applications had an average review time of 3 years or longer before the applications were granted patent protection. Three years is simply an unacceptable amount of time to wait as these inventors who are trying to get their patent protections—they have to wait several years before they can bring those products to the market and have the protections of patents.

What makes it even more unacceptable is that these folks who are applying for these patents pay a user fee. They pay a fee in order to have this work done. Yet, with sequestration and other types of budget maneuvering, the patent office actually cannot fully utilize the fees that are generated by the people who are paying these fees. So, in a sense, this is an innovation tax. People who are innovating pay a tax while they are innovating, when what we should be doing is accelerating their ability to bring these products to market, create jobs, and advance the economy.

The backlog now, after the passage of the act, still stands at 600,000, with an average review time of 2.3 years. So we have made some progress, but we still have a long way to go.

So in order to reduce the patent application backlog, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office needs the ability to access all of the fees it receives in order to hire additional examiners and administrative patent judges. That is what this amendment before us does—it gives the patent office the resources it needs in order to do its job effectively. The end result is a stronger American economy. I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 521

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and call up Peters amendment No. 521.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. PETERS] proposes an amendment numbered 521.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in science, technology, and basic research in the United States)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INVESTING IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND BASIC RESEARCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to investment in science, technology, and basic research in the United States, which may include educational or research and development initiatives, public-private partnerships, or other programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, this amendment is similar to the previous amendment in that it focuses on innovation. It focuses on what this country does best, which is create new products and advance the knowledge with scientific discoveries and new inventions.

This amendment, however, deals specifically with scientific discovery and technological breakthroughs that drive our economy. We have known throughout human history that the drivers of that have been the big breakthroughs, whether it is the cotton gin or the internal combustion engine or the railroads. These have been inventions that have transformed the entire planet.

We need to continue to have those innovations, but in order to do that, we need to invest in basic scientific research. Investments in basic research have resulted in countless innovations that improve our day-to-day lives and support the Nation's overall productivity and competitiveness.

The Federal Government has long played a crucial role. This has always been, in the past, a very bipartisan issue, that the Federal Government invest in this basic, cutting-edge research and development. However, we have seen a very I think disturbing trend over the last few decades as R&D spending has fallen. The amount of money which the Federal Government puts into basic scientific research now is less than 1 percent of GDP. This is simply unacceptable. We have to look at basic scientific research as the seed corn for our economy. We need to invest in seed corn so we can harvest the rewards of that investment.

This amendment would strengthen Congress's ongoing commitment to responsibly increasing investments in science, technology, and basic research and help ensure U.S. science and technology leadership in an increasingly competitive world.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this amendment to show our commitment to investing in basic scientific research so we can continue to make the U.S. economy the strongest in the world.

AMENDMENT NO. 639

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and call up Peters amendment No. 639.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. PETERS] proposes an amendment numbered 639.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting trade and travel at ports of entry)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING TRADE AND TRAVEL AT PORTS OF ENTRY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting trade and travel at ports of entry, which may include construction at ports of entry or increased staffing at ports of entry, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 and the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, this amendment deals with another critical aspect of growing our economy. Certainly innovation and basic scientific research are the real drivers of long-term economic growth, but another very important aspect of that is international trade. The United States has the best workers in the world. We have the best entrepreneurs. We have the best innovators. We need to be in a position that we can continue to promote trade across the world.

So I rise to offer an amendment that will support trade and travel through our U.S. ports of entry. As we all know, trade and travel drive economic development. In fact, they generate over $2 trillion in economic impact and support nearly 15 million jobs nationwide. However, it is unfortunate to say that many our busiest ports of entry are in need of modernization in order to safely and efficiently process travelers and goods.

I speak about this with firsthand experience. In Michigan, our manufacturers and agricultural producers rely on efficient trade with Canada, which is our Nation's largest export market, our top customer, as well as our closest ally. However, existing infrastructure at our ports of entry often does not allow for the most efficient processing of trucks and cargo. We have two major crossings in Detroit—in Windsor, Canada, as well as Port Huron in Sarnia. Both of those trade areas need additional investment in their customs plazas to efficiently handle the trade between our two countries.

Those investments are important investments in the future of this country and important in order to make sure we continue to expand trade and economic activity. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. First, Mr. President, I thank Senator PETERS for the amendments he just offered. We had a hearing in the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee in regard to the patent issues. It is clearly a huge concern by the innovators, the small business, biotech, and high-tech firms. I thank the Senator very much for giving us an opportunity to act on that matter.

Secondly, let me compliment the Senator on the research issues. I took to the floor yesterday and talked about the budgets of the National Institutes of Health and how critical that is, not only for their direct mission, which is to find answers to diseases, but also to provide the answers to building blocks for companies that do incredible work.

I was at AstraZeneca in Frederick on Monday, where they do the biologics manufacturing, and they depend very much on the NIH budget.

I thank the Senator for the amendments he offered. I know we will have a chance to act on them a bit later.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 364, 367, 439, 440, 899, AND 900 EN BLOC

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc: Cardin amendments Nos. 364, 367, 439, 440, 899, and 900.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Mr. CARDIN] proposes amendments numbered 364, 367, 439, 440, 899, and 900 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 364

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving oral health care for children and pregnant women under Medicaid)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPROVING ORAL HEALTH CARE FOR CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN UNDER MEDICAID.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to initiatives that would improve oral health care for children and pregnant women under the Medicaid program by the amounts provided in such legislation for such purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 367

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing a funding stream for a voter reinfranchisement initiative)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING PROVIDING A FUNDING STREAM FOR A VOTER REINFRANCHISEMENT INITIATIVE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing a funding stream for a voter reinfranchisement initiative, which may include Bureau of Prisons notifications for released inmates of voting rights, notifications by United States attorneys of voting rights restrictions during plea agreements, and a Department of Justice report on the disproportionate impact of criminal disenfranchisement laws on minority populations, including data on disfranchisement rates by race and ethnicity, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 439

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to mandating a higher threshold that the Small Business Administration may guarantee, through the Surety Bond Guarantee Program, of the bonds that small businesses are required to obtain so that they may be able to better compete successfully for Federal Government contracts)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING THE GUARANTEE THRESHOLD FOR THE SURETY BOND GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Surety Bond Guarantee Program of the Small Business Administration, which may include exploring or raising the range for surety bonds, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 440

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing the Family Funds limit of the Small Business Investment Company Program from $225,000,000 to $350,000,000, as passed by the Committee in 2013, which is zero subsidy and funded entirely through fees paid by investors and businesses)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO RAISING THE FAMILY OF FUNDS LIMIT OF THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT COMPANY PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Small Business Investment Company Program of the Small Business Administration, which may include raising the Family of Funds limit of the Small Business Investment Company Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years

2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 899

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the importance of financial literacy education to allow individuals to make informed and effective decisions with their financial resources)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION TO ALLOW INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE INFORMED AND EFFECTIVE DECISIONS WITH THEIR FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to financial literacy education, which may include improvements to financial literacy education curricula in schools or which may improve the capacity of teachers to provide effective financial literacy education, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 900

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the importance of civics and government education)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT EDUCATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to civics and government education, which may include improving instruction in civics and government education or which may improve the capacity of teachers to provide effective civics and government education, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to take a few minutes to talk a little bit about the amendments.

I see Senator PORTMAN on the floor, and I want to talk about amendment No. 899, which provides a deficit-neutral reserve fund for financial literacy.

The two of us have been working for over a decade to increase the amount of savings for Americans, particularly retirement savings. We know that at early ages people need to understand the importance of saving.

I offer this amendment, and Senator PORTMAN has been very helpful to me in developing this amendment. I hope we will be able to act on this a little bit later.

Amendment No. 364 deals with oral health, which establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving oral health care for pregnant women and children under Medicaid. Let me point out to my colleagues something they may not be aware of; that is, the oral health of a pregnant woman very much impacts the baby. Therefore, it is important pregnant women have attention to their oral health care needs. It is transmitted to their babies.

I urge my colleagues to help us in supporting this effort. We have taken major steps to improve pediatric dental care. This is another step we can take by dealing with pregnant women.

With regard to amendment No. 367, which sets up the deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide for voter reenfranchisement initiatives, once again I think my colleagues would be surprised to learn there is an estimated 5.85 million citizens who cannot vote as a result of criminal convictions and nearly 4.4 million of those have already been released from prison.

We have 4.4 million people living in our community whom we expect to be productive citizens, and yet they have been disenfranchised from voting.

Nationwide 1 in 13 African Americans of voting age have lost their right to vote, a rate four times the national average. I think that should give us all concern.

Latino citizens are also impacted because they are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

States have vastly different approaches to people voting with criminal convictions. This patchwork of State laws has caused confusion among the election officials and the public, sometimes resulting in the disenfranchisement of even eligible voters. So this amendment would provide much needed information into the hands of citizens returning from incarceration.

I thank my colleague Senator PAUL for his work with regard to this issue. The two of us are trying to find a way we can bring forward together a workable way that can help many who have been released from our prisons to have the right to vote and participate in our community.

With regard to two amendments I am offering, amendments Nos. 439 and 440, both are related to my work as the ranking Democrat on the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee.

One would set up a deficit reserve fund to deal with surety bonds. We have increased the limit of the surety bond by the SBA for small companies, which is very important. This would help make that a more permanent increase.

The small companies, if they try to get a surety bond, have to pledge just about every one of their assets in order to get it. The SBA program helps with that credit so they can get affordable surety bonds without jeopardizing their ability to raise capital. This amendment calls attention to that need where we can help small businesses in this country.

I also set up the deficit-neutral reserve fund for family funds within the small business investment company.

I thank Senator RISCH. He has been working on this issue, and I have been working with him on this issue. I think we will hopefully be able to come together on legislation that will increase the opportunities under the small business investment companies, which is, again, an avenue for capital for small companies, the driving force for job innovation in our community.

This amendment would allow us again to focus on that legislation, which we hope to move through the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee.

Lastly, I have offered a deficit-neutral reserve fund, amendment No. 900, concerning civic education.

I have taken the floor to point out that, yes, we need to stress areas of excellence in the sciences, et cetera, in education, but let's not forget civic education. The bedrock of our country's values are based upon our civic system, and it is important that young people have a full understanding of civic education.

This amendment would give us an opportunity, in this Congress, to move forward in promoting civic education for our school system.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first, I applaud my colleague from Maryland for these constructive amendments. I am happy to be a cosponsor of the financial literacy amendment, which enables all of our constituents to be able to save and invest more, particularly with regard to retirement savings for retirees.

The savings rate is low. Baby boomers are retiring without having lifetime savings, and financial literacy is critical for them. It is also critical for our young people to give them the opportunity to start saving early with the power of compound interest and to be able to make wise decisions for their future—whether it is for retirement, whether it is for health care or whether it is for other purposes.

I have enjoyed working with my colleague Senator CARDIN on this issue over the years, and I am proud to cosponsor his amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 681

I wish to call up another amendment this morning because it is very important for all of us in this Chamber because all of us are affected by it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendment No. 681.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN] proposes an amendment numbered 681.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to demolishing vacant and abandoned homes)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DEMOLISHING VACANT AND ABANDONED HOMES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing funding to improve the safety of neighborhoods in the United States, which may include demolishing blighted and abandoned homes, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, this is a commonsense amendment that calls for prioritizing the investments to tackle a very important issue for our cities and towns across our country, especially those hardest hit by the housing crisis.

Main Streets, unfortunately, across our country have become littered with abandoned and blighted properties.

In Ohio, there are about 80,000 of these abandoned home; hundreds of thousands, of course, across the country. I have had the opportunity to walk the streets in some of our cities in Ohio with some of our farsighted mayors who are tackling this issue. They are looking for a little bit of help. I have been in Warren, OH, Toledo, OH, and Lima, OH.

When you walk these streets and talk to the people in the neighborhoods, they let you know how they are feeling about this. They don't like these blighted properties, in part, because it reduces the home values for the whole neighborhood. In fact, there is some evidence out there that these blighted properties can cost neighbors up to 80 percent of their home value. So one of the best things you can do for tumbling home values in America right now in struggling neighborhoods is demolish these abandoned properties.

Second, and this is very important, they become magnets for crime, for arson, and for other dangerous activities that put neighbors at risk. It puts first responders at risk. There are stories around the country. Unfortunately, in my home State of Ohio, some first responders, firefighters, have gone to a fire in an abandoned structure, actually been injured, and in one case lost their life. This is something neighbors feel strongly about.

When I was in Toledo, with the mayor of Toledo, observing one of the demolitions—it was a house that was about 10 feet away from a neighboring home. The mother was there with some of her young children, and she said: Thank goodness this is happening, because every night I go to sleep I put my head on my pillow praying that the house next door is not going to be subject to the arson attacks that have happened in the city of Toledo in these abandoned structures and praying that my children are not going to be injured by an arson next door to me.

It is critical that we provide this help. Land banks in these areas have done a terrific job. Cleveland, in particular, I will hold up as doing a great job. But in States like mine and in other manufacturing States—Florida, Michigan, and other States around the country—these land banks are doing the best they can, but they need additional resources to demolish many of these properties in order to help struggling neighborhoods recover.

This has been a bipartisan issue. We have been able to direct some funding there, including from the hardest hit funds. I want to continue to make progress because it is so important, again, for our neighborhoods and for the safety of those people who live in these neighborhoods that are affected most directly by abandoned homes.

I hope we can get some votes from both sides of the aisle for this amendment today and make it clear to those local officials across our country, and to those neighbors in these communities, that we are going to do what we can to help provide the resources to be able to deal with these blighted and abandoned structures.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

AMENDMENT NO. 944

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendment No. 944.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. NELSON], for himself and Mr. SCHATZ, proposes an amendment numbered 944.

Mr. NELSON. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To create a point of order against legislation that would use tax dollars to censor publicly-funded climate science)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST USING TAX DOLLARS TO CENSOR PUBLICLY-FUNDED CLIMATE SCIENCE.

It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would censor or otherwise limit the ability of any Federal employee or Federal agency to use in official documents or presentations terms common in scientific literature describing atmospheric, climate, weather, or oceanic processes, including terms relevant to changes in the global climate system or other risks to human health, the environment, and the economy related to air pollution.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, what this amendment does is it supports the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution: freedom of speech, to prohibit censorship of Federal agencies and Federal employees from speaking in scientific terms about the oceans, the weather, the atmospheres, and the climate.

You would think this is so common sense and so understood under our freedom of speech in our U.S. Constitution, but we have all read news reports at the State level, at the local level, and maybe even at the Federal level that, indeed, some folks are trying to muzzle scientists from speaking about the science involving the oceans, the atmosphere, climate, and the weather.

I have the privilege of knowing something about the space program. When I hear people saying they don't want NASA to get involved in climate, well, NASA builds the satellites, NASA launches the satellites—but then NOAA, in the Department of Commerce, operates these weather satellites—other satellites that are taking measurements of the Earth to understand what is happening to our atmosphere, what is happening to our climate.

When I start talking about the atmosphere, I can't help but flash back 29½ half years ago, looking at our planet out the window of a spacecraft and looking at the rim of the Earth and seeing the thin little film that is the atmosphere that sustains all of our life.

There is a lot about it that we don't know. There is a lot about it that we, in fact, can measure scientifically. Yet for some reason, there is some commentary going on in America today that we want to muzzle our scientists.

So this amendment is a simple, little, commonsense amendment that says you can't muzzle a Federal agency or a Federal employee, telling them they can't use their First Amendment right of freedom of speech to speak in scientific terms about the oceans, the weather, the atmosphere, and the climate.

Imagine if we were going to muzzle researchers at the National Institutes of Health and censor them, saying they couldn't use medical terms such as asthma or cancer. What if that was off limits? There is not even a question that we would consider that.

Last week, when we got into the matter of climate, a study suggested the massive Antarctic glacier is melting. The water from that melting glacier will impact global sea levels, potentially raising them by 10 feet. This week, researchers tell us the melting of Greenland's ice sheet is slowing the cyclical ocean current that drives the warm gulf stream, which comes right along the southeastern coast of my State and goes out through the middle

of the Atlantic and warms parts of Western Europe. To understand all of that, it is critical we have this information, which has the potential to impact all of us, no matter where we live.

At times of seasonal high tide, the streets of Miami Beach are flooded. The mayor of Miami Beach campaigned paddling in a kayak on Alton Road, which is on the west side of the city of Miami Beach. He campaigned in a kayak at the time of seasonal high flood talking about what the city needed to do because of what NASA's scientists tell us.

This is what NASA has testified to before the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. This was not a forecast, they were not projections, but measurements of the rise of the sea level in south Florida over the course of the last 45 years—6 to 8 inches. Again, this was not a forecast but measurements. Do we want to muzzle that NASA scientist who testified before our committee and who, by the way, in this case is also a NASA astronaut? Do we want to muzzle him?

Scientists simply must have the tools and the ability to tell us what they observe without limitation on the terms they can speak. So let us make clear that public science cannot be muzzled, that we won't support censorship, and that the taxpayers deserve an honest return on their investment.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 346, 425, 426, 427, 442, AND 810 EN BLOC

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendments Nos. 346, 425, 426, 427, 442, and 810 en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Ms. COLLINS] proposes amendments numbered 346, 425, 426, 427, 442, and 810 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 346

(Purpose: To modify the deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting jobs in the United States through international trade to include the reauthorization or extension of trade adjustment assistance programs)

On page 58, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

(4) reauthorizing or extending trade adjustment assistance programs;

AMENDMENT NO. 425

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving retirement security)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPROVING RETIREMENT SECURITY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving retirement security by making it easier for small businesses to provide retirement plans for their employees by easing the administrative burden and by encouraging individuals to increase their savings by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 426

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting economic growth and job creation for small businesses)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION FOR SMALL BUSINESSES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting economic growth and job creation by making it easier for small businesses to plan their capital investments and reducing the uncertainty of taxation by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 427

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investment in Alzheimer's disease research)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INVESTMENT IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RESEARCH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing sufficient investment in Alzheimer's disease research, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 442

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to restore a sensible definition of full-time employee for purposes of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to the employer penalties under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148), which may include changes to the definition of ''full time employee'' under that Act, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 810

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing access to higher education for low-income Americans through the Federal Pell Grant program)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR LOW-INCOME AMERICANS THROUGH THE FEDERAL PELL GRANT PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing access to higher education for low-income Americans through the Federal Pell Grant program, which may include allowing for 1 or more additional payment periods during the same award year, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, there will be very little time later today when we start voting for there to be full explanations of any of these amendments, which I think is very unfortunate. I do want to let my colleagues know about some of these amendments, and I am proud to say that, for the most part, the amendments I have filed and have now called up are bipartisan amendments that enjoy support on both sides of the aisle.

For example, my amendment No. 427 would create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to support sufficient investment in Alzheimer's disease research to achieve the goal set by the national plan to address Alzheimer's disease—of having the means to prevent and effectively treat that disease by the year 2025.

This amendment is cosponsored by Senator MORAN, Senator WARNER, Senator MCCASKILL, Senator TOOMEY, and Senator DONNELLY. It is modeled very much on a bill that Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have introduced to increase funding for Alzheimer's research.

Just yesterday the Special Committee on Aging, which I lead along with Senator MCCASKILL, held an extensive hearing on Alzheimer's disease. We listened to preeminent researchers and individuals such as B. Smith, who unfortunately has been afflicted with early onset Alzheimer's. We listened to a caregiver and to a geriatric physician from Portland, ME. We had testimony

from the Mayo Clinic and testimony from the individual who heads the Institutes on Aging at the National Institutes of Health. To a person they pointed out that we are spending $226 billion a year caring for people with Alzheimer's, yet we are investing less than $600 million in this disease.

The experts tell us that if our investment were at the level of $2 billion a year, we could explore the promising breakthroughs, the therapeutic targets that are needed to develop a means of prevention or better treatments or, ultimately, even a cure for Alzheimer's. Think of that. That $2 billion figure that is recommended by the expert advisory council, headed by Dr. Ron Peterson from the Mayo Clinic, is less than 1 percent of what we are spending caring for people with Alzheimer's.

This disease is going to bankrupt the Medicare and the Medicaid Programs. We are currently spending $154 billion from those two programs for care of patients with Alzheimer's.

That is one of the amendments I will be proposing.

I see the Senator from Illinois is on the floor, and he has been another real leader in this area.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator from Maine yield for a question?

Ms. COLLINS. Yes, I will be happy to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. First, I want to thank her. I took a look at the 200 pending amendments on this budget resolution, and I think at least 10 relate to biomedical research from both sides of the aisle. This is clearly a bipartisan issue, and I thank my colleague for speaking out on this Alzheimer's issue, because these victims and advocates for research came this week to visit.

It is stunning, just stunning, to think for a moment that we diagnose a person with Alzheimer's in America once every 68 seconds. When staff told me that, I couldn't believe it. I said, that has to be wrong, but it is right. It is an indication of the rapid development and growth of this terrible disease.

So I thank my colleague for putting in perspective the fact we spend over $200 billion a year already on it, and that doesn't calculate all of the sacrifices of the caregivers in helping members of the family.

It would seem to me that amidst all this budget debate there should be certain areas that are sacred, and I think biomedical research should be one of them. I thank my colleague for speaking up on Alzheimer's and I hope we can continue this dialog on behalf of NIH and the other agencies doing the research.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague and friend from Illinois for his comments. I happened to catch his speech yesterday. There was a sea of purple at our hearing—purple representing the Alzheimer's cause. I hope one day purple will represent Alzheimer's survivors. Wouldn't that be wonderful.

This is a high priority for me. And I agree with the Senator from Illinois, I believe we should be increasing our investment in biomedical research, particularly for Alzheimer's, but in many other areas as well. The irony is that, ultimately, it will reduce not only human suffering but the cost of health care.

The trajectory of Alzheimer's is such that if we do not develop better treatments, a means of prevention, or a cure, by the year 2050 the estimate is we are going to be spending more than $1 trillion taking care of people with Alzheimer's.

For all of us in the baby boomer generation, the estimates are that by age 85, nearly 1 out of 2 of us will be afflicted with Alzheimer's, if the current trajectory is unchanged. Frankly, we are going to be spending our golden years either with Alzheimer's or taking care of someone with Alzheimer's. So this is a crisis, and it deserves our attention.

I know Senator MORAN also has a broader amendment on biomedical research, which I am proud to be a sponsor of, and this is an area where I hope we can come together in a bipartisan way, as my colleague has suggested.

Mr. President, there are other amendments I would like to briefly discuss, seeing no one seeking the floor immediately, I don't believe. I will have my staff check on that.

I am also going to offer an amendment to create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase access to higher education for low-income Americans through the Federal Pell grant program, including an innovative idea that I am very interested in, and that the chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, is very interested in, which would allow for year-round Pell grants so that individuals could complete their education more quickly.

Before I was elected to the Senate, I worked at a college in Maine—Hudson University in Bangor, ME—and I saw firsthand the difference that Pell grants made in the lives of these students. Indeed, on my staff today there are highly talented individuals who were able to go to college solely because of the existence of Pell grants. Their families did not have experience with higher education and could not afford higher education. Pell grants made possible a bright future for these two women on my staff.

This is the kind of opportunity that should unite us and that all of us should rally behind. Allowing year-round Pell grants would allow students to complete their education more quickly and join the workforce more quickly, which would help them financially as well. So I hope this is something we can pursue and that will be adopted as well.

Another of my bipartisan amendments, No. 442, would establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to change the definition of full-time employee under ObamaCare so a worker could work for more than 30 hours per week before the employer mandate penalty would be triggered. This, too, is bipartisan. Senator DONNELLY, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator MANCHIN, and I have all been working on this.

I hear from workers who are telling me their hours have been cut to 29 hours a week because of these penalties their employers simply cannot afford. It is not just in the for-profit hospitality industry, it is also in school systems, community colleges. So that is yet another of my amendments that I hope will enjoy support later today.

Mr. President, I see a number of my colleagues on the floor, so I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold her request?

Ms. COLLINS. I am happy to withhold the request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 877 AND 878 EN BLOC

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment in order to call up two of my amendments en bloc: Hirono amendments Nos. 877 and 878.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Hawaii [Ms. HIRONO] proposes amendments numbered 877 and 878 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 877

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing college completion, which may include expanding Federal Pell Grant eligibility by allowing college students to use Pell Grants for more than 2 semesters in an academic year)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING COLLEGE COMPLETION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing college completion, which may include expanding Federal Pell Grant eligibility by allowing college students to use Federal Pell Grants for more than 2 semesters in an academic year by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 878

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in clean energy and preserving the environment)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INVESTING IN CLEAN ENERGY AND PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the reduction of the dependence of the United States on imported energy and the investment of receipts from domestic energy production, or energy efficiency and renewable energy development, or new or existing approaches to clean energy financing, or reducing greenhouse gas emissions levels, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, before I briefly outline my amendments, I need to say a few words about the budget before us.

The vision outlined in the budget before us is truly a disaster for the middle class and our economy. This budget lays out priorities that would undermine the gains that millions have made in getting affordable health insurance. It would undermine the ability of millions of students to get a college education. It puts tax cuts for the wealthy ahead of giving even a modest wage boost to those who are working hard to get ahead. This budget would give big corporations the opportunity to write their own rules while reducing the opportunity for the disabled veterans and children to live a decent life.

Democrats have tried to improve this budget. We tried to eliminate the sequester in a fair way. Republicans said no. We tried to make sure our commitments to those on Social Security and Medicare remain ironclad. The Republicans said no. We tried to close a few loopholes to invest in our communities and create jobs. The Republicans said no. We tried to give students the opportunity to get an affordable college education. The Republicans said no.

Given all these problems, I cannot support this budget. This budget favors the wealthy and special interests on the backs of middle-class families, seniors, and students in Hawaii and across the Nation, but I want to offer two ideas that I hope can improve this budget just a little bit.

Amendment No. 877 would restore year-round Pell grants without increasing the deficit. Many college students juggle work and family schedules. To balance these commitments they need to attend college year-round. But Pell grants can only be used in two semesters, currently.

My amendment would allow students to access Pell grants year-round, as they could from 2008 to 2011. This has been a bipartisan idea in the past. In fact, Senator COLLINS just now offered her similar amendment, amendment No. 810, that I also support. We should adopt this commonsense, bipartisan policy.

I thank Senator COLLINS for her work in enabling students to complete their college education in a way that would allow them to do so without disruptions and additional costs. I look forward to working with her as we move forward on this bipartisan-supported idea.

The second amendment I am offering, amendment No. 878, is very simple as well. The budget resolution allows for energy legislation, provided it is paid for only with cuts. It also lays out what I think is a very limited view of our Nation's energy priorities, particularly the heavy focus on fossil fuel development. My amendment would provide a broader, more forward-looking view of our Nation's energy priorities. My amendment allows for energy legislation that reduces our dependence on foreign oil, increases energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment and innovation, and addresses carbon pollution.

Hawaii relies on imported oil for energy. The U.S. military recognizes that overreliance on fossil fuel is a national security risk. We have to recognize our future can't be based on fossil fuels.

Hawaii and other States are leading the way in transitioning to a clean energy economy. My amendment would ensure that Congress's priorities are more in line with where Hawaii and our Nation are heading in the future. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting these two amendments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 445, 448, AND 449 EN BLOC

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc: Gardner amendments Nos. 445, 448, and 449.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. GARDNER] proposes amendments numbered 445, 448, and 449 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 445

(Purpose: To prevent labor disputes at seaports in the United States from causing national economic disruptions and crippling businesses across the United States)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PREVENT ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS AT SEAPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preventing economic disruptions at ports in the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 448

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to encouraging expedited approval of liquefied natural gas export applications at the Department of Energy)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENCOURAGING EXPEDITED APPROVAL OF LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS EXPORT APPLICATIONS BY DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to encouraging approval of liquefied natural gas export applications, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 449

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting efficient resourcing for the Asia rebalance policy)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING EFFICIENT RESOURCING FOR THE ASIA REBALANCE POLICY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing funding related to supporting efficient resourcing for the Asia rebalance policy by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

AMENDMENT NO. 523

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendment: Stabenow amendment No. 523.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW], for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. MERKLEY, proposes an amendment numbered 523.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prevent United States companies from getting tax benefits for moving jobs overseas, to end offshore tax loopholes including inversions, and to provide incentives for United States companies to relocate overseas jobs to the United States)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO BRINGING JOBS BACK TO AMERICA.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to tax provisions to encourage United States enterprises to relocate operations from overseas to within the United States, closing offshore tax loopholes (including those relating to inversions), or discouraging United States enterprises from relocating United States operations to other countries, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I believe every worker, every business deserves a fair shot to get ahead. A basic American principle is creating opportunity. We all know our workers are the best in the world, and when we have a fair fight we can work hard and we can win, but part of that fair fight is making sure we can do something about the broken Tax Code and the system we have. My amendment would address that, the Bring Jobs Home amendment.

We all know there are companies that, unfortunately, are able to game the system to avoid paying their taxes. They move on paper in order to be able to register in another country while still having the benefits of our country or they move overseas and, through the Tax Code, we as communities and their workers pay the cost of the move.

It is important to recognize the revenue that is being given up helps pay for our American way of life—our roads, airports, clean water, clean air, opportunities for education, innovation, medical research, science—all of the things that create the wonderful quality of life we have in our country that everyone contributes toward, those things that we need to do together.

Unfortunately, the Tax Code is rewarding too many companies to be able to take advantage of not doing their fair share. That is what my amendment addresses.

As I indicated, moving their business on paper around to different countries to avoid contributing to our American way of life, our American quality of life, they invert, costing Americans tens of billions of dollars in revenue that could go to support our veterans, our national defense, rebuilding America's roads and bridges, and water and sewer systems.

I believe it is particularly offensive to Americans when people find out that, in fact, a company can decide to pick up and move, and the cost of the move—the cost of packing up and leaving our country—is a cost they can write off on their taxes, which means we all pay the price; the workers who are packing people up, the communities that are losing the jobs, our country, in terms of the lost revenue, and we pay for it.

Over the last 10 years, 2.4 million jobs were shipped overseas, and American taxpayers were asked to foot the bill. It makes no sense. Surely, we can come together on a bipartisan basis and agree to stop that—to stop that right off. That is what this amendment does.

Over 20 million more jobs are at risk of being shipped overseas today. In fact, in Michigan we have lost more than 700,000 jobs to offshoring. Now, I understand we are in a global economy. I understand there are a lot of decisions being made around the globe as to where companies will locate, but our Tax Code should not have loopholes in it that incentivize companies to actually continue to either get the benefits of America while pretending to be someplace else or moving and having us help pay for it.

This is a very serious part of tax reform. As we debate a budget resolution that has over $400 billion in cuts to Medicare for seniors in it, that has over $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid—80 percent of the dollars in Medicaid going for low-income seniors and people in nursing homes—when we look at the fact that we have been trying to pass a bill to create millions of good-paying American jobs by rebuilding America, by rebuilding our roads, by rebuilding our infrastructure, we can't get support to do that. People say we can't afford to pay for it.

This is the opportunity to create the revenue to pay for it, to create the revenue to lower the cost of student loans so more people have a fair shot to go to college, have an opportunity for the American dream, so they are not coming out of college being riddled with all kinds of debt, mounds of debt. It means they can't buy a house, they can't buy a car, they can't get started in life with a family because they are buried in debt. When we raise these issues on the floor, we hear we cannot afford, as a country, to fix those things that affect every family—people struggling to get into the middle class and stay in the middle class.

I think this budget ought to be about the middle class. I think we ought to be saying this is a middle-class budget, and I think if we are going to do that, we have to come together on fair ways to be able to fund those things that benefit everyone, that grow the economy by creating and expanding the middle class. We will not have an economy unless we expand the middle class. That means good-paying jobs here—here. I am all about export. I just want to export our products, not our jobs, and we have a Tax Code that is encouraging the export of our jobs.

So I hope we come together around the Bring Jobs Home amendment, agree there is one area of the Tax Code that everybody ought to support fixing; that is, where folks are using loopholes and games and gimmicks, frankly, to avoid contributing to the quality of life in our country.

We can create opportunities without adding one more dollar to the costs of middle-class families or small businesses or those who stay in our country and decide they want to continue to be a part of our great American economy. This is about closing for the tax cheaters who are avoiding stepping up and being a part of solving America's problems.

My amendment No. 523 will bring jobs home and invest in the middle class of our country. I hope this is an area we can come together on, and I urge support for my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 781, 565, 562, 552, AND 590 EN BLOC

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendments en bloc: amendments Nos. 781, 565, 562, 552, and 590.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Florida [Mr. RUBIO] proposes amendments numbered 781, 565, 562, 552 and 590 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 781

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reducing foreign assistance to the Palestinian Authority and certain United Nations agencies and increasing foreign assistance for Israel)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REDUCING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AND CERTAIN UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND INCREASING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE FOR ISRAEL.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reducing assistance for the United Nations Human Rights Council, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, and the Palestinian Authority because of these entities' anti-Israel behavior, and increasing foreign assistance for missile defense programs in Israel, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 565

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that Medicare is not raided to bailout insurance companies under the President's health care overhaul)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING THAT MEDICARE IS NOT RAIDED TO BAILOUT INSURANCE COMPANIES UNDER THE PRESIDENT'S HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that Medicare funds are not used to bailout insurance companies, which may include through the risk corridor program or other programs established in the President's health care law, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 562

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a new outcomes-based process for authorizing innovative higher education providers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A NEW OUTCOMES-BASED PROCESS FOR AUTHORIZING INNOVATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to establishing a new outcomes-based process for authorizing innovative higher education providers to participate in programs under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 552

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing funding for the relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING FUNDING FOR THE RELOCATION OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN ISRAEL FROM TEL AVIV TO JERUSALEM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing funding for United States embassies, which may include the relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 590

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the Medicare Advantage program)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING THE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting the Medicare Advantage program, which may include reversing the cuts to the Medicare Advantage program that were enacted under the President's health care law, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. RUBIO. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 991, 636, AND 638 EN BLOC

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up three Warner amendments en bloc: amendments Nos. 991, 636, and 638.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Virginia [Mr. WARNER] proposes amendments numbered 991, 636, and 638 en bloc.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, was my amendment No. 991 reported in that bloc as well?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 991

(Purpose: To restore program integrity funding to combat waste, fraud, and abuse)

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

AMENDMENT NO. 636

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the personal information of consumers from data breaches)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING THE PERSONAL INFORMATION OF CONSUMERS FROM DATA BREACHES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating protecting the personal information of consumers from data breaches, which may include providing notification to affected consumers or enhancing data security programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 638

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-reduction reserve fund reserve fund for Government reform and efficiency)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR GOVERNMENT REFORM AND EFFICIENCY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to achieving savings through the use of performance data or scientifically rigorous evaluation methodologies for the elimination, consolidation, or reform of Federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives, or the sale of Federal property, and reduce the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. The Chairman may also make adjustments to the Senate's pay-as-you-go ledger over 6 and 11 years to ensure that the deficit reduction achieved is used for deficit reduction only. The adjustments authorized under this section shall be of the amount of deficit reduction achieved.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I would like to speak to these amendments for a couple of moments.

The first amendment, No. 991, targets improper payments and fraud in our largest entitlement programs. It is remarkable—every elected official I have ever met at any level of government often rallies against waste and fraud in government, and that means it so unusual that this budget we have before us leaves out critical funding to fight fraud and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and disability programs.

The amendment I am offering today would restore all program integrity funding to the Republican budget to the levels allowed in the Budget Control Act. Program integrity activities have a proven track record of saving money. When we invest in programs that track and eliminate overpayments and fraudulent claims, we end up reducing costs and lowering budget deficits.

For example, according to the Social Security actuaries, program integrity efforts to conduct ''continuing disability reviews''—specifically to weed out beneficiaries who have recovered and are no longer defined as ''disabled''—saves taxpayers $10 for every $1 spent on program integrity efforts.

I am introducing this amendment because this is a good use of taxpayer dollars and a critical way to ensure that the money we invest in important programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security disability goes directly to the beneficiaries who rely on

them. Any elected official who has ever said that we ought to root out waste and fraud in entitlement programs should obviously be supporting restoring these critical funds.

The second amendment I wish to raise is a bipartisan measure, No. 636, filed along with Senators CRAPO and KING, dealing with consumer data security.

Recently, we have seen major data breaches that have affected hundreds of millions of American consumers, those who have shopped at Target and Home Depot, have accounts at JPMorgan Chase, or have received health care from Anthem. In the aftermath of the Target breach, working with Senator KIRK, we recommended that various industry groups in the private sector cooperate on information sharing to ward off data thieves.

With continuous advances in technology, it is vitally important that we continue to strengthen our efforts to protect consumers from cyber crime by enacting smart, targeted protections. Our bipartisan amendment simply recognizes that we need to provide reasonable notification to consumers when their personal information is compromised and encourage greater cooperation and enhanced data security programs in the private sector to safeguard that data. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment.

Finally, I would like to introduce a third amendment, No. 638, along with my colleague Senator AYOTTE, that mirrors language included in the chairman's mark of our last budget resolution. This amendment encourages Congress to act on the recommendations from GAO to improve Federal Government efficiency by reducing fragmentation, overlap, and duplication. The Senate has a bipartisan history of working on these issues, and I think it is important that our budget resolution this year include our continuing commitment to this work.

In 2010, Congress passed the bipartisan Government Performance and Results Modernization Act, or GPRA, which required Federal agencies to report how their money was being spent, as well as top priorities and possible avenues of consolidation within the agency. Last year, we passed the DATA Act, which works in concert with GPRA to further track how agencies are spending money.

It is important that the savings from these actions go toward reducing our deficit. That is why the Warner-Ayotte amendment is actually a deficit-reduction reserve fund.

Again, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment.

I yield to my good friend, the Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia for yielding to me.

First of all, I would like to talk for a moment about the budget. I am pleased that the Senate is debating a budget. We are required by law to pass one by April 15. It has been a while since we have been able to accomplish that. I am hopeful that the budget will be reconciled with the House-passed budget, giving us the opportunity to develop 12 appropriations bills within this budgetary outline.

It is unfortunate that by the nature of a budget, it is a partisan endeavor. The expectation is that no Democrat will vote for the budget that ultimately will pass the Senate today. I hope that doesn't continue to be true in another issue that I am encouraging and am encouraged to know will be considered by the Senate, and that is the sustainable growth rate fix, the so-called SGR fix.

Back in 1997, a budget act was passed that created a formula by which physicians are reimbursed under Medicare. That formula has been very damaging to the practice of medicine—the ability to sustain a practice of medicine—particularly in areas of the country in which the population is elderly and patients are generally on Medicare and most of the physicians' income is then derived from reimbursement from the Medicare system.

The SGR has created a series of problems. At least annually, there has been a problem we have had to fix. Over a decade, we have spent millions of dollars—in fact, $150 billion in short-term so-called doc fixes.

What I hope happens after consideration of the budget today, tonight, in the morning, is that there will be unanimous consent and agreement that we take a vote on finally permanently fixing the problems created by this SGR, the formula.

In my State of Kansas, there are 127 community hospitals across our State that care for patients every day, every hour. Most of those hospitals have a significant volume of Medicare patients. The physicians who admit patients to those hospitals and see patients on an ongoing basis in those communities see a significant portion of their patients, and their bills are paid by Medicare.

In the last several years, the reduction in payment for a physician, that Medicare reimbursement, has been in the neighborhood of 20 percent to 30 percent. The reality, I think all of us know—in fact, it is evidenced by the fact that every year we do a patch, we fix this issue—what we know is that in the absence of fixing that formula either on a periodic basis or today potentially permanently, physicians will no longer be able to see Medicare patients. In many of the communities I represent, the physicians are employed by the hospital. So this becomes not just a physician issue, not just a hospital issue—the reality is, it is a patient issue. Will you have a doctor in your community who is willing to see, who is able to see a patient who is of the age at which Medicare is providing Medicare health care benefits?

The opportunity we have today is important. We can do so many things by permanently fixing the SGR. The outcome is that communities across our country and communities across my State of Kansas have a much brighter hope that their hospital doors remain open and physicians continue to practice medicine in their communities.

Our health care providers face tremendous challenges today related to the Affordable Care Act, related to the ever-increasing amount of regulatory burden placed upon hospitals and doctors, upon the costs associated with moving toward computerized medical records. Our health care providers in many instances are hanging on by a thread, and whether or not a community has a doctor, has a hospital determines whether that community has a future.

I know that in my own hometown of Plainville, the ability of my parents—who lived into their nineties—to remain in their hometown was determined by whether there was an active, quality medical community, quality physicians who cared about their patients and hospitals, who were there to admit their patients when that care was needed. Only because that existed in our hometown were my parents, into their nineties, able to continue to live in a community they called home.

The SGR fix is a significant component to make certain that no people have to move, no senior citizens have to move someplace closer to a doctor or a hospital because their hospital no longer is in existence or their physician no longer cares for folks who have Medicare.

The SGR, which I did not support when it was created, has caused a volatile and unsustainable system for both patients and health care providers. The uncertainty of knowing when and if Congress is going to fix by a patch creates problems in and of itself, in addition to the ultimate reimbursement rate that physician receives.

The time to act is now. We are as close to a permanent SGR fix as we have been in my time in Congress. It would be a very sad occurrence if we let this opportunity slip by, and one more time, in a few months, we will be back trying to figure out how to patch the SGR once again. We will spend more money. We will create greater uncertainty. We will hasten the day in which citizens of our country—Medicare recipients—are no longer able to see a physician of their choice or be admitted to the hospital in their community.

I am of the view that we ought not move on to other business. We ought not recess for this April period of time until we make sure that tonight or in the morning the SGR fix is permanently put in place.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 467, 468 EN BLOC

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc on behalf of Senator BLUNT: amendments Nos. 467 and 468.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follow:

The Senator from Kansas [Mr. MORAN], for Mr. BLUNT, proposes amendments numbered 467 and 468 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 467

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the direct provision of defense articles, defense services, and related training to the Kurdistan Regional Government)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE DIRECT PROVISION OF DEFENSE ARTICLES, DEFENSE SERVICES, AND RELATED TRAINING TO THE KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the direct provision of defense articles, defense services, and related training to the Kurdistan Regional Government by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 468

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to military aid to Israel)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing grants only in Israel for the procurement in Israel of defense articles and defense services, including research and development to assist Israel in maintaining its qualitative military edge, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 707, 967, 896, 897, AND 573 EN BLOC

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside to call up amendments Nos. 707, 967, 896, 897, and 573 en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY] proposes amendments numbered 707, 967, 896, 897, and 573 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 707

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reduce overdose deaths)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REDUCING OVERDOSE DEATHS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to prevention of prescription drug and opioid overdose deaths, which may include support of opioid overdose prevention activities, increased surveillance and monitoring for opioid prescription drugs and overdoses, expanded access to evidence-based treatments for opioid addiction, or enhanced research for alternatives to opioid pain medication, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 967

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to domestic medical isotope production)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DOMESTIC MEDICAL ISOTOPE PRODUCTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to nuclear medical isotope production facilities used to produce molybdenum-99 (other than facilities that use highly-enriched uranium), and associated radioisotope processing, waste management, and support facilities which may include ensuring that such facilities are included on the list of eligible projects for the receipt of incentives for innovative technologies under title XVII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005(42 U.S.C. 16511 et seq.), by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 896

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving the safety of offshore oil drilling in the United States)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPROVING THE SAFETY OF OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving the safety of offshore oil drilling in the United States, which may include changes to existing law to increase the liability cap with respect to offshore oil spills, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 897

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting consumers in the United States from price increases due to large-scale natural gas exports)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING CONSUMERS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM PRICE INCREASES DUE TO LARGE-SCALE NATURAL GAS EXPORTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting consumers and businesses in the United States from price increases or other impacts of large-scale natural gas exports, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 573

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting the repair and replacement of natural gas distribution pipelines and infrastructure no longer fit for service)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT OF NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINES AND INFRASTRUCTURE NO LONGER FIT FOR SERVICE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting the repair and replacement of natural gas distribution pipelines and infrastructure no longer fit for service by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. MARKEY. I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, a lot of things have happened. We are on the path, I hope, to being able to pass a budget that balances in 10 years. It has some problems, but I think it would be a major change from the course we

have been on, and so I will support it. I hope to be able to support it, although things could happen, I guess, between now and our final vote.

One of the things I wish to share with my colleagues is simply that the proposal to fix the doctors' payments—the so-called doc fix, the SGR—which has been around for a long time is one of my highest priorities. It is, indeed, unreasonable and unjustified to require doctors to be uncertain every year as to whether they are going to get a 21-percent or so reduction in their Medicare payments. They can hardly do the work at that fee level. So we do need to fix it.

However, on the same day that we are now declaring that we want to pass a budget that puts us on a financial path to balance in 10 years by a meager $3 billion—a balanced budget plan, a responsible plan; an idea and goal to achieve—we are also talking about passing an unpaid-for plan, and in my view it is not responsible, to spend and borrow another $141 billion, after the proposed offsets, to pay for the doc fix. This is what brings this Congress into disrepute. The same day we assert we want to have a balanced budget, and we lay out a plan that will get us there in 10 years, we are now considering passing an unpaid-for increase in spending that will add $141 billion to the debt. Colleagues, we just can't do that.

To my physician friends, whom I talked to a lot about this and who are worried about it, let's all work together to lay out a plan that will pay for this expense. We can do that. Maya MacGuineas is at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a well-respected, bipartisan group. They have basically been shocked by this proposal. They submitted papers that said over 20 years it will add $500 billion to the debt. While, some have said that over 20 years, it will pay for itself. According to Maya MacGuineas' analysis, it won't, and we don't have official data now. So why would we allow this legislation to pass through so fast?

I urge my colleagues, let's do a short-term fix again, but then let's do a permanent fix, one that is responsible, one that is grownup, one that is paid for, and not just one that adds more debt to the credit card of America at a time when we cannot do that anymore.

I am so disappointed that we may not be able to let this legislation clear today because I don't believe it is going to be beneficial to us. We can come back and take action to maintain the appropriate payment levels. Let's do it the right way so we can be proud of it.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 435, 473, 593, AND 993 EN BLOC

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and, on behalf of Senator MENENDEZ, call up amendments Nos. 435, 473, 593, and 993 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for Mr. MENENDEZ, proposes amendments numbered 435, 473, 593, and 993 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 435

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to support for Ukraine, which should include the provision of lethal defensive articles)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF LETHAL DEFENSIVE ARTICLES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing funding to support the Government of Ukraine in reestablishing its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which should include the provision of lethal defensive articles, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 473

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing funding to combat anti-Semitism in Europe)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING FUNDING TO COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing funding for programs to counter anti-Semitic activity in Europe, which may include efforts to empower civil society, including diverse religious and ethnic groups, civil and human rights organizations, and the business community, to fight anti-Semitism and discrimination and convening regular consultations with Jewish community organizations and non-Jewish civil and human rights organizations to demonstrate visible support, listen to concerns, and solicit recommendations on improving security and supporting victims, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 593

(Purpose: To require consideration of long-term deficits for any legislation relating to repealing or replacing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010)

Beginning on page 87, strike line 23 and all that follows through page 88, line 4.

AMENDMENT NO. 993

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to strengthening the national do-not-call registry)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL DO-NOT-CALL REGISTRY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to compliance with the national do-not-call registry, which may include adjusting or increasing fines, providing flexibility for the relevant regulatory agency, or modifying the conditions of the safe harbor provisions, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 665, 677, 678, 667, 666, AND 668 EN BLOC

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendments en bloc: Nos. 665, 677, 678, 667, 666, and 668.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. FLAKE] proposes amendments numbered 665, 677, 678, 667, 666, and 668 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 665

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting awarding of construction contracts based on awardees entering or not entering into agreements with labor organizations)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING AWARDING OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS BASED ON AWARDEES ENTERING OR NOT ENTERING INTO AGREEMENTS WITH LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a prohibition on the awarding of construction contracts on behalf of the Government based upon any solicitations, bid specifications, project agreements, or other controlling documents, that require or prohibit bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors to enter into or adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations or discriminate against or give preference to such bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors based on their entering or refusing to enter into such agreements by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through

2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 677

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preventing political targeting by the Internal Revenue Service of individuals and social welfare organizations exercising free-speech rights)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PREVENTING POLITICAL TARGETING BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE OF INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS EXERCISING FREE-SPEECH RIGHTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preventing political targeting by the Internal Revenue Service of individuals and social welfare organizations exercising free-speech rights, which may include maintaining current standards and definitions in defining political activity for the purpose of determining the tax status of individuals and social welfare organizations, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 678

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prosecution of first-time illegal border crossers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FIRST-TIME ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to decreasing the recidivism of illegal border crossers, including removing any prohibition on Federal prosecution of first-time border crossers, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 667

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that individuals do not simultaneously receive unemployment compensation and disability insurance benefits)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SOLVENCY OF THE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving the financial solvency of the unemployment compensation program and the social security disability insurance program, which may include ensuring that individuals do not simultaneously receive unemployment compensation and social security disability insurance benefits, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 666

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reducing the level of Federal premium support for crop insurance policies, which may include eliminating premium support for crop insurance for agricultural producers with an adjusted gross income of more than $750,000 in fiscal year 2016)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FEDERAL PREMIUM SUPPORT FOR CROP INSURANCE POLICIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reducing the level of Federal premium support for crop insurance policies, which may include limiting premium support for crop insurance for agricultural producers with an adjusted gross income of more than $750,000 in fiscal year 2016, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 668

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to government reform and efficiency)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO GOVERNMENT REFORM AND EFFICIENCY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to achieving savings through the use of performance data or scientifically rigorous evaluation methodologies for the elimination, consolidation, or reform of Federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives, the sale of Federal property, or the reduction of improper payments by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. The Chairman may also make adjustments to the Senate's pay-as-you-go ledger over 6 and 11 years to ensure that the spending reduction achieved is used for deficit reduction only. The adjustments authorized under this section shall be of the amount of spending reduction achieved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 504, 505, 506, 1011

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc on behalf of Senator SULLIVAN: Nos. 504, 505, 506 and 1011.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI], for Mr. SULLIVAN, proposes amendments numbered 504, 505, 506, and 1011 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 504

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to limiting the ability of Environmental Protection Agency personnel to carry guns)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DISARMING THE EPA.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to limiting the ability of Environmental Protection Agency personnel to carry firearms, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 505

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting programs related to the ground-based midcourse defense and the long-range discrimination radar programs of the Department of Defense)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 352. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING PROGRAMS RELATED TO THE GROUND-BASED MIDCOURSE DEFENSE AND THE LONG-RANGE DISCRIMINATION RADAR PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting programs related to the ground-based midcourse defense and the long-range discrimination radar programs of the Department of Defense by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 506

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting vulnerable families from job killing regulations)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING VULNERABLE FAMILIES FROM JOB KILLING REGULATIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that Federal agencies consider the full cost of regulations, including indirect job losses, prior to enacting or amending any regulation or rule, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1011

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to providing an exemption from certain permitting requirements for routine maintenance activities relating to transportation infrastructure)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING AN EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS FOR ROUTINE MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing, for certain routine maintenance activities relating to transportation infrastructure, an exemption from certain requirements, which may include an exemption from the permitting requirements of section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1012

(Purpose: To strike more than $1.2 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, preserving a critical source of comprehensive, affordable health and long-term care coverage for millions of otherwise uninsured low-income adults, parents, and seniors, including millions of nonelderly low-income adults in States that expanded Medicaid as part of health reform)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside, on behalf of Senator WYDEN, to call up amendment No. 1012.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], Mr. WYDEN, for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE, proposes an amendment numbered 1012.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator SHAHEEN and Senator ISAKSON be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes in order to call up our amendments.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 321, 611, AND 839 EN BLOC

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up amendments Nos. 321, 611, and 839 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Georgia [Mr. ISAKSON] proposes amendments numbered 321, 611, and 839 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 321

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a biennial budget and appropriations process)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A BIENNIAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to establishing a biennial budget and appropriations process, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 611

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to subject all fees collected by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to the annual appropriations process)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUBJECTING ALL FEES COLLECTED BY U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES TO THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the use of fees collected by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which may include prohibiting the expenditure of any such fees unless such expenditure has been approved through the annual appropriations process, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 and the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 839

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting United States citizens held hostage in the United States embassy in Tehran, Iran, between November 3, 1979, and January 20, 1981)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 352. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING UNITED STATES CITIZENS HELD HOSTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN TEHRAN, IRAN, BETWEEN NOVEMBER 3, 1979, AND JANUARY 20, 1981.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting United States citizens held hostage in the United States embassy in Tehran, Iran, between November 3, 1979, and January 20, 1981, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am glad to join the Senator from New Hampshire on a very important piece of legislation that is being proposed as an amendment to the budget today. It is called the Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act which 2 years ago passed this Senate with 68 votes. It has bipartisan support this year. It is the right way to solve our biggest problem, which is responsible spending in Washington.

The Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act assumes the following: What we have been doing has been broken for years. Every President since Ronald Reagan has endorsed the biennial budget. Twenty of the fifty States in the United States of America have a biennial budget. It is time we did budgeting and oversight and allowed time for both.

What this bill basically says is that in odd-numbered years we will do our appropriating and in even-numbered years we will do oversight of appropriations.

Wouldn't it be great to change the paradigm in America to where during election years and even years, instead of saying how much bacon we are going to bring home, to instead say how much savings we are going the find in the appropriations process. We can find new money to fund new programs without raising taxes or raising revenues of the Federal Government.

It is a responsible way to run our country, it is a way we ought to run

our country, and it is a responsible way for America to return to fiscal accountability.

With an $18.1 trillion deficit and with spending going haywire and us not being able to do budgeting or appropriating at all, it is time we call time out, fix our problem, and move forward.

I yield to the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire, who as Governor of New Hampshire for 6 years did biennial budgeting and has great experience in that effort.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, in supporting the biennial budgeting amendment. This is legislation we have been working on—this will be the third session of Congress now—and it is a response to what I think we would all agree is a broken budget process here in Washington.

Since 1980, we have only had two budget processes that have been finished on time, according to established process. In that timeframe, since 1980 when, as Senator ISAKSON pointed out, every President has endorsed biennial budgeting, Congress has resorted to more than 150 short-term funding bills or continuing resolutions. That is no way to govern. While we have made progress in recent years to reduce our deficits, we need reform of our budget process.

Senator ISAKSON pointed out very eloquently how this proposal would work. In New Hampshire, where I served three terms as Governor, I had a legislature of members of the other party and yet we were able to pass biennial budgets 3 years, on time, that were balanced. It worked in New Hampshire. It works in 19 other States. It can work here.

This is an opportunity for us to begin to reform our budget process. It won't fix everything, but it will go a long way in addressing our opportunity to provide oversight in the second year of the budget process.

I hope our colleagues will join us, and that we will again, as we did in 2013, have a majority to support biennial budgeting in this body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from New Hampshire for her remarks and thank her for her commitment.

The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. It is time we get a different result in Washington, which is balanced budgets, fiscal accountability, and balanced spending, and a biennial budget will do that.

In our remaining time, with the permission of the Senator from New Hampshire, I wish to address one other amendment we have called up to be pending, which is amendment No. 839, which has already been reported.

Amendment No. 839 is very simply an amendment that recognizes the fact that 52 Americans were taken captive in 1979 in Iran at our Embassy. Forty-four of them are still alive. They remain the only American hostages ever taken who were never compensated for their time. We have revenue accumulating because of the Iranian sanctions. Everybody on the Foreign Relations Committee is supportive, and I think the State Department is too, of seeing to it we take a portion of those sanctions and compensate the American hostages of the Iranian Government from 1979 to 1980.

As the Presiding Officer will remember, it was the day Ronald Reagan was sworn in that Jimmy Carter finally made arrangements to get those hostages out of Tehran. They suffered torture, physical abuse, and terror for 444 days. They deserve to be compensated. We deserve to take the money the Iranians have been paid for sanctions and see to it these Americans are compensated for what they suffered in 1979 and 1980.

I appreciate the time from the Chair and I yield back the remainder of our time.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 750, 855, 749, 856, AND 759 EN BLOC

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc on behalf of Senator LEE: Amendments Nos. 750, 855, 749, 856, and 759.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI], for Mr. LEE, proposes amendments numbered 750, 855, 749, 856, and 759 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 750

(Purpose: To modify the spending-neutral reserve fund reauthorizing funding for payments to counties and other units of local government to ensure payment at levels roughly equivalent to property tax revenues lost due to the presence of Federal land)

On page 64, lines 10 and 11, strike ''Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)'' and insert ''funding the payments in lieu of taxes program at levels roughly equivalent to lost tax revenues due to the presence of Federal land''.

AMENDMENT NO. 855

(Purpose: To prohibit increasing the public debt limit under reconciliation)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 202. LIMIT ON SENATE CONSIDERATION OF RECONCILIATION.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a bill or joint resolution reported pursuant to section 201, or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or joint resolution, which would increase the public debt limit under section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, during the period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

(b) WAIVER.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(c) APPEALS.—An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on the point of order raised under this section.

AMENDMENT NO. 749

(Purpose: To ensure that the reserve fund relating to affordable healthcare choices for all is used to repeal and not further empower the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act)

On page 50, line 17, strike ''or reforming''.

AMENDMENT NO. 856

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund to support legislation preventing the Federal Communications Commission from reclassifying broadband providers as common carriers under title II of the Communications Act of 1934 and from implementing other ''net neutrality'' provisions)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROHIBIT THE RECLASSIFICATION OF BROADBAND PROVIDERS AS COMMON CARRIERS UNDER TITLE II OF THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1934.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the openness of the Internet, which may include prohibiting the reclassification of broadband providers as common carriers, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 759

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to clarifying Federal jurisdiction with respect to intrastate species)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CLARIFYING FEDERAL JURISDICTION WITH RESPECT TO INTRASTATE SPECIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to limiting the Federal regulation of species found entirely within the borders of a single State by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal

years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 925 AND 926 EN BLOC

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendments Nos. 925 and 926 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. TILLIS] proposes amendments numbered 925 and 926 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 925

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the United States civil courts system)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE UNITED STATES CIVIL COURTS SYSTEM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the United States civil courts system, including improvements to civil discovery rules that will contribute to the speedy and efficient resolution of disputes while protecting the rights of all litigants to a trial by jury, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 926

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude)

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. ___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ENSURE THAT VOTING RIGHTS OF CITIZENS ARE NOT DENIED OR ABRIDGED ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, COLOR, OR PREVIOUS CONDITION OF SERVITUDE.

The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, amendment No. 925 recognizes the work that has been done by the Judicial Conference to make discovery in civil cases less cumbersome and costly.

Amendment No. 926 incorporates language from the 15th Amendment—no denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race—into our budget instructions.

I thank the Chair.

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

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 729, 342, AND 588 EN BLOC

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc: amendment No. 729, amendment No. 342, and amendment No. 588.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS] proposes amendments numbered 729, 342, and 588 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 729

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to invest in surface transportation projects)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INVESTMENTS IN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to making changes or providing for the authorization of programs to invest in freight movement, rail, highway, transit, transportation alternatives, and other surface transportation projects, including competitive grant programs, which will drive United States economic competitiveness, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 342

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the National Guard State Partnership Program)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to achieving theatre security cooperation goals, which may include funding for the National Guard State Partnership Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 588

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at air ports of entry)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 352. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING THE NUMBER OF U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICERS AT AIR PORTS OF ENTRY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at air ports of entry to reduce wait times and otherwise facilitate travel, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 402, 596, 597, AND 865 EN BLOC

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up, on behalf of Senator JOHNSON, amendments Nos. 402, 596, 597, and 865 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI], for Mr. JOHNSON, proposes amendments numbered 402, 596, 597, and 865 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 402

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving information sharing by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to investigations relating to substandard health care, delayed and denied health care, patient deaths, other findings that directly relate to patient care, and other management issues of the Department)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO INVESTIGATIONS RELATING TO SUBSTANDARD HEALTH CARE, DELAYED AND DENIED HEALTH CARE, PATIENT DEATHS, OTHER FINDINGS THAT DIRECTLY RELATE TO PATIENT CARE, AND OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES OF THE DEPARTMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving information sharing by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to investigations relating to substandard health care, delayed and denied health care, patient deaths, other findings that directly relate to patient care, and other management issues of the Department by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 596

(Purpose: To convey clear information in graphic form about projected deficits)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. TO CONVEY CLEAR INFORMATION TO CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT PROJECTED DEFICITS.

As part of the annual update to the Budget and Economic Outlook required by section 202(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 602(e)), the Congressional Budget Office shall—

(1) include a projection of Federal revenues, outlays, and deficits for a 30-year period beginning with the budget year, expressed in terms of dollars and as a percent of gross domestic product; and

(2) publish a graph depicting the magnitude of projected deficits in the Federal budget on a unified basis under current policy, expressed in terms of billions of dollars, arranged appropriately to show—

(A) the magnitude of the combined projected deficits of the budget year and the 9 subsequent fiscal years;

(B) the magnitude of the combined projected deficits of the 10th through 19th subsequent fiscal years;

(C) the magnitude of the combined projected deficits of the 20th through 29th fiscal years; and

(D) the magnitude of the combined projected deficits of the entire period that includes the budget year and the 29 subsequent fiscal years.

AMENDMENT NO. 597

(Purpose: To convey clear information to Congress and the public about projected Federal outlays, revenues, surpluses, and deficits)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. TO CONVEY CLEAR INFORMATION TO CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT PROJECTED FEDERAL OUTLAYS, REVENUES, AND DEFICITS.

As part of the annual update to the Budget and Economic Outlook required by section 202(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 602(e)), and at any other time the Congressional Budget Office releases projections of Federal deficits over any term of years, the Congressional Budget Office shall publish with its projection a 1-page statement—

(1) summarizing and categorizing total outlays, receipts, surpluses, and deficits of the Federal Government on a unified basis for that same prospective time period;

(2) categorizing and subtotaling separately—

(A) outlays for mandatory programs and for discretionary programs;

(B) outlays, payroll tax revenue, and offsetting receipts for Social Security and for Medicare;

(C) the surplus or deficit of revenues over outlays for Social Security and for Medicare; and

(D) revenues.

AMENDMENT NO. 865

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund to accommodate legislation that would stop the Federal government from forcing States to pay unemployment compensation benefits to millionaires)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STOP THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM FORCING STATES TO PAY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS TO MILLIONAIRES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the payment of unemployment insurance benefits to high-income individuals by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 12 noon today be equally divided between the managers or their designees, and that at 12 noon, the Senate vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the votes but with side-by-side amendments allowed to be offered by Senator SANDERS, or his designee, on the Scott amendment No. 692 and the Vitter amendment No. 515, and that the vote occur on the listed amendment second; so that the order then would be Sanders No. 881, Kirk No. 545, Stabenow No. 523, Rubio No. 423, Wyden No. 1012, Paul No. 940, Murray No. 798, Moran No. 356, Baldwin No. 432, Collins No. 810, Franken No. 828, Scott No. 692, Coons No. 966, Blunt No. 928, Durbin No. 817, Vitter No. 515, Bennet No. 947, Murkowski No. 838, and Inhofe No. 649.

I further ask unanimous consent that there be 2 minutes equally divided between the managers or their designees prior to each vote and that all votes after the first in this series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. For the information of all Senators, this will be the first series of votes today.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 932

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment No. 932.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. COCHRAN], for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI, proposes an amendment numbered 932.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a biennial budget resolution process)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A BIENNIAL BUDGET RESOLUTION PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to establishing a biennial budget resolution process, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to support this amendment. The amendment I am offering along with the Senator from Maryland, the vice chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Ms. MIKULSKI, proposes the creation of a biennial budget resolution process.

Having a two-year budget could enable the annual appropriations process to run more smoothly, and it might also benefit other committees. The appropriations process often bogs down due to the failure of the budget resolution process. If there is no budget resolution in place, there is no framework to facilitate consideration of appropriations bills.

Establishing a biennial budget process does merit serious consideration, but biennial appropriations are another matter.

Proponents of biennial appropriations argue that having an ''off year'' in which there are no appropriations bills will mean more oversight during the off year. Well, this ignores the close relationship between oversight and the appropriations process itself. Within each year's appropriations process, in the hearings before the committee, informal meetings, committee

reports, and the bills themselves, Congress provides guidance—admonitions sometimes—and funding adjustments based on program performance and changing priorities. The appropriations process is one of the best tools Congress has to reform, improve, eliminate, and modernize programs under its jurisdiction.

Having an off year would not translate into more oversight. It might well have the opposite effect, as Congress would not possess any hammer or useful tool of the year's appropriations bill to modify agency actions. So you're yielding more power to the executive branch to spend money, borrow money, and try new programs without having proper oversight of the appropriations and the authorizations process.

Writing and debating annual appropriations is an essential part of the Congressional oversight responsibility that was contemplated by the Framers of the Constitution. It does not detract from the power of, or minimize or infringe on, authorizing committees' ability to perform additional oversight. There is no limitation under this process of a legislative committee's prerogatives. It provides the money, though, as the Constitution contemplates, through an appropriation of funds approved by the people's representatives—not the Executive's, not the people who run the Departments, and not the President himself.

We changed things with the King of England during the colonial era. The people recognized they wanted the people in charge. ''Here, sir, the people govern'' became a watchword of the Revolution and the establishment of the United States of America.

So under this suggestion, which we are criticizing at this moment, Congress would be compelled to do one of two things: either adjust appropriations in the off year through supplemental appropriations, or give agencies themselves greater flexibility to move money around among different programs and activities that are part of the government spending process.

The first defeats the purpose of the biennial appropriations proposal. The second is a further expansion of Executive power. You're building up the Executive with more tools to do its will without respect to what the people's representatives in the Congress might prefer. The second is the further expansion of Executive power, generally, that we should be wary of granting. The Executive has an enormous amount of power, but under our system, we should seek an equally powerful role for the people's representatives, and for the direct election of Members of the U.S. Senate whose responsibility includes the power to help ensure that the States have the funds they need to carry out their responsibilities.

Congress can improve its performance in budgeting, but it does not have to abandon the annual review of theFederal appropriations process. It doesn't have to be part of the answer to the question.

So I hope Senators will carefully review what is at stake and what is being suggested and consider that before you vote. I hope the Senate will support my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, while waiting for the Senator from New Jersey to arrive in his seat, I want to associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Mississippi, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. COCHRAN.

I want to be sure we understand that this idea of biennial budgeting is really a bad idea—well intentioned but a bad idea.

The Isakson amendment goes beyond a 2-year budget resolution and calls for establishing 2-year appropriations of bills. The power of the purse is one of Congress's most powerful holds. We shouldn't give it up. What would happen, if we go with the Isakson and Shaheen amendment and not follow Cochran-Mikulski, we need to know we would be putting too much power in the hands of the executive branch, unelected bureaucrats, and OMB. So proponents of biennial appropriating will not approve congressional oversight—just the opposite.

Without annual appropriations bills, agencies will have little incentive to be candid in their testimony and responsive to congressional will and congressional directives. We sacrifice our most important tool.

The other consideration is the practicality. Under biennial appropriations, the timeline between the initial forecast and the actual budget could be 30 months; then, we can't also respond to emergencies. Threats change every day—ISIS, security, the crisis that just happened to our allies in Germany. We have to be able to respond.

Congress should not tie its own hands and limit its ability. Support Cochran-Mikulski, defeat Isakson-Shaheen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENT NO. 881

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 881, which is at the desk.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for himself and Mrs. Murray, proposes an amendment numbered 881.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting a substantial increase in the minimum wage)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROMOTING A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to labor reform, which may include a substantial increase in the minimum wage by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 720, 721, AND 722 EN BLOC

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendments Nos. 720, 721, and 722 en bloc.

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

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Jersey [Mr. BOOKER], proposes amendments numbered 720, 721, and 722 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 720

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting workforce development through apprenticeship programs)

At the end of title III, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing funds for programs that support workforce development through apprenticeships, and providing additional funds to the Office of Apprenticeship of the Department of Labor to expand apprenticeship programs nationally, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 721

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to encourage freight planning and investment that incorporates all modes of transportation, including rail, waterways, ports, and highways to promote national connectivity)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENCOURAGING FREIGHT PLANNING AND INVESTMENT THAT INCORPORATES ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING RAIL, WATERWAYS, PORTS, AND HIGHWAYS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports to encourage freight planning and investment that incorporates all modes of transportation including rail, waterways, ports

and highways, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 722

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting payments for conversion therapy or treatments that purport to change the gender identity or sexual orientation of an individual under the Medicare and Medicaid programs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING PAYMENTS FOR HARMFUL AND FRAUDULENT TREATMENTS UNDER MEDICARE AND MEDICAID.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to prohibiting payments for harmful and fraudulent treatments under the Medicare or Medicaid programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I hope to have the opportunity to speak about amendments Nos. 720 and 722 later, but I would like to speak now about No. 721, which is a freight rail amendment.

I am very happy to see the Presiding Officer, Senator RUBIO, whom I have worked with on other legislation. Having bipartisan work on important critical issues is essential. I am happy to join with Senator FISCHER on this important amendment.

It focuses on the urgency to improve the movement of freight and strengthen our competitiveness by investing in a comprehensive multimodal national network that includes not just our major highways but our rails, seaports, local roads, and intermodal facilities.

I am happy to see Senator SANDERS, who has the courage to stand and speak about the infrastructure deficit in our country and calls for bold, fiscally sound investment. I want to make sure, as we move forward, that freight planning and investment as seen by this amendment is prioritized. Along with Senator FISCHER, I support broadening our approach to freight policy that would promote greater national productivity. Why is this important? Hundreds of millions of tons of freight are annually shipped through our ports, rails, and highway networks.

The Great Corridor runs from my State of New Jersey to New York, to Philadelphia, moving over $55 billion in goods each year, and is one of the most significant chokepoints in the U.S. transportation network that moves $17 trillion of goods between metropolitan areas each year.

The incredible freight network drives our economy, boosts economic competitiveness, and creates jobs in America, thousands and thousands of jobs. With a slight adjustment of our priorities and a strong national commitment to investing in our infrastructure, we can dramatically reduce congestion, improve the health of our American communities and make sure goods get where they need to go faster, cheaper, all while strengthening our economy and creating jobs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important amendment and look forward to continuing to work on critical transportation and infrastructure priorities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time for debate has expired.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and ask for consideration of amendment No. 1024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I object. The vote is set aside for 12 noon. We could have 50 more people coming down and offering additional amendments. They will have an opportunity to offer those amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

AMENDMENT NO. 881

There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Sanders amendment No. 881.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this is a very simple, straightforward amendment. It calls for a substantial increase in the minimum wage. The simple truth is that in America, people working full time should not be living in poverty. Since 1968, the real value of the Federal minimum wage has fallen by close to 30 percent. People all over this country and in State after State on their own have voted to raise the minimum wage.

By the way, in State after State where the minimum wage has gone up, more jobs have been created. Let us stand today with the tens of millions of workers who are struggling to put food on the table, to take care of their families. Let us raise the minimum wage

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I would urge my colleagues to vote ''no.'' This is not the proper place for this. It can be handled as regular legislation at any time. This budget resolution is focused on balancing the budget in 10 years. That is important in and of itself, because balancing the budget renews job growth and expands opportunity for hard-working families.

CBO analyzed our budget for its economic growth impact. That report makes it clear that the economy grows as the government slows its spending rate. With that growth comes new jobs. Building on CBO's analysis, it is clear that over 1 million new jobs could be created if our budget took full effect. That will create competition for employees. That will increase wages.

The minimum wage was designed to be a training wage that teaches people how to show up for work on time and how to learn a job before transitioning to new jobs, and those that do get advanced really quickly.

I would ask there be a ''no'' vote on this amendment. It does not belong in this budget.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 1024

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 1024.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. HEINRICH], for himself, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. BENNET proposes an amendment numbered 1024.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To create a point of order against legislation that would provide for the sale of Federal land to reduce the Federal deficit)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST THE SALE OF FEDERAL LAND TO REDUCE THE FEDERAL DEFICIT.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would provide for the sale of any Federal land (other than as part of a program that acquires land that is of comparable value or contains exceptional resources or that is conducted under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (43 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)) that uses the proceeds of the sale to reduce the Federal deficit.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 881

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Sanders amendment No. 881.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 93 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Portman
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Leahy	Schumer
Carper	Manchin	Shaheen
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	McCaskill	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Donnelly	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—52

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Rounds
Burr	Hatch	Rubio
Capito	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Cotton	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Vitter
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	
Ernst	Murkowski	

The amendment (No. 881) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I understand there is a bipartisan agreement in the works to modify the Kirk amendment No. 545 and, therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on amendment No. 545 occur after the vote on Inhofe amendment No. 649.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 523

There are now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Stabenow amendment No. 523.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I would hope we could all come together and agree that we want to bring jobs back to America. This is about saying if you are a business in America and you want to pretend to move offshore on paper but have the benefits of clean air and clean water and roads and all of the benefits of our American way of life, you ought to be contributing to that way of life. So this closes tax loopholes being used by companies right now to avoid paying their fair share.

Small businesses are here paying their fair share; individuals are, workers are. Yet we have a code where you can pack up and move overseas and American taxpayers have to foot the bill for the move. The workers losing their jobs have to foot the bill for the move. It makes no sense.

We want to bring jobs back to America. This simply closes egregious loopholes to make sure everybody is a part of America and that everybody is contributing to our quality of life and our way of life in America. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment. Some of Senator STABENOW's tax reform ideas might have merit, but they should be dealt with in the context of comprehensive tax reform rather than as a stand-alone proposal. Otherwise, we would have a whole bunch of these stand-alone proposals that would become part of the budget, instead of empowering committees of jurisdiction to handle them as regular legislation, which they still would have to do.

The U.S. Tax Code is overly complicated. It is inefficient, and it is archaic. The current structure hurts economic growth, frustrates working Americans, and pushes American businesses overseas. Any discussion of international or corporate tax reform should take place in the context of comprehensive tax reform to simplify the whole system.

The budget resolution assumes the tax-writing committees will adopt a tax reform proposal that reduces marginal rates but broadens the tax base to create a fair, efficient, competitive, pro-growth tax regime, and that the revenue is neutral. We look forward to working on that in the Committee on Finance.

I oppose the amendment, and I ask for a ''no'' vote. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Ms. STABENOW. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 94 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Crapo	Isakson
Ayotte	Cruz	Johnson
Barrasso	Daines	Kirk
Blunt	Enzi	Lankford
Boozman	Ernst	Lee
Burr	Fischer	McCain
Capito	Flake	McConnell
Cassidy	Gardner	Moran
Coats	Graham	Murkowski
Cochran	Grassley	Paul
Collins	Hatch	Perdue
Corker	Heller	Portman
Cornyn	Hoeven	Risch
Cotton	Inhofe	Roberts
Rounds	Sessions	Tillis
Rubio	Shelby	Toomey
Sasse	Sullivan	Vitter
Scott	Thune	Wicker

The amendment (No. 523) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on Wyden amendment No. 1012 occur after the vote on the Stabenow amendment No. 523, and that amendment No. 940 be modified with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 940), as modified, is as follows:

On page 14, line 2, increase the amount by $76,513,000,000.

On page 14, line 3, increase the amount by $48,578,000,000.

On page 14, line 6, increase the amount by $112,990,000,000.

On page 14, line 7, increase the amount by $87,604,000,000.

On page 14, line 11, increase the amount by $29,603,000,000.

On page 14, line 15, increase the amount by $11,863,000,000.

On page 14, line 19, increase the amount by $6,396,000,000.

On page 14, line 23, increase the amount by $3,274,000,000.

On page 15, line 19, decrease the amount by $21,000,000,000.

On page 15, line 20, decrease the amount by $6,300,000,000.

On page 15, line 23, decrease the amount by $21,000,000,000.

On page 15, line 24, decrease the amount by $16,800,000,000.

On page 16, line 3, decrease the amount by $13,020,000,000.

On page 16, line 7, decrease the amount by $3,570,000,000.

On page 16, line 11, decrease the amount by $1,050,000,000.

On page 17, line 12, decrease the amount by $14,000,000,000.

On page 17, line 13, decrease the amount by $9,100,000,000.

On page 17, line 16, decrease the amount by $14,000,000,000.

On page 17, line 17, decrease the amount by $11,900,000,000.

On page 17, line 21, decrease the amount by $4,200,000,000.

On page 17, line 25, decrease the amount by $2,100,000,000.

On page 18, line 4, decrease the amount by $700,000,000.

On page 20, line 13, decrease the amount by $10,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 14, decrease the amount by $6,500,000,000.

On page 20, line 17, decrease the amount by $10,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 18, decrease the amount by $8,500,000,000.

On page 20, line 22, decrease the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 1, decrease the amount by $1,500,000,000.

On page 21, line 5, decrease the amount by $500,000,000.

On page 28, line 20, decrease the amount by $20,000,000,000.

On page 28, line 21, decrease the amount by $16,000,000,000.

On page 28, line 24, decrease the amount by $20,000,000,000.

On page 28, line 25, decrease the amount by $19,600,000,000.

On page 29, line 4, decrease the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 29, line 8, decrease the amount by $400,000,000.

On page 33, line 19, decrease the amount by $41,000,000,000.

On page 33, line 20, decrease the amount by $29,520,000,000.

On page 33, line 23, decrease the amount by $41,000,000,000.

On page 33, line 24, decrease the amount by $41,000,000,000.

On page 34, line 3, decrease the amount by $11,480,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1012

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Wyden amendment No. 1012.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, earlier in this week I was encouraged when Republicans voted with Democrats to approve an amendment I introduced with Senator SANDERS that would protect Medicaid beneficiaries from benefit cuts under the budget. But when we actually look at the Republican budget on Medicaid, it is impossible to square that budget, which has $1.2 trillion in cuts, with the vote that was held earlier this week to protect Medicaid. And we can't get those savings without cutting reimbursements for nursing homes and long-term care services. Medicaid pays 40 percent of all nursing home care.

Colleagues, let us be consistent with our Medicaid vote that was cast earlier this week, and support my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.'' The budget before us suggests we modernize the Medicaid program based on the successful and bipartisan model of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

The Senate budget strengthens and improves Medicaid and protects the most vulnerable among us who rely on the program. The budget does not cut Medicaid. It slows its rate of growth. The Senate Finance Committee will of course determine the details of any Medicaid reform should legislation on that matter come before this body. And it would require legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this budget makes massive cuts in Medicaid and will throw women, men, and children off of that vitally important program.

I strongly support the Wyden amendment. Let's protect Medicaid.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining before the vote.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. WYDEN. 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 result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 95 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	

NAYS—53

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	

The amendment (No. 1012) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 423

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Rubio amendment No. 423.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, this is a pretty straightforward amendment. It funds defense fully based on the Gates budget, which was the last defense budget that was put together based solely on the assessment of threats we face and the requisite military needs to deal with those threats. The national security of our country is the predominant obligation of the Federal branch of government. It is the one thing that only the Federal Government can do, and it is the first thing it is tasked with doing. If it cannot protect us from foreign threats and protect our national security, all the other issues we are contemplating become elementary. This is a critical component, given the fact that around the world today there is an increase in threats from radical jihadists and nonstate actors to rogue states such as Iran and North Korea, to massive military buildup on behalf of the Chinese and the Asia-Pacific region, to the challenges faced by NATO and our allies in Europe as Vladimir Putin tries to redraw the post-Soviet order in Europe.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support this. It does, once again, put us at the Gates' budget number which was the last number we arrived at, that was presented to us, and that fully funds the needs of our military based truly on the threats of the modern era.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. This is truly a remarkable amendment because it runs directly in opposition to everything the Republicans have been talking about. They say we have to cut Medicare and Medicaid and education because of the terrible deficit. Do you know why we have a deficit and large debt? Because we went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan and we forgot to pay for it.

Now Senator RUBIO says, hey, let's continue spending more money on war but just put it on the credit card. We don't have to pay for it. Enough is enough. If you want to go to war, start paying for that war. Let the American people know what the cost of war is.

Mr. President, I raise a point of order that the pending amendment violates section 312(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of my amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 32, nays 68, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 96 Leg.]

YEAS—32

Ayotte	Enzi	Moran
Barrasso	Gardner	Murkowski
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Cassidy	Isakson	Sasse
Coats	Johnson	Shelby
Collins	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	McCain	Thune
Crapo	McCaskill	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	

NAYS—68

Alexander	Franken	Perdue
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Portman
Blumenthal	Hatch	Reed
Booker	Heinrich	Reid
Boxer	Heitkamp	Rounds
Brown	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Capito	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	King	Scott
Carper	Klobuchar	Sessions
Casey	Lankford	Shaheen
Cochran	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Tester
Corker	Manchin	Tillis
Cornyn	Markey	Toomey
Daines	Menendez	Udall
Donnelly	Merkley	Vitter
Durbin	Mikulski	Warner
Ernst	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Fischer	Nelson	Wyden
Flake	Paul	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 32, the nays are 68.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the

affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The point of order is sustained and the amendment falls.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I wish to remind everyone that these are supposed to be 10-minute votes. I am asking for a little bit closer timing on this. We have hundreds of them to go yet today, so we need to be more responsive in voting. It is a 10-minute vote.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 940, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Paul amendment No. 940, as modified.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, national defense is the No. 1 priority of the Federal Government. My amendment increases defense spending, but pays for it with spending cuts. It is irresponsible and dangerous to continue to put America further into debt, even for something we need. We need national defense, but we should pay for it.

America does not project power from bankruptcy court. We need a strong national defense, but we should be honest with the American people and pay for it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the Republican budget throws 27 million people off of health care. It denies nutrition programs for hungry kids and pregnant women. It cuts $90 billion from the Pell program, making it harder for young people to get a college education, and it raises the price of prescription drugs for the elderly. For Senator PAUL, that is apparently not enough. He wants, over a 2-year period, $189 billion in cuts to discretionary programs, which will be devastating to the working families of this country.

Stop the war against working families. Vote no on the Paul amendment.

I make a point of order that the pending amendment violates section 312(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of my amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 4, nays 96, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

YEAS—4

Enzi	Paul
McConnell	Vitter

NAYS—96

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 4, the nays are 96.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected. The point of order is sustained and the amendment, as modified, falls.

The Senator from Washington.

AMENDMENT NO. 798

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the amendment I am offering today would simply expand access to paid sick days and give our families some much needed economic stability.

Working families should not have to sacrifice a day's pay or sacrifice their job altogether just to take care of themselves or a sick child, but today in this country, 43 million of our Nation's workers do not have access to paid sick days. This amendment would allow workers to earn up to 7 paid sick days over the course of a year.

It will not only help our families, it will be good for business. Paid sick days boost productivity, and in cities and States that already have paid sick leave laws, many employers state that this policy has not affected their revenue.

Allowing workers to earn paid sick days would take us a step closer to having an economy that works for all of our families, and I urge its support.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment. Under the current law, the Family Medical Leave Act provides 12 work weeks of job-protected unpaid leave for employees following the birth of a child, to care for a seriously ill family member, or for their own serious health issues.

Voluntary paid leave programs work precisely because they are voluntary, thereby offering flexibility to both employees and employers. The one-size-fits-all approach does not permit the flexibility needed to help all kinds of businesses and all kinds of workers. Employers, not the Federal Government, are best situated to know the benefits compensation that should be provided.

This, again, is a bill that should go through committee. It might be very successful if it goes through the committee process, but regardless it ought to, and so I ask for a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Murray amendment No. 798.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murray
Ayotte	Heinrich	Nelson
Baldwin	Heitkamp	Peters
Bennet	Hirono	Portman
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Reed
Booker	Isakson	Reid
Boxer	Johnson	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Burr	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Kirk	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Manchin	Thune
Cassidy	Markey	Toomey
Collins	McCain	Udall
Coons	McCaskill	Warner
Corker	Menendez	Warren
Donnelly	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Feinstein	Murkowski	
Franken	Murphy	

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blunt	Flake	Risch
Boozman	Gardner	Roberts
Capito	Graham	Rounds
Coats	Grassley	Rubio
Cochran	Hatch	Sasse
Cornyn	Heller	Scott
Cotton	Inhofe	Sessions
Crapo	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Enzi	Moran	Vitter
Ernst	Paul	Wicker

The amendment (No. 798) was agreed to.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, on rollcall vote No. 98, I voted nay. I intended to vote yea. Therefore, since it will not affect the outcome of the vote, I ask unanimous consent that I be recorded as voting yea.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, on rollcall vote No. 98, I voted nay. I intended to vote yea. Since it will not affect the outcome of the vote, I ask unanimous consent that I be recorded as voting yea.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

AMENDMENT NO. 356

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Moran amendment No. 356.

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the Moran amendment is an attempt to address the issue—in fact it is addressing the issue—of the 40-mile requirement contained in the choice act that Congress passed in August. Senators may recall that in August we were successful in coming together and passing legislation to give veterans greater options if they live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or if they cannot get the services within 30 days, the VA should provide those services, if they choose, at home.

This amendment makes clear that the VA should provide those services in the circumstance where there is a VA facility within 40 miles, but it does not provide—if it does not provide the service the veteran needs, it does not count against the 40 miles. This is a commonsense, very bipartisan amendment. I ask that it be adopted.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I appreciate Senator MORAN raising this issue. Last year we wrote the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act. We included language to allow veterans living at least 40 miles from a VA facility to access care in the community.

Like Senator MORAN, I represent a rural State. I am the first to understand the unique needs of rural veterans. I have spoken with Senator MORAN and understand his intention is to ensure that veterans living at least 40 miles from a facility that provides the care they need can seek care in the community through the Choice Program on a case-by-case basis.

If that is his intention, I think it is a good amendment. I think we should all support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—100

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

The amendment (No. 356) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 432

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Baldwin amendment No. 432.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, my amendment would create a free community college program, making a bold investment in our Nation's students, its workforce, and the future of our economy.

It pays for this investment in a balanced way, and my amendment would actually reduce the deficit by enacting the Buffett rule, asking millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share of taxes while giving our students a fair shot at the opportunities a higher education brings.

Inspired by programs in Tennessee and Chicago, this spring President Obama proposed a program that would allow students to attend community college for 2 years at no cost. This was a bold step.

Passing my amendment will show that Congress is ready to act to give every student a fair shot at an affordable education. Voting for this amendment means you believe a college education should be a path to the middle class and not a path into debt.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on the Baldwin-Schumer-Sanders-Stabenow amendment to support free community college and invest in our students and our workforce.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, for the 1 minute in opposition, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment. It spends more than $50 billion and pays for it by raising taxes.

This amendment is again telling the Finance Committee exactly how to do its work. But worse yet, the President's budget proposal for community college tuition free for all is not free for the States.

The Federal Government would pay 75 percent, but the States have to pay 25 percent. That is a 25-percent unfunded mandate. There is no provision for the States to be covered under this thing.

So we are telling them they are going to provide free college, although a lot of them already do. For the poor, the Pell grant is $5,775, and the average college tuition is $3,347. But it is not clear exactly what strings the administration would attach to States and community colleges in exchange for a 75-percent match.

Some of Senator BALDWIN's tax reform ideas may have merit, but they should be dealt with in the context of comprehensive tax reform rather than as a stand-alone proposal.

I ask my colleagues to vote ''no.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The question is on agreeing to the Baldwin amendment.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 55, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 100 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	McCaskill	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Donnelly	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—55

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Ayotte	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Sessions
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kirk	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Vitter
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	
Ernst	Murkowski	

The amendment (No. 432) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 810

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Collins amendment No. 810.

The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of myself and Senator HIRONO. Our amendment would create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to expand access to higher education for some of our neediest students through the Pell grant program.

The amendment would allow for year-round Pell grants so students who want to accelerate their degrees by taking additional courses, including during the summer, can receive an additional Pell grant when they need it

and complete their education more quickly without having to wait for the next academic year to begin.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I want to thank the Senator from Maine. We should be working to make college more affordable, reducing the crushing burden of student debt, and giving Americans a chance to further their education and training skills.

The underlying budget makes drastic cuts to Pell grants and would increase the average student's debt by thousands of dollars. The amendment of the Senator from Maine would help make college more affordable and accessible by reinstating the year-round Pell grant, which is a much needed investment to improve students' success.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. MURRAY. I urge our colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I think we have an agreement to take this on a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 810) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 828

(Purpose: To provide additional resources to save student financial aid and keep college affordable for more than 8,000,000 low- and middle-income students by restoring the $89,000,000,000 in cuts to Federal Pell Grants in the Republican budget)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Franken amendment No. 828.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, we just voice-voted an amendment to let students use summer Pell grants, but the fact is this budget cuts Pell grants. In Minnesota alone, more than 160,000 students were able to go to college thanks in part to Pell grants, and the same holds for millions around the country.

When my wife Franni and I were in college, a full Pell grant paid for about 80 percent of a public college education. Today it pays for less than 35 percent. Yet this budget would cut this program and make it harder for students to pay for college. My colleagues want to cut it further. We should not be doing that.

That is why I offer this amendment to restore funding for Pell grants.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. FRANKEN. I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator wish to call up his amendment?

Mr. FRANKEN. I would say yes.

I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Minnesota [Mr. FRANKEN], for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. REED, proposes an amendment numbered 828.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of March 25, 2015, under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote no.

First, this amendment would increase deficits relative to the budget resolution. It increases spending in Function 500, with no offset.

Second, the budget resolution doesn't cut Pell grants, the primary program helping these millions of people.

The budget does encourage restoring the Pell Grant Program to its original status as a discretionary program, subject to annual review by colleagues. The tuition purchasing power of Pell grants is at an all-time low even though Pell grant spending has tripled in the past decade. Since 2008, there has been an effort to maintain and increase the maximum Pell grant, but college tuition increases faster than that.

This is a program that needs to be reviewed by the applicable committee to see what needs to be done. We think there are parameters in the budget to take care of the issue. It provides sufficient funding on the discretionary side to maintain the maximum Pell grant level, which is set to rise to $5,775 for the upcoming academic year.

I ask my colleagues to vote ''no.''

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Burr	Collins
Ayotte	Capito	Corker
Barrasso	Cassidy	Cornyn
Blunt	Coats	Cotton
Boozman	Cochran	Crapo
Cruz	Isakson	Roberts
Daines	Johnson	Rounds
Enzi	Kirk	Rubio
Ernst	Lankford	Sasse
Fischer	Lee	Scott
Flake	McCain	Sessions
Gardner	McConnell	Shelby
Graham	Moran	Sullivan
Grassley	Murkowski	Thune
Hatch	Paul	Tillis
Heller	Perdue	Toomey
Hoeven	Portman	Vitter
Inhofe	Risch	Wicker

The amendment (No. 828) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on amendment No. 692.

The Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 1026

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside in order to call up my amendment No. 1026.

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

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. WYDEN], for Mrs. MURRAY, for herself and Mr. WYDEN, proposes an amendment numbered 1026.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to transparency health premium billing)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO CONSUMER PRICE TRANSPARENCY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increased disclosure of any Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148) taxes or other provisions in health insurance monthly premium statements, including advance premium tax credits, cost sharing reductions, medical loss ratio rebates and savings, free preventive care, coverage of preexisting conditions and prohibitions on premium rating because of gender, the cost of insurance company administrative expenses, and taxes and fees, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, more than 5 years after being signed into law, the Affordable Care Act is improving the health and well-being of millions of Americans. Many of the Affordable Care Act's greatest successes are getting lost in the noise of political attack ads. The Affordable Care Act has expanded health care coverage to millions of Americans. These people no longer have to go to bed at night worried about the possibility of bankruptcy if they get sick.

Americans who had coverage already are benefiting from new protections.

Women now pay the same premiums as men. Preexisting conditions can no longer be used as an excuse to deny coverage, and health plans no longer put lifetime caps on benefits. This amendment would require insurers to disclose all of the benefits afforded to consumers through the Affordable Care Act.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time in opposition?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, we don't have any problem with this being taken by voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 1026.

The amendment (No. 1026) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 692

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Scott amendment No. 692.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment in order to call up the Scott amendment No. 692 in regard to transparency in health insurance costs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. SCOTT] proposes an amendment numbered 692.

Mr. SCOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 692

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to transparency in health premium billing)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO TRANSPARENCY IN HEALTH PREMIUM BILLING.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increased disclosure of any Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148) tax in health insurance monthly premium statements, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, my amendment is a very simple amendment. It simply seeks to make sure insurance companies increase the transparency on the actual cost of the health insurance tax on monthly premiums.

The bottom line is this: When a single mom goes to the grocery store and she gets her receipt, at the bottom of the receipt it reflects the taxes she has paid. When a father of three buys clothes, at the end of his receipt it reflects the taxes that are being paid.

By the year 2018, this invisible tax not seen by the average insurance purchaser will have raised about $14.3 billion in costs because of this health insurance tax. My amendment makes it easier to understand and appreciate the actual cost of the health insurance tax.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Affordable Care Act is a critical step forward in our efforts to build on our progress to put patients first and allows every family to get affordable, quality health care. But the work didn't end when the law passed—far from it. Families across the country are expecting us to keep working to build on that progress and continue to make health care more affordable, accessible, and of higher quality. That is what we are focused on, on this side, and the amendment that just passed did that, but we should not be playing political games in joining to move our health care system backward. It is bad enough that the underlying budget repeals the health care law and cuts patients and families off without proposing an alternative law, but this amendment makes it worse. It means patients and families get skewed, incomplete information about their health care costs. I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Bennet	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Sessions
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kirk	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Manchin	Toomey
Cruz	McCain	Vitter
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Cantwell	Donnelly
Blumenthal	Cardin	Durbin
Booker	Carper	Feinstein
Boxer	Casey	Franken
Brown	Coons	Gillibrand
Heinrich	Merkley	Schumer
Heitkamp	Mikulski	Shaheen
Hirono	Murphy	Stabenow
Kaine	Murray	Tester
King	Nelson	Udall
Klobuchar	Peters	Warner
Leahy	Reed	Warren
Markey	Reid	Whitehouse
McCaskill	Sanders	Wyden
Menendez	Schatz	

The amendment (No. 692) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. 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. ENZI. 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. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote on the Coons amendment be moved to occur after Kirk amendment No. 545.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 928

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Blunt amendment No. 928.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise in support of this amendment, amendment No. 928. It will create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prohibit a fee or tax on carbon emissions. This vote is important to send a clear message to the administration that Americans cannot afford to pay higher utility bills because of bad energy policies.

I thank Senator THUNE for cosponsoring this amendment, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator wish to call up his amendment?

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up my amendment No. 928.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Missouri, [Mr. BLUNT], for himself and Mr. THUNE, proposes an amendment numbered 928.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to protect the United States from an energy tax)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CARBON EMISSIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this

resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to carbon emissions, which may include prohibitions on Federal taxes or fees imposed on carbon emissions from any product or entity that is a direct or indirect source of emissions, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I yield 20 seconds to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my colleagues that when you put a price on carbon, it works. If you look at my State, we are creating jobs in clean energy. We are balancing our budget better than we ever have before. We have strong support from the people of California. I don't know why on Earth we would say no to something that leads to prosperity, jobs, and a clean and healthy environment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I yield 20 seconds to the Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the premise of this is that climate change is not real and not urgent, which puts that side of the aisle at odds with NASA, the Department of Defense, every major American scientific society, corporate leaders in their home States, and probably every single State university in their home States.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, climate change——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, 20 plus 20 equals 40 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They spoke for more than 20 seconds.

All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to Blunt amendment No. 928.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 103 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Alexander	Cotton	Heitkamp
Ayotte	Crapo	Heller
Barrasso	Cruz	Hoeven
Blunt	Daines	Inhofe
Boozman	Donnelly	Isakson
Burr	Enzi	Johnson
Capito	Ernst	Kirk
Cassidy	Fischer	Lankford
Coats	Flake	Lee
Cochran	Gardner	Manchin
Collins	Graham	McCain
Corker	Grassley	McCaskill
Cornyn	Hatch	McConnell
Moran	Rounds	Thune
Murkowski	Rubio	Tillis
Paul	Sasse	Toomey
Perdue	Scott	Vitter
Portman	Sessions	Wicker
Risch	Shelby	
Roberts	Sullivan	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	Menendez	Tester
Casey	Merkley	Udall
Coons	Mikulski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Franken	Nelson	Wyden

The amendment (No. 928) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 817

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Durbin amendment No. 817.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we have a Tax Code in America which creates incentives and rewards to companies all across the United States.

I am proposing what I call the patriot employers' tax credit. It is a tax credit for those American companies that hire Americans and keep their jobs in the United States, for companies that pay at least half of their employees $15 an hour—and we picked that number because at that wage, one doesn't qualify for the basic safety net programs—companies that provide good health insurance for their employees, good pension programs for their employees, and companies that give a preference to veterans and to those in the Reserve and National Guard who are serving overseas. I think those companies deserve our encouragement, a reward of a tax credit for patriotic employers.

I hope my colleagues will join me in standing up for the companies that stand up for America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, here we go again. I will be asking the Senate to vote ''no'' on this amendment.

Again, Senator DURBIN has some good tax reform ideas. They probably have merit, but we should deal with these ideas through comprehensive tax reform rather than a stand-alone proposal that tells the Finance Committee how to do its work.

So far, we have resisted every one of these amendments. I assume we will resist the rest of them today. But we can't tell the Finance Committee how to handle comprehensive tax reform if we expect to simplify the whole system.

So I ask for a ''no'' vote, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, is there any time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

The question is on agreeing to the Durbin amendment.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 104 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

The amendment (No. 817) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 515

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Vitter amendment No. 515.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this amendment, No. 515, the Vitter amendment, is very simple and straightforward but important. It says that the U.S. Department of Education should not be able to bribe or coerce States into any particular set of standards or curriculum or testing, whether it is common core or anything else. That decision should be up to the States. That decision should be up to local education communities, not the Federal Government. The Federal Government, through our Department of Education, should not bribe or coerce States in any direction. That is what the amendment is all about.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I think we all believe that in our country all students should have access to a quality public education regardless of where they live or how they learn or how much money they make. Education is one of the smartest investments we can make.

Chairman ALEXANDER and I are working together on a bipartisan process to fix the broken No Child Left Behind law. I believe we are going to make

progress in the coming weeks. I appreciate his working with me.

The fact is that this amendment is not needed. The common core was not mandated by the Federal Government. Race to the Top did not mandate adoption of common core. ESEA waivers have not mandated the common core. Federal law already prohibits the Federal Government from requiring States to adopt certain standards or curriculum.

By the way, this is a ''spending neutral'' reserve fund that I think we all should be aware of for the first time in this Republican budget.

For all of those reasons, I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 105 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

The amendment (No. 515) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Kirk amendment No. 545 and the Inhofe amendment No. 649 be modified with the changes at the desk.

I further ask unanimous consent that a vote on Whitehouse amendment No. 867 occur after the vote on the Murkowski amendment No. 838.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 545), as modified, is as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REIMPOSING WAIVED SANCTIONS AND IMPOSING NEW SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE JOINT PLAN OF ACTION OR A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR AGREEMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Iran, which may include efforts to immediately reimpose waived sanctions and impose new sanctions against the Government of Iran if the President cannot make a determination and certify that Iran is complying with the Joint Plan of Action or a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 947

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Bennet Amendment No. 947.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up amendment No. 947.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. BENNET] proposes an amendment numbered 947.

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To ensure that small businesses are provided relief as part of tax reform by permanently increasing the maximum amount of the section 179 small business expensing allowance to $1,000,000 and the investment limitation to $2,500,000 and indexing them both for inflation)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to small business tax relief, which may include a permanent increase of the section 179 small business expensing allowance to $1,000,000 or an increase in the investment limitation to $2,500,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, this is a simple amendment. It increases the amount of money that small businesses can expense in a given year. That makes it easier for them to purchase new equipment and grow the economy.

It is especially important to places such as the State of Colorado, where small businesses make up 97 percent of the employers in our State. Specifically, the amendment increases the section 179 expensing allowance to $1 million. Right now, it is at $25,000.

If we ever manage to pass another extenders bill, it will increase to $500,000. As we all know, many small businesses are pass-through entities. So they pay the individual tax rate even though they may use business tax credits and deductions. So in tax reform they may lose some of their credits but may not see a corresponding drop in their tax rates.

As we begin the process of reforming our Tax Code, we need to ensure that these types of small businesses can continue to grow, invest, and innovate. This amendment takes an important step in achieving this goal.

I am told that there is an agreement—there may be an agreement—to have a voice vote on this amendment. That would certainly be fine with me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I don't think there is any objection on our side to a voice vote. I ask for a voice vote.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Hearing no further debate, the question is on agreeing to Bennet amendment No. 947.

The amendment (No. 947) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 838

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Murkowski amendment No. 838.

The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 838.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is already pending.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, Senator SULLIVAN and I have come together to move forward on this amendment. It provides a spending-neutral reserve fund for the sale, transfer or exchange of Federal lands to State and local governments.

I want to make sure that folks understand. This is not selling any land by itself. Only subsequent legislation can do that. It would require us to come back, just as we do now, with exchanges, conveyances, and sales, to move the legislation through.

What we have done is we have made sure that all lands that are included within national parks, national preserves, and national monuments are excluded so there can be no effort to purchase or exchange there.

Our amendment will allow us to craft balanced, bipartisan legislation to empower States, improve conservation systems, and promote economic growth.

That is exactly what we did last year, when we moved through the NDAA with support from 80 Senators for that package.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, Americans have always had a deep connection to the outdoors. In New Mexico, families go back year after year to fish in the Santa Barbara River, to the Santa Fe National Forest to hunt, and to the Gila National Forest.

Our public lands are part of our American heritage. We cherish passing that tradition on to our children and to our grandchildren. Yet this amendment would make it easier to turn our public lands over to State land commissioners and eventually to sell them outright.

Make no mistake. This amendment will mean more locked gates and more ''no trespassing'' signs in places that families have used for generation.

Colleagues, this land is your land. I urge Senators to vote no on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Murkowski amendment.

The Senator from Vermont.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. SANDERS. Has the 10-minute limit expired?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised that it has.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, please, a parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There shall be no further inquiries during a rollcall vote.

Mrs. BOXER. And what rule is that that governs that?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is advised that we are in a rollcall vote.

Mrs. BOXER. Well, you allowed another parliamentary inquiry. Why wouldn't you allow my parliamentary inquiry? All I want to know is how many minutes we have gone over the vote. I hear it is 11 minutes, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The parliamentary inquiries are at the sufferance of the Chair.

Mrs. BOXER. The sufferance of the Chair?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The sufferance of the Senate.

Mrs. BOXER. Well, the Senate is definitely suffering. But, in any event, we are 11 minutes over. Let's bang the gavel.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 106 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cassidy	Heller	Rounds
Coats	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Sessions
Cornyn	Kirk	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Vitter
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker

NAYS—49

Alexander	Gardner	Nelson
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Peters
Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reid
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Boxer	King	Schumer
Brown	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Cardin	Manchin	Tester
Carper	Markey	Udall
Casey	McCaskill	Warner
Coons	Menendez	Warren
Donnelly	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

The amendment (No. 838) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 867

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Whitehouse amendment No. 867.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this amendment would establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund that would make it more difficult for corporations and billionaires to secretly influence our elections through secret contributions and also to prevent such entities from evading campaign finance law, including by making false statements to Federal authorities and agencies.

I can tell my colleagues, if you are not sick of the secret money floating into our elections, your constituents are. So listen to your constituents. Give this a vote, and let's get started on fixing this grave American disgrace.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.'' Respectfully, I think we have some skepticism about this proposal, and I want to remind my colleagues this issue was decided by the Supreme Court over 5 years ago. The Citizens United case has nothing to do with corporate-union contributions to campaigns. Those prohibitions remain in place, and the Supreme Court decision reversed what for-profit and not-for-profit corporations can say in elections. The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act bans election-related expenditures and communications by American corporations. Proposals like this amendment are not designed to ensure transparency and civility of elections. They are, as Justice Thomas's concurring opinion in Citizens United correctly described, ''specifically calculated to curtail campaign-related activities and prevent the lawful, peaceful exercise of First Amendment rights.''

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, how much time is remaining on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 13 seconds.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. The Supreme Court specifically left the disclosure of these sources of these secret contributions to Congress. So the Supreme Court actually has given us this job. I urge that we take it up.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, how much time does our side have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

Mr. ENZI. I ask for a ''no'' vote.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to Whitehouse amendment No. 867.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 107 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Peters
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Kaine	Reid
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Kirk	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

NAYS—52

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Ayotte	Flake	Portman
Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Rounds
Burr	Hatch	Rubio
Capito	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	
Ernst	Paul	

NOT VOTING—1

Donnelly

The amendment (No. 867) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 649, AS MODIFIED

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 649 be brought up, as modified.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oklahoma [Mr. INHOFE], for himself and Mr. MORAN, proposes an amendment numbered 649, as modified.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting funding of international organizations during the implementation of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty prior to Senate ratification and adoption of implementing legislation)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING FUNDING OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ARMS TRADE TREATY PRIOR TO SENATE RATIFICATION AND ADOPTION OF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to funding, which may include prohibiting funding for the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty Secretariat or any international organizations created to support the implementation of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty prior to Senate ratification and adoption of implementing legislation by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on amendment No. 649, as modified.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, everyone in here knows what the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty does. It doesn't infringe upon our Second Amendment rights. We all know that. It also limits our ability to help our allies like Israel in building their weapons system.

President Obama has signed the treaty but has not submitted it for ratification; for one reason, he knows the votes are not there. Two years ago, at 5 a.m. in the morning, 53 Senators, from both parties, voted for my amendment very similar to this. My amendment would prevent funds from going to the treaty Secretariat or any other organization that is working to implement this treaty.

I ask for your support and retain the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, the United States is not a party to the Arms Trade Treaty. It has not even been submitted to the Senate for consideration. Regardless of your position on the treaty itself, prohibiting funding for any international organization anywhere while other countries are implementing a treaty is simply absurd. By the way, the treaty for which we are not a party to ultimately makes the rest of the world live up to the arms export standards of the United States, which is good to prevent proliferation for destabilizing arms that could be used against American soldiers and to help level the playing field for U.S. defense manufacturers. So the amendment actually harms U.S. national security by placing U.S. soldiers at greater risk from armed soldier transfers to our enemies, illegitimately and illegally, without proper oversight by other countries.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 15 seconds.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is very simple. If you are for extreme gun control and against the Second Amendment rights, you ought to vote no on this.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Inhofe amendment No. 649, as modified.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 108 Leg.]

YEAS—59

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heinrich	Rounds
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rubio
Coats	Heller	Sasse
Cochran	Hoeven	Scott
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Tester
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Donnelly	McCain	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Boxer	Carper
Bennet	Brown	Casey
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Coons
Booker	Cardin	Durbin
Feinstein	Menendez	Schatz
Franken	Merkley	Schumer
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Shaheen
Hirono	Murphy	Stabenow
Kaine	Murray	Udall
King	Nelson	Warner
Klobuchar	Peters	Warren
Leahy	Reed	Whitehouse
Markey	Reid	Wyden
McCaskill	Sanders	

The amendment (No. 649), as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 545, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Kirk amendment No. 545, as modified.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, the coming amendment is the Kirk-Brown amendment which is the key Iran vote of this session of Congress.

If my colleagues are upset about the intel-sharing arrangement with the State of Israel, if my colleagues feel we should rebalance our policy with regard to the United States potentially voting against Israel in the U.N., this is the time to rebalance our policy with regard to our allies in the State of Israel.

I urge the body to support this Brown-Kirk bipartisan amendment which has been worked out with the other side. I just talked to the senior Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, who assured me she supports this amendment. So does the senior Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, with whom I have built such a long, bipartisan partnership on the Iran issue.

I urge adoption of this amendment.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I will just take 20 seconds and yield the rest.

I hope we all vote for this because it doesn't do anything to cause disarray in negotiations. What it says is if there is a deal and there is a breakout and it is certified that there is a breakout with Iran, we would have a very quick way to restore sanctions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank the Senator from Illinois as well as the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from California.

We are united in our goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon; we all know that here. I commend the President for trying to resolve the nuclear dispute diplomatically.

I urge my colleagues to support the Kirk-Brown-Boxer-Menendez amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

All in favor say aye, all opposed, no.

The ayes appear to have it.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we voted. Regular order.

Mr. KIRK. I would like to get the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have a point of order. Was the vote called?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The vote was not called.

The yeas and nays have been asked for.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 109 Leg.]

YEAS—100

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

The amendment (No. 545), as modified, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

AMENDMENT NO. 966, AS MODIFIED

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask that my amendment be modified with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator wish to call up the amendment?

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to call up amendment No. 966, as modified.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Delaware [Mr. COONS], for himself and Mr. SANDERS, proposes an amendment numbered 966, as modified.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to offsetting the costs of operations against the Islamic State)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO OFFSETTING THE COSTS OF OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ISLAMIC STATE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing revenue to offset the costs of the war against the Islamic State, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, we need to make sure we pay for our war against ISIS. ISIS is a national security threat. We are just now coming to the end of two long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have cost trillions of dollars, and we didn't pay for them. It is unacceptable. Our country has a long history of paying for our wars, and we need to return to that tradition. As a democracy, we should go to war as a nation and not put the burden on just the troops and their families.

I am pleased to have the cosponsorship of Senator SANDERS, and I urge my colleagues to support our amendment to raise the revenue necessary to pay for our war.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Thank you, Mr. President.

I certainly appreciate the statement of my good friend, and we have talked a good deal about this. I believe we ought to pay for everything we do around here. There are all kinds of ways for paying for things, including reducing spending on things we shouldn't be spending money on. So I would like to work with him in the future. I agree with him 100 percent that the amount of money that goes out the door should be equal to the amount of money that comes in the door, but I oppose this amendment just because of the way it was crafted. I wish he had said it needed to be paid for, and I would agree with that, but the way it is crafted leads me to want to oppose this, and I hope on our side we will do so.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty seconds.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would simply say that I appreciate the sentiment expressed by the Senator from Tennessee. I agree that all wars need to be paid for. I think we need to recognize that revenue is required to do so.

I yield the floor to Senator SANDERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 20 seconds remaining.

Mr. ENZI. I ask my colleagues to vote ''no.'' The Coons amendment is short and simple, but it claims it will offset the cost of the war against ISIS with the President's budget. We didn't pass the President's budget. This $8.8 billion is divided between the Department of Defense, which executes Operation Inherent Resolve, and the State Department, which provides——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ENZI. I ask for a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will come to order.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, what this amendment says is that if Senators vote for another war, this time they will have to raise taxes to pay for it. No more wars on the credit card. Vote yes.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 110 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

The amendment (No. 966), as modified, was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WICKER). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, for the information of all my colleagues, it only took us 6 hours 15 minutes to do 17 votes.

The next tranche has 26 votes in it. I need to let you know that you don't have to wait all 10 minutes to turn in your vote. If you vote in 5 minutes, we can finish in 5 minutes.

Otherwise, a 5-minute vote takes us 10 minutes, just like a 10-minute vote

takes us 20 minutes, and a 15-minute vote takes us 30 minutes.

We are going to have to cut down the time, or I am sure people are going to give up before they get to some of their amendments.

I do need to announce that there is dinner in the Mansfield Room. It is courtesy of Senator MCCONNELL, and it is for both parties.

You also need to know that Senator REID has agreed to provide dinner tomorrow night in the Mansfield Room. So unless we can speed this up, what we are looking for is a volunteer for breakfast and for lunch tomorrow.

Looking at the list of amendments, I am pretty serious about all of that. We need to speed it up.

To do that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the following amendments in the order listed, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to the votes, with an exception of a side-by-side to the Nelson amendment No. 944 and the McCain amendment No. 360, and that the listed amendments be voted on second.

The first one is Isakson, No. 839; then Stabenow, 1072; Portman, 689; Casey, 632; Thune, 607; Bennet, 1014; McConnell, 836; Merkley, 842; Gardner, 443; Murray, 951; Graham, 763; Blumenthal, 825; Flake, 665; Sanders, 475; Hatch, 1029; Schatz, 1063; Kirk, 1038; Nelson, 944; McCain, 360; Wyden, 968; Lee, 750, as modified; Reed, 919; Cotton, 659; Menendez, 993; Cotton, 664; Brown, 994.

The amendment (No. 750), as modified is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 750

On page 64, line 11, insert ", which may include funding the payments in lieu of taxes program at levels roughly equivalent to lost tax revenues due to the presence of Federal land" after "Taxes (PILT)".

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that all the amendments on this list not currently pending be made pending en bloc at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nonpending amendments by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk as follows:

Stabenow, 1072; Bennet, 1014; McConnell, 836; Graham, 763; Sanders, 475; Hatch, 1029; Schatz, 1063, Kirk, 1038; Wyden, 968; Reed, 919; Cotton, 659; Cotton, 664; Brown, 994.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1072

(Purpose: To provide additional resources to reject the Senate Republicans' proposed $435 billion in cuts to Medicare)

On page 32, line 2, increase the amount by $1,813,000,000.

On page 32, line 3, increase the amount by $1,813,000,000.

On page 32, line 6, increase the amount by $11,996,000,000.

On page 32, line 7, increase the amount by $11,996,000,000.

On page 32, line 10, increase the amount by $22,539,000,000.

On page 32, line 11, increase the amount by $22,539,000,000.

On page 32, line 14, increase the amount by $30,065,000,000.

On page 32, line 15, increase the amount by $30,065,000,000.

On page 32, line 18, increase the amount by $38,117,000,000.

On page 32, line 19, increase the amount by $38,117,000,000.

On page 32, line 22, increase the amount by $47,460,000,000.

On page 32, line 23, increase the amount by $47,460,000,000.

On page 33, line 2, increase the amount by $56,270,000,000.

On page 33, line 3, increase the amount by $56,270,000,000.

On page 33, line 6, increase the amount by $65,098,000,000.

On page 33, line 7, increase the amount by $65,098,000,000.

On page 33, line 10, increase the amount by $76,773,000,000.

On page 33, line 11, increase the amount by $76,773,000,000.

On page 33, line 14, increase the amount by $84,543,000,000.

On page 33, line 15, increase the amount by $85,543,000,000.

AMENDMENT NO. 1014

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to responding to the economic and national security threats posed by human-induced climate change, as highlighted by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting national security, economic growth, and public health by addressing human-induced climate change through increased use of clean energy, energy efficiency, and reductions in carbon pollution by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 836

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency of greenhouse gas emissions, which may include a prohibition on withholding highway funds from States that refuse to submit State Implementation Plans required under the Clean Power Plan of the Agency)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REGULATION BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency of greenhouse gas emissions, which may include a prohibition on withholding highway funds from States that refuse to submit State Implementation Plans required under the Clean Power Plan of the Agency, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 763

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to subjecting all Federal spending to sequestration)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUBJECTING ALL FEDERAL SPENDING TO SEQUESTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to subjecting all Federal spending, except spending relating to Social Security, to sequestration by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 475

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to strengthening the United States Postal Service by establishing a moratorium to protect mail processing plants, reinstating overnight delivery standards, and protecting rural service)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO STRENGTHENING THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening the United States Postal Service, which may include imposing a moratorium to prevent mail processing plants from closing, reestablishing overnight delivery standards, recognizing the importance of rural delivery, allowing the Postal Service to innovate and adapt to compete in a digital age, or improving the financial condition of the Postal Service by the amounts

provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1029

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent American jobs from being moved overseas by reducing the corporate income tax rate)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PREVENT AMERICAN JOBS FROM BEING MOVED OVERSEAS BY REDUCING THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX RATE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preventing American jobs from being moved overseas, which may include a reduction in the corporate income tax rate, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1063

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring all legally married same-sex spouses have equal access to the Social Security benefits they have earned and receive equal treatment under the law pursuant to the Constitution of the United States)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING EQUAL TREATMENT OF MARRIED COUPLES UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring equal treatment of married couples, which may include ensuring that all legally married spouses have access to Social Security benefits after the death of their spouse, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1038

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase wages for American workers)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE WAGES FOR AMERICAN WORKERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reaffirming the ability of States to adopt minimum wages higher than the Federal minimum wage level commensurate with the cost of living in the State, which may include the adoption of pro-employment and wage-increasing policies by providing pro-growth tax relief and eliminating excessive government mandates, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 968

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enacting middle class tax relief, including extending and expanding refundable tax credits, such as tax provisions and policies included in legislation like the Working Families Tax Relief Act, American Opportunity Tax Credit Permanence and Consolidation Act, Helping Working Families Afford Child Care Act, or the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act, among other legislation)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to extending and expanding refundable tax provisions that benefit working families, childless workers, and the middle class, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 919

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to eliminating deductions for corporate compensation in excess of $1,000,000)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ELIMINATING DEDUCTIONS FOR CORPORATE COMPENSATION IN EXCESS OF $1,000,000.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to excessive subsidization in the tax code of corporate compensation, which may include eliminating deductions for corporate compensation in excess of $1,000,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 659

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting the designation of critical habitat)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING PROPER ECONOMIC CONSIDERATION IN DESIGNATION OF CRITICAL HABITAT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to critical habitat designations, which may include requirements that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service examine the cumulative economic effects of the designation, such as on land or property uses or values, regional employment, or revenue impacts on States and units of local government, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 664

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities at the detention facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING FACILITIES AT THE DETENTION FACILITIES AT UNITED STATES NAVAL STATION, GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA.

(a) FINDING.—The Senate finds that the detention facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are an important tool in the counterterrorism efforts of the United States.

(b) DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND.—The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities at the detention facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 994

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to end ''too big to fail'' bailouts for Wall Street mega-banks (over $500 billion in total assets)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT–NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO END "TOO BIG TO FAIL" BAILOUTS FOR WALL STREET MEGA-BANKS (OVER $500 BILLION IN TOTAL ASSETS).

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to any bank holding companies with over $500,000,000,000 in total assets to better protect taxpayers, including such measures as capital or leverage requirements, restrictions on the growth, activities, or operations of a company, or divestiture of assets or operations of any company that is unable to present a credible plan to facilitate an orderly bankruptcy or resolution, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of

fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that there be 2 minutes equally divided between the managers or their designees prior to each vote and that all votes after the first in this series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 827, 1025, 533, 984, AND 535 EN BLOC

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up the following amendments en bloc: Hatch No. 827, Hatch No. 1025, Hatch No. 533, Hatch No. 984, and Hatch No. 535.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI], for Mr. HATCH, proposes amendments numbered 827, 1025, 533, 984, and 535 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 827

(Purpose: To establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reforming the Federal regulatory process by enabling retrospective review of existing regulations, improving the process by which new regulations are created, ensuring fair and effective judicial review, and securing an effective role for Congress in the Federal regulatory process through legislation and oversight)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REFORMING THE FEDERAL REGULATORY PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) creating an effective mechanism for the review of the existing Federal regulatory burden to identify rules for repeal or modification that—

(A) impose paperwork burdens that could be reduced substantially without significantly diminishing regulatory effectiveness;

(B) impose disproportionately high costs on small businesses;

(C) could be strengthened in their effectiveness while reducing regulatory costs;

(D) have been rendered obsolete by technological or market changes;

(E) have achieved their goals and can be repealed without target problems recurring;

(F) impose the greatest opportunity costs in terms of economic growth;

(G) are ineffective;

(H) overlap, duplicate, or conflict with other Federal regulations or with State or local regulations; or

(I) impose costs that are not justified by benefits produced for society within the United States;

(2) reforming the process by which new regulations are made by Federal agencies, including independent agencies, for the purposes of—

(A) prioritizing early public outreach in the rulemaking process;

(B) ensuring the use of the best available scientific, economic, and technical data;

(C) preventing the misuse of guidance documents to skirt public input;

(D) ensuring the use of best practices for regulatory analysis, including cost-benefit analysis, into each step of the rulemaking process;

(E) facilitating the adoption by Federal agencies of the least costly regulatory alternative that would achieve the goals of the statutory authorization;

(F) ensuring more careful consideration of proposed high-cost rules;

(G) ensuring effective oversight of the Federal regulatory program, including independent regulatory commissions, by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs;

(H) improving the consideration of adverse impacts on small businesses;

(I) providing greater transparency in the rulemaking process; and

(J) improving compliance with section 515 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (Public Law 106–554; 114 Stat. 2736A–153) (commonly known as the ''Information Quality Act''), the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.), and chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the ''Regulatory Flexibility Act'');

(3) enhancing accountability by facilitating fair and effective judicial review of agency actions; and

(4) ensuring that Congress can effectively exercise its appropriate role in the regulatory process through legislation and oversight;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1025

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to H–1B visas)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO H–1B VISAS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to H–1B visas, which may include increasing the annual cap or exempting advanced STEM degree holders from the H–1B cap or recapturing unused green cards or allowing spouses of H–1B visa holders to work or increasing STEM funding in the United States by raising the H–1B fee paid by employers, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 533

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that Department of Justice attorneys comply with disclosure obligations in criminal prosecutions)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING THAT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ATTORNEYS COMPLY WITH DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that all Department of Justice attorneys comply with all legal and ethical obligations in criminal prosecutions, which may include legislation that ensures the disclosure to the defendant in a timely manner of all information known to the Government that tends to negate the guilt of the defendant, mitigate the offense charged or the sentence imposed, or impeach the Government's witnesses or evidence, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 984

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that patients, including military members and veterans, have access to new antibacterial drugs that treat serious or life-threatening infections through the creation by the Food and Drug Administration of a limited population approval pathway for antibacterial drugs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIMITED POPULATION APPROVAL FOR ANTIBACTERIAL DRUGS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the treatment of serious or life-threatening infections for which there is an unmet medical need, and which may include the establishment by the Food and Drug Administration of a limited population approval pathway to bring to market new antibacterial drugs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 535

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to balancing the Federal budget)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO BALANCING THE FEDERAL BUDGET.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to balancing the Federal budget, which may include legislation to ensure that total outlays for any fiscal year do not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year and legislation to ensure that total outlays for any fiscal year do not exceed 18 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States for the calendar year ending before

the beginning of such fiscal year, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1044, 1047, 724, 713, AND 1005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up amendment No. 1044 on behalf of Senators CARDIN and MCCAIN; and amendments Nos. 1047 and 724 on behalf of Senator KAINE; amendment No. 713 on behalf of Senators MURPHY and CASSIDY; and amendment No. 1005 on behalf of Senators MURPHY and GRAHAM.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up en bloc.

The clerk will report the amendments by number en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for other Members, proposes amendments numbered 1044, 1047, 724, 713, and 1005 en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1044

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to imposing sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights or significant acts of corruption)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPOSING SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR GROSS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS OR SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF CORRUPTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to imposing sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights or significant acts of corruption by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1047

(Purpose: To provide for sequestration replacement)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REVISE OR REPEAL SEQUESTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports that amend section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 or the enforcement procedures under section 251A of that Act to revise or repeal the discretionary spending limits and enforcement procedures established under those sections, relating to providing relief from sequestration and the reduction in discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, split evenly between both the revised security category and the revised nonsecurity category, and offsetting such relief through targeted changes in mandatory or discretionary spending programs and tax expenditures by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. For purposes of determining deficit-neutrality under this section, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may include the estimated effects of any amendment or amendments to the discretionary spending limits.

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. ADJUSTMENTS FOR SEQUESTRATION REPLACEMENT.

(a) MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTING INCREASE IN DISCRETIONARY LIMITS.—If a measure becomes law that amends the discretionary spending limits established under section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)), the adjustments to discretionary spending limits under section 251(b) of that Act (2 U.S.C. 901(b)), or the enforcement procedures established under section 251A of that Act (2 U.S.C. 901a), the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate shall adjust the allocation called for in section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 633(a)) to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and may adjust all other budgetary aggregates, allocations, levels, and limits contained in this resolution, as necessary, consistent with such measure, up to the amounts specified and reserved in subparagraph (b).

(b) AMOUNTS SPECIFIED AND RESERVED.—The amounts specified (and to be reserved from the allocation called for in section 302(a) allocation of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 633(a)) to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate until such time as the conditions specified in subsection (a) are met are—

(1) for fiscal year 2016—

(A) for the revised security category, $37,000,000,000 in budget authority (and the outlays flowing therefrom); and

(B) for the revised nonsecurity category, $37,000,000,000 in budget authority (and the outlays flowing therefrom); and

(2) for fiscal year 2017—

(A) for the revised security category, $37,000,000,000 in budget authority (and the outlays flowing therefrom); and

(B) for the revised nonsecurity category, $37,000,000,000 in budget authority (and the outlays flowing therefrom).

AMENDMENT NO. 724

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing United States exports and improving the competitiveness of United States businesses)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3___. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING UNITED STATES EXPORTS AND IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF UNITED STATES BUSINESSES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing United States exports and improving the competitiveness of United States businesses, including through a long-term reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 713

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to comprehensive mental health reform)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to comprehensive mental health reform, which may include legislation that provides increased access to individuals suffering from mental illness and greater workforce opportunities for mental health professionals, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1005

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to expanding United States counter-propaganda communications to combat misinformation from the Russian Federation or terrorist groups like ISIS and al Qaeda)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions,or conference reports relating to funding for international counter-propaganda communications in order to combat misinformation, undermine ideologies of violence and hatred, and ensure moderate voices are heard, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 839

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Isakson amendment No. 839

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, amendment No. 839 recognizes that on November 4, 1979, 52 brave Americans were taken hostage in Tehran, Iran. They were beaten, they were held in captivity, they were tortured.

Finally, the Algerian accords were negotiated, and they were released in January of 1981. But in the Algerian accords, they were prohibited from ever being compensated by litigation against the nation of Iran.

Now, with the sanction money flowing into the U.S. Treasury and into the State Department, the money is there to compensate these brave individuals, of which there are 44 still remaining alive.

This amendment acknowledges that Congress has the responsibility that the Supreme Court dedicated to make sure these people get compensated for the bravery they exhibited for the United States of America in captivity.

I urge that this amendment be adopted.

I recognize the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I strongly support Senator ISAKSON's efforts here, which passed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year, working with the State Department, and moved unanimously to approve this bill.

This is to give 52 Americans, who were held hostage in Iran and denied the opportunity to seek redress for their terrible ordeal, that opportunity. The only way we are going to give them that opportunity for the 444 days that their families were held hostage in Iran, is to have this type of action.

I look forward to working with them, not just today but beyond, to get it passed so we can get these American families their justice.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Georgia for his leadership on this issue. He and I have cosponsored a bill that achieved this goal.

This amendment is vitally important to advance public awareness and make our colleagues more aware of the importance of this very significant issue. I thank him for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Isakson amendment.

The amendment (No. 839) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1072

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Stabenow amendment, No. 1072.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise to ask support for the Stabenow-Cantwell amendment.

This addresses the cuts to the budget in Medicare. Medicare is a universal health care program, as we know. It is a great American success story. Everybody believes that.

It protects Americans from having their life savings wiped out by a single illness. It guarantees important medical care and quality of life for literally tens of millions of people across our country.

I was very disappointed yesterday that our Republican colleagues voted against providing a point of order that would allow us to object to efforts to privatize Medicare or cut benefits or raise out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs or preventive services. But as a result of that, we now have in front of us a budget that calls for $435 billion in cuts to Medicare.

We all know there are ways to work together to create savings through efficiencies and quality measures and other things, but we should not be telling a generation of seniors, and those coming beyond them—who worked hard their whole lives and paid into the programs—that they will not have the health care they need and deserve.

So I ask colleagues to join with us in rejecting the $435 billion in Medicare cuts that are in this budget resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote no.

In the committee, Senator STABENOW heard several different versions of this amendment. None of them passed muster with the Parliamentarian.

I credit the Senator's instincts to approach the question of Medicare seriously. I am sure she knows we all take Medicare seriously. Why does the budget resolution have the numbers that it has? Because the Republicans and the President agree that we have to act on policies which extend the life of the Medicare trust fund.

The budget does this by adopting the President's goal of extending the life of Medicare's hospital insurance, HI trust fund, by at least 5 years.

While Republicans and the President share the goals of a financially stronger Medicare Program, the Republican budget empowers the Senate Finance Committee, the committee of jurisdiction, to determine how best to extend the life of the trust fund and solve the program's grave financial challenges. Many people have concerns about what the administration has proposed with this new Medicare policy. I do, too, and expect that the Finance Committee, working on a bipartisan basis and in cooperation with the House, can craft a solid, successful legislation to save Medicare from insolvency.

I ask for a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Stabenow amendment.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 111 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Coons	King
Bennet	Donnelly	Klobuchar
Blumenthal	Durbin	Leahy
Booker	Feinstein	Manchin
Boxer	Franken	Markey
Brown	Gillibrand	McCaskill
Cantwell	Heinrich	Menendez
Cardin	Heitkamp	Merkley
Carper	Hirono	Mikulski
Casey	Kaine	Murphy
Murray	Schatz	Warner
Nelson	Schumer	Warren
Peters	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Reed	Stabenow	Wyden
Reid	Tester	
Sanders	Udall	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

The amendment (No. 1072) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 689

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Portman amendment No. 689.

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, this amendment is a commonsense reform that allows the Joint Committee on Taxation to provide an accurate score to those of us in the Senate.

Right now we get a static score only, and everybody knows it is not wise to just have a static score, because it doesn't take into account the effect of tax changes on the economy.

I think everyone in the Chamber would agree there is some impact on the economy. We have to know what it is. This is informational. We will still get the static score, but also get a macroeconomic score.

The Joint Committee on Taxation already does the analysis. So they have the information, they are just not allowed to share it with you. I would think everybody in this Chamber should support this.

In the underlying bill, there is already also a macroeconomic analysis on the spending side, which is something new. So spending and taxes will both be analyzed. We will have the macroeconomic score.

The last time we talked about this a couple years ago on the floor, we got a majority vote—some Democrats, all the Republicans. I hope we will get a bipartisan vote today. I think it only makes sense for us to have the best information possible to be able to do the best tax reform possible, for instance, to be sure it does focus on economic growth, jobs, and rising wages.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, dynamic scoring is nothing more than an accounting gimmick that makes tax cuts appear at least partly pay for themselves. It is an attempt to make it seem like the failed policies of trickledown economics work, but we know better.

According to the CBO, the Bush tax cuts from 2001 and 2003 are responsible

for more than 13 percent of the increase in our national debt from 2001 to 2011.

Tax cuts did not grow the economy; they just grew our debt. The fuzzy math of dynamic scoring may get to a different answer, but the reality is that tax cuts for large profitable corporations and the wealthiest Americans do not pay for themselves. They just make the rich richer.

Once again, Republicans are opting for accounting gimmicks to cover up their real intentions. Dynamic scoring will rig the scoring process in favor of legislation that benefits those who are already doing very well.

I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

The question is on agreeing to the Portman amendment.

Mr. SANDERS. 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.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 112 Leg.]

YEAS—59

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Ayotte	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Capito	Hoeven	Rounds
Cassidy	Inhofe	Rubio
Coats	Isakson	Sasse
Cochran	Johnson	Schatz
Collins	Kaine	Scott
Corker	King	Sessions
Cornyn	Kirk	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McCaskill	Vitter
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Franken	Peters
Bennet	Gillibrand	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reid
Booker	Heitkamp	Sanders
Boxer	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Cardin	Markey	Tester
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Casey	Merkley	Warner
Coons	Mikulski	Warren
Donnelly	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Nelson	

The amendment (No. 689) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 632

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Amendment No. 632.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I am honored to be working on this amendment with Senator SHAHEEN and Senator MURRAY. This amendment will create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to support efforts to prevent employment discrimination against pregnant workers.

In the United States today, for so many years, we have had a standard set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities. The same should apply to pregnant workers.

We had a Supreme Court case decision just yesterday. Peggy Young was victorious, but the result is that there is no predictable standard for pregnant workers in the workplace. We need a standard so employees know what their rights are and so employers can follow the law.

I yield for my colleague Senator SHAHEEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, this is about ensuring that women are not discriminated against because they want to have children. This is making sure that women don't have to choose between their jobs and their families. It is about ensuring that all women can be reassured that if they are pregnant, their employer has to provide reasonable accommodations.

I hope my colleagues will vote for this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I want to declare that Republicans are committed to fair and equal treatment of pregnant women as well. Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act in 1978 and passed the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993. Congress may need to enact this specific legislation through committee in order to address this issue. This amendment does confirm the ability of the committee of jurisdiction to draft legislation. We would be happy to accept this on a voice vote.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I request a rollcall vote and ask for the yeas and nays.

Mr. ENZI. A rollcall vote has been requested.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the Casey amendment No. 632.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge the Republicans to vote aye.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 113 Leg.]

YEAS—100

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

The amendment (No. 632) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 607

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Thune amendment No. 607.

The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise in support of my amendment No. 607, to create a deficit-neutral reserve fund to repeal the Federal estate tax, better known as the death tax.

My amendment will put the Senate on record in support of eliminating this destructive and ill-conceived tax on American families in their time of grief. It has often been said but it is worth repeating: A death in the family should not be a taxable event.

I agree wholeheartedly with a piece in the newspaper earlier this week by Harry Alford, president of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, who writes that the death tax ''disproportionately hampers minority and women-owned businesses across the country'' and ''creates an unfair situation for minority businesses which have finally started to accumulate wealth within the last 60 years.''

The death tax also hits farmers particularly hard.

According to USDA statistics on cropland values, a significant percentage of farms in my State of South Dakota and States such as North Dakota, Montana, Illinois, Indiana, Colorado, Minnesota, Florida, and Missouri remain subject to this double tax even at the higher estate tax exception limit.

Incremental relief from this unfair tax is not enough. The time has come for full repeal. I urge support for my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this amendment is not about family farms or small business. This amendment benefits exclusively the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of the families in this country—the very, very wealthiest people—and 99.7 percent of the families in America will not benefit by 1 nickel. By the way, for those concerned about the deficit, this will cost us $250 billion over a 10-year period.

Ironically, the Republican budget raises taxes for lower income families

who are on the earned-income tax credit program and the children's tax credit program. So what we are doing now is giving tax breaks to billionaires in the same bill that we are raising taxes for low-income working families, and adding significantly to the deficit.

I think this should be a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. THUNE. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 114 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Sasse
Cochran	Isakson	Scott
Corker	Johnson	Sessions
Cornyn	Kirk	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Vitter
Ernst	Moran	Wicker

NAYS—46

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Collins	Menendez	Warner
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Donnelly	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Murray	
Franken	Nelson	

The amendment (No. 607) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate on the Bennet amendment No. 1014.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, this amendment is very straightforward. The purpose reads ''. . . responding to the economic and national security threats posed by human-induced climate change, as highlighted by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.''

The amendment establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund to promote national security, economic growth, and public health by addressing climate change through the increased use of clean energy, the deployment of energy efficiency, and the reduction of carbon pollution.

That is it. That is all it is—simply a statement of all the facts and the suggestions of three common strategies to address the issue.

Climate change is a serious threat to the world, to our country, and to Colorado. Ask anyone whose farm or ranch depends on water from the Colorado River or one of its tributaries.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senators time has expired.

Mr. BENNET. I urge a ''yes'' vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, just Wednesday of this week, the new annual Gallup poll came out. It said very clearly that among the six environmental concerns the Gallup poll included in its survey, global warming polled at the very bottom, right after the loss of the tropical rainforests, I might add. Gallup also found that a majority believe that the seriousness of global warming is overstated.

The Obama administration and others on this side like to claim 97 percent of the world's scientists believe in manmade global warming. Monday's Wall Street Journal op-ed debunked the 97 percent and the survey represents the views of only 79 respondents out of 3,149. Lastly, the agencies they are talking about that claim that 2014 was the warmest year on record, such as NASA—NASA now has reduced that to 38 percent. They have retreated from that position. So the people have caught on to this hysteria, and I ask colleagues to oppose the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment No. 1014.

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 legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 115 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Ayotte	Graham	Murray
Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Peters
Blumenthal	Heller	Portman
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Kirk	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Collins	Markey	Tester
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	

NAYS—47

Alexander	Cassidy	Crapo
Barrasso	Coats	Cruz
Blunt	Cochran	Daines
Boozman	Corker	Enzi
Burr	Cornyn	Ernst
Capito	Cotton	Fischer
Flake	McCain	Scott
Gardner	McConnell	Sessions
Grassley	Moran	Shelby
Hatch	Paul	Sullivan
Hoeven	Perdue	Thune
Inhofe	Risch	Tillis
Isakson	Roberts	Toomey
Johnson	Rounds	Vitter
Lankford	Rubio	Wicker
Lee	Sasse	

The amendment (No. 1014) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 836

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate on McConnell amendment No. 836.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I believe the next amendment is No. 836.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Let me just say to my colleagues that this is an amendment which ought to pass 100 to 0. Let me tell you why. The Administrator of EPA just testified within the last couple of weeks that she does not have the authority under the Clean Power Plan to cut off State roads and bridges funds.

So today, with my friends from Kentucky and Oklahoma, I have offered an amendment that is really quite simple. It says that Washington bureaucrats should not be allowed to punish innocent Americans by threatening the roads and bridges they use just because a citizen's State may take a wait-and-see approach—a wait-and-see approach—as courts rule on massive EPA regulations. These are regulations which would threaten the middle class without having a meaningful impact on the global climate.

The legal issues here will resolve themselves eventually. But whatever our party or ideology, we should be able to agree that the Federal Government should not be punishing hard-working families just to score political points as States await legal clarification.

Let me say it again. The Administrator of the EPA does not believe she has the authority to do this. We need to make it clear that the Senate opposes any step in that direction.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to amendment No. 836, which seeks to undercut the President's Clean Power Plan to address climate change and reduce dangerous carbon pollution.

The year 2014 was the single most dangerous year ever recorded in terms of temperatures, the warmest in history. NOAA and NASA continue to chronicle this ever-worsening warming planet. Not only will the President's power plan reduce greenhouse gasses, but it will also reduce the amount of pollution that leads to dangerous smog-related diseases that are contracted by Americans all across our planet.

Instead of debating this amendment, we should be debating the way to reduce the impacts of dangerous greenhouse gases on our planet.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The question is on agreeing to the McConnell amendment No. 836.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 116 Leg.]

YEAS—57

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Ayotte	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rounds
Coats	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Sessions
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kirk	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Donnelly	McCain	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Reid
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	King	Schatz
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown	Leahy	Shaheen
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Cardin	McCaskill	Tester
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Casey	Merkley	Warner
Coons	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Peters	

The amendment (No. 836) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 842

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Merkley amendment No. 842.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has returned $5 million to American citizens victimized by predatory scams and unscrupulous practices. If you support ending victimization of our citizens, support this bill. If you support creditors, then vote against it.

I yield to my colleague from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I am proud to join with Senator MERKLEY in advancing this amendment. It is important we continue to have a strong and effective CFPB to protect consumers and ensure transparency and fairness in our financial marketplace.

I urge an ''aye'' vote by my colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is, and always has been, an agency with excessive independence. The agency actually steals funding from the Federal Reserve before it goes to the Federal Government, which takes away from our general fund. There is no control over any part of that agency.

Once it had a Director a year ago, we said there needed to be an inspector general taking a look at this problem. But the inspector general said he has no access to the records, even though he works there.

So this is an agency that is out of control. It is time for us to gain control over the agency, and I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Merkley amendment.

Mr. MERKLEY. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 117 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

The amendment (No. 842) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 443

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Gardner amendment No. 443.

The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, this amendment does a very simple thing. It protects State water rights. It creates a deficit-neutral reserve fund to make sure we are protecting privately held water rights from intrusion by the U.S. Forest Service or the ski area water rule, and it makes sure we are keeping private water rights held safe from groundwater rules by the U.S. Forest Service.

This is an effort to make sure we are protecting private water rights, preventing bypass flows, and making sure we are doing everything we can to make sure that State water law is the imminent feature of our water in this country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, the Gardner amendment would radically change the way water is handled on public lands. There are real concerns about how Federal land management agencies deal with water, particularly in the drought-afflicted West. But this amendment is so broad that it is trying to address these problems in a way that will have numerous unintended consequences. It would make even worse some of the water shortages in the areas of the West, particularly in the Lower Colorado Basin. It would also create havoc in our national parks in both the East and the West.

The amendment would call into question the status of water contracts actually signed by the Bureau of Reclamation throughout the West. Uncertainty is the last thing we need. It would have damaging implications for settlements such as the Yakima Basin where people have come to agreement.

I agree we need to continue to work on the drought issues in the West. But saying that Federal management agencies don't have their obligations, such as helping in the national forests with firefighters——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. CANTWELL. I urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, once again, this is about water rights. This is about making sure we protect State-held water rights.

It is a very clear contrast. If you believe water rights should be managed by the Federal Government, then vote against the amendment. But if you believe private water rights are under State law, managed by State law, decided by State law, then vote for this amendment.

Let's protect our private water rights. Let's keep our law clear—that this matter belongs in the hands of the States and not in the hands of the Federal Government.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Gardner amendment No. 443.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 118 Leg.]

YEAS—59

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Coats	Inhofe	Scott
Cochran	Isakson	Sessions
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Corker	Kirk	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Tester
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	

The amendment (No. 443) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 951

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to the vote on the Murray amendment No. 951.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as a former preschool teacher, I have seen firsthand the kind of transformation that early learning can inspire in a child. I believe we should be investing more in our children, not less. So today I am offering an amendment to expand access to early childhood education so more kids can start kindergarten ready to learn. This amendment would expand high-quality early learning opportunities for low- and moderate-income 3- and 4-year-olds and build on the investments that Governors and legislators across the country, regardless of party affiliation, are already making to improve early learning opportunities through public-private partnerships. It is fully paid for by closing wasteful tax loopholes. I hope our colleagues can support this critical amendment.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this amendment. All of us know there is a great value to pre-school, and the Federal Government already spends as much as $20 billion per year on early childhood programs, including Head Start. This amendment would call for $66 billion over 10 years, so it is just $6.6 billion per year. But we already spend $20 billion, which is almost as much as we spend on kindergarten through 12th grade. How many programs do we need? We have 45 at the moment.

One year ago, when we reauthorized the child development block grant, I offered an amendment to reduce the number of programs to five and put them all under one agency. That would save enough money to do this. Elementary and secondary education will be marked up, I think, when we get back. That committee process would be the appropriate place to consider this proposal, not in the budget. I would ask for a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Murray amendment No. 951.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 54, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 119 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Boxer	King	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Manchin	Stabenow
Carper	Markey	Tester
Casey	McCaskill	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NAYS—54

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

The amendment (No. 951) was rejected.

AMENDMENT NO. 763

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Graham amendment No. 763.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I am going to withdraw this amendment, but before I do, I will take a couple of minutes to explain what it would do and what awaits us.

Most Members of the body don't understand, I think, that there are 160 programs which are exempt from sequestration. Our pay is exempt from sequestration, as is Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, food stamps, most all of Medicare, all of Medicaid, and the Veterans' Administration. The military, the intel community, and NIH have had devastating cuts, but we don't include our own pay. At the end of the day, how can we justify making sure we take care of the veterans, but we are putting those who are serving our country in the fight today at risk?

So I will withdraw this amendment for now because I think we are about to get some reason regarding sequestration, but if we don't, I will have an amendment for each of the 160 programs, starting with our pay. We need to feel the pain we are inflicting on other people.

I will withdraw this amendment for now, hoping we can fix sequestration, but if not, we need to take a look at the entire government and let others feel the pain, not just those who wear the uniform and are doing the work this country needs to have done.

AMENDMENT NO. 763 WITHDRAWN

With that, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT NO. 825

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Blumenthal amendment No. 825.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, this amendment helps to keep faith with our veterans and to make sure we leave no veteran behind by reflecting and responding to their voices and the message they have given us about the need for more and better health care relating to post-traumatic stress, treatment for military sexual trauma, and an improvement in the delivery of health care for them around the country.

It also improves the job training and rehabilitation programs for our veterans and makes sure, among other provisions, there is greater accountability and more funds and support for the inspector general of the VA so we can avoid the kinds of gaps and egregious shortcomings we have seen in this past year and also improve the Choice Program this Congress passed.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this bipartisan amendment.

I thank Senator MORAN and Senator BALDWIN for their support and cosponsorship and urge that we keep faith with our Nation's heroes and leave no veteran behind.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, we are willing to take this on a voice vote.

We yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the Blumenthal amendment No. 825.

The amendment (No. 825) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 665

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Flake amendment No. 665.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, in 2009, the President signed Executive Order 13502, which states that it is the policy of the Federal Government to encourage executive agencies to consider requiring the use of PLAs, or project labor agreements, in connection with large-scale construction projects.

This Executive order did not mandate the use of PLAs. However, some Federal agencies have interpreted that order to require it, and so all this amendment does is take it back to what the law intended—that the Federal Government is neutral with regard to the awarding of contracts, allowing the free market to work its will, and deliver to taxpayers the best possible product at the best possible price.

I urge adoption of the amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Flake amendment—and Senator FLAKE is my friend—strikes the project labor agreement option.

What is a project labor agreement? It is only awarded to a company after they win the competitive bid. So they have to come in with a low competitive bill.

What does a project labor agreement contain? How much it is going to cost, what wages will be paid, and how disputes will be settled. The net result is that projects cost less and they are done on time.

Why would we want to eliminate the possibility of saving taxpayers money with project labor agreements? I hope my colleagues will vote no so we can put the money we are going to save from the Flake amendment into some important investments in America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if I could have the attention of all Senators. At the rate we are going, we could be here until 5 a.m. in the morning, so I think it is a good time to seek some cooperation.

We have a number of amendments lined up here where sponsors will take a voice vote in the tranche we are working on now. If there are any Senators who are not in the current tranche and would like to be considered, I recommend that those Senators come over here and talk to the budget staff and see if we can't take some of them and do it by a voice vote and see if we can move through this process so we can get out of here at a reasonable hour.

I ask my friend the Democratic leader to give us a view of the status on the Democratic side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senator from South Carolina set a good example by withdrawing his amendment. That is really what the standard should be. Senator BLUMENTHAL was second best when he said he would take a voice vote. The only disagreement I would have with my friend the Republican leader is that if we go through all of these amendments that are pending, it will take 33 more hours. That is the math. That is the truth. We need to move on.

Remember, this budget resolution is a statement of policy. It is not the law. We can say ''I gotcha'' on this one, ''we gotcha'' on that one, but that is—we have done that now for 8 hours or whatever it is.

I really do agree with the Republican leader. The staff has worked so hard. They haven't worked just today and yesterday and this week; they have been working for weeks to get us to the position where we are tonight. I know the Republican leader bought dinner tonight, and I appreciate that very much. But if we can get finished here by 11:30, I will buy dinner when we get back, and it will be better than that.

So we have had an ample vote-arama. For all the new Members, they see what it is like. The time has come for Senators to show some restraint.

No one's election is going to be determined—I say that to the world. No one's election is going to be determined by what is taking place here tonight—no election. I defy anyone to show me in any of these vote-aramas where a vote has made any difference. And we are witnesses to that, and I can testify to that. One time, to show my colleagues how meaningless these votes are, we voted against prisoners being able to have Viagra in prison. We actually voted on that. No one lost an election. By the way, it was defeated.

So let's—we can go through all of the Viagra amendments and do all of these things to embarrass each other, but that isn't what we should be doing. The time has come to forgo pressing amendments to votes altogether.

It has been very dignified. Earlier today, I said how proud I am of the two managers of this legislation. They have totally different political outlooks, but they have been gentlemen to each other and gentlemen to each of us.

So I hope we can move forward as quickly as possible. The agreement for the dinner was not a Las Vegas bet; it is something I will do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I will just add, we will finish tonight, and it might help us move quicker, in addition to having voice votes on a lot of amendments, if we sit at our own desks and see if we can just get through this as rapidly as possible without denying anyone their rights.

So I recommend we go ahead, whatever the next amendment is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Flake amendment.

Mr. FLAKE. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 120 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Ayotte	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Flake	Portman
Blunt	Gardner	Risch
Boozman	Graham	Roberts
Burr	Grassley	Rounds
Capito	Hatch	Rubio
Cassidy	Heller	Sasse
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Sessions
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker

NAYS—49

Baldwin	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Peters
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Kaine	Reid
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Kirk	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Franken	Murphy	
Gillibrand	Murray	

The amendment (No. 665) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 475

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Sanders Amendment No. 475.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. This amendment establishes a deficit-neutral fund to prevent the U.S. Postal Service from——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. SANDERS. This deficit-neutral reserve fund would prevent the Postal Service from shutting down 82 processing plants in 37 States. It would restore delivery standards which have been slowed down and protect rural postal services.

The Postal Service is vital to the well-being of our Nation and economy. This is especially true in our rural areas. This is an issue that has had bipartisan support for the last number of years.

Senator COLLINS is a cosponsor of this amendment. She has been very active on this issue, and I would hope we could pass it with a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I want to thank Senator COLLINS for all of her efforts in this area and Senator SANDERS for making this a bipartisan amendment, and I would ask to accept this on a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Sanders amendment No. 475.

The amendment (No. 475) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1029

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Hatch amendment No. 1029.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 1029 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is pending.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, no one believes in tax policy that has the effect of shipping jobs overseas.

My amendment, which is cosponsored by Senator WYDEN—a true bipartisan amendment—goes right to the heart of what amendment No. 523 of my friend from Michigan and amendment No. 817 of my friend from Illinois claimed to be doing.

Tax policy leaders of all ideological stripes agree on a key point. The U.S. corporate tax rate is the highest among our trading partners and is making American firms less competitive, thereby hurting American workers.

My amendment would put in place a deficit-neutral reserve fund to bring the corporate rate down and to prevent the bleeding of U.S. jobs. Vote for it to preserve and grow U.S. jobs.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the purpose of this amendment, as I understand it, is to prevent American jobs from being moved overseas. I think if we are serious about this, we may want to change our disastrous trade policies, which have led to the shutdown of thousands of factories in this country and millions of decent-paying jobs. In my view, at a time when we have an $18 trillion national debt, the last thing we need to do is to cut corporate taxes on profitable corporations that in many cases pay little or nothing in Federal taxes.

We have major corporation after major corporation making billions of dollars. They pay zero in Federal income taxes. I don't quite know how you can lower their taxes below zero. We need real tax reform in this country that ends corporate loopholes that is costing us well over $100 billion a year.

So I would urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think the Senator, through the Chair, would yield to me for a moment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time remaining.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator from Oregon be given 30 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I support this amendment.

President Obama favors lowering this tax rate, and I believe the reason he does is because he thinks this will provide another opportunity to reduce offshoring. I support the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Since this is bipartisan, I would hope we would take this by voice vote. And it is the chairman and ranking member of the committees who have to do the work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment No. 1029.

The amendment (No. 1029) was agreed to.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday, I corrected the record on the matter of tax expenditures. That statement focused on individual income tax expenditures. According to 2014 Congressional Budget Office data, the individual income tax accounts for 47.1 percent of federal revenue. By contrast, the corporate income tax accounts for 11.9 percent of federal revenue. Today I am going to discuss corporate tax expenditures.

The Joint Committee on Taxation, Congress's nonpartisan official tax scorekeeper, provides scoring and analysis of corporate tax expenditures. What are corporate tax expenditures? In a general sense, they are departures from a regular income tax. A regular income tax records income and provides deductions for expenses related to producing income to arrive at net income. Tax benefits in the form of exclusions, deductions, and credits not connected to the generation of business income are generally treated as corporate tax expenditures. As the tax-writing committee hearings have shown, our business tax system is overloaded with subsidies and other complex special provisions. Those deviations from basic measures of net income can result in economic inefficiencies, slow growth, and an economy that produces fewer jobs than it otherwise would. From a revenue-neutral standpoint, the flip side of that narrower, less-efficient tax base is a higher than optimal tax rate. It is a matter of broad-based consensus of senior tax policymakers from the left to the right that there is a ''two-fer'' in broadening the tax base and lowering the rate. This applies to both corporate businesses and noncorporate businesses.

To the extent Congress delays translating the bipartisan goal of a broader business base and lower rates into concrete policy, the dangers of further inversion transactions and foreign takeovers looms on the economic horizon. My friends on the left side of the political spectrum should be the most concerned. Why? The reason is the local economies most vulnerable to inversions and foreign takeovers of U.S.-based businesses are in business sectors that dominate in the high cost-of-living, high-tax so-called ''Blue States.'' I am referring to the high-tech, pharmaceutical, and other cutting-edge intellectual property producing business sectors. Those business sectors tend to be based in high-cost, high-tax blue States. My friends on the other side should be very sensitive to threats to their local economies.

For that reason, I continue to be stunned to see many of most liberal friends on the other side take positions on this budget resolution that are at odds with the goal of tax reform. Cherry-picking corporate tax expenditures to use for new spending, if it were to become viable policy, would starve the resources for tax reform. If my friends on the other side were to prevail on this strategy, you could forget about the bipartisan goal of broadening the business tax base and lowering tax rates. Their policy positions, if enacted, would leave tax policymakers with no resources to engage in reform. In fact, a broader U.S. tax base with rates that are already too high would make U.S.-based businesses less competitive. The tax baggage of being a U.S.-based business would grow, further tipping the balance toward foreign control by inversions and takeovers.

The debate on corporate tax expenditures isn't about the merits of those policies. That debate on the merits of corporate tax expenditures could, should, and will be joined in legislating tax reform. That is a bipartisan goal for a bipartisan policy result that is necessary to build a stronger American economy.

AMENDMENT NO. 1063

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes equally divided prior to a vote on the Schatz amendment No. 1063.

The Senator from Hawaii.

AMENDMENT NO. 1063, AS MODIFIED

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 1063 be modified with the changes at the desk.

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

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING EQUAL TREATMENT OF MARRIED COUPLES UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM AND BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring equal treatment of married couples, which may include ensuring that all legally married spouses have access to Social Security benefits after the death of their spouse and to benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

Mr. SCHATZ. All legally married, same-sex couples deserve equal treatment under the law, regardless of

where they live. But right now, eligibility for spousal benefits provided under the Social Security Act and by the Department of Veterans Affairs is determined by a place-of-residence standard. That means that legally married same-sex couples who move to a State that doesn't recognize same-sex marriage could be denied Social Security and veterans survivor benefits.

Plain and simple, this is wrong, and this doesn't reflect our American values. This amendment will fix this and provide equal protection under the law and the Social Security and veterans benefits that gay Americans have earned. I would be happy to entertain a voice vote in support of this amendment if the majority is amenable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, it has come to my attention that is not going to be possible on this amendment.

Again, this is a statement that has to be handled by the committee of jurisdiction and has no real effect. So I would ask that everybody vote ''no'' on this one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Schatz amendment No. 1063, as modified.

Mr. SCHATZ. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 121 Leg.]

YEAS—57

Ayotte	Franken	Murphy
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Heinrich	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Peters
Booker	Heller	Portman
Boxer	Hirono	Reed
Brown	Johnson	Reid
Burr	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Schatz
Capito	Kirk	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	McCaskill	Udall
Corker	Menendez	Warner
Donnelly	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—43

Alexander	Flake	Risch
Barrasso	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Rounds
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Cassidy	Hatch	Sasse
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Sessions
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Perdue	

The amendment (No. 1063), as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 1038

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on Kirk amendment No. 1038.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on behalf of the Senator from Illinois, we are offering an alternative to the Sanders amendment that failed earlier today. The Sanders amendment called for a substantial increase in the minimum wage, an action that the Congressional Budget Office has told us could kill up to 1 million jobs.

The Kirk amendment takes a different approach. It reaffirms the ability of the individual States to raise the minimum wage above the Federal level, but only if they choose to do so at their own volition.

It also calls for policies that will result in higher wages for all Americans, progrowth tax relief and the elimination of burdensome mandates such as ObamaCare.

I urge my colleagues to support the Kirk amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Frankly, I don't quite understand this amendment. This is what it says: This amendment would ''establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund'' to reaffirm that States can raise minimum wage while providing tax relief and eliminating excessive government mandates.

States do not need permission from the Federal Government to raise the minimum wage. In fact, 29 States have already raised the minimum wage. And in the last election, when that question was on the ballot in four States, all four of those States voted to raise the minimum wage.

People all over this country want us to raise the Federal minimum wage, which is now a starvation wage of $7.25 an hour.

So this amendment, quite frankly, does not make a whole lot of sense to me. I would hope it will be defeated.

States are looking to the Federal Government to raise the minimum wage. We don't have to tell them what to do. They are doing just fine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this amendment is a reaffirmation of the 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

I ask for the support of our colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 57, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 122 Leg.]

YEAS—57

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Ayotte	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Carper	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Sasse
Cochran	Isakson	Scott
Collins	Johnson	Sessions
Corker	King	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reid
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown	Leahy	Shaheen
Cantwell	Manchin	Stabenow
Cardin	Markey	Tester
Casey	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Peters	

The amendment (No. 1038) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

AMENDMENT NO. 944

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 944.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is pending.

There is 2 minutes of debate on the amendment.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, this is an amendment to call a point of order on any legislation that would attempt to muzzle Federal employees in using any scientific language that calls a change—scientific language that would apply to oceans, to weather, to the climate, and to atmospheres.

This is an attempt to make clear that we do not agree with muzzling or censoring Federal agencies or Federal employees when it comes to employing their scientific knowledge.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this amendment is not germane to the budget resolution. It creates a point of order concerning subject matter that is not within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Budget, prohibiting Federal employees or agencies from exercising their freedom of speech by prohibiting using terms from atmospheric scientific literature.

While I know many of my colleagues have strong opinions on this topic, it is not appropriate for inclusion in a budget resolution. In fact, this amendment is corrosive. It damages the privilege of the budget. Therefore, when debate time expires I will raise a point of order that this amendment is not germane to the budget resolution and I encourage my colleagues to sustain it.

I guess that probably concludes the debate.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida has 7 seconds remaining.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, this is an issue of freedom of speech, First Amendment rights. This is in fact—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, amendment No. 944 is not germane to the budget resolution now before the Senate. Therefore, I raise a point of order against the amendment under section 305(b)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I move to waive, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 123 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Ayotte	Franken	Nelson
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Portman
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rubio
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Leahy	Schumer
Carper	Manchin	Shaheen
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	McCaskill	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Corker	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—49

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	
Fischer	Murkowski	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 49.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected. The point of order is sustained and the amendment fails.

AMENDMENT NO. 360

There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the McCain amendment No. 360.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, this amendment is simple. It says that children who show up at our border will not be allowed to stay. They will be returned to the country they came from. Right now they are being transported up by the lowest form of life that ever existed on the Earth. Young women are being raped, people are being killed, people are being molested, and the drug cartels are the ones that are bringing them up. This has got to stop. They can go to the consulate and the embassies in their countries—I am talking about the three Central American countries, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. But to have the drug cartels and parents paying thousands of dollars to have them transported up, many of the young women being raped on the way, is unacceptable.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 360, AS MODIFIED

Mr. President, I have a modification at the desk and ask unanimous consent that my amendment be modified.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is so modified.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 3____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DETERRING THE MIGRATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to deterring the attempted migration of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in the United States, which may include the expedited removal of unlawful entrants from noncontiguous countries, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I did raise an objection to the change, although I appreciate the fact that the Senator made that change.

I rise to oppose amendment No. 360 which would roll back critical antitrafficking and humanitarian protections for children from Central America. Last summer I led a congressional delegation to the Rio Grande Valley border to view the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied children from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Clearly, concrete cells at Border Patrol stations are no place for children, which is where they likely would be under the expedited deportation proceedings allowed under this amendment. These young children are fleeing danger and violence in their own home countries. It is also no answer to require these children to seek asylum in their home countries while being exposed to the very violence they are trying to escape in the first place.

This is the portion of the amendment the Senator has eliminated. It still doesn't leave out the part about expedited deportation. So let's keep the current law in place that—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. HIRONO. We voted for this law unanimously, signed by President Bush. I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, 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.

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 124 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Sasse
Cochran	Isakson	Scott
Collins	Johnson	Sessions
Corker	King	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McCaskill	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Markey	Stabenow
Carper	Menendez	Tester
Casey	Merkley	Udall
Coons	Mikulski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Franken	Nelson	Wyden

The amendment (No. 360), as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 968

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Wyden amendment No. 968.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 968, and I urge Senators to support this amendment because it will cut taxes on the middle class and give millions of Americans a new ladder of economic opportunity. This amendment rewards hard work, makes college more affordable, and helps parents who have a tough time making ends meet. Let's create a new path upward for the middle class and those who want to be middle class. Support this amendment.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, once again I have to ask my colleagues to vote ''no.'' This is a tax reform idea that has some merit, but it has to be dealt with in the context of comprehensive tax reform rather than a stand-alone proposal. I know that he and his Finance Committee chairman, Senator HATCH, are working on changing the Tax Code to eliminate some of the overcomplicated, inefficient, and archaic language, so we should address it in the committee of jurisdiction, not in the budget.

Even though the amendment is deficit neutral, it is, again, telling a committee what to do and how to do it, and it is even by the person who has the capability to do that. So I would ask for a ''no'' vote.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the Wyden amendment No. 968.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 125 Leg.]

YEAS—73

Ayotte	Grassley	Reed
Baldwin	Heinrich	Reid
Bennet	Heitkamp	Risch
Blumenthal	Hirono	Roberts
Booker	Hoeven	Rubio
Boozman	Johnson	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Sasse
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Capito	Leahy	Scott
Cardin	Lee	Sessions
Carper	Manchin	Shaheen
Casey	Markey	Shelby
Coats	McCain	Stabenow
Collins	McCaskill	Sullivan
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Corker	Merkley	Thune
Crapo	Mikulski	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Udall
Donnelly	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Franken	Nelson	Wyden
Gardner	Peters	
Gillibrand	Portman	

NAYS—27

Alexander	Daines	Inhofe
Barrasso	Enzi	Isakson
Blunt	Ernst	Kirk
Burr	Fischer	Lankford
Cassidy	Flake	McConnell
Cochran	Graham	
Cornyn	Hatch	
Cotton	Heller	
Paul	Rounds	Vitter
Perdue	Tillis	Wicker

The amendment (No. 968) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 750, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to a vote on the Lee amendment No. 750, as modified.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the Federal Government owns almost two-thirds of the land in Utah and almost half of the land in the 11 coterminous States in the Western United States. But unlike other property owners, the Federal Government does not pay property tax. As a result, areas with high concentrations of Federal land, such as most of Utah and most of the Western United States, face budget shortfalls that affect the ability of those States to fund critical education, transportation infrastructure, and emergency services.

To help compensate local governments for this loss of property tax revenue, the Federal Government created the PILT Program—PILT stands for Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program—to provide some funding for these revenue shortfalls.

Historically, PILT payments tend to represent just a tiny fraction, just pennies on the dollar for what these jurisdictions could otherwise collect in property tax revenue.

Now to correct the damage caused by this unfair system——

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. LEE. I ask my colleagues to vote for this amendment which would allow us to bring PILT into conformity with what these jurisdictions would otherwise receive from taxation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment. While there are many of us who support full funding for PILT, this amendment is impractical. In fact, the Congressional Research Service reports indicate that attempts to set up tax equivalency for PILT would be wrought with errors and gamesmanship. That is because counties routinely tax different land uses at different rates.

Second, my colleagues should note that this may increase PILT payments more than 350 percent of today's authorized level, and that would raise the cost of this program from $4 to $5 billion, to $15 to $20 billion.

Because the amendment creates a spending-neutral reserve fund, only cuts to other mandatory spending programs could be used to fund the 350 percent rise in payments.

So, Mr. President, I cannot support this amendment. It is unsustainable and unworkable, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

Ms. CANTWELL. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 126 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Flake	Perdue
Blunt	Gardner	Portman
Boozman	Graham	Risch
Burr	Grassley	Roberts
Capito	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Coats	Hoeven	Sasse
Cochran	Inhofe	Scott
Collins	Isakson	Sessions
Corker	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Donnelly	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Heitkamp	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Reid
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	King	Schatz
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brown	Leahy	Shaheen
Cantwell	Markey	Stabenow
Cardin	McCaskill	Tester
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Casey	Merkley	Warner
Coons	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Nelson	
Heinrich	Peters	

NOT VOTING—1

Feinstein

The amendment (No. 750), as modified, was agreed to.

NOTICE

Incomplete record of Senate proceedings. Today's Senate proceedings will be continued in Book II.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATING WESTON BASLER ON HIS STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Weston Basler, of the Seckman High School Jaguars Wrestling team, on his win in the 132 Class 4 2015 State Wrestling Championship match.

This student and his coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you in joining me in recognizing Weston Basler for a job well done!

RECOGNIZING MR. KENNETH R. MOWRY FOR HIS INDUCTION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA HOLSTEIN HALL OF FAME

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Kenneth R. Mowry, a native of Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania for his recent induction into the Pennsylvania Holstein Hall of Fame. This honor culminates a career spanning over 65 years of breeding and developing some of the most productive dairy cows in the nation.

This long and successful journey in the agriculture industry began for Mr. Mowry when he joined his father at Mowry Farms, a 1,100 acre 350-cow dairy farm in Roaring Spring. In the years that followed, the farm's cattle set 52 state records and another 26 national records in dairy production. Not slowing down with achievements, Mr. Mowry also had 12 of his cows featured on the front cover of ''Holstein World,'' a publication dedicated to Holstein breeders.

In addition to his Holstein-related contributions, Mr. Mowry should also be recognized for his dedication and service to the local community. Mr. Mowry, a member of Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church, served nearly 40 years on the Morrison's Cove Memorial Park Board of Directors, was a member of the Cove Lion's Club for 25 years, and sat on the Northern Bedford School Board for 12 years.

Mr. Mowry's induction in the Pennsylvania Holstein Hall of Fame recognizes his outstanding career and brings great distinction upon himself, the community, and the 9th District of Pennsylvania. I invite my colleagues to join me in offering congratulations for his many achievements and more than 50 years of selfless community service.

RECOGNIZING VIOLET SCHLITZ FOR HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. MARK MEADOWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mrs. Violet E. Schlitz on her 100th birthday, which she will celebrate on April 13th, 2015. I am proud to honor her today as an exemplary member of our community.

Since the age of 13, Mrs. Schlitz has called the United States her home. A native Canadian, she became a citizen in 1950 and in the 1970s moved to Western North Carolina and settled in Hayesville. It is there where she and her husband Lee raised their three sons and have been blessed with eight grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

A community leader, Mrs. Schlitz was active in her sons' scouting, regularly volunteered at Chattooga Regional Hospital, and served at Sharp United Methodist Church, where she has been a faithful member. Mrs. Schlitz has selflessly served those around her, and over the years has knit more than 2,000 sweaters for needy children. Her activities reflect Mrs. Schlitz's character and the incredible size of her heart.

On behalf of the entire 11th District of North Carolina, I congratulate Mrs. Violet E. Schlitz on her milestone 100th birthday and thank her for her service to our local community of Western North Carolina.

HONORING DR. AILEEN MARTY

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Dr. Aileen Marty, an outstanding individual in the South Florida community.

Dr. Marty is currently professor of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine at Florida International University's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. She served admirably in the United States Navy for 25 years, specializing in tropical medicine, infectious diseases pathology, and disaster medicine. She has also served as a professor at Uniformed Services University, Johns Hopkins University, the National Defense University, and the University of Valencia, Spain.

Dr. Marty's previous experience also includes coordinating work between the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security. She developed interagency training programs involving the Department of Agriculture and Homeland Security. Dr. Marty has worked with the White House, Congressional Conferences, has served on Blue Ribbon Committees, and has been a delegate to the World Health Association. She has worked on numerous research teams, has responded to various global emergencies, and provided consultation on a wide range of health issues. Most recently she has worked tirelessly in the fight against Ebola. Her quarter century experience in the practice, training, and research of tropical medicine, infectious disease, and pathology has led to her having published over 90 books and peer-reviewed journal articles.

Beyond her work in infectious diseases, she is an expert on chemical, biological radiation, and high-energy weapons. She is one of only 403 people listed in the international roster as a member of the United Nations Monitoring and Verification Team for Weapons of Mass Destruction. In 2001, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) designated her ''Subject Matter Expert on Weapons of Mass Destruction'' and used her experience and expertise to help develop plans and programs, and to coordinate with NATO allies. She has a reputation for in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience in all aspects of biological agent research, clinical medicine, travel, and tropical medicine, and has earned a worldwide reputation for providing and producing excellent scientific data and innovative research.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Dr. Aileen Marty for her continued service to South Florida, and the world at-large, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, known as the TRA, and to express the gratitude of the American people for the contributions of the Republic of China (ROC) in World War II.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) was signed into law on April 10, 1979. For 36 years, it has served as the backbone of the extraordinary friendship between the ROC and the United States of America. The TRA was Congress' way of codifying a pledge from the American people to the people of Taiwan that ''we will stand with you, always.''

The TRA has provided stability to Taiwan, permitting it to thrive and become the economic powerhouse it is today, and to deepen its transition to democracy.

Furthermore, as we near the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II it is just and appropriate that we should remember the great contributions of the ROC to the allied victory. In closing, I would like to point out one of the many heroic contributions of the ROC to the allied victory in World War II:

In April 1942, General Sun Li-jen led a mission to successfully rescue 7000 British soldiers and many other civilians, including Americans, who were encircled by the Japanese Army, in the Burma campaign at Yenangyaung.

We should never forget the contributions of the Republic of China to the allied victory in World War II.

Likewise, we should never forget the importance of the Taiwan Relations Act for the peace and stability, not only of Taiwan, but also for the entire East Asia region.

TRIBUTE TO LOCAL BROADCASTERS IN THE 24TH DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss local broadcasting, and specifically how local broadcasting creates a sense of unity and involvement within local communities. The local broadcasters of Central New York have played a unique role in bringing my community closer together.

As an example, Galaxy Communications, one of our local broadcasters, operates three radio stations in the 24th District and has been working closely with the Humane Society of Central New York. Galaxy Communications has been committed to promoting Humane Society events throughout the year. The Lights on the Lake Dog Walk, annual Woof Stock, Canine Carnival, and 7th Annual Drop-A-Thon events are just a few instances where our local broadcasters have partnered with the local community to raise money and awareness for the greater good of Central New York.

In addition to partnering with local charities, local broadcasting works to strengthen the community by recognizing the hard work, generosity, and achievements of individuals, families, and professionals throughout the 24th District. Whether it's commending the outstanding contributions that our teachers make in the daily lives of our children, highlighting the growth of small businesses, or hosting radio-a-thons and telethons that raise money for community events, local broadcasters give important recognition and support to Central New York and communities across the nation.

I greatly appreciate our local broadcasters' dedication to delivering emergency information when my community needs it and the further efforts of local broadcasters to unify, improve, and support the 24th District through their work on the air.

CONGRATULATING MR. JACK HILER ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JACKIE WALORSKI

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Jack Hiler, who will retire as the President and CEO of Stripco. During his more than 30 years of service, Mr. Hiler grew Stripco from a small steel company to a bustling family business.

Born in 1947, Mr. Hiler graduated from Penn High School and married Kathy, his high school sweetheart. In 1984, Mr. Hiler, along with his brother Ed, and his business partner Jerry Munger, purchased a portion of Sharp Steel and founded Stripco. Thanks to the success of the new company, two years later Stripco expanded and moved to a new 26 acre property in Osceola, Indiana.

For the past 43 years, Mr. Hiler and his wife have lived in Osceola, raising three sons and enjoying their ten grandchildren and recently built a home in Jimtown where they plan to live out their retirement. Family has been such an integral part of Mr. Hiler's life that his sons have followed into the family business of working at Stripco.

Through all of this, Mr. Hiler has led the business to major growth and expansion to the benefit of the local community and his family. Today, Stripco employs over 140 employees and provides a wide variety of value-added steel processes and produces and ships more than 100,000 tons of products.

Mr. Hiler has also been a dedicated public servant to his community, giving generously to Grace Baptist Church in Osceola to support missions and faith-based organizations that provide medical care, clean water to people across the world. He is a longtime supporter of local 4–H programs and is known for his willingness to help his employees and support causes important to them.

Mr. Hiler's work both in founding Stripco and as a community servant exemplify his dedication to Indiana. It is an honor to recognize Mr. Hiler on the occasion of his retirement from over three decades of contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Jack Hiler upon his retirement from Stripco. He has brought joy to countless individuals through his support and leadership and I sincerely thank him for his service, and wish him the very best in all of his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CAPE COD CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Cape Cod Children's Museum on its twenty-fifth anniversary.

For the past two and a half decades, the Cape Cod Children's Museum has been providing children from Cape Cod and the South Cape's younger visitors with entertaining memories that will last a lifetime. Founded in 1990 by a group of three women from Falmouth, the Cape Cod Children's Museum has since been a staple of the community. Guests of the museum immediately notice the high, vaulted ceilings that have a distinct Cape Cod charm. Under that same roof, children are greeted by wall-to-wall educational and entertaining displays. Be it the pirate ship in the main hall, with exhibits of nautical flags and terminology, or the planetarium, exposing the youth of Cape Cod to the wonders of the stars, the children's museum is an invaluable component of the community.

Since the museum moved into its present location fifteen years ago, parents have eagerly brought their children, confident that they will enjoy everything the facilities have to offer. The museum has always been a must-see for any family.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the Cape Cod Children's Museum on its twenty-fifth anniversary. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Museum for its many years of success, and in applauding their efforts educating and entertaining Cape Cod's children.

CONGRATULATING THE SAINT FRANCIS BORGIA STARRY KNIGHTS DANCE TEAM

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Saint Francis Borgia Starry Knights Dance Team, on their Class 2 State Championship win at the Missouri Dance Team Association competition.

These students and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you in joining me in recognizing the Saint Francis Borgia Starry Knights Dance Team for a job well done!

HONORING MS. PATRICIA HUFF

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Ms. Patricia Huff, an outstanding individual in Southwest Florida.

Originally from Nashville, Tennessee, Ms. Huff moved to the Florida Keys in 1984. She soon became involved in several community organizations, including the Friends of the Museum of the Everglades, serving as its President in 2003, 2004, and 2007 to 2010. She has published the Friends' Newsletter since 2001 and continues to serve on the Board of Directors as Vice-President. She also conducts the historic walking tours around Everglades City.

Ms. Huff co-founded the Everglades Society for Historic Preservation in 2005, serving as President from 2005 to 2008, and continues as a member of the Board of Directors today. She has been a member of the Collier County Historic and Archaeological Preservation Board since 2005, and in 2009 served as Chairperson. In addition to these organizations, Ms. Huff has served as President of the Friends of Fakahatchee Strand in 2003–2004, a member of the Everglades Area Chamber of Commerce Board from 2004–2007, and currently serves on the Everglades Association. She is also co-Director (and co-founder) of the River of Grass Greenway (ROGG) Executive Committee of the Naples Pathways Coalition.

ROGG has received a federal grant to fund a Master Plan and Feasibility Study for the proposed pathway from Naples to Miami. Ms. Huff is currently serving on the Project Team and Steering Committees for the study.

I am privileged to know Ms. Huff, and admire her commitment to the community. In her spare time, Ms. Huff is an avid bike rider. Along with her husband Steve, they have bicycled throughout the United States and Europe every year, covering over 25,000 miles since the year 2000. She is also publisher of the "The Mullet Rapper", a bi-weekly newsletter for the Everglades community and the primary source of information for city events.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Patricia Huff for her continued service to Southwest Florida, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

IN HONOR OF OFFICER ALEX YAZZIE

HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I offer my heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Officer Alex Yazzie as they mourn a husband, father, and companion gone too soon. They are joined by the grateful hearts of the community of Shiprock, the Navajo Nation, and the state of New Mexico, as we all honor a tremendous public servant who gave his life in the line of duty.

Alex had dedicated his life to serving his country and his community so that we could rest easy. From basic training at Camp Pendleton with the Marine Corps, to 14 years with the Navajo Division of Public Safety, Alex had time and time again rushed into harm's way so that we could be safer. Last Thursday was no different; Officer Alex Yazzie responded because a family was in danger, because his fellow officers were in danger, because his community needed him.

When Alex didn't come back that day he left behind a legacy of kindness and service. We are wounded by his loss, but comforted by the memories of all that he gave us and the example that he set for all those in his community.

My prayers are with those that Alex has left behind, and I hope that they find peace in this most difficult time.

HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSALS

HON. JOHN K. DELANEY

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DELANEY. Mr. Speaker, we are confronted by a set of facts that represent both tremendous opportunity and tremendous concern for our country. First, we are competing in a knowledge-based and technology-driven global economy. Second, our long-term fiscal trajectory is not sound. Third, our nation's infrastructure is increasingly inadequate and is dragging down economic growth. Fourth, millions of working Americans are still struggling to live the American Dream.

Unfortunately, none of the budgets brought to a vote on the House floor this week offer an adequate and appropriate response to these problems and priorities. I am strongly opposed to the Republican budget offered by Chairman PRICE. It fails to prepare our country for the future, hurts the most vulnerable Americans and reflects the wrong priorities, making it harder for many to pursue an education, buy a home or retire with dignity. It hurts seniors, parents and children. On balance, the Democratic alternative budget is a better reflection of our nation's values.

However, turning the budget into a political football is also not the answer. I believe that the only way we can truly address the challenges facing our country, help our workers and businesses compete and restore our fiscal health is to focus on the best ideas. I'm tired of Congress not being able to work together productively to do the people's work.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARY JANE MCSORLEY GARAMENDI

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleagues in the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, Congressman PETE AGUILAR, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, Congressman XAVIER BECERRA, Congressman AMI BERA, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS, Congressman TONY CÁRDENAS, Congresswoman JUDY CHU, Congressman JIM COSTA, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS, Congressman MARK DESAULNIER, Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO, Congressman SAM FARR, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN, Congressman MIKE HONDA, Congressman JARED HUFFMAN, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congressman TED LIEU, Congressman ALAN LOWENTHAL, Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI, Congressman SCOTT PETERS, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Congressman RAUL RUIZ, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ, Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, Congressman ADAM SCHIFF, Congressman BRAD SHERMAN, Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, Congressman ERIC SWALWELL, Congressman MARK TAKANO, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congresswoman NORMA TORRES, Congressman JUAN VARGAS, and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, to honor and remember the life of Mary Jane McSorley Garamendi. Mary Jane passed on March 19, 2015, amongst the prayers and support of her loving family and friends. The matriarch of the Garamendi family and a lifelong resident of Calaveras County, California, Mary Jane had a strength of spirit and benevolence of character that built a vigorous family, vibrant community, and lasting legacy.

Mary Jane was born on March 21, 1921, the granddaughter of pioneering Irish-Italian immigrants. When she was only three years old, she and her sister, Anne, lost their mother and a newborn brother, but their devoted father succeeded in raising them to be strong and independent young ladies on the family cattle ranch in Chili Gulch. Mary Jane attended and graduated from Mokelumne Hill Elementary School and then from Calaveras High School in 1938. In 1942, she graduated from the University of Nevada Reno with a teaching credential for elementary and high school.

At college, Mary Jane met Raymond V. Garamendi, a fellow student and the love of her life. Following their graduations, they spent the years of World War II stationed at posts in California, Florida, and Georgia, and then returned to Chili Gulch to build their family home on the cattle ranch and begin their life raising seven children. They grew up part of the "Greatest Generation" and were determined to teach their children the tradition of agriculture, the power of education, and the importance of good governance.

Mary Jane's narrative is one of family, service, and community betterment. Always deeply engaged in civic affairs, she participated in the Mokelumne Hill Elementary School Parents Club, Mokelumne Hill Community Club, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church Altar Society, Calaveras County Historical Society, Calaveras County Democratic Club and Central Committee, Calaveras County American Association of University Women, Mokelumne Hill Community Historical Trust, and the Mokelumne Hill History Society. She volunteered as a Cub Scout leader and Catechism teacher, served as a foreman on the Calaveras Grand Jury, and became a Board Member for the Mark Twain St. Joseph Foundation. She was a devout Catholic and lifelong parishioner of the St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Mokelumne Hill, which afforded other opportunities to engage and enrich the community. Whether she was serving at the Calaveras Women's Shelter, the Mokelumne Hill History Center, or the Calaveras County Museum, she readily and enthusiastically donated her time, heart, and energy to the people and places around her.

A civic leader, Mary Jane was honored by the Phi Beta Phi Fraternity in recognition of 75 years of membership, earning the honor of induction into the Diamond Arrow Society. In 2009, she was named the State of California "Woman of the Year" by her son, JOHN GARAMENDI, who was California Lieutenant Governor at the time. Her contributions to education, agriculture, and government also helped earn an honor for the Garamendi family by the Calaveras County Fair & Jumping Frog Jubilee.

For Mary Jane, life itself was an act of joy and remembering. This shone through her commitment to the preservation of her rich Irish-Italian heritage and her careful studying of the Pitto and McSorley family histories. When Ray passed away in 1991, Mary Jane oversaw the family ranch alongside her son, Robert, allowing the working traditions to continue uninterrupted. The Ranch, which received a California Agriculture Heritage Award in 2005, is now in its 152nd year of operation, spanning six generations and lending a sense of tradition and timelessness to the family's weddings, reunions, and Christmas parties.

Mary Jane was a friend, a global adventurer, and the best sports enthusiast her children and grandchildren could ever hope for. Mary Jane's love and legacy continue on in the spirit, vigor, and joy of her 21 grandchildren and 35 great-grandchildren. She will be remembered for her unconditional love, her interminable commitment to service, and the popsicles she kept stocked in the freezer for

the children to enjoy after summer swims. Reflecting back on her proud gold country heritage, her many years of good health, her large and ever-growing family, she would often say, "I am a very lucky lady." We were lucky to have known her, and are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to honor such a full and profound life.

RECOGNIZING THE WOMEN LEADERS OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women's History Month, I would like to take a moment to honor a few women from New York who were trailblazers of the gun violence prevention movement.

Barbara Hohlt, Tina Johnstone, Ellen Freudenheim, and Robyn Ringler are founders of and volunteers with New Yorkers Against Gun Violence who worked tirelessly to pass the original Brady Bill in 1993, which strengthened federal background checks on firearms purchasers. These women, along with my constituent Donna Dees-Thomases, and countless others went on to organize the historic "Million Mom March" which will celebrate its 15 year milestone this year on Mother's Day.

These volunteers and activists are the backbone of the movement for sensible gun laws and safer communities. With the leadership of these courageous women and others like them, New York has taken important steps to improve our gun safety laws, including requiring background checks on all gun sales. It is critical that Congress follow through on sensible reforms to close existing loopholes, prevent accidental handgun deaths, and provide law enforcement with the necessary resources to keep dangerous firearms out of the wrong hands.

In keeping with the theme of this Women's History Month: "Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives," I would like to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the testimony of one mother in particular, Karin Wilson. She was a talented Brooklyn artist who in 2005 delivered these words before the United Nations. If you take the time to read her words, you'll understand the toll of gun violence on our society and the need for bold action in Congress.

NO CHILD'S LIFE SHOULD END WITH A BANG

KARIN WILSON, MILLION MOM MARCH, BROOKLYN

ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS JULY 2005

I lost my beloved son, my only child Christian on December 3, 1999. Just 28 days after he turned 19, he was a man-child, not quite an adult but past adolescence. The millennium came in a way I could have never imagined. The pain is indescribable; the magnitude of my loss makes me inconsolable. I've been wronged and robbed! I'm from the United States, I live in the state of New York, born and raised in the Borough of Brooklyn, which is just across the river from here. The U.S. is one of the most powerful and technologically advanced countries on this planet. We haven't fought a war in this country since the American Civil War, a war that was fought from 1861–1865.

Yet in my neighborhood and in many others in this country we hear gun shots at night. Parents start doing silent headcounts of their children after hearing the sounds of gun shots. We have neighbors, friends and family members who were killed or maimed with a firearm. Because of my son's death I became part of the largest grassroots anti-gun violence movement in the United States.

Let me tell you how my life has changed. I won't have the comfort of my son looking after me in my old age. I won't have my son around making sure I'm eating well, taking my medications properly, taking care of my bills, making sure that my house is warm in winter, and sidewalks shovelled and de-iced when it snows. I don't have any more graduations to attend, or opportunities to applaud successful career achievements. I no longer hear funny stories or jokes (and I was told my son was one of the funniest guys around, he kept people laughing and feeling good.) But worst of all I can't look or touch him anymore.

When you people leave here, and fly back home to your country, you probably have wives and husbands, children and grandchildren. You know it's through our children we get a little bit of immortality. You know your face, your body type, your values are going to be around long after you're gone . . . because of your children. Children are our legacy.

Well I was robbed. And it looks like I won't have a legacy now. My face, my body type, my values will probably disappear when I die. It doesn't look like any part of me will appear in the future. In the next century it will be as if I never, ever existed. And, that's pretty sad.

I've learned that there is nothing definite, overt action to overcome the inertia of grief. Most of us have someone who needs us. If we haven't, we can find someone! So instead of praying for the strength to survive, I prayed for the strength to give away.

I joined the MILLION MOM MARCH. I went from being a victim of gun violence to a survivor of gun violence. And, now I'm an advocate for survivors. I'm thoroughly committed to saving other children. Though I couldn't save my own child's life, I'm going to do all I can to save yours.

I know it is possible to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by gun violence. Our children have the right to grow up in environments free from the threat of gun violence. My son certainly had that right which he didn't get.

Our children want to grow old. All humans have the right to be safe from gun violence in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and places of work and worship.

Gun violence is a public health crisis of global proportions that harms not only the physical, but the spiritual, social and economic health of our families and communities.

The Million Mom March has a slogan, which I subscribe to 100 percent: ''No child's life should end with a bang''.

I am trying to understand why my child had to die by gunshot, but I don't understand. I know that you people listening to me have very powerful positions in your governments, and you'll probably never cross paths with women like me again. So I implore to listen compassionately to what we have said today.

If I had one wish, it would be that all governments would monitor the manufacture and distribution of firearms and bullets with the same degree of care that they use to monitor the removal of nuclear waste from reactors.

We have an opportunity to change laws and create real accountability on these items. We have to stand up now and be counted on to do the right thing!

RECOGNIZING THE KHOJALY MASSACRE

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to all of the victims of the Khojaly Massacre which occurred on February 26, 1992 in the small Azerbaijani town of Khojaly. The Khojaly Massacre claimed six hundred and thirteen innocent civilians and remains one of the most devastating acts of violence in South Caucasus history. To date the fate of one hundred and fifty Khojaly civilians remain unknown.

Due to the rising tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan there are countless casualties and innocent lives taken daily. More so than ever the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict calls for fair, political, and comprehensive settlement in order to encourage multi-national stability and economic prosperity. As co-chair of the Minsk Group, the United States remains devoted to working with both sides to achieve these goals. As we honor the victims of the Khojaly Massacre we must stay committed to working together to protect the human rights of all.

STOP TARGETING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I voted on Wednesday, March 25, in favor of H. Con. Res. 27, authored by Budget Committee Chairman TOM PRICE, because it is my belief that Congress has a responsibility to address our nation's fiscal crisis.

This proposal is simply a visionary document and a way forward in the budgetary process so we can continue the debate about the financial challenges our country faces and return to funding the government through regular order.

Like last year's proposal, the budget plan for FY 2016 calls for significant reductions in discretionary spending, reduced taxes and the full repeal of the President's costly health care reform law. It proposes a balanced budget in less than 10 years and recognizes that we can no longer ignore the trillions of dollars in mandatory spending on entitlement programs that almost completely consume our nation's budget.

This year's plan also asks Members of Congress to again lead by example by cutting their own pay, benefits and office budgets in the quest to reduce our debt and put this nation on sound financial footing.

Further, the proposal protects our nation's defense and security forces. I have repeatedly said that we must get serious about the national security threats that exist in this world and what is required of our forward presence and response forces.

This budget gives the United States the flexibility and capabilities that are essential to the rebalance of our security posture toward the Asia Pacific, our enduring security commitments in the Middle East, and the need to respond to contingency operations around the globe.

Our nation has no greater asset than the folks who have served and are currently serving our nation, both military and civilian alike. Their dedication and service to our nation is unwavering and it is important that Congress provide the best equipment, training, and compensation so these men and women can meet their duties in full. The House budget plan restores national security spending and helps our defense maintain its current strength.

These are all measures that I have and will continue to support; however, it is disappointing that this proposal, just as in past budget proposals, unfairly targets only one group of Americans for additional sacrifices: the civilian federal workforce.

I have serious concerns that this resolution again forces federal employees to contribute more towards their retirement, approximately six percent, which is the equivalent of a pay cut, and eliminates their defined benefit retirement plan for deficit reduction purposes. It also goes farther than previous budget plans by proposing to decrease the rate of return on the Thrift Savings Plan's Government Securities Fund (G Fund).

America's First District is full of hardworking and dedicated citizens who serve the people of this nation every day, such as on the front lines of the War on Terror or in support roles for our military. Still others provide invaluable services at places such as VA hospitals, cancer and Alzheimer's research laboratories, and law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and DEA. And yet, federal civilian employees continue to see their pay cut and their benefits reduced on nearly every occasion.

Federal employees have already endured a three-year pay freeze; furloughs due to sequestration; and were required to not work because of indecision and political gamesmanship that resulted in a government shutdown on October 1, 2013 lasting 16 days. In addition, employees hired since 2012 have seen required contribution increases to their retirement, bringing our federal workers' total sacrifice to date to $159 billion over ten years.

It is because of these sacrifices that I supported legislation to allow furloughed workers to receive back pay for time out of work during the 2013 shutdown. In addition, I introduced the Federal Employee Combat Zone Tax Parity Act, which would extend the tax credit available to military personnel who serve in combat zones to the civilian federal employees that work alongside them.

Congress charges federal employees with important duties and expects these duties to be performed with the highest caliber of expertise, but rather than being recognized for their service, these public servants see their salary and benefits continually used as a pawn in the game of politics. We continue to ask our federal civilian workforce to do more with less.

According to data collected by the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, there has been a decline in federal employee job and workplace satisfaction for the fourth consecutive year. A score sheet compiled by the Partnership for Public Service shows that government-wide, federal employee job satisfaction and commitment fell 0.9 points in 2014 to a score of 56.9 out of 100. Morale among our nation's civilian federal workforce is at a historical low and these continued attacks keep the highly-skilled and experienced people we need from seeking a federal job.

Enough is enough.

I am fully ready and willing to enact deeper cuts to my own salary, benefits and congressional operations, which are provisions included in this year's budget, but we must stop singling out federal employees simply because Congress continually fails to address the out-of-control spending.

There is no question that our nation must get its spending in order, and federal employees have been and are certainly willing to continue to do their part to help in this effort.

Their daily contributions to their fellow citizens and to the cause of freedom are simply innumerable, and yet during deficit reduction debate over the last several years, federal employees have been asked to contribute much more than their fair share. Our federal civilian employees live a life of selfless service and they deserve our appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, I voted in support of H. Con. Res. 27 because it is Congress' constitutional duty to budget and appropriate. Congress must get back to regular order. Congress does our federal employees no favors when governing by continuing resolution and through crisis management. We must bring more certainty to the annual federal appropriations process.

This budget proposal is a means for Congress to further discuss our country's fiscal challenges, but I will continue to push for deficit reduction efforts in the future that focus more realistically on addressing the true drivers of our debt, rather than targeting those who serve their nation every day.

HONORING MS. JOSIE BACALLAO

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Women's History month I rise today to honor Ms. Josie Bacallao, an outstanding individual in the South Florida community.

Ms. Bacallao is currently President and CEO of Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF). Founded more than 30 years ago by community leaders, HUF was formed to ease the acculturation transition for immigrants from other nations. Today, this nonprofit organization provides assistance, through 19 programs, to Broward's diverse community. HUF remains the county's largest agency dedicated to the immigrant population, providing them with the tools they need to build a new life. Having been born in Cuba, raised in South Florida, and educated at Florida International University, no one is better suited to lead this organization.

Prior to her work at HUF, Ms. Bacallao was Vice President/Marketing Director for the Sun-Sentinel Company and worked for The Miami Herald/el Nuevo Herald as their VP/Marketing for more than 20 years. Beyond her professional background and work, she also sits on the board of CareerSource Broward, Greater Ft Lauderdale Alliance, and the Advisory Board of Florida Blue. She is a member of the Ft Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, and the Broward Chamber of Nonprofit Organizations.

Throughout her career Ms. Bacallao has been recognized for her achievements. She was honored with the Silver Medallion from National Conference for Community and Justice; was named to the Broward County Women's Hall of Fame; and received United Way of Broward County's Human Services Professional Award. Legal Aid and Service of Broward County bestowed the Russell E. Carlisle Advocacy Award on Ms. Bacallao for her work in creating pro bono immigration clinics. She also received one of the most meaningful awards of her career, The Jim Moran Foundation Award, for her work leading a nonprofit organization.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Josie Bacallao for her continued service to South Florida, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this remarkable individual.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. KEITH ELLISON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 though 2025:

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Chair, I would like to submit a letter that was signed by over 4,800 faith leaders supporting the Congressional Progressive Caucus' alternative budget.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As clergy and faith leaders of many faiths, we urge you to support The People's Budget, introduced by the co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Congressmen Keith Ellison and Raúl Grijalva. The Federal budget should reflect our values and shared priorities, and we believe that this proposal achieves that goal.

The teachings of our respective faiths are steeped in the understanding that we have a communal responsibility to care for the most vulnerable in society. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ensuring that all workers receive a fair wage are not simply policy positions: they are sacred obligations.

The People's Budget would create desperately-needed, good paying jobs, repeal sequester and all Budget Control Act spending caps and end Corporate Inversions that allow U.S. companies to avoid paying taxes. The Budget's proposals invest in veterans, women, communities of color and their families and K–12 education. It expands the Earned Income Tax Credit and unemployment insurance and enhances the social safety net. It reauthorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and implements comprehensive immigration reform, including a pathway to citizenship. In short, The People's Budget, if passed, would set our nation back on the path toward a fair and healthy economy.

These priorities were among those laid out by the Washington, DC Interfaith community in releasing our own Faithful Budget, which lays out how government spending could align with these moral priorities: http://bit.ly/faithful-budget. The ''People's Budget'' echoes many of the key proposals outlined in the Faithful Budget, so we're proud to support it. You can read more about

the ''People's Budget'' here: http://bit.ly/peoples-budget.

Our government should serve all of its citizens. By bolstering the social safety net for those who most need it and prioritizing measures that reduce the growing inequality in our nation, The People's Budget does just that, and it deserves the support of Congress. We urge you to vote for it when it comes to the House Floor.

Thank you for your consideration.

A TRIBUTE TO LINDSAY MOSER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Lindsay Moser for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Lindsay has the determination and drive to be successful in all that she does, and her exemplary work with Principal Financial Group Inc. is a testament to that. As the Campus and Diversity & Inclusion Manager for Principal Financial Group, Lindsay is passionate about going the extra mile. Lindsay's outstanding work ethic and dedication to service, both professionally and personally, makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Lindsay in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great State of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Lindsay on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

REMEMBERING ANDREW J. PARISE, MAYOR OF THE VILLAGE OF CEDARHURST, NY

HON. KATHLEEN M. RICE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Andrew Parise, the longtime mayor of the Village of Cedarhurst who passed away last month at the age of 90. A decorated veteran of World War II, Mayor Parise fought in the Battle of the Bulge and personally bore witness to the atrocities of the Holocaust when his division liberated the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. After the war, Mayor Parise returned home and spent 60 years as a decorated public servant, fully devoted to his neighbors and his community.

I wish to share the following essay by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky, remembering Mayor Parise as a man who led by example, who welcomed human beings of all religions, races and ethnicities and created a spirit of equality and inclusiveness in the Cedarhurst community that will live on long after his passing.

[From AMI Magazine, Feb. 18, 2015]

A MAYOR TO REMEMBER

(By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

I went back to the shtetl last week. You know, like the fellows who go back to Hungary or Poland 50 years after the war, the ones who left when they were little kids. When they get there, though, it's a different shtetl.

Of course, some of their old neighbors are still there. You know, the Januariuszes and the Stanislaws in Poland and the Andrashes and Ferkos in Hungary. There they are milling around, looking at you with a mixture of disdain and curiosity, and you're not exactly sure what you're doing there either.

Still, there's something that always draws a person back to his beginnings. What is it? Maybe it's a longing for ''your land, your birthplace and the house of your father'' that even pogroms, concentration camps and ruthless natives can't repress.

You are wondering, I am sure, where I went. No, it was not the little village of Tzitivyan in Lithuania, nor was it Dolhinov, Minsk or even Ostrov.

I went back to the world in which I was born and raised, before it was transformed into a vastly different universe. A remnant of that world was compressed and transplanted into a funeral home in Lynbrook, Long Island, where my father and I went to pay our respects to the old neighborhood and its colorful characters.

Andrew Parise, our backyard neighbor for 58 years, and the mayor of the Village of Cedarhurst since 1995, passed away last week. At a time when Jews were a minority in Woodmere and Cedarhurst—and Orthodox Jews almost nonexistent—Mayor Parise opened his arms and embraced us warmly.

Mr. Parise was loved and revered by everyone. Possibly the oldest active mayor in the United States, he commanded respect; indeed, no one ever referred to him as anything other than ''the mayor,'' It was, lehavdil, almost like ''the rosh yeshivah.''

It's hard for city folks to relate to a mayor who rode around in an older Lincoln Town Car with a license plate reading ''CEDMAYOR,'' stopping to kibbitz with the locals, and offering rides to people when it rained. He implored my father and me to cut through his backyard to shorten our Shabbos walk to shul, and worked diligently on solving zoning problems for the myriad shtiebelach popping up on village street corners.

It was gentiles like Andy Parise who facilitated the harmonious transformation of Cedarhurst, a very secular town that, along with four other similar villages, burgeoned into the Orthodox community known as the Five Towns.

My trip to the funeral home in Lynbrook was a trip back in time, as I met so many players of the original five shtetlach there, people whose influence and presence were so prominent when I was a kid.

Of course, joining me in the room was my father and an Avi, an Asher and an Ari, much younger than I and strangers to the past to which I'd come to pay my respects. Still, for the most part it was the universe of the pre-frum Five Towns, when the Nickys, Jimmys, Tonys, Joeys and Jesses dominated. If I closed my eyes I could almost hear my father pleading and cajoling to get the garbage picked up, the zoning approved or the unions to back off.

In those days, the Italians ran the town. Orthodox Jews were an anomaly; a yarmulke was such a strange sight on Central Avenue that I remember distinctly tugging on my mother's sleeve whenever I saw another one and shouting, ''Look, Ma! He's wearing a yarmulke!''

As I made my way up to the front of the room in search of the Parise children I was stopped by Nick Fabrizio. When I was a kid he was a bus driver; now he owns the bus company. It was one of the largest independent bus companies in our area. While he still comes into the business every day he has passed most of the reins—or the wheels—over to his son Michael. ''Hey! Rabbi!'' he called out. ''How's your pop? I remember how he used to call me at five o'clock in the morning on snow days, pleading with me to pick up the kids even though the public schools were closed!'' He was interrupted by Nicky DeSibio, whose father, affectionately known as Uncle Pete, used to be a big Republican politician.

''What a loss,'' he said, shaking his head. ''Were you aware that I did all the zoning work for you guys when your father had all these problems with the yeshivah back in the day?'' Then he spotted my elderly father and hugged him. ''Rabbi! I was just telling your son . . .''

He was relating some of his ''war stories'' when a voice rang out as if we were standing at a wedding. ''Hey! It's Mutty!'' Yes, that was my sobriquet well before my hair turned gray. ''I've never forgotten you! How's your dad? How's Tzqueaky?'' pronouncing my brother Zvi's name the exact same way all the kids, as well as Mr. Shave, our Irish tenant, used to. It was David Parise, the youngest of Andy's three kids, as enthusiastic and warm as always.

I could remember myself as a seven-year-old kid with a large yarmulke, watching the older fellows, Parise, Ferguson, Collins and Newman, playing stickball. They always let me play with them and never made fun of my head covering or my religion. And I can't remember a negative remark against Leroy Collins, the first and only black kid in the neighborhood. I even joined them on some of their mischievous adventures at the Cedarhurst railroad station, which by today's standards are rather innocuous, but I would still rather not mention.

David was peppering me with questions and I was asking him if he knew whatever happened to the rest of the gang. All of a sudden my mind was in a 50-year-old place, filled with Farinas, Lanzilottas and DiLorenzos. As the names came swirling back at me I wondered: Why hadn't I experienced all the anti-Semitism I'd heard so much about?

Then my eyes glanced at the mayor, lying in repose in a half-opened coffin, next to the myriad medals he'd received fighting the Nazis and liberating Buchenwald, including a Purple Heart. I thought about the tone he'd set for his family and for all of his friends.

When asked, he was proud to talk about his experiences. ''When we got to Buchenwald, there were no live people left; maybe a few. Mostly there were large pits filled with skeletons. General Eisenhower wanted us to go into the concentration camps so we could be witnesses to Hitler's atrocities.''

I thought of the early years, when he'd embraced my father's presence and vision for the town. I thought of all the times my father went to him to take care of a ''problem.''

I also remembered hearing stories from other rabbis, some of whom arrived years later. Rabbi Aryeh Ginzberg once related how the mayor had refused to let him sit on a folding chair in his office, insisting on schlepping in a big comfortable leather one for him. ''My rabbi doesn't sit on a folding chair if I can do anything about it,'' he said.

The Mayor would always visit our sukkah, and I heard that after my parents started going away for Yom Tov he continued the tradition by visiting the sukkah of Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, the local Chabad shaliach. When Rabbi and Rebbetzin Wolowik were sitting shivah for their son, Levi Yitzchak, the mayor visited every day.

Somehow, he always managed to figure out a way to make things work, whether it was a shul having a problem with zoning laws or trying to get additional parking spaces. His favorite motto was something like the Gemara's ''koach d'heteira adif'': ''Some people in authority express power by saying no. I express it by saying yes.''

As I looked at the medals I thought of what it must have been like for an Italian kid fighting the Nazis and liberating the Jews.

I also reflected on how the towns and the landscape have changed. Orthodox Jews are now on the board of local villages; the deputy (and soon to be) mayor of Cedarhurst is a trustee of the Young Israel of Woodmere. Torah-observant citizens make up the majority of the school board.

I glanced at the coffin and the medals, and the Purple Heart. Being among all the people who had treated my father and our family with such warmth and accommodation, I thought, ''I may have gone back to the shtetl of my youth, but I was not with the Lithuanian, Polish or Hungarian collaborators.'' I was in the presence of the soldiers, and their children who are fighting the Nazis until this very day.

CELEBRATING THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a very important day in U.S.-Taiwan relations. April 10th marks the 36th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This important statute has been critical in defining the diplomatic, economic, and strategic relationship we have enjoyed with Taiwan over the last four decades. The TRA has strengthened our relationship and helped to encourage a particularly strong economic partnership. Over the course of the last few decades, Taiwan has created a thriving and innovative economy that most countries around the world envy. Taiwan plays a critical role in the supply of everyday products and is fully integrated in the global economy.

Also, as we near the 70th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it is just and appropriate that we remember the Republic of China's important contributions to the alliance that defeated fascist militarism in that heroic struggle.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to many more decades of cooperation between the United States and Taiwan. I am also confident that if we continue to enhance our economic relationship with this fellow republic, the dynamic partnership that we've built together will continue to thrive in the future.

TRIBUTE TO ARJUN KUNJILWAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Arjun Kunjilwar attends Dawson High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

VOTING: A POWERFUL WAY TO GET INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

During the time when the US Constitution was first proposed, why was it important that every one of the 13 states ratified it? There wasn't a need for a unanimous vote, but there was a need for unity and full cooperation. In a similar sense, while voting on an issue doesn't have to be undisputed, it represents a loyalty and adherence to the American belief of democracy where individual voices and opinions can be freely expressed. Every citizen should vote in any election because individual beliefs can unite together to achieve anything desired. A vote can represent so many things. It has the power to magnify one's voice so that it can be heard by others. It can help drive change when many are put together. It signifies a person's concern and perspective of what actions will lead to improvement. It can unite a group of people to help work towards a certain goal.

In today's society, presidential election voting seems to have lost some of its importance. Since 2004, while the number of people who are eligible to vote has increased by 18,000 (attributed to increasing population), the number of people who actually fill out the ballot has increased only about 7,000, and the percent of the population that actually does vote has dropped about 2%. In a society that constantly focuses on what can be improved, voting provides the stimulus for change. People may choose not to vote because they don't feel as if their opinion will cause or spark anything. Yet, voting is the most efficient tool in the hands of the public that can steer the nation in the direction they desire. It also allows the governing bodies to know what is exactly expected of them and keeps them in check. Voting therefore, represents an unalienable role in the government, and should be considered as an important duty of every citizen.

Finally the right to vote it is the greatest symbol of any democracy where the freedom to make choices will always prevail. While the voting process might not give every citizen his or her vision of a perfect society, those who choose to vote express a loyalty to their nation and the want to have it functioning perfectly. So while all votes might not be needed to determine a majority, doesn't each and every one of them have their own value?

HONORING DAVID SHUFFLER

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, as we give pause this month to commemorate the innumerable contributions that African Americans have made—and continue to make—to our nation, I rise to honor a Bronx activist, organizer and impassioned voice for community empowerment. It is with great pleasure and admiration that I stand before you today to applaud Mr. David Shuffler for his many years of compassionate public service and tireless work to improve the lives of our community residents.

Mr. Shuffler was born and raised in the South Bronx where he continues to live, work, and serve the community today. Mr. Shuffler is the Executive Director at Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice (YMPJ). YMPJ is a multi-service, faith based, grassroots community organization located in the Bronx River/Soundview sections of the Bronx that has served the community with unwavering dedication for more than twenty years.

Mr. Shuffler began his career as a public servant when he became a member at Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice in the summer of 1994. Upon quickly joining the staff at YMPJ, Mr. Shuffler became an integral part of forming the original R.I.V.E.R. Team, which led grassroots community organizing efforts that resulted in victories like the creation of Concrete Plant Park and Starlight Park. Today, these parks offer more than thirty acres of waterfront park space, and play a critical role in the realization of the South Bronx Greenway. Mr. Shuffler was also a leader on other important issue campaigns such as unemployment and police reform. The breadth of issues that David Shuffler has worked to champion over the years speaks to the power of his vision, and his commitment to ensuring that the quality of life of individuals in our community is consistently improving.

Today, Mr. Shuffler continues to influence various levels of government on a wide spread of local issues. Over the course of his career he has been able to secure over $50 million dollars for community led efforts throughout the city and helped move effective policy which has directly benefitted some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community. I am grateful to Mr. Shuffler for his ongoing dedication to our community, and I am honored to call him a fellow public servant.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Mr. David Shuffler for his consistently remarkable dedication to public service and longstanding commitment to improving our community.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHIEF JOHN AMOROSO

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chief John Amoroso on his retirement after four years of dedicated service as

the Chief of Police to the people of Avenal, California.

Chief Amoroso was born on June 10, 1956 in San Francisco, California. He graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1974. He went on to attend the College of the Sequoias on a baseball scholarship, where he earned an Associate of Science Degree.

In July 1976, Chief Amoroso married Susan Brown. The couple would go on to have two daughters, Amy and Melissa.

Chief Amoroso started his distinguished law enforcement career in 1979 with the Hanford Police Department (HPD). He served with the department for nine years and earned the rank of Sergeant before being hired by the Kings County Sheriff's Office in 1988. In 1992, Chief Amoroso was awarded a Medal of Valor for his work in a SWAT mission that resulted in the arrest of a double homicide suspect. Chief Amoroso spent 21 years with the Kings County Sheriff's Office before retiring in December 2009.

On April 1, 2010, the City of Avenal hired Chief Amoroso to establish Avenal's first police department. In addition to hiring officers, acquiring equipment, purchasing vehicles, and facilitating officer training, he designed the Ken Brown Public Safety Center where the Avenal Police Department is located.

Chief Amoroso's work to establish the Avenal Police Department fully materialized on November 15, 2010 when the Avenal Police Department relieved the Kings County Sheriff's Office and assumed full responsibility for law enforcement in the City of Avenal.

After dedicating his life to law enforcement, Chief Amoroso is retiring on April 10, 2015.

Avenal and the entire Central Valley community have been extremely fortunate to have a dedicated law enforcement officer such as Chief Amoroso to ensure the wellbeing of their community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in commending Chief John Amoroso for his thirty five years of dedicated law enforcement work in the Central Valley and congratulating him on his recent retirement from the Avenal Police Department.

A TRIBUTE TO JAIMIE MILLER-ACKLEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Jaimie Miller-Ackley for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Jaimie has the determination and drive to be successful in all that she does, and her exemplary work with Iowa Credit Union Foundation is a testament to that. As the Executive Director of the Iowa Credit Union Foundation, Jaimie is passionate about going the extra mile. Jaimie's exemplary work ethic and dedication to service makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Jaimie in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Jaimie on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING WILLIE RENE LEFLORE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Ms. Willie Rene Leflore.

Ms. Leflore is a lifetime resident of Sunflower County, Mississippi.

Ms. Leflore is a soldier encouraging others to sign up and be counted. In her words, ''Gone are the days of nurturing, chopping, hoeing, hauling water pails, getting up early, catching Bill Henderson's bus, etcetera, to work from sun up to sun down for $3.15 daily''.

Growing up, Ms. Leflore wanted to be free to enter the front doors of Labella Restaurant and ride at the front of the Grey Hound Bus. So, Ms. Leflore took a stand, and marched beside Cora Stone Johnson, Nelson Dotson, John Richardson, Lene and others for her civil rights.

Ms. Leflore is a soldier for what is right. She believes in receiving the same privileges and rights as other races. She believes that all adults have their own mind to decide on what they want to participate in as long as it is right. She fought for that privilege. It was an acquired desire to march beside others who shared the same belief.

Ms. Leflore worked, never missing a day unless she was sick. When she became ill, she had to retire. She has received numerous commendations as a loyal supporter of all athletic activities at Gentry High School. To this day, she still uses the phone as her legs and mouth, encouraging others to stand and show themselves approved. She believes that standing for what you believe in regardless, of the odds against you, and the pressure that tears at your resistance means courage, which is what she had to constantly remind herself of. She always kept a smile on her face, even when on the inside she felt like dying. She stopped at nothing. Doing what was instilled in her heart, is to make another's life a little more bearable. When she was in the moment, she was loyal, she wasn't selfish and she kept her head high.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Willie Rene Leflore for her dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

IN RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION OF MR. LONNIE POWELL AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO KANSAS CITY'S ARTISTIC COMMUNITY

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today to honor the contributions of Kansas City Artist and Educator, Mr. Lonnie Powell. Mr. Powell is a native of Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, which I proudly represent, and his professional contributions continue to enhance the skills of young artists, and have united artists for the purpose of showcasing talent. Additionally, his unique abilities have created a treasure of expressive visual art. To have the respect of one's peers and the leadership skills to make a significant difference in one's community is the rarest of gifts. But to have the additional commitment, energy, and desire to pursue and achieve one's goals are equally extraordinary qualities.

Mr. Powell's artistic development began at a young age, when he cultivated the desire to draw and create using his pencil. Despite the stress his father had placed on the importance of trade skills for financial stability, after graduating from Central High School in Kansas City, Powell chose to pursue higher education. He graduated from Lincoln University, in Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1966 with a Bachelor of Science in Art Education, and promptly began his long career in education.

From 1966 to 1975, Powell taught art at several schools in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. He introduced his students to different artistic techniques and delighted in their individual creativity. Powell began working on his Master's Degree in Art Education at Central Missouri State College and had completed 37 hours when the private sector enticed him to leave teaching and join the corporate world. At Xerox Corporation, he made President's Club, an honor reserved for the upper echelon of the national sales force. Though he had significant accomplishments, and had received numerous awards, there was little time left for creating art. He missed the students and felt a pervading emptiness. Therefore, after eight years in the corporate world, Powell returned to his real passion, teaching art. He has often said that he learned from his students as much as they learned from him. He quotes Pablo Picasso, ''Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.''

In 2000, Powell retired from teaching and focused on his own artistic career. He is well known for his visual narratives which illustrate the subject's feeling and glimpses into their thoughts. Through mediums of oil, acrylics, watercolor, pastels, and pencil, he exposes the soul. For Powell, a finished piece is first appreciated and then evaluated in order to avoid complacency and continually strive to improve.

In 2001, Lonnie Powell became the founder and president of The Light in the Other Room. This organization remains active and has formed many partnerships in the name of art. Powell had envisioned a collaborative of African-American, Kansas City based artists that would benefit both the community and participating artists. Powell says ''The two greatest

joys for me have been learning from each other and causing a bit of a stir in the Kansas City Area. We are very optimistic about our future and the future of our beloved metropolitan area.'' His organization has worked with The Greater Kansas City Links, The Jackson County Links, Hatebusters Inc., The Epsten Gallery, The Sister City Association of Kansas City, Missouri, Central Missouri State University, William Jewell College, Vaughn Cultural Center, and Portfolio Gallery and Education Center of St. Louis, Missouri, to name a few.

Powell has participated in solo and group exhibits at Ethnic Art Gallery, the Central Exchange, Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center and Museum, The American Jazz Museum's Changing Gallery, The Vine Street Studio, The Review Studio and many others. His creations have also been accepted in numerous competitions around the country.

His exhibits at numerous colleges and universities include: Park University, Western Missouri University, Lincoln University, Rockhurst University (where he spent a year as artist in residence from 1969 to 1970), The University of Central Missouri, Avila College, William Jewell College and the Kansas University Medical Center.

Powell's art is in numerous private collections, as well as corporate collections including: Sprint Nextel Corporation, H&R Block Corporation, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Fishnet Corporation, Andrew/McMeel Universal, Sports Association Management, Inc., Truman Medical Center. The American Jazz Museum, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art (Oppenheimer Collection) and The Mulvane Art Museum all have his art as part of their permanent collections. Additionally, he has some pieces in The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum's permanent collection as well as in their traveling exhibition, Shades of Greatness, which tours galleries and museums across the country.

In 2005, Powell was awarded Signature membership in the National Watercolor Society. He won the NWS Combined Donors' C Award for his piece, South Sun. In 2006, he was named one of the ''Ones to Watch'' by Watercolor Magic Magazine (now Watercolor Artist Magazine). In 2013, Powell was awarded ''Best of Show'', at the Harlem X-Hibit, Black Art in America.

One of Powell's most bittersweet experiences took place in 2007 when he traveled with Change the Truth to Kajjansi, Uganda. There, he worked with the children of St. Mary Kevin's Orphanage. This was a profound experience in which he first felt initial shock, seeing children with so very little. However, he will tell you of the joy he came to know from working with these young children as many were extremely talented. Powell says he found it hard to leave his little students behind.

Powell is blessed with a wonderful family, including his lovely wife, Brenda, their son, Gregory, (and his wife, Tava) and a beautiful granddaughter, Jaden.

Mr. Speaker, please join me and our colleagues in expressing our appreciation to Mr. Lonnie Powell for his endless commitment to our artistic community. He is not only a role model for our artists, but he serves as an example of how we can all live our lives. Mr. Speaker, his art moves us and his contributions have enlightened our community.

A TRIBUTE TO ANGIE PFANNKUCH

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Angie Pfannkuch for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Angie has the determination and drive to be successful in anything she does, and her exemplary work with Olson Associates Inc. is a testament to that. As Development Consultant she utilizes her management abilities to develop large land renovations in Des Moines to revitalize historic areas. In her free time Angie likes to dedicate herself to serving others. She recently took a mission trip to Ghana to help establish an orphanage, King Cares International's first project in Africa. In all aspects of her life, Angie is an example of the hard work and service that makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Angie in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Angie on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH ON ITS CENTENNIAL

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the City of Miami Beach in Florida's 23rd Congressional District.

Incorporated on March 26th, 1915, Miami Beach took its place on the map with only a handful of residents. Now home to nearly 100,000 people, the City of Miami Beach has not only grown in population but in reputation. This vacation paradise is an internationally recognized tourist destination visited by millions each year. However, for as much as Miami Beach is known for its fun and sun, it has evolved into a hub for business and is a trendsetter in the areas of arts and culture, fine dining and entertainment.

More than 100 years ago, Miami Beach pioneers Carl Fisher, John Collins and the Lummus brothers had a vision to develop a small island that could stand as a city in and of itself. Combining their efforts, the Collins Bridge, the longest wooden bridge in the world at that time, was constructed to connect Miami's mainland with this new island community. And with just 33 registered voters, John Newton Lummus was elected the city's first mayor. Soon thereafter, the building boom of the 1920's helped create the now historic and famed Art Deco district, known to the world as ''South Beach.''

As a matter of fact, Miami Beach is home to numerous sites in the National Register of Historic Places, from the Venetian Causeway to the Fountainebleau Hotel to Beth Jacob Congregation which now houses the Jewish Museum of Florida. The city's various neighborhoods are as distinct as its residents, from South Beach to Mid Beach to North Beach, Miami Beach radiates a true sense of community.

Miami Beach has served as a cultural playground for entertainers such as Jackie Gleason, Frank Sinatra and even The Beatles who performed on the Ed Sullivan Show live from the Deauville Hotel.

This month Miami Beach will celebrate its Centennial with 100 hours of showcasing its history and all the city has to offer, including a performance by Miami Beach residents and cultural icons Gloria Estefan, Barry Gibb and Andrea Bocelli.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to represent the City of Miami Beach in our nation's capital. I thank Mayor Philip Levine, the Members of the City Commission, and the city's staff for their many accomplishments that have made the City of Miami Beach a wonderful place to live, work, visit and raise a family.

SUPPORT OF THE ''HOMELAND SECURITY DRONE ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS ACT''

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the ''Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act.''

On January 27th, a small drone landed on the grounds of the White House.

Thankfully, this incident did not threaten the President or his family, as it was nothing more than an ill-advised misadventure by a hobbyist.

It did, however, raise serious questions about the threat commercially available drones may pose to individuals, infrastructure, and our aviation system.

Recently, drones were observed flying over sensitive assets in France, including nuclear installations, the home of the French President, and near the United States Embassy. These drone activities have raised concerns about the security implications of the commercial availability of small and medium sized drones.

Undoubtedly, drones have great commercial potential and their utility will aid our agricultural sector and others in the decades to come.

Even as drones have the potential for so much good in the hands of a farmer, there is

the risk that they will be used for ill in the hands of someone who intends harm.

Last week, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency, of which I am the Ranking Minority Member, of the House Committee on Homeland Security, held a hearing regarding the potential security threats posed by small and medium sized commercially available drones.

During the hearing, we heard from experts in the field regarding the need for DHS to act as the Federal lead in researching the issue of security vulnerabilities posed by small and medium sized drones.

The witnesses described the need for DHS to develop security policies and for DHS to disseminate information to State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials regarding how such officials may bolster preparedness for and responses to attacks perpetrated by commercially available small and medium sized drones.

I authored the ''Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act'' to address the issues raised before the Subcommittee last week and to ensure DHS serves as the lead Federal department responsible for the security issues raised by small and medium sized drones.

The bill also requires DHS to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment regarding small and medium sized drones so that the policies the Department and its components develop are based on sound analysis and the probable rather than the possible.

Finally, my bill will address the concerns we heard from the President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police regarding a lack of information being disseminated regarding how State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies should respond to potential threats posed by drones.

It does so by mandating that the Secretary of Homeland Security provide information to State, local, and tribal law enforcement entities regarding how to prepare for and respond to potential threats posed by drones.

I urge my colleagues to support the ''Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act''.

TRIBUTE TO GREG IRVINE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Corona and Riverside County at large are exceptional. Corona has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Greg Irvine is one of these individuals. On April 15, 2015, Greg will be honored for his dedicated service as he ends his tenure as the Assistant City Manager for the City of Corona.

Greg's work with the City of Corona began in 1996 when he first served as the Assistant City Treasurer. Greg was then promoted to Interim City Treasurer and would later be promoted again to serve as Assistant General Manager for the Department of Water and Power. Greg was then moved to be the Assistant to the City Manager and in August of 2004, he was appointed to Assistant City Manager. It was in this capacity that he oversaw public policy for the City of Corona which encompassed legislative advocacy and city communications as well as marketing efforts. Given his depth of experience through his service as Assistant and Interim City Treasurer, he also had the executive responsibility for the Finance Department. His knowledge was helpful for Corona in steering through the recession and has been commended by several City Council Members. Additionally, Greg's involvement in the community goes far beyond the doors of City Hall. He has been an active participant in numerous community service organizations throughout Corona.

In light of all Greg Irvine has done for the community of Corona, I wish him the best as he embarks on his retirement. Greg's tireless passion for the community has contributed immensely to the betterment of Corona, California. I am proud to call Greg a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for his service and salute him as he ends his time as Assistant City Manager for the City of Corona.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,152,372,692,901.05. We've added $7,525,495,643,987.97 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 1963 LEESBURG STOCKADE WOMEN

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize fifteen outstanding women who at a young age had the courage to take a stand for their rights and were imprisoned for it, enduring horrific conditions and circumstances while confined within a Civil War-era abandoned stockade located deep in the backwoods of Leesburg, Georgia. These brave women will be honored at the 1963 Leesburg Stockade Women's Honor Program. This exceptional tribute, sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club of Americus-Sumter County, will be held on Saturday, April 4, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia.

Fifty-two years past, during a dark moment in our nation's history, fifteen valiant African-American adolescent girls from Americus, Georgia were unjustly imprisoned for their involvement in a peaceful Civil Rights protest in their hometown. Taken to the abandoned stockade, these girls, who were between 11 and 15 years of age, spent close to two months in conditions that were, quite simply, reprehensible. Deprived of clean water, adequate nutrition, proper hygiene, contact with their families, and other basic comforts, these innocent girls suffered acute physical and psychological turmoil as a result of their struggle for equality. Such wounds do not heal easily or quickly, yet even as cuts have turned to scars, these passionate and fiercely determined women have overcome.

With this resiliency in mind, it is my privilege to announce that these devoted citizens stand together, ever courageous, to share their stories with the public for the first time. Ten individuals—Dr. Shirley Green-Reese, Willie Mae Smith-Davis, Dr. Carol Barner Seay, Melinda Jones Williams, Verna Hollis, Billie Jo Thornton Allen, Diane Dorsey-Bowens, Lula Westbrooks Griffin, Laura Ruff Saunders and Emmarene Kaigler Streeter—will speak of their experiences at the event, bringing vibrant testimony to the turmoil and triumphs of the Civil Rights Movement. The remaining five women—Pearl Brown, Mattie Crittenden, Sandra Russell Mansfield, Annie Lou Ragans Laster, and Gloria Westbrooks Breedlove—are now deceased but will also be honored and remembered during the ceremony.

A number of local, state, and national figures, including Americus Mayor Barry Blount; Senior Vice President of the Boys and Girls Club of America, Dr. Damon A. Williams; and Museum Specialist at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Deborah Tulani Salahu-Din, will be present to commemorate the outstanding fortitude of these remarkable women. Terrible though it was, their ordeal continues to spread awareness for the critical nature of Civil Rights across the country and thankfully, their trials have not been in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today in paying tribute to the enduring spirits, the dignity, and the impact of these fifteen valiant women from Americus, Georgia. They are living proof that the occurrences of the past survive within us today. Let us always be grateful to the 1963 Leesburg Stockade Women who paved the way for a better today and a brighter tomorrow for all Americans.

HONORING LUKE MOFFETT

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Luke Moffett attends Seven Lakes High School in Katy, Texas. The essay topic is: in

your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

An organized and intentional government is essential for any country to thrive and run efficiently. However, in my opinion, the government can easily overstep its bounds and become a catalyst for persecution and oppression. It is clear that the founding fathers were very skeptical of—after years of debate—creating a centralized government. They realized that the very thing they fought and died to rid themselves of can easily creep back into the delicate balance of true democracy, actively nullifying their painful sacrifices. When they finally had the chance to establish their vision of a perfect government, they immediately focused on the concept of a small central government to give the power back to the people. With the terror of absolute rule fresh on their minds, knowing the potential of a sovereign government, these men realized what government's role truly should be. Because of this, the founding fathers are the most influential figures in my view towards the government's role in my life and the lives of those around me. I believe that the subsidies and programs that accompany a large and powerful government are far outweighed by its potential to take all those things away in an instant. If we allow the government to provide everything for us, then we truly have no freedom because we are ultimately bound to the large government that provides everything we need. Although this is extreme, it accurately portrays the dangers of a large central government. Therefore, I firmly believe that local and state governments should adopt a larger role in the lives of the citizens within their jurisdiction, coupled with a central government that focuses on foreign affairs and large international issues. On the contrary, the necessity of a central government can easily be witnessed throughout history and, therefore, cannot be overlooked. In the United States' establishment, the absence of a central government led to turmoil, violence, and an obvious lack of organization. The balance between local, state, and federal government is fragile and difficult to set, yet it is vital to the well-being of a nation. Therefore, I believe that although governments may have good intentions, ultimately governments lose sight of true freedom, and because of that reason, a government should never have the ability to micromanage my life or limit my Constitutional freedoms.

HONORING THE CAREER OF J. MICHAEL CRABTREE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the long, distinguished career of one of my good friends, J. Michael Crabtree, who will be retiring this spring.

Michael has been a hardworking and respected member of the education community for more than 40 years. The time and dedication he devoted brought about significant positive change to the students and community of Southern Nazarene University. Not only the students, but professors, community members, parents, and alumni greatly benefited from his work. Michael's different positions at the university over the years allowed many to experience his diverse skill set and leadership qualities. One of his recent accomplishments was his helping to complete the nine million dollar Campaign for the Science effort for the J.D. & Mary West Science Laboratory.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Michael for many years. His recent positions at the university demonstrate his ability to maintain strong relationships and enhance school programs. Michael is retiring as Associate Vice President for University Advancement where his main focus was endowment development and planned giving. He maintained and enhanced relationships with donors as well as donor programs. His other roles at the school included assistant to the president, Vice President for University Advancement, and executive director of university advancement among others.

Michael also spent considerable time volunteering. He spent countless hours with organizations and groups throughout the community such as the Bethany Arts Council, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation, and Oklahoma City Civic Music Association along with many others. He received the Manager of the Year award in 1988 from Southern Nazarene University and "Service recognition for 35 years in higher education" in 2008.

I want to thank Michael for his time and devotion to better the school that I attended as an undergraduate. His career will be remembered for years to come by everyone involved in the school and community.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the career of J. Michael Crabtree. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating this milestone in his remarkable life.

RECOGNIZING THE OPENING OF THE LIVE4LALI CLINIC

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Chelsea LaLiberte and Jody Daitchman, as well as the other hardworking volunteers, on the opening of the Live4Lali clinic in Arlington Heights, Ill.

In the Chicago suburbs, somebody dies of a heroin overdose every three days. Cheaper than cigarettes and more accessible than alcohol, heroin has become a plague on our suburbs. Ms. LaLiberte and Ms. Daitchman recognized that our community and suburbs across the country are struggling with this epidemic, and they have taken bold and courageous action to prevent people from falling victim to drug abuse.

Their efforts have already saved countless lives and the Live4Lali clinic will undoubtedly save countless more. I offer my deepest thanks for their work in helping to strengthen our community, and I urge the Members of this House to help us empower these agents of change by getting drug abuse prevention programs the funding they need.

HONORING MARGARETTE PURVIS

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of Black History Month to recognize the important contributions made by African-Americans across the nation. African-Americans have made countless contributions to our country and made many great sacrifices for this great nation, and nowhere is the power, heritage, and vibrance of this community more visible than in New York City. It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to honor one of our local champions, Ms. Margarette Purvis, for her many years of advocacy and work to better the lives of families across our community.

Ms. Purvis leads Food Bank For New York City, the country's largest food bank serving one out of every five New Yorkers. In this role, Ms. Purvis has led the strategic vision for all of Food Bank's operations, philanthropy and programming, including the organization's citywide food distribution system and member network of over 1,000 charities and schools. In addition, Ms. Purvis, who has more than 20 years of experience in services to our nation's most vulnerable, was selected by Governor Andrew Cuomo to chair the New York State Anti-Hunger Task Force, where she's leading the drafting of recommendations for better coordination of hunger relief services and policies throughout the state.

Ms. Purvis has held numerous prestigious positions before assuming her current role. She was CEO and Principal of PCG Services, an Atlanta-based firm. PCG developed and implemented social and philanthropic programming and branding strategies for businesses, notables, nonprofits and government agencies. She was also the Vice President of National Programming at Points of Light Foundation, leading the launch and implementation of its multimillion dollar programs and civic engagement units while overseeing large-scale disaster initiatives in response to Hurricane Katrina. Prior to each of these Ms. Purvis served her first term at Food Bank as the organization's Vice President of Programs and Services where for five years she developed national award-winning programs, including the Education Institute and Kids Café programs.

The common thread through all of Margarette Purvis' professional endeavors is a strong passion for others; particularly, a passion for prioritizing the needs of our community's most vulnerable individuals who are not always able to advocate for themselves. This allegiance to fighting the good fight for those who are unable to fight for themselves is precisely what makes Ms. Purvis such a remarkable leader. I am honored to help serve a community that counts such a fierce advocate as an ally, and look forward to continuing to work with Ms. Purvis to serve those in need.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Ms. Margarette Purvis for her tireless effort and devotion to helping our community.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MORMAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Michael Morman for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Michael has the determination and talent to be successful in all that he does, and his work with Shive-Hattery Inc. is a testament to that commitment. As an Architect and Project Manager for Shive-Hattery, Michael is able to pursue a personal passion of his in his professional life. He maintains an active schedule outside work, volunteering for numerous organizations, including the Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Michael in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Michael on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

CONGRATULATING JOHN SUTTON

HON. LARRY BUCSHON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate 8th district' constituent, John Sutton of Worthington, Indiana and former Army Specialist 4th Class. Mr. Sutton was awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroically rescuing a fellow solider from the burning wreckage of their downed helicopter on September 3, 1969. Even though Mr. Sutton was seriously injured, he and the surviving co-pilot bravely returned to the burning wreckage to pull the pilot, who lost both of his legs in the crash, to safety.

The Soldier's Medal is the highest medal awarded to enlisted Army personnel for noncombat related acts of valor. Mr. Speaker, I join my fellow Americans in thanking Mr. Sutton for his act of true bravery and selflessness. He is well deserving of this high honor.

HONORING EDDIE WILLIAMS, SR.

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Mr. Eddie Williams, Sr.

Before joining the clergy nearly 35 years ago, the Rev. Eddie Williams, Sr. already was a trailblazer in the Port City and had dedicated his life to helping others.

Born July 21, 1931, on Dent Street, in Greenville, Mississippi, Mr. Williams would go on to become his native city's first black radio announcer.

He attended Sacred Heart Elementary School and Coleman High School before continuing his education at the Greenville Industrial College.

After graduating, Williams in 1951 enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a medic in Korea.

He was honorably discharged in 1953 and briefly lived in Detroit where, he said, he first saw a somewhat integrated world. ''It was a northern city, so it was definitely better there.'' Williams said, ''At the time here, we had black and white waiting rooms.''

Still, Williams returned to his hometown and went to work at the newly opened Greenville Mill. In 1958, Williams switched careers, hiring on with the new community radio station WESY as its public relations director, which put him on the air.

As an on-air personality, Williams guided Delta residents through the Civil Rights movement, from the sit-ins by college students in Montgomery, Ala., the March on Washington to the Magnolia State's own Freedom Summer in 1964 and the integration of Mississippi schools in 1970.

''At that time, Dr. (Martin Luther) King was working, and I would do everything Dr. King was doing,'' Williams said. ''He was fighting for us, for the right to vote, and I was trying to keep our people informed of what was going on. When I got the news, I would hit the air with it.''

Through his post at WESY, Williams became active in community affairs and won numerous civic commendations, including the Elks Serene Lodge No. 567's Outstanding Citizen Award in 1973 and its Man of Year award in 1974. In 1975, Williams was included in the annual Who's Who Among Black Americans and made the list of Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans of 1976.

In 1980, after nearly three decades with WESY, Williams embarked on a spiritual journey and became pastor of Greater Springfield MB Church.

''The radio was entertaining and fun, but the church is a completely different thing,'' he said. ''I feel like I was led to help people become the people that God would have us all to be.''

In 1989, Williams became the pastor at Victory Temple Baptist Church on Alexander Street, where he has been since. For the past two years, he has told his parishioners about the rich history of current and former black ''Green-villians'' and urges the next generations to build on those achievements.

''Certainly we have made progress, but we still have a long way to go, and we've all got to work toward that goal,'' he said. ''All of us, particularly black people, have got to put more effort into getting to where we need to be. We need to have more than Black History Month and start having Black History days and Black History years.''

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Eddie Williams, Sr. for his dedication to serving others and giving back to the African American community.

THE 225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATENT ACT CELEBRATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, on April 10th we celebrate the 225th anniversary of President George Washington signing into law the Patent Act of 1790. We honor the wisdom of our founding fathers in creating the first patent system to recognize by law the inherent right of an inventor to have protection over their inventions and innovations. Our Constitution grants Congress the power ''to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.'' With the creation of the Patent Act came the ability for Americans to be rightfully credited for the use of their talents to progress our nation.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office has issued over nine million patents. These patents demonstrate the creativity and foresight of the American people and their outstanding contributions enhance lives worldwide. We celebrate the first Patent Act, and salute the men and women who have promoted the progress of science and arts to make America a technological, economic, and cultural leader among nations.

I applaud the Patent and Trademark Office for its continued efforts to encourage innovation and strengthen the nation's competitiveness in the global economy. We must recognize the critical importance of intellectual property. It is critical that Congress continues to acknowledge the need for effective patents, trademarks, and copyrights while upholding the vision of our Nation's founders. Today, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Patent and Trademark Office—the model for managing patent systems around the world—for its stewardship of the patent system and for inspiring independent inventors, entrepreneurs, and small businesses to be innovators.

CONGRATULATING CINDY BOURLAND

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my longtime friend Cindy Bourland, who was named by Texas Governor Rick Perry to fill a vacancy on the Third Court of Appeals. She's a perfect fit to handle this important responsibility.

I've known Cindy since she was a young girl in my Sunday school class. She was an intelligent, kind, and motivated young lady who everyone knew had a very bright future. That she has achieved great things surprises no one.

I was excited that she decided to pursue a career in the law. She later practiced before my court and showed herself to be a skilled attorney who understood both the letter and spirit of the law while never losing sight of its impact on people.

As a former judge, I know firsthand the demands Cindy will face. Judges have the responsibility to, as scripture says, ''let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.'' I know she's ready to meet this challenge.

It's been a privilege to watch Cindy Bourland grow up, both in her life and career. I'm excited for her new responsibilities and honored to call her Judge. Most of all, I'm proud to call her my friend.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL LAND TRANSACTION FACILITATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION OF 2015

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my legislation, the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) Reauthorization of 2015. This legislation authorizes the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to sell surplus federal lands to states, localities, or private entities that can be put to economically-beneficial use. Profits from the sales can then be used to purchase state or private land encumbered by National Parks and other federal areas, advancing conservation goals and improving recreational, hunting and fishing access.

Since its initial introduction in 2000, FLTFA reduced federal land ownership by 9,000 acres over the course of a decade. I am honored to introduce this important piece of legislation that will streamline the federal land acquisition process.

A TRIBUTE TO JUSTINE PEEBLES

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Justine Peebles for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Justine has the determination and drive to be successful in any professional and personal task she undertakes. As Vice President of Lincoln Savings Bank she utilizes her drive and do-it-yourself attitude to advance the goals of the bank and provide great customer service. In her free time Justine likes to dedicate herself to serving others. She took the lead role on a project called Feeding the Future that supplies a warm meal to children every night in the Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa and also spends some of her free time volunteering at the Youth Emergency Services Shelter. Justine's exemplary work ethic and dedication to service makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Justine in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Justine on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

TRIBUTE TO JILLIAN SABOE

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Jillian Saboe attends Pearland High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

When people hear the word ''government'' or ''politics'' or any other words associated with the political process, their usual first reaction is either a cringe or look of disgust; some purposefully and some mindlessly. Why is it that in a country founded on individual rights and freedoms that people feel negatively toward the institutions that were created to protect them?

''In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?'' Looking at this question, I can see the possibilities of three different paths one might take. One: The government should interfere less with American citizens and practices. Two: The government should interfere more with American citizens and practices. Personally, I choose path number three: The government should not be looked at or act as an item of interference. The government should be an institution that interacts with individuals and groups in need of help and protection. A teenage girl should not be frightened when she sees a cop while driving down the highway, she should feel safe. A small business owner should not fear of losing his shop while filing his taxes, he should feel untroubled. An old man should not worry about what money will go where when he passes, he should feel cared for. Although a government has the responsibility to ensure a steady economy, ensure sturdy foreign relations, and increase trade, a government should also prioritize its responsibility to take care of its citizens. When I say ''take care,'' I don't mean making sure that they all get their social security checks when they reach a certain age, I mean making sure citizens receiving social security checks feel content with their situations. In my opinion, the government is allowed to be the bad guy sometimes to make sure that everything runs smoothly, but the government's main role is to humanely support and protect its citizens at all costs.

A government must be many things in order to survive. It must be strong. It must be efficient. It must be intelligent. But the most important thing a government should be is comfortable.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, March 25, 2015, I was unavoidably detained and missed Roll Call vote #140. Had I been present I would have voted No.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ELECTRIC CHARGING ADVANCEMENT REFORM ACT

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, my home of Los Angeles unfortunately is the nation's smoggiest region of the country. We are surrounded by mountains and have highest per capita ownership of cars. The Los Angeles region has made great improvements in our air quality. In the last 15 years, the number of dirty air days has dropped by 38%. Still—we have the worst air quality in the nation. The American Lung Association ranks the Los Angeles region as number one in the nation for ozone pollution and in the top five for particulate matter pollution.

This results in many health issues including higher numbers of children with asthma and significantly lung function problems in normal, healthy people.

We do love our cars in Los Angeles, and the pollution from these cars is a key cause of our air quality problems. Los Angeles could drastically improve its air quality if more of those cars were plug in vehicles. However there are simply not enough charging stations available for this to be feasible.

As an owner of an all-electric Nissan Leaf, I know all too well that there is a lack of charging stations. I have personally experienced range anxiety. There have been times when driving home I have had to turn off the lights, radio, and air conditioning to ensure that I can make it home because there were no charging stations nearby. Los Angeles is one of the largest consumers of elective vehicles in the country. But, I believe people would buy more electric vehicles if charging stations were readily available.

Today, I am introducing the Electric Charging Advancement Reform Act to encourage more electric vehicles on our roads, which will result in clean air improvements and energy independence. This is an act integral to revolutionizing the accessibility of plug-in electric

vehicles (PEVs) to potential drivers. My bill would reauthorize the electric vehicle recharging property credit for full electric and fuel cell vehicles which will make available to both consumers and businesses a tax credit of up to $100,000 for the installation of charging stations.

No one driving a gas-powered car has to worry about finding a gas station before they get to their destination. Let us make sure that charging stations are just as easily accessible and convenient as the gas stations that are at every major intersection in our cities and off our major freeways.

INTRODUCTION OF TAX RETURN PREPARER ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I introduced, along with my colleagues Reps. ROBERT "BOBBY" SCOTT, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON and CAROLYN MALONEY, H.R. 1609, the Tax Return Preparer Accountability Act, which would provide explicit authority for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to regulate tax return preparers.

As we near April 15th, millions of taxpayers will pay someone to help them fill out their tax returns. Many of these tax preparers are honest and trustworthy. But, unfortunately, too many of them take advantage of their customers or help their customers engage in tax fraud themselves.

In Memphis, my Congressional district, a company named Mo' Money Taxes was caught charging taxpayers deceptive and outrageous fees and cheating them out of their refunds. The company also helped some customers prepare fraudulent returns that claimed bogus deductions and cheated the public of needed tax revenue. Fortunately, the Department of Justice has shut down the tax preparer company but there are many businesses just like them cheating taxpayers and the government alike.

The IRS issued rules in 2011 regulating the tax return preparer industry by requiring them to register with the IRS and meet certain education and testing standards. However, a federal court held that the IRS did not have the authority under existing law to issue these regulations and they could not come into effect.

That's why I introduced the Tax Return Preparer Accountability Act because it's important that anyone who assists in filing federal taxes is sufficiently trained and maintain a certain level of professional conduct.

I hope that Congress will quickly act on this bill to ensure that these dishonest business practices cannot continue, and protect the pocketbooks of middle-class families.

A TRIBUTE TO JOSHUA NORTON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Joshua Norton for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Joshua has the determination and drive to be successful in anything he does, and his exemplary work as Vice President for Commercial Lending at West Bank is a testament to that. Joshua utilizes his abilities to connect people to move them towards a common goal not only in his professional life but also in his free time. Joshua spends his off time serving others on the Make-A-Wish Iowa board of directors. Joshua's outstanding work ethic and dedication to service, both professionally and personally, makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Joshua in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Joshua on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, April 10th of this year will mark the 36th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This important legislation has defined the relationship between our two countries and led to one of our most stable and reliable democratic alliances.

Today, Taiwan is an important strategic partner, providing a first line of defense for our interests in the Pacific and deterring aggression from countries in the region. This is why it is so important that we do what we can to support Taiwan's military capabilities.

Taiwan has also developed into an economic powerhouse over the last three decades. Its rapidly growing economy has allowed it to become one of the United States largest trading partners. In fact, Taiwan's imports of American goods exceeded $36 billion in 2012, a number that continues to grow every year. Many Hoosiers take advantage of this robust trade relationship, helping to build Indiana's economy and create good paying jobs.

Since coming to Congress, I have had an opportunity to travel to Taiwan and to interact with many Taiwanese-Americans. I appreciate their friendship and hospitality. On its 36th anniversary, I am pleased that the TRA continues to guide U.S.-Taiwan relations so we can further strengthen this important partnership.

HONORING MARY E. COLEMAN

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Black History Month this year, I am honored to reflect on the everyday contributions African-Americans have made across the nation, and specifically within my district in The Bronx. It is with great admiration that I stand before you today to honor Ms. Mary E. Coleman for her many years of tireless work to improve the lives of our community residents.

Originally hailing from Mississippi, Ms. Coleman has had a decorated career as an administrator in the worlds of finance and higher education. Ms. Coleman began her career as the Vice President of Finance and Administration for a multi-corporate designer, manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of men's and women's apparel. Ms. Coleman went on to join the City University of New York (CUNY) as a Dean at Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, served as Deputy Executive Director of American Field Service Intercultural Programs, Inc., a 55-nation student/teacher international exchange program. She subsequently held a senior management position in Mitchell Titus, LLP, the largest minority-controlled certified public accounting and management consulting firm in the country. In each of her roles, it is clear that Ms. Coleman appreciated the value of investing resources in diversity, and used her platforms to help others appreciate the value of diverse human capital.

Returning to higher education, Ms. Coleman joined the Senior Staff at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College to serve as the Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration. She is a dedicated and long-serving CUNY administrator. Most recently, she served for 17 years as the Vice President for Finance and Administration locally at Bronx Community College (BCC). Before working at BCC, Ms. Coleman served as the Dean of Administration and Finance at Hostos Community College, another strong Bronx institution. Through the support, leadership, and vision of Mary Coleman, Bronx Community College has grown into the remarkable institution it is today. She has made a career of ensuring that unprivileged individuals have access to life changing programs, and Ms. Coleman's lasting legacy will live on through each student whose life was improved on account of possibilities and opportunities made possible at Bronx Community College.

Today, Ms. Coleman currently sits on the Executive Board of the National Council of Black American Affairs and the American Association of Community College's Global Commission on Global Education. I am proud to know that someone like Mary E. Coleman has given so much of herself to improving the lives of residents in our community, and I am confident that she will continue her important work.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Ms. Mary E. Coleman for her ongoing commitment to improving the lives of others and her tireless efforts to uplift our community.

TRIBUTE TO NICOLAS JEFFRESS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Nicolas Jeffress attends Dawson High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

In 1776, we fought for our right to self-govern, and every day men and women give their lives to protect and defend those rights. But now we are facing a new threat to our independence, apathy. Every day people willingly give up their right to govern and wonder why their community is not reaching its potential. Just like in other parts of life though, building a great community takes work.

During my sophomore year, many students felt the pressure of both rigorous course loads and class rank competition, and some resorted to cheating. This situation was complicated by the fact that the penalties for cheating were not consistently enforced and when they were enforced, they were light relative to the potential gain. As I talked to more students and teachers, I became concerned that Dawson had a culture of academic dishonesty, much like professional cycling, where some felt cheating was necessary just to keep up. I could not let this be my school's culture.

I started working on how to address this problem by talking to other students. Although many were frustrated with the dishonesty, they did not think anything could be done to fix it. Fortunately, thirty students did care! When we met, we talked not only about the problem but how we could change it. Over the next three weeks we developed specific proposals around testing procedures, penalties and education. We took these proposals forward to our principal and even demonstrated how students were cheating using tools like camera pens. We also spoke to the Pearland ISD school board about our work at Dawson and provided them the proposals as well. Although the early conversations were sometimes difficult, we started to have an impact.

Over the summer between my sophomore and junior year, Pearland ISD wrote a new honor code that went into place at both Dawson and Pearland High Schools. As I read through the honor code during packet pick-up, I could see many of our recommendations almost verbatim. I thought of Yoda, ''Do or do not. There is no try''; I'm glad I decided to do. I got involved in my local community and changed my school.

As I become an adult, the political process will allow me to become even more involved in my community. During my Dad's school board campaign, I had the opportunity to meet many great public servants. We are so fortunate to have so many great people working hard on our community. However, with only 5% of people choosing to vote in local elections, I doubt we are reaching our full potential. We need more people willing to be involved, developing solutions to problems, bringing new ideas. Communities form districts, which form states, which make up a nation; all political movements start at grass root local communities and cascade to the national government. I certainly intend to do my part to honor the sacrifices so many have made to build the country we have today.

A TRIBUTE TO AMY OSTRANDER CROLL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Amy Ostrander Croll for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Amy has the determination and drive to be successful in all that she does and her exemplary work with Community Youth Concepts is a testament to that. As Executive Director, she is responsible for moving the organization forward—taking risks when necessary so that the goals of the organization can be achieved. In her free time Amy enjoys biking and serving others. She donates her time to the Urbandale Community Action Network and the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. In all aspects of her life, Amy is an example of the hard work and service that makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Amy in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Amy on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

RECOGNIZING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRESNO HIGH SCHOOL SENATE CLUB

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in recognition of the Fresno High School Senate Club. Fresno High School was founded in 1889 as the City of Fresno's first high school. The following year, the Fresno High School Senate was established on March 21, 1890.

The Foundation of the Senate is modeled after the United States Senate, with each member representing a state in our Union. Admission to the Fresno High School Senate requires a majority vote of the body for academically qualified candidates who are sponsored by an active member of the club. Candidates are required to attend at least three club meetings and present a speech to complete the application process. Upon admission, a U.S. state is permanently assigned to the new senator, who is then invited to declare a political party preference. The Fresno High School Senate is primarily a debate club and has the distinction of being the oldest continuously active high school club in the United States.

The Senate is governed by both a Constitution and bylaws and it follows parliamentary procedure set by Robert's Rules of Order. The organization instills knowledge of the law making process of our national government. Furthermore, the public speaking debate society addresses current issues of world, national, and community interest and concern.

The Fresno High School Senate Club meets every week on the Fresno High School Campus and is guided by a faculty member known as the ''President of the United States.'' Active Senators, in addition to being top academic achievers, also perform hundreds of hours of service to the greater Fresno community.

Over many decades, the Senate has produced dozens of outstanding alumni known as, ''Honorary Senators,'' who achieved distinguished careers in law, medicine, business, education, government, architecture, technology, the military, and other notable occupational fields.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Fresno High School Senate on the significant milestone of its 125th Anniversary as I extend my best wishes for the organization's continued success in shaping the lives of young students, creating model citizens and nurturing the studies of United States history and government.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN MOCKLER

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleagues in the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, Congressman PETE AGUILAR, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, Congressman XAVIER BECERRA, Congressman AMI BERA, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS, Congressman TONY CÁRDENAS, Congresswoman JUDY CHU, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS, Congressman MARK DESAULNIER, Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO, Congressman SAM FARR, Congressman JOHN GARAMENDI, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN, Congressman MIKE HONDA, Congressman JARED HUFFMAN, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, Congressman TED LIEU, Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN, Congressman ALAN LOWENTHAL, Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI, Congressman JERRY MCNERNEY, Congresswoman GRACE NAPOLITANO, Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI, Congressman

SCOTT PETERS, Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Congressman RAUL RUIZ, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ, Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, Congressman ADAM SCHIFF, Congressman BRAD SHERMAN, Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, Congressman ERIC SWALWELL, Congressman MARK TAKANO, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, Congresswoman NORMA TORRES, Congressman JUAN VARGAS, and Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, to honor the extraordinary life of Mr. John Mockler, who passed away on March 3, 2015. Mockler was one of the most influential voices on California education policy for more than 40 years, where he advised hundreds of Democratic and Republican lawmakers on public school funding. His legacy of public service, and support for public education, will impact California's public education system for many generations.

Born on October 2, 1941 in Chicago and raised in Harbison Canyon near San Diego, Mockler was the son of William and Jane Mockler and had three sisters: Elsie, Lynn and Virginia. Mockler attended the University of San Francisco at 16, and subsequently graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara with a degree in Economics. A lifelong Democrat, Mockler cut his teeth in San Francisco politics, where he became active in union politics and was the executive director of the Youth Against 14 campaign in 1964. Proposition 14 would have made it legal to discriminate against home buyers on the basis of race.

Mockler is best known as the architect of Proposition 98, the 1988 initiative that established a minimum level of state financial support for public schools at 40 percent of general fund spending. Proposition 98 remains a central feature in state budget negotiations for the past quarter century. His familiarity with the law made him an indispensible advisor to Governors Gray Davis and Jerry Brown as well as legislative leaders including former Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, Mockler's one-time boss.

He is survived by his life partner Carol Farris, two children—Robert and Jessica, five grandchildren Willa, Clara, Sidney, Zachary and Auden, and countless friends and admirers.

Today, the California Democratic Congressional Delegation salutes and honors the life of Mr. John Mockler. Mockler will be remembered for his tenacious support for schools and teachers and his legacy is felt with the enrollment of every kindergartner and the graduation of every senior class. We join all of Mockler's loved ones in celebrating his incredible life. He will be deeply missed.

HONORING GLORIA COLEMAN DOTSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Gloria Coleman Dotson.

Gloria Coleman Dotson grew up and lives in Claiborne County as the oldest of seven children of Curtis Coleman and Ethel Allen in the town Ulysses S. Grant said was "Too Beautiful to Burn." She is a 1973 graduate of Port Gibson High School. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education from Jackson State University in 1977.

After graduation, Ms. Dotson was employed by the Claiborne County Board of Supervisors in the Chancery Clerk's Office. She worked under the supervision of two Chancery Clerks: Mrs. Stella Jennings-Greenwood and Mr. Frank Wilson. She worked in the Chancery Clerk's Office for twenty-five years as Deputy Chancery Clerk prior to being elected Chancery Clerk in 2000. She is currently serving her fourth term as Chancery Clerk.

Ms. Dotson is a member of First Christian Disciples of Christ Church, a choir member and Sunday School Treasurer. She is involved in several civic organizations including: Port Gibson Main Street, MS Cultural Crossroad Gloria Board of Directors, Mississippi Delta Strategic Compact, a member of NAACP and the Chancery Clerk's Association.

Ms. Dotson has been married to Joe Dotson, Jr. for twenty-two years. They are the proud parents of three children: JaBari, JaNetra, and JoKevy. They have an eleven year old granddaughter, KaMeryal and a one year old grandson, KaMari.

The title "Chancery Clerk" does not adequately describe the various duties and responsibilities that Ms. Dotson has attendant to in the office. The Chancery Clerk's Office has a multitude of duties and functions which are governed by an assortment of statutes and court rules, along with following guidelines established either by the State Department of Audit or the Department of Finance and Administration. The Chancery Clerk's position is a four year elected term.

Ms. Dotson often states, "I thank God for allowing me to serve as a Public Official. I love my job. When I'm not serving my constituents, I spend time with my family and friends, work in the yard and reading."

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Gloria Coleman Dotson for her dedication and support to the Claiborne County Community.

CONGRATULATING THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH ON THEIR BICENTENNIAL

HON. BRAD R. WENSTRUP

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the City of Portsmouth on their bicentennial anniversary and celebration.

For 200 years, Portsmouth has stood proudly along the Ohio River, a gateway to the region and a testament to the work ethic of Southern Ohioans.

Since incorporation in 1815, Portsmouth has been an industrial power house. A leader throughout the years in the rail, steel, and notably shoe wear industries, the people of Portsmouth know the value and pride from a hard day's work. They were the backbone of America's industrial boon.

Today, Portsmouth stands firmly with one foot rooted in our shared history and one foot striding into the 21st Century. The well-known flood walls are a towering testament to the storied history of the region and its people, which include panels of the Hopewell culture, the NFL charter team Portsmouth Spartans, and a litany of community leaders throughout the city's history. Famous sons include Roy Rogers and Branch Rickey.

The city is home to Shawnee State University, hosts thousands of cyclists for the Tour of the Scioto River Valley, and celebrates annually at the River Days festival.

I am honored to represent Portsmouth today, an area of the state with such a rich history and strong community. Again, I congratulate Portsmouth on this historic milestone, and I wish the city the very best over their next 200 years.

A TRIBUTE TO BEN NELSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Ben Nelson for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Ben has the determination and talent to be successful in all that he does and his work with Pivot Wealth Strategies LLC is a testament to that commitment. As the President and Cofounder of Pivot Wealth Strategies, Ben is able to pursue a personal passion of his in his professional life. He maintains an active schedule outside work, volunteering and supporting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Iowa.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Ben in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Ben on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT WARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this

great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Robert Ward attends Dawson High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: in your opinion why is it important to be involved in the political process?

Founding fathers like George Washington, Samuel Addams, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Franklin were willing to deny the most powerful nation, navy, and army (The British) in the 1770s. Why? They were tired of abuse and fatly representation that was given to the New England colonies as they argued for fair and equal representation in the British parliament. ''No taxation without representation'' was declared by John Hampden when asked to pay for a shipping tax to the British parliament. He argued that he shouldn't have to pay any takes to the British government when he wasn't event represented in their parliament. The founding fathers noticed and followed suit, declaring independence for America in 1776 after the British government had refused to give equal representation for the colonies. The American Revolution took the lives of 50,000 along with thousands of French and Indian soldiers who fought for the America's ideals. America won the war with Washington's determination, Indian guidance, and new guerrilla warfare. Why was such a conflict pursued? The right to be represented and participate in the political process was why.

Thousands have died and still due to this day to protect every citizen's right to be involved in the political process. The ability to be involved gives every citizen in the country their ''bite''. It is the easiest way to make an impact on government and the nation short of being in the government administration. By simply participating: voting, suggesting legislation, and being involved in organizations like the congressional youth advisory council everyone can have a voice, a privilege that has been fought dearly for, and that few posses. It is crucial for those who want to have an impact to be a part of the political process.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANT WORK OF KA VOICE

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I am excited today to recognize the very important work of KA Voice. KA Voice is working tirelessly to enfranchise and empower the more than 67,000 ethnic Koreans residing in Illinois. Through voter registration efforts, community forums, debates, and policy engagement, this non-partisan group is working to give Korean-Americans a strong voice in Washington, D.C., statehouses, and in local governments.

I have long made it a priority to work with our local Korean-American community to ensure that they have a strong voice in Congress. KA Voice has made it easier for me to hear and act on of the community's priorities. Whether it is on the issue of immigration reform, a stronger economy or better relations with South Korea, KA Voice has helped me set an agenda in Congress that is moving our country forward.

This Saturday, March 28, KA Voice will hold its second annual national conference in Northbrook, Illinois. The conference will focus on civic engagement, which is at the heart of our democracy. I want to personally thank KA Voice President Charlie Jong Jung and his team of young leaders for bringing this important conference to Illinois and for their efforts in building a national organization or Korean-Americans.

CONGRATULATING THE LAKE OCONEE ACADEMY SCHOOL

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to pay tribute to Lake Oconee Academy: a charter school based in Greensboro, Georgia, that was named one of the U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Schools in 2014 and was named one of the best 50 elementary schools in the United States.

Today, I want to commend Lake Oconee Academy and its vision for educational excellence and community involvement. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the National Blue Ribbon Award is given to the schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. In my opinion, the Lake Oconee Academy is more than just a scholastic entity. It is a place of opportunity and hope.

Far from being a stopping point where students survive until a better opportunity avails itself, the academy is a place where character and responsibility is held in high regard and taught daily. Students are taught the values they need to go on and succeed in life.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I congratulate Lake Oconee Academy on all of its many accolades and congratulate the students, and staff for all their fantastic endeavors.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF AL ROTH

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a leader in our South Florida community, Mr. Al Roth.

It is with a heavy heart that I learned of his passing and I join other Floridians in mourning his death. Mr. Roth was a longtime Florida citrus farmer, hotelier, grocer and pioneer of both Broward County and the Town of Davie, which is located in the heart of Florida's 23rd District. His life is now part of the fabric of our South Florida history and he will be long remembered.

As Al's son Bob, of Bob Roth's New River Groves, said, ''He was an icon, a machine. He just didn't give up. He was like three people. Nobody worked like him . . . He would set up a display and come back the next day and change it. He said you have to let people know things are changing.''

For as much as things changed throughout the decades, some things always remained the same, like Al's friendly smile, his kindness and his generosity.

His personality was larger than life, and always reflected the wonderful man that he was. And I know firsthand that he always made his customers and my constituents feel welcomed, happy and valued. He genuinely cared for all those around him, whether family, a customer or a passerby.

At 104 years young, Al was a mainstay of our South Florida landscape. Although Al is no longer with us, his legacy lives on in his family and the institutions he helped found for all who live in and visit Florida. I hope they will long serve as a tribute to him and the indelible mark he left on our community.

INTRODUCTION FOR THE ROBIN DANIELSON FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCT SAFETY ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as a long-time advocate of women's health, I am proud to reintroduce legislation that would address unanswered health concerns regarding the safety of feminine hygiene products through the Robin Danielson Feminine Hygiene Product Safety Act.

American women spend well over $2 billion per year on feminine hygiene products and the average woman will use over 16,800 tampons and pads over the course of her lifetime. Yet, despite this large investment and high usage, there has been limited research on the potential health risks these products may pose to women.

Recent independent studies led by women's health organizations have shown that some feminine hygiene products could contain additives that may be harmful to a woman's health. While the FDA requires tampon manufacturers to monitor dioxin levels, this information is not made readily available to the public and much is still unknown about the cumulative adverse effects potentially posed by other components contained in these products. American women deserve the ability to make informed decisions when purchasing products that could affect their health.

It is time to move past menstrual health being taboo and ensure that accurate information with regards to women's health is being collected and is readily accessible. That is why I am reintroducing the Robin Danielson Feminine Hygiene Product Safety Act which directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to research whether the presence of dioxin, synthetic fibers, and other chemical additives like chlorine and fragrances pose any health risks to women who use feminine hygiene products. This bill emphasizes the need for more research and an understanding of additives in all feminine hygiene products.

I urge my colleagues to pass this important legislation that directs substantial, scientific research to be conducted in order to best protect the health of America's women.

COMMENDING THE CITIZENS' COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE FBI

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to recognize the efforts of eight individuals whose actions in 1971 helped uncover the illegal actions by some working on behalf of our own government to suppress the civil rights of many of our citizens. These eight individuals were members of a group who called themselves the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI (the ''Citizens' Commission''). The Citizens' Commission was responsible for obtaining documents from the Media, Pennsylvania office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that helped prompt the national debate about the intelligence community's domestic surveillance programs. The ensuing discussion ultimately led to the first congressional investigations of all intelligence agencies and to the establishment of the first congressional intelligence oversight committees.

We know the names of six of these individuals: William C. Davidon, Keith Forsyth, Bonnie Raines, John C. Raines, Robert Williamson, and Judi Feingold. Two members of the Citizens' Commission whose actions are equally commendable and contributed just as significantly to the cause and legacy of the Citizens' Commission have chosen to remain in anonymity.

On the evening of March 8, 1971, the members of the Citizens' Commission entered the satellite office of the FBI in Media, Pennsylvania, and left having taken nearly all of the documents they found within the office. In the following months, the members of the Citizens' Commission repeatedly mailed to reporters at several news publications documents detailing the contours of our intelligence agencies' programs that spied on American citizens and the vast length to which our civil rights had been violated for decades in the name of J. Edgar Hoover's desire to quell political dissent. These programs included COINTELPRO, or Counter Intelligence Program, a series of covert and often illegal programs conducted by the FBI targeted at disrupting domestic political organizations. It has been said that the intent of COINTELPRO was to accomplish its goals by destroying lives and ruining reputations.

The revelations made by the Citizens' Commission sparked a national debate concerning these programs as well as the importance of civil and privacy rights to all Americans. The news reports generated by the documents that had been made public helped form the basis for creation of the congressional committees that investigated intelligence agencies in 1975. Hearings held by the Senate committee, known as the Church Committee for its chairman, the late Senator Frank Church of Idaho, revealed the wide scope and impact of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI on American life throughout his nearly half century as director of the Bureau. Testimony before the committee revealed that he had secretly used his power to destroy individuals and organizations whose opinions and purposes he disliked. He secretly punished civil rights and antiwar activists and also average Americans who expressed their dissent in letters to newspapers or by participating in demonstrations. In the Bureau's harassment operations—as opposed to law enforcement or intelligence gathering—officials of the FBI secretly operated as prosecutor, judge and jury against people Hoover regarded as subversive. Thousands of people in government and education lost their jobs as a result of unverified files created by FBI informers that were used against people who were not permitted to face their accusers.

From the beginning of the Vietnam war, Hoover made himself the watchdog of dissent against the war—dissent by average Americans as well as Members of Congress who questioned war policy. In August 1964, when only two senators, Senator Ernest Gruening, Democrat from Alaska, and Senator Wayne Morse, Democrat from Oregon, opposed the Vietnam War authorization legislation—known as the Gulf of Tonkin resolution—the FBI director regarded their votes as subversive. Agents collected the names, and started files on people who sent telegrams to Senator Morse expressing support for his stand against the authorization bill. Two years after the resolution was passed, when Senator J. William Fullbright, Democrat from Arkansas, convened hearings to assess the progress of the war, Hoover placed Fullbright under surveillance to determine if he was a communist or dupe of communists.

The Church Committee's extensive final report stated:

''Many of the techniques used would be intolerable in a democratic society even if all the targets had been involved in violent activity, but COINTELPRO went far beyond that. The unexpressed major premise of the programs was that a law enforcement agency has the duty to do whatever is necessary to combat perceived threats to the existing social and political order.''

The Church Committee further concluded, ''Too many people have been spied upon by too many government agencies, and too much information has been collected.''

As a result of the actions of the Citizens' Commission, the resulting national discussion about these issues led to important changes to our government's domestic surveillance operations. The FBI's policies and practices were evaluated and reformed with respect to how the agency addressed domestic security threats, and the Department of Justice instituted investigative guidelines on domestic intelligence gathering.

Because of the important contribution the Citizens' Commission made to the public awareness and debate concerning domestic surveillance, national security, civil rights, and privacy, these eight individuals deserve our recognition as some of them have recently made their identity known. The identities of six of them and the impact of their non-violent act of resistance recently became known in the documentary film 1971, directed by Johanna Hamilton, and in the book The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI, written by Betty Medsger.

While we continue to discuss the proper use of domestic surveillance techniques today, particularly as technology evolves in ways that could not have been foreseen during the 1970s, we must remain vigilant to abuses of power, even if done with the stated goal of protecting the public. May we strengthen our resolve to protect the rights these individuals cherished and helped preserve over forty years ago.

HONORING AUSTIN HERNANDEZ

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Austin Hernandez attends Foster High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: select an important event that has occurred in the past 15 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

THE STEPPING STONE TO DESIGNER BABIES.

Imagine a world in which a couple could choose the gender of their baby. There would be no more suspense about the baby's gender. Before conception, people would know and would be able to give themselves adequate time to prepare for the arrival of their new bundle of joy. Well, this is a process that actually exists; it's called gender selection. On May 31st, 2012 The U.S. House of Representatives voted on whether or not to pass a national Ban on the use of abortion to eliminate an unborn child because of an undesired sex. This fast track procedure was not passed, but still has hope. If it were passed then the gender selection could be promoted and this reoccurring problem would not exist. Over the Past decade Gender selection has become a common practice used by many couples around the world.

The world today is not perfect, and neither are its people. Heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, and many other diseases run ramped in children, and one can't really prevent it. But what if it were preventable? With gender selection, this is possible. According to the Center for Human Reproduction (CHR), ''In some cases, the so-called ''sex-linked diseases'' are inherited via the mother but only male offspring are affected (muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, etc.).'' For example, because hemophilia only affects males, a woman with hemophilia has the disease but it does not affect her. However if she were to become pregnant with a boy, the disease would then affect him. With gender selection she would be able to save her baby boy from a life of problems. This process has led to fewer abortions and increased the health of children, which in turn could virtually increase the life expectancy of the U.S.

There are not only health reasons, but also psychological reasons for gender selection. The CHR states that ''a single female may feel better equipped having a daughter than a son; parents who lost a child may feel a strong need for a child of the same gender.'' If one were a single parent, wouldn't they feel better with a child of the same gender? They also claim that parent's whose children have passed away, may have the desire for another child of the same gender. In fact,

many parents are deciding upon this option as a way to help them move on and assist with the grieving process.

Another negative effect of gender selection is the opening of new doors and new possibilities when choosing a gender. How far could it go? Maybe as far as choosing hair color, eye color, intelligence, height, and ability, who knows? People will do anything for perfection. This is basically ''commodifying children'', says Gender Selection of Babies, and this could lead to a whole revolution in baby making. People wouldn't be unique anymore; the natural process of development would become obsolete. The unforeseen repercussions of gender selection could further harm society.

Gender selection, although it can be helpful, has more negative effects than positive and should not be a decision made lightly. Gender Selection has made the country think having a baby in a different way. Now for many having a child could turn into some sort of shopping spree for the newest and best item/baby. However, this process has helped Americans and many others around the world choose the sex they want. Not only has it also allowed families, who didn't believe it was possible, to have children but it has also has given them the choice to save a life and chose what they want. Gender selection has changed America, and will continue to help stop the abortion of unwanted children.

A TRIBUTE TO MANDI McREYNOLDS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Mandi McReynolds for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Mandi has the determination and drive to be successful in all that she does, and her exemplary work with Drake University is a testament to that. As the Director of Community Engagement and Service Learning, Mandi is passionate about going the extra mile. In all aspects of her life Mandi's example of hard work and service makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Mandi in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud her for utilizing her talents to better both her community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Mandi on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

HONORING MR. DONALD GREEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Mr. Donald Green.

A Coahoma County native, Donald Green is a dedicated and seemingly tireless community leader and business owner who has committed his career to creating economic and educational opportunities for farmworkers and families in the Mississippi Delta.

As Executive Director of Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Worker Opportunities, Inc., Mr. Green leads a staff of 22 providing job training and placement services to thousands of individuals every year. His organization also hosts a monthly food distribution and offers a civilian relief distribution staging area following weather emergencies and disasters. Currently, his team is transforming an existing warehouse and property into a farmers market, commercial kitchen, produce aggregation and food hub to raise incomes for dozens of limited-resource and beginning farmers. Prior to becoming the organization's chief executive, he was its Chief Financial Officer for 21 years.

He served as one of three Associate Tax Commissioners for the State of Mississippi and is the second African American in the State of Mississippi to do so. An accountant, Mr. Green also owns and operates an independent accounting service business.

Throughout his career, Mr. Green has been an ambassador between working people and local businesses. His board service includes: Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce; member of National Exchange Club; member of Clarksdale Industrial Foundation; member of Coahoma Community Development Organization; and member of Clarksdale/Coahoma County Airport Board. He has served as a State Treasurer of the Magnolia Council; Vice President of The Delta Council; member, Delta State Alumni University Association; former President of National Alumni Association; Founder and former President for Mississippi Delta Strategic Compact; Treasurer for Mississippi Blues Foundation; former President of Friendship Community Federal Credit Union. He was recognized in 2004 as Delta Regional Minority Businessman of the Year, inducted into the Delta State University Alumni Hall of Fame in 2009, and received the Freedom Team Appreciation Certificate for Services to Members of the Armed Forces. He is a member of the Clarksdale Rotary Club.

Committed to making higher education more accessible, Mr. Green became president of Delta State National Alumni Association in 1995 and led a five million dollar capital campaign. That funding has more than doubled in the years since and has a significant endowment. He has served on the university's foundation board. In 2001, he was appointed to a six-year term on the Mississippi State Board of Community and Junior Colleges. He is co-Founder and President of the Ronald Hoss Bennett Foundation, which awards college scholarships to football players from local high schools.

He is known to be a steady, hardworking leader in efforts to increase understanding and build relationships in social and economic diversity. Mr. Green helped negotiate the partnership between Delta State University and Coahoma Community College to purchase the Cutrer Mansion, which has evolved into a continuing education center for history, culture, and the arts. In 2014, he worked with the City of Clarksdale officials, business owners, and community activists to honor the life and work of civil rights leader Aaron Henry with a historical marker on the Mississippi Freedom Trail. He has served on the board of Clarksdale-Coahoma County Library and supports the Delta Blues Museum.

The son of sharecroppers Mr. Sylvester and Aree Green, Mr. Green grew up operating farm equipment in Coahoma County, Mississippi. A graduate of Coahoma Agriculture High School, he earned college degrees from Coahoma Community College and Delta State University. Mr. Green is the first African American to serve as President of Delta State University National Alumni Association.

He and his wife, Nelia, have two sons: Donald, Jr., a biomedical engineer living in Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Adam, a high school student, who participated in Youth Leadership Clarksdale and who is currently a freshman at Delta State University majoring in commercial design.

Mr. Green is Chairman of the Deacon Board and Chairman of the Building Fund at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Jonestown, Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing an amazing Entrepreneur and Economic Developer that has been instrumental in magnifying strides of America's black history.

TRIBUTE TO BRAD ROBBINS

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Corona and Riverside County at large are exceptional. Corona has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent to make their communities a better place to live and work. Brad Robbins is one of these individuals. On April 15, 2015, Brad will be honored for his dedicated service as he ends his tenure as the City of Corona's City Manager.

Brad has worked on behalf of the City of Corona since 1988 and has established himself as a highly regarded leader and active member of the community. Throughout his twenty-eight years of service with the City of Corona, Brad has held a variety of titles including the Department of Water and Power General Manager, Assistant City Manager-Community Development Director, Director of Planning and Assistant City Manager. Due to his success in all of these roles, Brad was then appointed as City Manager in August of 2008. Acting as such, Brad enforced the city ordinances and carried out the policies of the Council through the control and direction of City Departments. During the past seven years, not only did Brad productively navigate the economic recession and the impact on the

City of Corona, but he also encouraged the community to continue to thrive and grow as a leader in Southern California. Numerous Corona City Council members have extensively commended Brad for accomplishing so much during his time as City Manager, most especially because he is such an exceptional person to work with.

In light of all Brad Robbins has done for the community of Corona, I wish him the best as he embarks on his retirement. Brad's tireless passion for the community has contributed immensely to the betterment of Corona, California. I am proud to call Brad a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for his service and salute him as he ends his time as City Manager for the City of Corona.

HONORING KENNETH J. KNUCKLES

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise during this month, dedicated to the celebration of African-Americans who have made great contributions to our nation, to pay tribute to Mr. Kenneth J. Knuckles. I stand before you today to honor Mr. Kenneth J. Knuckles for his many years of compassionate public service and tireless work to improve the lives of our community residents.

Since January of 2003, Mr. Knuckles has served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ), which is the largest of the group of nine original empowerment zones, when counting designated areas in The Bronx. The initial federal investment of $100 million into UMEZ was matched by both the New York State and New York City governments, creating the largest capitalized empowerment zone in the United States. With the mission to reinvigorate distressed communities by utilizing tax incentives and public financing to attract private investment, UMEZ has done that and more. Since 1996, UMEZ has invested more than $230 million in the economy of Upper Manhattan, $140 million of which has occurred under Mr. Knuckles' leadership, leveraged over $1 billion in private capital, and created nearly 9,000 jobs. Kenneth Knuckles has led UMEZ through resounding success over the course of the last decade, and it is his deep understanding for the critical need for true economic empowerment and invigoration that makes him such an outstanding leader.

Mr. Knuckles is a prominent business and civic leader from The Bronx who has distinguished himself over the past two decades as an attorney, and has pursued an extraordinary career as a public servant. The list of his positions is long and distinguished. From 1987 to 1990 Mr. Knuckles served as Deputy Borough President of The Bronx, from 1990 to 1993 he served as Commissioner of the New York City Department of General Services, he once served as Assistant Housing Commissioner, and today he sits as a member of the New York City Planning Commission.

Mr. Kenneth Knuckles is a Bronx native who has dedicated himself to fostering the economic and civic revitalization of families and individuals throughout New York. There are countless government agencies, business owners, and families who have benefitted from Mr. Knuckles' extensive commitment to ensuring that economic vitality and equality are widespread ideals that are transformed into realities. Through his countless achievements and truly selfless service, I am proud to call Mr. Kenneth Knuckles a fellow public servant, and look forward to the great work he will continue to do for the individuals of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Mr. Knuckles for his consistently remarkable dedication to public service and longstanding commitment to improving the lives of New York's residents.

REINTRODUCING THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS HISTORY PROJECT ACT

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to reauthorize the National Women's Rights History Project Act, along with my upstate New York colleagues Representatives RICHARD HANNA, PAUL TONKO, JOHN KATKO and TOM REED. I originally worked with then-Senator Hillary Clinton to pass this bill into law in 2009, but it has not received appropriations since that time. The authorization for the project has expired, and it is vital that Congress pass this reauthorization and ensure that the women who shaped our nation's history and fought for every woman's rights are remembered and honored for generations to come.

The National Women's Rights History Project will establish an auto route linking sites significant to the struggle for women's suffrage, known as the Votes for Women Trail. It will also add to the National Register of "Places Where Women Made History," a variety of historic sites that were home to pivotal moments in our nation's struggle for gender equality. Finally, this Project will establish a public-private partnership network to offer financial and technical assistance for educational programs about the history of the fight for women's rights.

It is fitting that we reintroduce this bill during March, which is Women's History Month. I am especially proud that it was in Rochester, New York where Susan B. Anthony fought so hard for the rights that women throughout this country rely on today. Among her many efforts, Susan B. Anthony established the Equal Rights Association to refute ideas that women were inferior to men and to fight for women's right to vote. She also fought to tear down the walls holding women back from higher education.

In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Mary Ann M'Clintock convened the first women's rights convention at Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York. This event marked the beginning of a 72-year struggle for women's suffrage. During the convention, 68 women and 32 men signed the Declaration of Sentiments, which set out radical notions such as women's freedom to own property, receive an education and earn fair wages.

In 1880, a woman launched a brave petition to be the first female student at the University of Rochester. For almost twenty years, the petition was flatly denied—until 1898, when the University said that women would be allowed if they raised $100,000 for the school. In today's terms, that is equal to $2 million. By June of 1900 a group of women had managed to secure $40,000, and the University decided that women would be allowed to enroll if they could raise another $10,000 by September. Scrambling to reach the new goal, the women were $8,000 short a day before the deadline. With hours remaining, Susan B. Anthony stepped forward and raised $6,000 from friends and family before pledging her own life insurance policy to raise the final $2,000 and throw open the doors of higher education in Rochester. Now, more than 100 years later, the University of Rochester is home to the Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender and Women's Studies—one of the pre-eminent educational institutions in the world.

These are the stories of incredible courage, dedication, and unyielding belief in equality that the National Women's Rights History Project is designed to honor. The fight for women's rights and equality still continues today. It was just 93 years ago that women were finally granted the right to vote. The struggle for women's suffrage was never easy and it is vital that we honor the sacrifices and commitment of those who blazed the trail that led us here today, where a record number of women serve in the 114th Congress.

Reauthorizing the National Women's Rights History Project Act will ensure that this important civil rights story is celebrated for generations to come. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and reauthorize the National Women's Rights History Project.

HONORING THE STEVENSON HIGH SCHOOL MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ROBERT J. DOLD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Stevenson High School men's basketball team for their Illinois state championship title, becoming the first Lake County high school to win a Class 4A state championship title in men's basketball.

I want to personally recognize the players on the team: Connor Cashaw, Cameron Green, Justin Smith, Parker Nichols, Joshua McMullen, Ryan Rosenbaum, Matt Johnson, Ryuji Aoki, Jalen Brunson, Radek Gralak, Benjamin Rodheim, Jordan Newman, Jordan Hodes, Raymond Sullivan, Kevin Yang, and Nick Dillon.

I also want to recognize Head coach Pat Ambrose; Assistant Coach John Taylor; Volunteer Coaches Kevin Stineman and Paul Swan; and Managers Deborah Blount, Jack Greeley, Nathan Halterman and Matthew Solway.

This accomplishment speaks volumes to the players' dedication, hard work, and perseverance. Stevenson High School's win, however, is not just a victory for the players and the school; it is a victory for our entire community.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHABOT COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize and congratulate the Chabot College women's basketball team on a remarkable championship run that ended with the Gladiators bringing home the first place trophy for the California Community College Athletic Association women's state basketball championship.

On Sunday, March 22, the Gladiators of Chabot gave Mt. San Antonio College their first loss of the year in the championship game. This was the Gladiator's first state championship, but we know that it will not be their last. Prior to this year, Mt. San Antonio had won six of the last ten state championships.

I am proud of the Gladiators for bringing the trophy home to Hayward and Northern California. Since 1998 only one other Northern Californian team has won the championship.

The Gladiators showed grit, determination, and focus in their narrow victory over a tough Mt. San Antonio team. A late three pointer put the Gladiators on top and free throws down the stretch sealed the deal.

Head Coach Mark Anger and his staff have led a truly exemplary group of student athletes for the entirety of the season, finishing with 31 wins and only four loses, and clinching Chabot College's first Coast Conference North Championship in 13 years.

I want to give special recognition to stand out players Morgan Green, who received the State Player of the Year, the MVP Final Four, and the MVP Coast Conference North awards; Alana Simon, who was first team All State, All Tournament Final Four, and fist team All Conference; and Michelle Townsend, who was third team All State, All Tournament Final Four, and first team All Conference.

I wish the best of luck to all of the players and coaching staff of the Chabot College Gladiators.

Go Gladiators!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, during the rollcall votes on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, I was absent after returning to El Paso to meet with representatives from the U.S. Army who are conducting the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA). The SPEA is a formal review of our country's military installations in preparation for a reduction in force that will take the Army from 470,000 active duty soldiers to 420,000 by the end of the decade.

Had I been present, on rollcall number 136, I would have voted ''no.''

On rollcall number 137, I would have voted ''no.''

On rollcall number 138, I would have voted ''no.''

On rollcall number 139, I would have voted ''yes.''

On rollcall number 140, I would have voted ''no.''

On rollcall number 141, I would have voted ''no.''

On rollcall number 142, I would have voted ''no.''

HONORING TRINNIE 'PITO PITO' BACA

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to honor Trinnie 'Pito Pito' Baca, a living institution and tireless community leader in Belen, New Mexico.

When Pito Pito was three or four years old, he was unexpectedly bitten by thousands of red ants, resulting in convulsions and longstanding health complications. His family has lovingly cared for him ever since, and Pito Pito has shared his own love and compassion with friends and neighbors in Belen for more than 60 years.

In 2013, the City of Belen officially designated December 16 ''Trinnie Baca Day'' and Pito Pito received a key to the city in recognition of his lasting contributions. Residents will tell you that no gesture is too small for Pito Pito to demonstrate his heartfelt appreciation for his beloved community.

Famously known for dropping by local businesses to help sweep the entrance, shaking a stranger's hand, enthusiastically signaling motorists to honk their horns, and attending community events and funerals, Pito Pito's presence is felt in the community. He can always be found with a helping hand and guiding heart. Through his acts of love and kindness, Pito Pito demonstrates the profound impact one individual can have on an entire community.

I join family, friends, and everyone who has met Pito Pito in celebrating his birthday. Our state is richer and fuller because Pito Pito teaches and reminds us to love more, to be selfless, and to always remember that it is the people around us who make life worth living.

HONORING MADISON BRASUELL

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Madison Brasuell attends Foster High School in Richmond, Texas. The essay topic is: In your opinion, what role should government play in our lives?

The role that our government should play in our lives is a question being prodded back and forth between Congressmen and women since the creation of our nation. The answer is subjective, of course, because it is impossible to make 320 million people happy with the system by which our government is ran. The efficacy of our current system, however, is questionable at times and I believe that the government should play a minuet role in our lives.

I should start by noting that we are lucky to live in a country that gives us so much freedom in our daily lives. We are given, in my opinion, the most important facet anyone could ask for: the freedom of speech. With this amendment, we have the liberty to tell our government how we really feel and not fear the consequences for voicing our expressions. Though more often than not our government hears our desires and doesn't do anything about it. They promise to minimally interfere with our lives but then set new regulations on sectors that directly impact our lives and wind up hurting us in the end. It is unacceptable for a government to not genuinely care for its people.

I would ideally choose to live in an environment where there is a strong state government with little national government intervention. The national government's only job should be to provide a system defense, build and maintain highway systems and infrastructure, provide police enforcement, and keep peaceful trade facilitated with other countries. I feel that the government should have no control on our healthcare system, other than impose strict regulations, such as the certification of medical professionals and sanitation laws. I also believe that the government has no business interfering with our money except the protection against monopolies and the strict investment regulations. Other than that, I would say making the national government stronger would be detrimental to our nation.

My utopian government has flaws, as does every plan, but many Americans would agree on making the national government weaker. This would give Americans more freedom of choice because they would have more control over their lives and not have a ''government shadow'' tracking their every move. By having a government focus primarily on its safety of their people, they can focus less on trying to satisfy each individual and more on satisfying the nation as a whole.

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATENT ACT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, on April 10, 2015 the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office will recognize the 225th anniversary of the first U.S. Patent Act.

When President Washington signed the bill that laid the foundation for our patent system, even he could not have foreseen the revolution in technology that was yet to come. During these past two centuries America has been at the forefront of innovation, from the industrial revolution to the telegraph and telephone, to modern computers and the Internet, to a whole new era of mobile computing and personal devices.

American inventors have led the world for centuries in new innovations, from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison to the Wright brothers and Henry Ford. But if we want to continue as leaders in the global economy, we must continue to encourage the innovators of today to develop the technologies of tomorrow.

The fuel that powers the innovative engine that is America is its people. But the rules of the road require regular adjustment, and during the last two hundred years we have seen our patent laws updated and modernized. The most significant reforms took place in 1836, 1952 and most recently in 2011 with the America Invents Act.

Currently, we are continuing these efforts by addressing specific issues concerning abusive patent litigation with the Innovation Act (H.R. 9). This bill puts forward reasonable policies that allow for more transparency and brings fundamental fairness into the patent system and the courts. This bill holds true to the Constitution, our Founders and our promise to future generations that America will continue to lead the world as a fountain for discovery, innovation and economic growth.

So, on this 225th anniversary of the first U.S. Patent Act, America continues to be committed to lead the world in innovation and creativity.

INTRODUCTION OF PRIVATE STUDENT LOAN BANKRUPTCY FAIRNESS ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act, a bill I introduced earlier today with my colleagues DANNY DAVIS and ERIC SWALWELL which would restore fairness in student lending by treating privately issued student loans in bankruptcy the same as other types of private debt.

It is sad enough that our children are increasingly burdened by a crushing weight of student debt. But the fact that students under the weight of this debt are treated so unfairly in bankruptcy is unconscionable.

Before 2005, private student loans issued by for-profit lenders were treated in bankruptcy like most other unsecured consumer debt, such as credit card debt. Our bill will ensure that privately issued student loans will once again be treated like other consumer debt and be dischargeable in bankruptcy.

Private student loans have much in common with credit cards and subprime mortgages. For example, private student loans often have onerous interest rates with no caps and can include exorbitant fees and hidden charges. In addition, many lenders have used aggressive marketing and high-pressure sales tactics to target particularly vulnerable people, namely, young men and women without financial experience, and older Americans seeking to restart their careers in these financially difficult times by pursuing higher education and training.

The harmful features of many private student loans have resulted in a substantial rise in the number of delinquencies.

To make matters worse, private student loans lack the critical consumer protections that come with federal student loans. For instance, private lenders are not required to—and typically do not—provide any of the deferments, income-based repayment plans, cancellation rights, or loan forgiveness programs that are available to federal student loan borrowers.

A hallmark of our Nation's bankruptcy law is to give an honest but unfortunate debtor a chance to obtain meaningful relief. To that end, the law exempts very few types of debt from elimination through the bankruptcy process, and only for principled policy reasons, such as debts for child support, taxes, criminal fines and intentional injury.

Ten years ago, however, Congress changed the bankruptcy law without any substantive analysis so that student loans made by private, for-profit lenders became very difficult to discharge in bankruptcy.

Currently, the Bankruptcy Code prohibits the discharge of private educational debt unless the debtor, in addition to meeting the already stringent requirements for personal bankruptcy, proves that repayment would impose an, "undue hardship," on the debtor and the debtor's dependents. In practice, however, it's hard for a debtor to ever successfully meet this standard.

The current bankruptcy law unjustly punishes hardworking Americans who are simply trying to improve their lives by pursuing a higher education and became victims of predatory private student loan lenders.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau warns that private student loan debt currently exceeds $150 billion, which could undermine the future prospects of millions of Americans.

We can do better.

I urge my colleagues to support the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act.

A TRIBUTE TO GUNNAR OLSON

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Gunnar Olson for being named a 2015 Forty Under 40 honoree by the award-winning central Iowa publication, Business Record.

Since 2000, Business Record has undertaken an exhaustive annual review to identify a standout group of young leaders in the Greater Des Moines Area that are making an impact in their communities and their careers. Each year, forty up-and-coming community and business leaders under 40 years of age are selected for this prestigious honor based on a combined criteria of community involvement and success in their chosen career field. The 2015 class of Forty Under 40 honorees will join an impressive roster of 560 business leaders and growing.

Gunnar has the determination and drive to be successful in all that he does and his exemplary work with the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is a testament to that. As Communications Manager, he utilizes his abilities to create a story with accuracy and interest to achieve the goals of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. In his free time Gunnar likes to dedicate his time to serving others. He volunteers on the Water Works Foundation board and is working to revitalize the Water Works Park. In all aspects of his life, Gunnar's example of hard work and service is what makes our state proud.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Gunnar in the United States Congress and it is with great pride that I recognize and applaud him for utilizing his talents to better both his community and the great state of Iowa. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Gunnar on receiving this esteemed designation, thanking those at Business Record for their great work, and wishing each member of the 2015 Forty Under 40 class a long and successful career.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAFETY, EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS THROUGH PUBLIC INSPECTION ACT OF 2015

HON. DONNA F. EDWARDS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, historically on transportation projects, the construction inspector is the eyes, ears, and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements, and that the materials used will stand the test of time. In short, they are there to ensure that the motoring public gets what they pay for, and that public safety and the public interest are protected.

Outsourcing public inspection functions on State and local surface transportation projects eliminates a representative of the public from the construction site and puts a private company in charge of inspecting the work of the private construction company. This can create potential conflicts of interest. Unfortunately, across the nation, some departments of transportation are outsourcing public inspection with poor results.

That is why I am introducing today the Safety, Efficiency, and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act to require public employees to perform the inspection and related essential public functions on all state and local transportation projects. This bill is intended to ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted, and projects are delivered in a timely manner.

HONORING MS. PAM CHATMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable public servant, Ms. Pam Chatman.

For as long as Pam Chatman can remember, she's been coming in first. She was the first of 3 children born to parents in the heart of the poverty-stricken Mississippi Delta. She

was the first of her siblings to graduate from college. She was the first African American Woman to steer a course through the chaos of a broadcast news career to achieve the position of News Director at WABG.

But little did Pam know in 2006, when she became News Director, she was achieving yet another first: Mississippi's first-ever female African-American News Director, an honor she wears proudly.

Recently the Tru TV network chronicled Pam's seemingly unlikely journey from poverty to power, which is its hit new reality series "Breaking Greenville". Pam's starring role in that show underscores her passion, not just for her profession, but for the people who work for her as anchors, reporters and producers. Kids right out of college, who are hungry to learn the ropes of an often cut-throat career, find comfort in Pam's approach to leadership and management.

Pam was raised up in Shaw, Mississippi in a small rural community outside of the city limits called "Choctaw" a dirt-poor town of about less than 2-thousand people that sits in the heart of Bolivar County. Her grandmother, Marie Fly, raised her, and while poverty pulled at every corner of their lives, Pam relishes her adolescent years, coming of age in the Deep South. From its rich farming heritage, to its lakes and rivers teeming with catfish, to its red-clay hillsides that give a hint of color to an otherwise difficult existence, the Mississippi Delta to this day holds Pam's heart.

Pam graduated from Shaw high school in 1988 and enrolled in Rust College, one of Mississippi's oldest and most prestigious colleges for African-Americans.

Pam pledged to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated, the first inter-collegiate Greek-letter sorority established for Black college. Pam graduated from Rust College in 1994 with a degree in Broadcasting Mass Communication, and returned to the Delta, degree in hand, with her heart set on making a difference close to home. She landed her first television job at Greenville's WXVT where she worked as a Production Assistant and then later moved to the Newsroom. She eventually went to work for WXVT's competitor, WABG, where she worked her way up from Assignment Manager to ultimately News Director, a position she's held for 10 years.

Her notoriety as Mississippi's first female African-American News Director also convinced the state legislators to dedicate a portion of Highway 61 in her honor and to proclaim January 18th as Pam Chatman Day.

In addition to leading a winning news team, Pam is a tireless community volunteer and advocate for teens and young women. She's also a motivational speaker, teaching women of all ages to accept and appreciate their uniqueness within the human race. She especially has a big heart for women who have come from small rural communities and are victims of abuse and drugs.

Yes, Pam Chatman is indeed a woman of firsts: the first to volunteer when there's a need; the first to offer comfort when someone is hurting; a first-class example of what a little faith and a lot of love can accomplish.

Pam also has a Mentoring, Consulting and Training Organization; the organization believes that every person you meet is a Diamond in the Rough. The organization provides workshops to educate and empower teens to get an education; strive for success; and to let no one define their dreams or destiny. The organization provides food and clothing to needy families. Once a month Pam herself does random acts of kindness where she pays for people's groceries or their utility bill. Yes, she is a servant determined to impact everyone she meets in life with a smile or an act of kindness. The organization has a doll called the PChat Doll that has a curriculum that comes along with it to teach young girls to love the skin they're in as well to deter bullying. The focus of the curriculum is Character Education, Literacy and Parental Involvement.

Pam does consultant work for the Mississippi Department of Education Federal 21-Century Program's after school projects. In addition, Pam is also an entrepreneur. Pam has a cosmetics and spa line to enhance women of color and beauty called "Boss Lady PChatman" which was developed to assist in healing the totality of a woman from her inner beauty to her outer beauty.

Pam loves to help women break the chain of hurt and pain. So, she wrote a monologue gospel play entitled "Lord Show Me How to Heal My Scars". The play allows women from all walks of life to share their story through testimonials and songs.

Pam is the daughter of Louise Henry and the late Joseph Henry and has three siblings: Joseph, Jr., III; Evelyn and special niece Karris Henry, which she is assisting her family in raising.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing an amazing News Director, Actor, Motivational Speaker, Author, Entrepreneur, Philanthropist who has been instrumental in magnifying strides of America's black history.

TRIBUTE TO MARSHALL FOSTER

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share them with my House colleagues.

Marshall Foster attends Dawson High School in Pearland, Texas. The essay topic is: select an important event that has occurred in the past 15 years and explain how that event has changed our country.

In 2001, one day changed our nation forever. The World Trade Center twin towers in New York City stood tall on September 10th, and were no more on September 11th. This terrorist attack did exactly what its name implies: it placed a feeling of terror into every American heart. The tragedy of September 11th put the American spirit to the test, and the greatest country in the world proved that it is not a country that can be brought down. The United States showed its patriotism, strength, and courage by responding in a way that the cowardly terrorists did not expect. We did not fall, but stood strong and took the fight to our enemies. America was injured that day, but the American people grew stronger and sent a powerful message through patriotic action to those at home and abroad.

Americans were moved by the courage of the first responders on 9/11. The heroic actions of firefighters, policemen, and civilians are those which should be exemplified by every American. These people set the standard for American patriotism as they ran into burning buildings to save lives. In addition, our strength was demonstrated by ordinary citizens on United Airlines Flight 93 as they used their last moments to protect their country. Their counterattack caused the plane to crash before it could reach its target. The heroism of all of these Americans bolstered patriotism and strengthened our nation.

On the evening of September 11th, President George W. Bush sent a message to the world displaying the strength of the United States and sending chills down the backs of our enemies. He declared "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America . . . they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted . . . because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining". Remembering Bush's words and the attacks of 9/11, our country brought war straight to those who attacked us. This strength has changed the way Americans feel and has sparked my desire to join the United States Military to defend our great nation. Although the terrorist attacks took the lives of many, America has grown stronger as we fight back against those who threaten our freedoms.

Most Americans were not in New York City on that horrifying day. As Americans learned of the horror that befell our country, the feeling of security that had blanketed us quickly faded. Fear washed over our citizens as the new reality that our enemies could reach us at home set in. Americans who had not given much thought to safety began to appreciate the need for strengthened national security and our military. President Bush spoke these words at Ground Zero, letting all Americans know that we must fight to protect the freedom so many had taken for granted: "I can hear you! The rest of the world hears you! And the people . . . who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon!" It was at that moment that a burning patriotism was rekindled in our country. America would never be the same.

RECOGNIZING MATT McLEMORE

HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate my friend Matt McLemore for twenty-five years of dedicated service to WTIM radio in my hometown of Taylorville, Illinois. For nearly three decades, Matt has been an integral part of WTIM's commitment to bringing news to the Central Illinois community, serving as the host for the station's morning news show.

Matt first began at WTIM as a news director for the station in 1990, and shortly after began his role as the WTIM Morning Show host, where he became a household name to many

of his listeners. In my years in Congress, I have had the pleasure to be featured on Matt's program a number of times to discuss the work I do in Washington on behalf of the many Central Illinoisans that tune into his show. To honor Matt and his time with WTIM, the station will celebrate ''Matt McLemore Day'', an all-day, on-air party on April 2, 2015.

Matt, I thank you for your time with WTIM, your impact on the Taylorville community, and your service to thousands across Central Illinois. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1959–S2008.

Senate continued in the session that began on Thursday, March 26, 2015. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Measures Introduced: Twenty-seven bills and eight resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 868–894, and S. Res. 116–123. **(See next issue.)**

Measures Reported:

S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020.

S. 665, 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.

(See next issue.)

Measures Considered:

Budget Resolution: Senate continued consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1960–S2008, continued next issue.**

Adopted:

By 61 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. 98), Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 798, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation to allow Americans to earn paid sick time. **Pages S1960, S1986**

By a unanimous vote of 100 yeas (Vote No. 99), Moran Amendment No. 356, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing health care to veterans who reside more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides the care sought by the veteran. **Pages S1960, S1987**

Collins Amendment No. 810, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing access to higher education for low-income Americans through the Federal Pell Grant program.

Pages S1969–70, S1987–88

Wyden (for Murray) Amendment No. 1026, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to transparency health premium billing. **Page S1988**

By 56 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 102), Scott Amendment No. 692, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to transparency in health premium billing. **Page S1989**

By 58 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 103), Blunt/Thune Amendment No. 928, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to protect the United States from an energy tax. **Pages S1989–90**

By 54 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. 105), Vitter Amendment No. 515, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to requiring the Federal Government to allow states to opt out of Common Core without penalty. **Pages S1990–91**

Bennet Amendment No. 947, to ensure that small businesses are provided relief as part of tax reform by permanently increasing the maximum amount of the section 179 small business expensing allowance to $1,000,000 and the investment limitation to $2,500,000 and indexing them both for inflation.

Page S1991

By 51 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 106), Murkowski/Sullivan Amendment No. 838, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the disposal of certain Federal land. **Pages S1991–92**

By 59 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 108), Inhofe/Moran Modified Amendment No. 649, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting funding of international organizations during the implementation of the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty prior to Senate ratification and adoption of implementing legislation. **Page S1993**

By a unanimous vote of 100 yeas (Vote No. 109), Enzi (for Kirk) Modified Amendment No. 545, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reimposing waived sanctions and imposing new sanctions against Iran for violations of the Joint Plan of Action or a comprehensive nuclear agreement.

Pages S1993–94

Isakson/Menendez Amendment No. 839, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting United States citizens held hostage in the United States embassy in Tehran, Iran, between November 3, 1979, and January 20, 1981.

Pages S1978, S1998–99

By 59 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 112), Portman Amendment No. 689, to improve the dynamic scoring provision. **Pages S1963–64, S1999–S2000**

By a unanimous vote of 100 yeas (Vote No. 113), Casey Amendment No. 632, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. **Page S2000**

By 54 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. 114), Murkowski (for Thune) Amendment No. 607, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to allow for the permanent elimination of the Federal estate tax.

Pages S2000–01

By 53 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. 115), Enzi (for Bennet) Amendment No. 1014, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to responding to the economic and national security threats posed by human-induced climate change, as highlighted by the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. **Page S2001**

By 57 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 116), Enzi (for McConnell/Paul) Amendment No. 836, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency of greenhouse gas emissions, which may include a prohibition on withholding highway funds from States that refuse to submit State Implementation Plans required under the Clean Power Plan of the Agency.

Pages S1995, S2001–02

By 59 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 118), Gardner Amendment No. 443, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting privately held water rights and permits. **Pages S2002–03**

Blumenthal Amendment No. 825, to expand the deficit-neutral reserve fund for veterans and servicemembers. **Page S2003**

By 51 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 120), Flake/Vitter Amendment No. 665, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting awarding of construction contracts based on awardees entering or not entering into agreements with labor organizations. **Pages S1976, S2003–04**

Enzi (for Sanders) Amendment No. 475, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to strengthening the United States Postal Service by establishing a moratorium to protect mail processing plants, reinstating overnight delivery standards, and protecting rural service. **Pages S1995–96, S2004**

Enzi (for Hatch) Amendment No. 1029, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent American jobs from being moved overseas by reducing the corporate income tax rate. **Pages S1996, S2005**

By 57 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 121), Enzi (for Schatz) Modified Amendment No. 1063, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring all legally married same-sex spouses have equal access to the Social Security and veterans benefits they have earned and receive equal treatment under the law pursuant to the Constitution of the United States.

Pages S1996, S2005–06

By 57 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 122), Enzi (for Kirk) Amendment No. 1038, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase wages for American workers. **Pages S1996, S2006**

By 58 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 124), McCain/Flake Modified Amendment No. 360, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to deterring the migration of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. **Page S2007**

By 73 yeas to 27 nays (Vote No. 125), Enzi (for Wyden) Amendment No. 968, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enacting middle class tax relief, including extending and expanding refundable tax credits, such as tax provisions and policies included in legislation like the Working Families Tax Relief Act, American Opportunity Tax Credit Permanence and Consolidation Act, Helping Working Families Afford Child Care Act, or the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act, among other legislation. **Pages S1996, S2007–08**

By 56 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 126), Enzi (for Lee) Modified Amendment No. 750, to modify the spending-neutral reserve fund reauthorizing funding for payments to counties and other units of local government to include the option of payment at levels roughly equivalent to property tax revenues lost due to the presence of Federal land.

Pages S1979, S1995, S2008

By 52 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 128), Enzi (for Cotton) Amendment No. 659, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting the designation of critical habitat.

Pages S1996, (continued next issue)

Sanders (for Menendez) Amendment No. 993, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to strengthening the national do-not-call registry.

Page S1976

Rejected:

By 48 yeas to 52 nays (Vote No. 93), Sanders/Murray Amendment No. 881, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting a substantial increase in the minimum wage.

Pages S1982, S1983–84

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 94), Stabenow Amendment No. 523, to prevent United States companies from getting tax benefits for moving jobs overseas, to end offshore tax loopholes including inversions, and to provide incentives for United States companies to relocate overseas jobs to the United States. **Pages S1971–72, S1984**

By 47 yeas to 53 nays (Vote No. 95), Sanders (for Wyden) Amendment No. 1012, to strike more than $1.2 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, preserving a critical source of comprehensive, affordable health and long-term care coverage for millions of otherwise uninsured low-income adults, parents, and seniors, including millions of nonelderly low-income adults in States that expanded Medicaid as part of health reform. **Page S1985**

By 45 yeas to 55 nays (Vote No. 100), Baldwin Amendment No. 432, to provide additional resources to create the opportunity for more Americans to obtain a higher education and advanced job skills by supporting two free years of community college paid for by raising revenue through requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share. **Page S1987**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 101), Franken Amendment No. 828, to provide additional resources to save student financial aid and keep college affordable for more than 8,000,000 low- and middle-income students by restoring the $89,000,000,000 in cuts to Federal Pell Grants in the Republican budget. **Page S1988**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 104), Sanders (for Durbin) Amendment No. 817, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide tax benefits to patriot employers that invest in American jobs and provide fair pay and benefits to workers and to eliminate tax benefits for corporations that ship jobs or profits overseas. **Page S1990**

By 47 yeas to 52 nays (Vote No. 107), Whitehouse/Udall Amendment No. 867, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to making it more difficult for corporations and billionaires to secretly influence elections by making unlimited undisclosed campaign expenditures, and to prevent such entities from evading campaign finance law, including through making false statements to government agencies. **Page S1992**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 110), Coons/Sanders Modified Amendment No. 966, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to offsetting the costs of operations against the Islamic State. **Page S1994**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 111), Enzi (for Stabenow/Cantwell) Amendment No. 1072, to provide additional resources to reject the Senate Republicans' proposed $435 billion in cuts to Medicare. **Pages S1995, S1999**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 117), Merkley/Coons Amendment No. 842, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to consumer financial protection. **Page S2002**

By 46 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 119), Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 951, to establish and fund a new Federal-State partnership to expand access to high-quality preschool programs for children from low- and moderate-income families, offset with revenue from closing loopholes. **Page S2003**

By 44 yeas to 54 nays (Vote No. 127), Enzi (for Reed/Whitehouse) Amendment No. 919, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to eliminating deductions for corporate compensation in excess of $1,000,000. **Pages S1996, (continued next issue)**

Withdrawn:

Enzi (for Graham) Amendment No. 763, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to subjecting all Federal spending to sequestration. **Pages S1995, S2003**

Pending:

Rounds/Inhofe Amendment No. 412, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from engaging in closed-door settlement agreements that ignore impacted States and counties. **Page S1960**

Daines Amendment No. 388, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the designation of national monuments. **Page S1960**

Daines Amendment No. 389, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to holding Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives accountable for failing to pass a balanced budget. **Page S1960**

Roberts/Flake Amendment No. 352, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Federal employee performance awards. **Page S1960**

Roberts Amendment No. 462, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to over-the-counter medications. **Page S1960**

Vitter Amendment No. 811, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ending Washington's illegal exemption from Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **Page S1960**

Coats/Warner Amendment No. 595, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to improve cybersecurity. **Page S1960**

Coats Amendment No. 368, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing States the Medicaid flexibility they need to implement innovative reforms to improve care and enhance access for our Nation's most vulnerable. **Page S1960**

Daines Amendment No. 465, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Second Amendment rights. **Page S1960**

Daines Amendment No. 387, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to postal reform. **Page S1960**

Wyden/Crapo Amendment No. 434, to provide for an adjustment to committee allocations for wildfire suppression funding. **Page S1960**

Sanders (for Murray/Alexander) Amendment No. 697, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund for legislation that reforms and strengthens elementary and secondary education. **Page S1960**

Sanders (for Cantwell) Amendment No. 800, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to a comprehensive approach to crude-by-rail safety. **Page S1960**

Sanders (for Murray) Amendment No. 812, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide women with affordable access to comprehensive health care, including preventative services (such as contraception and breast cancer screenings), improve maternal health, and ensure that a woman has the same benefits and services no matter what part of the United States she lives in, all of which is critical to improving the health and well-being of women, children, their families, and society as a whole, and is an essential part of a woman's economic security and opportunity. **Page S1960**

Sanders (for Durbin/Coons) Amendment No. 345, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing funding for Federal investments in biomedical and basic scientific research. **Page S1961**

Wyden/Bennet Amendment No. 708, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to simplifying and expanding tax incentives for higher education to boost student attendance and completion. **Page S1961**

Wyden Amendment No. 791, to strike reconciliation instructions to the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Finance and require regular order. **Page S1961**

Wyden Amendment No. 870, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to extending tax provisions expiring in 2013 or 2014 for 2 years, such as those contained in the EXPIRE Act of 2014. **Page S1961**

Heller Amendment No. 453, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of Transportation prioritizes the construction of projects that are of national and regional significance and projects in high priority corridors on the National Highway System, which will improve the safe, secure, and efficient movement of people and goods through the United States and facilitate economic development and create jobs in the United States. **Page S1961**

Heller Amendment No. 452, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the Secretary of the Interior enters into candidate conservation agreements with each of the relevant 11 Western States before the United States Fish and Wildlife Service makes a listing determination on the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. **Page S1961**

Heller Amendment No. 457, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibition of Veterans Benefits Administration executive bonuses until the backlog of disability claims for veterans is eliminated. **Page S1961**

Heller Amendment No. 456, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs meet the privacy, dignity, and safety needs of women veterans. **Page S1961**

Coons/Bennet Amendment No. 343, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preserving mandatory appropriations for agricultural conservation programs. **Page S1961**

Coons Amendment No. 391, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the expansion of access to the income tax credit for employee health insurance expenses of small employers. **Page S1961**

Coons/Rubio Amendment No. 392, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting the use of college savings accounts while students are in elementary school and secondary school. **Page S1961**

Coons Amendment No. 394, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to special treatment of the income tax credit for research expenditures for startup companies. **Page S1961**

Coons Amendment No. 802, to offset the costs of the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. **Page S1961**

Baldwin Amendment No. 436, to preserve the point of order against the reconciliation legislation that would increase the deficit or reduce a surplus. **Page S1961**

Manchin Amendment No. 694, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in advanced fossil energy technology research and development. **Page S1961**

Manchin Amendment No. 578, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to addressing methamphetamine abuse in the United States. **Page S1961**

Whitehouse Amendment No. 700, to ensure high-income earners pay a fair share in taxes and to use the revenue to invest in repairing our Nation's bridges, coastal infrastructure, and damage from wildfires. **Page S1961**

Whitehouse Amendment No. 895, to prohibit budget resolutions that support cutting over

$1,000,000,000,000 in spending without identifying specific programmatic effects. **Page S1961**

Casey Amendment No. 633, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enhancing the child and dependent care tax credit. **Page S1961**

Merkley Amendment No. 843, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to restoring reductions in the Republican budget to the Stafford loan program that would mandate that students currently in college pay interest on their loans before they have received their education benefits, to make college more affordable, to reduce the debt burden of students, and to help graduates afford to pay back student loans. **Page S1961**

Merkley/Brown Amendment No. 952, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a more level playing field in trade agreements. **Page S1961**

Merkley Amendment No. 953, to save student financial aid and reduce the student loan debt levels in the Republican budget by 15 percent by eliminating new mandated interest charged while students are still in school. **Page S1961**

Cassidy Amendment No. 341, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the promotion of United States offshore energy production. **Page S1961**

Cassidy Amendment No. 539, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving Medicaid based on successful and bipartisan State demonstration projects. **Page S1961**

Cassidy Amendment No. 795, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to authorizing Federal permitting for manufacturing and energy construction projects relating to national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for ozone lower than a certain existing standard. **Page S1961**

Coons (for Bennet) Amendment No. 715, to create clean energy jobs through predictable and fair incentives for renewable energy. **Page S1961, (continued next issue)**

Murkowski (for Thune) Amendment No. 743, to reduce funding for the General Services Administration by $1,000,000 until 50 percent of counties in nonattainment for the 1997 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone as of January 30, 2015, achieve the air quality standard set forth in the 1997 NAAQS, and direct those funds to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of helping municipalities reach attainment with the 2008 NAAQS for ground-level ozone, acknowledging that (1) given limited State and Federal resources and the delay of the Administrator in issuing to States implementation guidance for the 2008 ground-level ozone NAAQS, priority should be given to achieving the 2008 standard, (2) the Administrator has not sufficiently implemented that standard, (3) focusing by the Administrator on the most polluted areas that are in nonattainment with that standard would benefit public health, and (4) promulgating a lower standard at this time would impose undue costs on the economy and workforce of the United States. **Page S1961**

Murkowski Amendment No. 770, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the construction of Arctic polar icebreakers. **Page S1961**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 485, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide equity in the tax treatment of public safety officer death benefits. **Page S1961**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 490, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to address the disproportionate regulatory burdens on community bankers. **Page S1961**

Gardner (for Ayotte) Amendment No. 852, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing small business regulatory relief and preventing duplicative regulations for investment advisors. **Page S1961**

Capito Amendment No. 415, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to a requirement that any new environmental agreement signed by the United States with any foreign country or countries not result in serious harm to the economy of the United States. **Page S1964**

Capito Amendment No. 416, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the reliability of the electricity grid. **Page S1964**

Peters Amendment No. 437, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to enhancing and improving the United States Patent and Trademark Office in order to reduce the patent application backlog. **Pages S1964–65**

Peters Amendment No. 521, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in science, technology, and basic research in the United States. **Page S1965**

Peters Amendment No. 639, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting trade and travel at ports of entry. **Pages S1965–66**

Cardin Amendment No. 364, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving oral health care for children and pregnant women under Medicaid. **Page S1966**

Cardin Amendment No. 367, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing a funding stream for a voter reinfranchisement initiative. **Page S1966**

Cardin Amendment No. 439, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to mandating a

higher threshold that the Small Business Administration may guarantee, through the Surety Bond Guarantee Program, of the bonds that small businesses are required to obtain so that they may be able to better compete successfully for Federal Government contracts. **Page S1966**

Cardin/Risch Amendment No. 440, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing the Family Funds limit of the Small Business Investment Company Program from $225,000,000 to $350,000,000, as passed by the Committee in 2013, which is zero subsidy and funded entirely through fees paid by investors and businesses. **Pages S1966–67**

Cardin Amendment No. 899, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the importance of financial literacy education to allow individuals to make informed and effective decisions with their financial resources. **Pages S1966–67**

Cardin Amendment No. 900, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the importance of civics and government education. **Pages S1966–67**

Portman Amendment No. 681, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to demolishing vacant and abandoned homes. **Pages S1967–68**

Collins Amendment No. 346, to modify the deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting jobs in the United States through international trade to include the reauthorization or extension of trade adjustment assistance programs. **Page S1969**

Collins Amendment No. 425, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving retirement security. **Page S1969**

Collins/Casey Amendment No. 426, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting economic growth and job creation for small businesses. **Page S1969**

Collins/Moran Amendment No. 427, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investment in Alzheimer's disease research. **Page S1969**

Collins Amendment No. 442, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to restore a sensible definition of full-time employee for purposes of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **Page S1969**

Hirono Amendment No. 877, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing college completion, which may include expanding Federal Pell Grant eligibility by allowing college students to use Federal Pell Grants for more than 2 semesters in an academic year. **Page S1970**

Hirono Amendment No. 878, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to investing in clean energy and preserving the environment. **Pages S1970–71**

Gardner Amendment No. 445, to prevent labor disputes at seaports in the United States from causing national economic disruptions and crippling businesses across the United States. **Page S1971**

Gardner Amendment No. 448, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to encouraging expedited approval of liquefied natural gas export applications at the Department of Energy. **Page S1971**

Gardner/Menendez Amendment No. 449, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting efficient resourcing for the Asia rebalance policy. **Page S1971**

Rubio Amendment No. 781, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reducing foreign assistance to the Palestinian Authority and certain United Nations agencies and increasing foreign assistance for Israel. **Page S1972**

Rubio Amendment No. 565, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that Medicare is not raided to bailout insurance companies under the President's health care overhaul. **Pages S1972–73**

Rubio Amendment No. 562, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a new outcomes-based process for authorizing innovative higher education providers. **Pages S1972–73**

Rubio Amendment No. 552, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing funding for the relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. **Pages S1972–73**

Rubio Amendment No. 590, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the Medicare Advantage program. **Pages S1972–73**

Warner Amendment No. 991, to restore program integrity funding to combat waste, fraud, and abuse. **Page S1973**

Warner/Crapo Amendment No. 636, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting the personal information of consumers from data breaches. **Page S1973**

Warner/Ayotte Amendment No. 638, to establish a deficit-reduction reserve fund for Government reform and efficiency. **Pages S1973–75**

Moran (for Blunt) Amendment No. 467, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the direct provision of defense articles, defense services, and related training to the Kurdistan Regional Government. **Page S1975**

Moran (for Blunt) Amendment No. 468, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to military aid to Israel. **Page S1975**

Markey Amendment No. 707, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to reducing overdose deaths. **Page S1975**

Markey Amendment No. 967, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to domestic medical isotope production. **Page S1975**

Markey Amendment No. 896, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving the safety of offshore oil drilling in the United States. **Page S1975**

Markey Amendment No. 897, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting consumers in the United States from price increases due to large-scale natural gas exports. **Page S1975**

Markey Amendment No. 573, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting the repair and replacement of natural gas distribution pipelines and infrastructure no longer fit for service. **Page S1975**

Sanders (for Menendez) Amendment No. 435, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to support for Ukraine, which should include the provision of lethal defensive articles. **Page S1976**

Sanders (for Menendez) Amendment No. 473, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to providing funding to combat anti-Semitism in Europe. **Page S1976**

Sanders (for Menendez/Stabenow) Amendment No. 593, to require consideration of long-term deficits for any legislation relating to repealing or replacing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. **Page S1976**

Flake/Roberts Amendment No. 677, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preventing political targeting by the Internal Revenue Service of individuals and social welfare organizations exercising free-speech rights. **Pages S1976–77**

Flake/McCain Amendment No. 678, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to prosecution of first-time illegal border crossers. **Pages S1967–77**

Flake/Manchin Amendment No. 667, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that individuals do not simultaneously receive unemployment compensation and disability insurance benefits. **Pages S1976–77**

Flake Amendment No. 666, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reducing the level of Federal premium support for crop insurance policies, which may include eliminating premium support for crop insurance for agricultural producers with an adjusted gross income of more than $750,000 in fiscal year 2016. **Pages S1976–77**

Flake Amendment No. 668, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to government reform and efficiency. **Pages S1976–77**

Enzi (for Sullivan) Amendment No. 504, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to limiting the ability of Environmental Protection Agency personnel to carry guns. **Page S1977**

Enzi (for Sullivan) Amendment No. 505, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting programs related to the ground-based midcourse defense and the long-range discrimination radar programs of the Department of Defense. **Page S1977**

Enzi (for Sullivan/Inhofe) Amendment No. 506, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting vulnerable families from job killing regulations. **Pages S1977–78**

Enzi (for Sullivan) Amendment No. 1011, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to providing an exemption from certain permitting requirements for routine maintenance activities relating to transportation infrastructure. **Pages S1977–78**

Isakson/Shaheen Amendment No. 321, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a biennial budget and appropriations process. **Page S1978**

Isakson Amendment No. 611, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to subject all fees collected by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to the annual appropriations process. **Page S1978**

Enzi (for Lee) Amendment No. 855, to prohibit increasing the public debt limit under reconciliation. **Page S1979**

Enzi (for Lee) Amendment No. 749, to ensure that the reserve fund relating to affordable healthcare choices for all is used to repeal and not further empower the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **Page S1979**

Enzi (for Lee) Amendment No. 856, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund to support legislation preventing the Federal Communications Commission from reclassifying broadband providers as common carriers under title II of the Communications Act of 1934 and from implementing other "net neutrality" provisions. **Page S1979**

Enzi (for Lee) Amendment No. 759, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to clarifying Federal jurisdiction with respect to intrastate species. **Pages S1979–80**

Tillis Amendment No. 925, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the United States civil courts system. **Page S1980**

Tillis Amendment No. 926, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. **Page S1980**

Sanders (for Cardin) Amendment No. 729, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to invest in surface transportation projects. **Page S1980**

Sanders (for Schatz) Amendment No. 342, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to the National Guard State Partnership Program. **Page S1980**

Sanders (for Schatz) Amendment No. 588, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at air ports of entry. **Page S1980**

Enzi (for Johnson/Baldwin) Amendment No. 402, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to improving information sharing by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to investigations relating to substandard health care, delayed and denied health care, patient deaths, other findings that directly relate to patient care, and other management issues of the Department. **Pages S1980–81**

Enzi (for Johnson) Amendment No. 596, to convey clear information in graphic form about projected deficits. **Page S1981**

Enzi (for Johnson) Amendment No. 597, to convey clear information to Congress and the public about projected Federal outlays, revenues, and surpluses, and deficits. **Page S1981**

Enzi (for Johnson) Amendment No. 865, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund to accommodate legislation that would stop the Federal government from forcing States to pay unemployment compensation benefits to millionaires. **Page S1981**

Cochran/Mikulski Amendment No. 932, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to establishing a biennial budget resolution process. **Page S1981**

Booker Amendment No. 720, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to supporting workforce development through apprenticeship programs. **Page S1982**

Booker/Fischer Amendment No. 721, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to encourage freight planning and investment that incorporates all modes of transportation, including rail, waterways, ports, and highways to promote national connectivity. **Pages S1982–83**

Booker Amendment No. 722, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting payments for conversion therapy or treatments that purport to change the gender identity or sexual orientation of an individual under the Medicare and Medicaid programs. **Pages S1982–83**

Heinrich Amendment No. 1024, to create a point of order against legislation that would provide for the sale of Federal land to reduce the Federal deficit. **Page S1983**

Enzi (for Brown/Vitter) Amendment No. 994, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to end ''too big to fail'' bailouts for Wall Street mega-banks (over $500 billion in total assets). **Pages S1996–97**

Enzi (for Hatch) Amendment No. 827, to establish a spending-neutral reserve fund relating to reforming the Federal regulatory process by enabling retrospective review of existing regulations, improving the process by which new regulations are created, ensuring fair and effective judicial review, and securing an effective role for Congress in the Federal regulatory process through legislation and oversight. **Page S1997**

Enzi (for Hatch) Amendment No. 1025, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to H–1B visas. **Page S1997**

Enzi (for Hatch/Murkowski) Amendment No. 533, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that Department of Justice attorneys comply with disclosure obligations in criminal prosecutions. **Page S1997**

Enzi (for Hatch) Amendment No. 984, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to ensuring that patients, including military members and veterans, have access to new antibacterial drugs that treat serious or life-threatening infections through the creation by the Food and Drug Administration of a limited population approval pathway for antibacterial drugs. **Page S1997**

Enzi (for Hatch) Amendment No. 535, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to balancing the Federal budget. **Pages S1997–98**

Sanders (for Cardin/McCain) Amendment No. 1044, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to imposing sanctions with respect to foreign persons responsible for gross violations of internationally recognized human rights or significant acts of corruption. **Page S1998**

Sanders (for Kaine) Amendment No. 1047, to provide for sequestration replacement. **Page S1998**

Sanders (for Kaine) Amendment No. 724, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to increasing United States exports and improving the competitiveness of United States businesses. **Page S1998**

Sanders (for Murphy/Cassidy) Amendment No. 713, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to comprehensive mental health reform. **Page S1998**

Sanders (for Murphy/Graham) Amendment No. 1005, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to expanding United States counter-propaganda communications to combat misinformation from the Russian Federation or terrorist groups like ISIS and al Qaeda. **Page S1998**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 32 yeas to 68 nays (Vote No. 96), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable budgetary discipline pursuant to Section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, with respect to Rubio Modified Amendment No. 423, to increase new budget authority fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050). Subsequently, the point of order that the amendment was in violation of section 312(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and the amendment was ruled out of order. **Pages S1985–86**

By 4 yeas to 96 nays (Vote No. 97), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable budgetary discipline pursuant to Section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, with respect to Paul Modified Amendment No. 940, to increase new budget authority for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 and modify outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2022 for National Defense (budget function 050) with offsets. Subsequently, the point of order that the amendment was in violation of section 312(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and the amendment was ruled out of order. **Page S1986**

By 51 yeas to 49 nays (Vote No. 123), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable budgetary discipline with respect to Nelson/Schatz Amendment No. 944, to create a point of order against legislation that would use tax dollars to censor publicly-funded climate science. Subsequently, the point of order that the amendment was in violation of section 305(b)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and the amendment was ruled out of order. **Pages S1968–69, S2006–07**

By 49 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 129), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to waive all applicable budgetary discipline with respect to Enzi (for Cotton) Amendment No. 664, to establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to construction of new facilities and improvements to existing facilities at the detention facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Subsequently, the point of order that the amendment was in violation of section 305(b) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, was sustained, and the amendment was ruled out of order.

Pages S1996, (continued next issue)

Senate continued in the session that began on Thursday, March 26, 2015. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Franklin R. Parker, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Thomas A. Burke, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Atul Keshap, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Republic of Maldives.

Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia.

Alaina B. Teplitz, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

John Michael Vazquez, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

Paula Xinis, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general.

(See next issue.)

Messages From the House: **(See next issue.)**

Executive Reports of Committees: **(See next issue.)**

Additional Cosponsors: **(See next issue.)**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **(See next issue.)**

Additional Statements: **(See next issue.)**

Amendments Submitted: **(See next issue.)**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **(See next issue.)**

Quorum Calls: One quorum call was taken today. (Total—5) **(See next issue.)**

Record Votes: Thirty-seven record votes were taken today. (Total—129) **Page S1983–94, S1999–S2008, continued next issue**

Evening Session: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and continued in evening session. (For complete Digest of today's proceedings, see next volume of the Congressional Record.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and

Education, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Labor, after receiving testimony from Thomas E. Perez, Secretary of Labor.

DIPLOMACY, DEVELOPMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs concluded a hearing to examine diplomacy, development, and national security, after receiving testimony from Ben Affleck, Eastern Congo Initiative, and Bill Gates, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, both of Seattle, Washington; Scott Ford, Westrock Group, LLC, Little Rock, Arkansas; John Megrue, Born Free Africa, New York, New York; and Admiral James Stavridis, USN (Ret.), Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Massachusetts.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine U.S. Central Command, U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Special Operations Command programs and budget in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from General Lloyd J. Austin, USA, Commander, U.S. Central Command, General David M. Rodriguez, USA, Commander, U.S. Africa Command, and General Joseph L. Votel, USA, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, all of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee ordered favorably reported lists in the Foreign Service.

SECURING THE BORDER

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine securing the border, focusing on defining the current population living in the shadows and addressing future flows, after receiving testimony from Jeffrey S. Passel, Pew Research Center, Randel K. Johnson, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Marc R. Rosenblum, Migration Policy Institute, all of Washington, D.C.; Daniel Garza, The LIBRE Initiative, Mission, Texas; and Madeline Zavodny, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 665, 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

S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020.

EXAMINE VETERANS' AFFAIRS OPIOID PRESCRIPTION POLICY

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Veterans' Affairs opioid prescription policy, practice and procedures, after receiving testimony from Carolyn Clancy, Interim Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, and John D. Daigh, Jr., Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections, Office of Inspector General, both of the Department of Veterans Affairs; John Gadea, Jr., Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection State Drug Control Division Director, Hartford; G. Caleb Alexander, Johns Hopkins Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness, Baltimore, Maryland; and Carol Forster, Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group, Oak Hill, Virginia.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 90 public bills, H.R. 1641–1730; and 21 resolutions, H.J. Res. 39–41; H. Con. Res. 30–33; and H. Res. 175–188, were introduced. **Pages H2107–12**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2115–16**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend James Stoeger, S. J., President, Jesuit Secondary Education Association, Washington, DC. **Page H2037**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a voice vote. **Pages H2037, H2083**

Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015: The House passed H.R. 2, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and strengthen Medicare access by improving physician payments and making other improvements, and to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, by a yea-and-nay vote of 392 yeas to 37 nays, Roll No. 144. **Pages H2045–83**

Pursuant to the Rule, the amendment printed in H. Rept. 114–50 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H2045**

H. Res. 173, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2), was agreed to by a yea-and-nay vote of 402 yeas to 12 nays with five answering "present", Roll No. 143, after the previous question was ordered. **Pages H2038–45**

Providing for the reappointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: The House agreed to discharge from committee and pass H.J. Res. 10, providing for the reappointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. **Page H2092**

Electing Members to the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library and the Joint Committee on Printing: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Res. 171, electing Members to the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library and the Joint Committee on Printing. **Page H2092**

Adjournment Resolution: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 31, providing for an adjournment of the House. **Page H2092**

Adjournment Resolution: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 32, providing for a conditional recess or an adjournment of the Senate. **Page H2092**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. on Monday, March 30th, unless it sooner has received a message from the Senate transmitting its concurrence in H. Con. Res. 31, in which case the House shall stand adjourned pursuant to that concurrent resolution. **Pages H2092–93**

Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following individuals on the part of the House to the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Women's History Museum: Mrs. Kathy Wills Wright of Arlington, Virginia, and the Honorable Marilyn Musgrave of Ft. Morgan, Colorado. **Page H2093**

Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution: Representatives Sam Johnson (TX) and Cole. **Page H2093**

British-American Interparliamentary Group—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group: Representative Crenshaw, Chairman; Representatives Latta, Aderholt, Holding, Whitfield, and Roe (TN). **Page H2093**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2045 and H2083. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 9 a.m. and at 2:03 p.m., the House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. on Monday, March 30, 2015, unless it sooner has received a message from the Senate transmitting its concurrence in H. Con. Res. 31, in which case the House shall stand adjourned pursuant to that concurrent resolution.

Committee Meetings

IMPLEMENTING THE AGRICULTURAL ACT OF 2014: COMMODITY POLICY AND CROP INSURANCE

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management held a hearing on implementing the Agricultural Act of 2014: commodity policy and crop insurance. Testimony was heard from Brandon Willis, Administrator, Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency; and Val Dolcini, Administrator, Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

APPROPRIATIONS—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a hearing on Department of Homeland Security budget. Testimony was heard from Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security.

APPROPRIATIONS—ARMY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on Army budget. Testimony was heard from John M. McHugh, Secretary, United States Army; and General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff, United States Army.

FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN NEUROSCIENCE AND NEUROTECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Federal Investments in Neuroscience and Neurotechnology oversight. Testimony was heard from Jo Handelsman, Associate Director for Science, Office of Science and Technology Policy; James Olds, Assistant Director for Biological Sciences, National Science Foundation; and public witnesses.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S READINESS POSTURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness held a hearing entitled ''The Department of Defense's Readiness Posture''. Testimony was heard from General Daniel Allyn, Vice Chief of Staff, Army; Admiral Michelle Howard, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Navy; General Larry Spencer, Vice Chief of Staff, Air Force; and General John Paxton, Assistant Commandant, Marine Corps.

COMBAT AVIATION MODERNIZATION PROGRAMS AND THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET REQUEST

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing entitled ''Combat Aviation Modernization Programs and the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request''. Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral Paul A. Grosklags, USN, Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development, and Acquisition), Navy; Lieutenant General Jon M. Davis, USMC, Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Aviation, Marine Corps; Rear Admiral Michael C. Manazir, USN, Director of the Air Warfare Division, Navy; Major General Timothy M. Ray, USAF, Director, Global Power Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force; and Lieutenant General James M. ''Mike'' Holmes, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff, Strategic Plans and Requirements, Air Force.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FISCAL YEAR 2016 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO MAINTAIN TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing entitled ''Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2016 Science and Technology Programs: Laying the Groundwork to Maintain Technological Superiority''. Testimony was heard from Alan Shaffer, Principal Deputy, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; Mary Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology; Rear Admiral Upper Half Mathias Winter, USN, Chief of Naval Research; David Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Science, Technology, and Engineering; and Arati Prabhakar, Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

EXAMINING THE GROWING PROBLEMS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND HEROIN ABUSE: STATE AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Growing Problems of Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse: State and Local Perspectives''. Testimony was heard from Corporal Michael Griffin, Narcotics Unit Supervisor—K9 Handler, Special Investigations Division, Tulsa Police Department; and public witnesses.

NEXT STEPS FOR SPECTRUM POLICY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Next Steps for Spectrum Policy''. Testimony was heard from Gary Epstein, Chair, Incentive Auction Task Force, Federal Communications Commission; Julius Knapp, Chief, Office of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission; John Liebovitz, Deputy Bureau Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission; and Roger Sherman, Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Federal Communications Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 299, the ''Capital Access for Small Community Financial Institutions Act of 2015''; H.R. 601, the ''Eliminate Privacy Notice Confusion Act''; H.R. 650, the ''Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2015''; H.R. 685, the ''Mortgage Choice Act of 2015''; H.R. 1195, the ''Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection Advisory Boards Act''; H.R. 1259, the ''Helping Expand Lending Practices in Rural Communities Act''; H.R. 1265, the ''Bureau Advisory Commission Transparency Act''; H.R. 1367, to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands; H.R. 1408, the ''Mortgage Servicing Asset Capital Requirements Act of 2015''; H.R. 1480, the ''SAFE Act Confidentiality and Privilege Enhancement Act''; and H.R. 1529, the ''Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2015''. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 299, H.R. 601, H.R. 1195, H.R. 1265, H.R. 1259, H.R. 1480, H.R. 1367, H.R. 1408, H.R. 1529, H.R. 650, and H.R. 685.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY TO CONFRONT ISIS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Administration's Strategy to Confront ISIS''. Testimony was heard from General John Allen, USMC, Retired, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Department of State; Brigadier General Michael Fantini, USAF, Middle East Principal Director, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Department of Defense; and Brigadier General Gregg Olson, USMC, Deputy Director for Middle East, Joint Staff Strategic Plans and Policy, Department of Defense.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a business meeting to consider rules change and a hearing entitled ''Leadership Challenges at the Department of Homeland Security''. The committee agreed to a committee resolution amending the rules of the Committee on Homeland Security. Testimony was heard from John Roth, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security; and Maria M. Odom, Ombudsman, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

EFFECT OF THE PRESIDENT'S FY 2016 BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS FOR THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE'S ENERGY AND MINERALS PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE SECTOR JOB CREATION, DOMESTIC ENERGY AND MINERALS PRODUCTION AND DEFICIT REDUCTION

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled ''Effect of the President's FY 2016 Budget and Legislative Proposals for the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service's Energy and Minerals Programs on Private Sector Job Creation, Domestic Energy and Minerals Production and Deficit Reduction''. Testimony was heard from Neil Kornze, Director, Bureau of Land Management; and Tom Tidwell, Chief, Forest Service.

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS AT EPA—WHEN RECORDS MUST BE KEPT

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Oversight; and Subcommittee on Environment, held a joint hearing entitled ''Destruction of Records at EPA—When Records Must Be Kept''. Testimony was heard from Paul M. Wester, Jr., Chief Records Officer, National Archives and Records Administration; Kevin Christensen, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, Office of Inspector General, Environmental Protection Agency; and a public witness.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1560, the ''Protecting Cyber Networks Act''. H.R. 1560 was ordered reported, as amended. This markup was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate continued in the session that began on Thursday, March 26, 2015. See next volume of the Congressional Record.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1 p.m., Monday, March 30

House Chamber

Program for Monday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 1 p.m.

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(Senate proceedings for today will be continued in the next issue of the Record.)

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