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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the Reverend Kathryn Pocalyko, Pastor of the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour in North Chesterfield, VA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God most mighty, O God most merciful, O God our strength and our song, You call these leaders to serve the public, promote justice, and establish peace in our land. We lift before You all who govern and serve our Nation through this body, its Senators, its staff, and its pages. Bless Members with collaboration in this Holy experiment. Give to those whom we entrust with authority the spirit of wisdom and understanding. Guide them with the spirit of counsel and insight. Grant them a spirit of knowledge. Grace them with Your presence. For You show us a vision of a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the Nation. May that tree take root here, bearing fruit in the hearts and work of these servants.

We pray this through 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. ROUNDS). The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, President Obama regularly calls on Republicans and Democrats to work together to advance the priorities of our Nation, and we certainly agree.

Our top priority is our national security, and Congress worked together on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis to pass the National Defense Authorization Act. So while Americans were surprised to learn the President announced he would veto that bipartisan bill, they must be shaking their heads in disbelief now that they have learned the President will not only veto the bill, he is going to brag about it—not only going to veto the bill, but he is going to brag about it in a photo op today down at the White House.

Remember what it is the President will veto today. This bipartisan bill will attack bureaucratic waste and authorize pay raises and improved quality-of-life programs for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines; it will strengthen sexual assault prevention and response; it will help wounded warriors and heroes who struggle with mental health challenges; and it will equip the men and women who serve with what they need to defend this Nation.

This is the worst possible time for an American President to veto a national defense bill and especially to do so for arbitrary partisan reasons. Republicans and Democrats in Congress worked so hard to pass this important legislation, legislation that authorizes the exact amount—the exact amount—the Commander in Chief requested. So now we will have to work together again, this time hopefully to override the President's veto.

The President should be highlighting his signature on this bipartisan legislation that supports the men and women who defend our Nation. Instead, with our servicemembers facing threats and instability in several theaters, he will

be bragging—bragging—about using his veto pen. Our allies are seeking leadership and stability, not indecision. A partisan veto of this bipartisan bill is simply unacceptable.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Americans know that cyber attacks are attacks on their privacy and their property. No one wants to think about a stranger riffling through their medical records. No one wants to think about a criminal stealing their credit card information. That is why we have this bipartisan cyber security bill before us in the Senate.

This bipartisan legislation will help protect Americans' most private and personal information by sharing information between the private and public sector on cyber threats. Experts say the tools in this bill can help prevent future attacks in both the public and private sectors. It contains important measures to protect civil liberties and individual privacy, and it has been carefully vetted and scrutinized by Senators of both parties. No wonder this bill passed through committee with nearly unanimous bipartisan support, 14 to 1.

The House already voted to protect the privacy of Americans by passing cyber legislation. With a little cooperation, the Senate can as well. That is why I urge all Members to vote today to move forward on this bipartisan bill, which will set up votes on amendments from both parties. With continuing cooperation, we can take an important step toward protecting the privacy of our constituents.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

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



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THE DEBT AND GOVERNMENT
FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the day before yesterday I surprised some by saying nice things about Congressman PAUL RYAN, and they said nice things about him. Since then, a handful of people have demanded to know why we would ever say nice things about a man who has attacked Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, as he has done in recent history. The answer is very simple. Democrats need, our country needs, responsible Republican negotiating partners if Congress is to avoid twin challenges facing us in the coming weeks: avoiding the first-ever default in the full faith and credit of the United States and preventing another government shutdown. We need someone to deal with. We must avoid the self-inflicted wounds that have typified the rule of House Republicans and certainly Senate Republicans.

In spite of our ideological differences, in my view, Congressman RYAN is the only House Republican, whom I am aware of, with real potential to impose a basic modicum of order in the House of Representatives and work with us to avoid default and another government shutdown. He has helped in the past, and I am confident he could in the future if he chooses to.

To my allies, rest assured that I will continue to oppose Congressman RYAN's plans to privatize Medicare and slash Social Security. I have said the Ryan budget would lead to a "Kochtopia," and I believe that to be truer now than ever before.

Congressman RYAN also coauthored the Murray-Ryan budget compromise. That was good work. House Chairman RYAN and Senate Chair MURRAY, Budget chairs, did a very good job. He appears to be supportive of comprehensive immigration reform, and he joined Democrats in saying America's auto industry and financial system should be saved.

Maybe the problems are too deep to resolve any time soon. I hope not. I am concerned that we have already seen Congressman RYAN prove incapable of reining in members of the so-called Freedom Caucus. I hope that is not a sign of things to come, but with the stakes as high as they are, we owe it to the American people to pursue the most responsible path, and that will be it. Now is the time to rebuild a system where "compromise" is no longer considered a dirty word and where Republicans and Democrats work side-by-side to address the challenges our government faces. However, one of the conditions Congressman RYAN has given House Republicans is that he doesn't want to work weekends. Well, if he gets the job, I hope he will not take weekends off until we do something to solve the debt crisis and to fund the government.

BLOCKING NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Congressional Republicans continue to govern

destructively during this 114th Congress. After nearly a year in control of the Senate, what do Republicans have to show for it? Shutdown threats, lapsed laws, vital programs expired, and an abiding sense of uncertainty. Instead of looking for opportunities to govern constructively, Republicans appear to be bent on mayhem. They are doing everything they can to appeal to their extreme rightwing without regard to the consequences.

It seems that every day that is a bad day for government, we have a large segment of the Republican caucus cheering that it is great. Anything that is bad for government is a good day for us, is what they are saying. Instead of looking for opportunities to govern constructively, they are doing everything they can to not do things constructively. They are doing everything they can to appeal to, I guess, the extreme rightwing, to phrase it, without regard to the consequences, but consequences are very significant.

This afternoon we are finally confirming Ambassadors for several African nations, but to view the confirmation of four individuals a success would be a mistake, when we consider that Senate Republicans are doing everything they can to stop these nominees.

Just 2 weeks ago, the junior Senator from Arkansas announced his intention to hold up our Ambassadors to Sweden, Norway, and the Bahamas. At a time when American leadership is needed abroad, these posts sit empty because the junior Senator from Arkansas is blocking them. Why is Senator COTTON blocking these nominees? He has admitted his hold has nothing to do with the nominees' qualifications—nothing. Indeed, all were reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support months ago. Instead, the junior Senator from Arkansas is holding these nominees hostage until he gets information from the Department of Homeland Security. That is right. He is holding up State Department nominations to get a response from Homeland Security. Blocking important Ambassadors to get information from a completely different agency makes zero sense. That is akin to having two fighters in a ring and one fighter is going for the referee instead of the other boxer. That is about what we have here. The sad part about this is that the junior Senator from Arkansas is not alone in blocking qualified nominees. The Republican caucus is obviously supporting him. Why?

I have spoken before about the crucial need to confirm Gayle Smith as Ambassador to the U.S. Agency for International Development. She would be a good Administrator. I talked to one of my staff yesterday who has a relative who works for this Agency. It is terrible. There is nobody leading the Agency. It has affected the whole department. That is wrong.

Why is this nomination important? The Agency for International Development, better known as USAID, plays a

central role in our Nation's foreign policy. How? By administering humanitarian and development aid to nations of people in need. A person only needs to watch the nightly news to see that help is needed across the globe—the pictures of the huddled masses of men, women, and children now with the weather turning in Europe. There are millions of people trying to get out of Syria, trying to get out of the Middle East because of what is going on there, with blankets—wet blankets—over their bodies. Little kids are being protected by their mothers, as much as they can be, and by their dads. Victims of civil wars, disease outbreaks, and natural disasters depend on the aid and compassion of the American people. To our credit, we try our best to help as much as possible.

Let's take one example: the Syrian refugee crisis. It is the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. That says a lot. Millions—not thousands, millions—of Syrians have been displaced because of the country's civil war. Thousands are fleeing to Europe to escape the violence. Because of that civil war, it is estimated that there are 4 million displaced people in Syria alone. Millions have been displaced in Iraq. The whole Middle East is in turmoil. The United States has an obligation to assist—a humanitarian obligation to assist. We are the single largest donor of humanitarian aid for the Syrian crisis. But how can we help if Senate Republicans are hamstringing this Agency? They are doing that.

Gayle Smith, an experienced public servant, has been nominated to lead this Agency. This good woman can't even get a vote in the Senate. Senator CRUZ has been blocking her nomination for months. Why? Is there anything that is wrong about her? Of course not. The word is it is because he doesn't like the Iran nuclear agreement. Remember what the Iran nuclear agreement was? It was an effort by the international community, including Russia and China, to stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. That is what it was all about. I guess Mr. CRUZ, in his attempt to become President—1 of 15 Republicans running for President—thinks this would be a good issue for him, blocking the person this government has chosen to lead this Agency.

Gayle Smith has extensive experience in African affairs. She worked at this Agency during the Clinton administration. She is exactly the type of leader our country needs to confront this crisis in Europe. Even the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, the junior Senator from Tennessee, said he was "glad the executive branch has nominated someone who has the kind of experience [Smith] has." Her nomination has won support from prominent Republicans, including Bill Frist who was one of my predecessors as the majority leader in the Senate, and from Richard Lugar, the distinguished Republican, former chair of the Foreign Relations Committee in

the Senate, a man who has expertise in foreign relations. They both see her as the person to do the job. But that does not affect the junior Senator from Texas.

We know how others feel about him. Former President Bush gave his opinion of the junior Senator from Texas 2 days ago. There is widespread support for her nomination—if only the Republican leader would bring it to the floor. Yet Republicans continue to hold Ms. Smith and other important foreign policy nominations as ransom to exact political prices from the White House while our diplomacy suffers.

I am disappointed that the junior Senators from Arkansas and Texas would hold up these proud Americans who only want to serve their country. But I am far more disheartened by the actions of Republicans who should know better. Why do other Republicans support these callous actions? Republicans have blocked nominees to other ambassadorships for years. Now they are even blocking career Foreign Service officers. These are people who simply receive a promotion they have earned and serve our Nation regardless of the President. Foreign Service officers are not Democrats. They are not Republicans. They do our country so much good.

I have had the good fortune to travel the world. When I travel I always meet with the Foreign Service officers, not just the Ambassadors. I get everybody together. I tell them what a wonderful job they do for our country. They go to the most remote outposts in the world, representing the interests of America. They are career people. I also try to visit with the Peace Corps volunteers.

But I am so disappointed—and I have talked to him—in the senior Senator from Iowa for holding up a list of 20 career Foreign Service officers. He has held them up for months until he gets answers from Secretary Hillary Clinton's aide Huma Abedin. What does this have to do with these Foreign Service career officers? Nothing. He sent nine letters to the State Department demanding things regarding this woman and some emails from Hillary Clinton. Haven't we heard enough about emails for Hillary Clinton?

As we talk, she is over there before this great committee of the House that even the majority leader of the House said is nothing more than—I am paraphrasing—a political witch hunt. The Republican Congressman from New York said basically the same thing. A person who works over there in that committee was fired because he thought it was wrong that they were going after Hillary Clinton when the purpose of the whole hearing was supposed to be to find out what happened in Libya.

There has been a concerted effort for more than 2 years to try to embarrass Hillary Clinton. Huge amounts of money have been spent on outside groups, and the House of Representatives, which is supposedly so frugal—

the Republican House of Representatives—doesn't want to spend any money that shouldn't be spent—\$5 million on this worthless committee wasting time.

Listen to these people who are being held up, being denied a well-deserved promotion and rank by the senior Senator from Iowa. This is important. These people serve for decades. They work hard, and they get a promotion once in a while—not with the help of the senior Senator from Iowa. He will hold them up because he wants to try to embarrass Hillary Clinton, who is running for President of the United States. Here is who he is holding up: the Deputy Director for East Africa Operations in Kenya, an education officer in Honduras, a deputy controller in El Salvador, a regional Food for Peace officer in Ethiopia, the Director of the Food for Peace Program in South Sudan, the Democracy and Governance Director in El Salvador. There are others.

What could the senior Senator from Iowa possibly have against the Deputy Director for East Africa Operations in Kenya? Or an education officer in Honduras? Or the regional Food for Peace officer in Ethiopia? They have absolutely nothing to do with Senator GRASSLEY's concerns, and these individuals have no ability to respond to any of his requests. I have spoken with him. I told him I think it is a mistake to target these career people. Career diplomats are some of the finest people who work for our government. They are not partisans. They have committed their lives to public service under Democratic and Republican administrations. The Foreign Relations Committee reported these nominations unanimously. They hail from Texas, Florida, Michigan, Arizona, Virginia, New Mexico, and a few other States. Like other Foreign Service officers across this great world, these fine individuals wake up tomorrow ready to serve on the frontlines of American diplomacy in hotspots throughout the world—places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, where we lost four.

Denying them a promotion they have earned will affect their career advancement and retirement, and it has real consequences for the families. This is not anything that is going to hurt President Obama. It affects our country. These are people who have families. They have children. They are being held up, stopped for this little promotion they get once in a while. We shouldn't be singling out these non-partisan officers and putting their careers on hold because the senior Senator from Iowa is not getting the answer to nine of his letters that have nothing to do with these people.

Promotions for military officers and our Foreign Service Officer Corps have traditionally moved through the Senate without political interference. They shouldn't now be subjected to political gamesmanship because people are concerned that Hillary Clinton may

be elected President. Senators GRASSLEY and COTTON have also placed holds on a man named Brian Egan to serve as the State Department's Legal Adviser, a lawyer—a position that has been vacant for 2½ years. The senior Senator from Iowa stated that his hold is not intended to question the credentials of Brian Egan in any way, but is instead related to Clinton aide Huma Abedin. That says it all.

He continues to hound the State Department. He sent nine different letters, including requesting Ms. Abedin's sensitive private employment information. Not only does Senator GRASSLEY want emails and timesheets, but he wants access to any and all information related to her maternity leave. She had a baby. I wonder if he thinks she faked that. This is nothing more than a transparent attempt to drag this good woman through the mud. For what? Let's be clear. This isn't about her. This is about Hillary Clinton's Presidential campaign. Congressional Republicans are desperate to find something—anything—to embarrass this good woman—a woman who served as First Lady of this country, served as a Senator from the State of New York, and served with distinction as our Secretary of State. They will do anything they can to embarrass her.

They are in the process of doing it across the Capitol Complex now. They have told her to be ready: We have 8 hours of questioning. Remember, their questions are dealing with issues that have nothing to do with what happened in Libya.

This is their frantic attempt to damage her politically. I say to my friend from Iowa: Stop this nonsense. Have some dignity. Stop this obstruction for politics' sake. For whatever sake, it is wrong. She is no longer Secretary of State. She hasn't been for a long time. John Kerry is. Secretary Kerry has been there a long time now. Stop trying to undermine the State Department, and instead give it the resources and people it needs to work for the American people.

I suggest to my Republican colleagues, if they seek expedited responses to their inquiries, it would make more sense to confirm the Legal Adviser, who can advise on these issues and respond to their questions—they don't have a lawyer down there—rather than to block these nominations so that he can't assist anyone.

Senate Republicans are holding Ambassadors captive over an issue that has absolutely nothing to do with the State Department. They are holding up career Foreign Service officers. The Senate Republicans are blocking promotions for a group of career people over an issue that has nothing to do with them, that they possibly can't resolve. They can't do anything about it. They are blocking the person who would be running our Agency for International Aid because they don't like the Iran agreement—an issue that the nominee does not handle.

Finally, Senate Republicans are blocking the nomination of the Legal Adviser of the State Department, the person who would be best able to answer their legal questions if he were confirmed. Thanks to the Republicans' failure to govern—now I am not making this up. It has been determined by political scientists in our country that this Congress is the most unproductive Congress in the history of the country. Thanks to the Republicans' failure to govern, we are still far behind recent historic norms in confirming nominees, and innocent public servants are caught in the middle of this do-nothing Congress led by the Republicans. It is not right, and it is not fair. I hope adult voices in the Republican caucus will say enough is enough. Sometimes enough is enough. People have to rise up against these people who are giving Republicans such a name. The brand is not so good. I hope the Presiding Officer understands that. Partisanship should not extend beyond the borders of our Nation. It is time for Republicans to start acting like a governing party and stop playing these games with our national security based on the fact that they don't like the person who is President of the United States and the one who is going to become President of the United States.

Will the Chair announce what our business is today?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 754, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 754) to improve cybersecurity in the United States through enhanced sharing of information about cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Burr/Feinstein amendment No. 2716, in the nature of a substitute.

Burr (for Cotton) modified amendment No. 2581 (to amendment No. 2716), to exempt from the capability and process within the Department of Homeland Security communication between a private entity and the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the United States Secret Service regarding cybersecurity threats.

Feinstein (for Coons) modified amendment No. 2552 (to amendment No. 2716), to modify section 5 to require DHS to review all cyber threat indicators and countermeasures in order to remove certain personal information.

Burr (for Flake/Franken) amendment No. 2582 (to amendment No. 2716), to terminate the provisions of the Act after six years.

Feinstein (for Franken) further modified amendment No. 2612 (to amendment No. 2716), to improve the definitions of cybersecurity threat and cyber threat indicator.

Burr (for Heller) modified amendment No. 2548 (to amendment No. 2716), to protect information that is reasonably believed to be personal information or information that identifies a specific person.

Feinstein (for Leahy) modified amendment No. 2587 (to amendment No. 2716), to strike the FOIA exemption.

Burr (for Paul) modified amendment No. 2564 (to amendment No. 2716), to prohibit liability immunity to applying to private entities that break user or privacy agreements with customers.

Feinstein (for Mikulski/Cardin) amendment No. 2557 (to amendment No. 2716), to provide amounts necessary for accelerated cybersecurity in response to data breaches.

Feinstein (for Whitehouse/Graham) modified amendment No. 2626 (to amendment No. 2716), to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect Americans from cybercrime.

Feinstein (for Wyden) modified amendment No. 2621 (to amendment No. 2716), to improve the requirements relating to removal of personal information from cyber threat indicators before sharing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Nevada.

AMENDMENT NO. 2548, AS MODIFIED

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, after my years of growing up in Nevada, I appreciate the values that make Nevadans distinct, fiercely independent, and very diverse—in fact, as diverse as the terrain is in Nevada. But what never ceases to amaze me about Nevadans is our passion for protecting America's privacy from the intrusion of the Federal Government. It is a value that is shared across the entire State and one that I have sworn to uphold. But many Americans have lost faith that their government will uphold their civil liberties.

It is Congress's responsibility to ensure that every piece of legislation passed by this body protects the privacy and liberties of all Americans, and I will not accept attempts to diminish these nonnegotiable rights. That is why I am on the floor today to continue protecting Americans' and Nevadans' privacy by pushing for my amendment on the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act.

To begin with, I wish to commend my colleagues, both Chairman BURR and Ranking Member FEINSTEIN, for recognizing the need to address the serious issue of cyber security. As ranking member of the commerce committee's consumer protection subcommittee in the last Congress, I delved into these issues and understand the impact of data breaches and cyber threats. It is an economic concern as well as a national security concern for our country.

I share the desire to find a path forward on information sharing between the Federal Government and the private sector as another tool in the cyber security toolbox, but these efforts cannot come at the expense of personal privacy. The bill, including the substitute amendment that I see today, does not do enough to ensure that per-

sonal, identifiable information is stripped out before being shared, and that is why I have offered this simple fix.

Let's strengthen the standard for stripping out this information. Right now, this legislation says that the Federal Government only has to strip out personal information if they know it is not directly related to cyber threat—that word being “know.” My amendment No. 2548, as modified, will ensure that when personal information is being stripped out, it is because the entity reasonably believes it is not related to cyber threat. That is the change—from knowing to reasonably believing. This distinction creates a wider protection for personal information by ensuring that these entities are making an effort to take out personal information that is not necessary.

Frankly, I am proud of the support I have from Senators LEAHY and WYDEN, both great advocates in the Senate for privacy. However, I am disappointed that my amendment was not included in the substitute amendment that we see today.

The supporters of this bill talk about how this legislation upholds privacy but couldn't accept a reasonable amendment that complements those privacy provisions.

Our friends over in the House of Representatives already agree that the private sector should be held to this standard, which is why they included this language in the cyber security bill they passed. I guess the question is, if this is good enough for the private sector, shouldn't it be good enough for the government sector?

Furthermore, DHS has publicly acknowledged the importance of removing personal, identifiable information because it will allow an information sharing regime to function more efficiently.

What this has come down to is our Nation's commitment to balancing the needs for sharing cyber security information with the needs to protect Americans' personal information. Like many in the tech community have already stated, security should not come at the expense of privacy. In fact, that was said a couple hundred years ago by Benjamin Franklin. Security should not come at the expense of privacy. I believe my amendment No. 2548 to hold the Federal Government accountable strikes that balance, and I hope this simple fix can be incorporated into the legislation.

I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense effort to strengthen this bill and keep our commitment to upholding the rights of all U.S. citizens.

I appreciate Senators BURR and FEINSTEIN's willingness to work with me on this amendment and look forward to continuing this debate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Nevada and say to him generally that we tried to put everything in the managers' amendment that we could, and the threshold was that we had to have total agreement. I know my colleague understands that it is difficult, but we have done everything we can to protect the rights of every individual Member to bring an amendment to the floor, to debate the amendment, and to have an up-or-down vote—even for the ones that were not germane. It is unfortunate that one amendment on both sides will be kicked out because they have to happen before the cloture vote, and that was not allowed to take place.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2193

Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2193) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, in just shy of 25 minutes, the Senate will have a procedural vote on the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015. The committee worked diligently for most of this year in a bipartisan way to achieve a balance of great policy and reported that bill out on a 14-to-1 vote.

I say to my colleagues: We have reached a very delicate balance. There have been bending and twisting and giving and taking, and we have done it not only within the Senate of the United States and within the committee, we have done it with stakeholders all around the country.

I will remind my colleagues that this bill we are attempting to get through the Senate is a voluntary information sharing bill, and the mere fact that it is voluntary means we have to have in place certain incentives that provide a reason for companies to participate.

I commend Chairman JOHNSON and Ranking Member CARPER. Their committee and staff have worked with us side by side to try to incorporate their thoughts and the thoughts of all the agencies and also worked with stakeholders around the country.

I am pleased to tell my colleagues today that we received this morning a notice from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and it says: "The Chamber urges the United States Senate to pass CISA expeditiously. There is overwhelming support."

When the vice chair and I ventured into this, we also made a commitment

to lock arms because we thought we found the right balance. Although it may be enticing for Members to support amendments that might come up, there is a reason we didn't incorporate them in the managers' amendment. It may have been due to the differences the vice chair and I had or maybe it was because it would have killed the support we had with the stakeholders around the country. We will have one of those amendments today, and it is going to be inviting for people to do it, but let me say to my colleagues, if do you it, information sharing is over with, and the effort is dead. It has been tried for 3 years, yet we continue to see attacks happen, and massive amounts of personal data go out of the system to be used for criminal or espionage reasons.

This is really our last chance. The vice chairman and I have reached what we think is the absolute balance that provides the buy-in of those who will be asked to voluntarily turn over this data and to help minimize the loss of data in our entire economy.

I urge my colleagues to support the cloture motion that will happen at 11 a.m. We will have a short debate, and then we will take up an amendment, and the vice chair and I at that time will ask our colleagues not to support that amendment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the cloture motions on amendment No. 2716 and S. 754.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURR. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators on the Democratic side be permitted to speak for 5 minutes each on our time: FEINSTEIN 5 minutes, WYDEN 5 minutes, and CARPER 5 minutes.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, after many years of effort, the Senate is about to take its first vote to move forward on important cyber security legislation. As I stated in my remarks yesterday, this substitute makes 20 changes to the underlying bill. It includes 14 amendments offered by other Senators to improve privacy protections and ensure better cyber security for emergency services, the health care industry, and the Federal Government. As the chairman just said, we have been listening and we have tried to incorporate a substantial number of amendments in the managers' package.

This is a good bill. It is a first step. It is not going to prevent all cyber attacks or penetrations, but it will allow companies and the government to share information about the cyber threats they see and the defensive measures to implement in order to protect their networks.

Right now—and this is important—the same cyber intrusions are used again and again to penetrate different targets. That shouldn't happen. If someone sees a particular virus or harmful signature, they should be able to tell others so they can protect themselves. That is what this bill does—it clears away the uncertainty and concern that keep companies from sharing this information. It says that two competitors in a market can share information on cyber threats with each other without facing antitrust lawsuits. It says that companies sharing cyber threat information with the government for cyber security purposes have liability protection.

The bill is completely voluntary. I don't know how to say that over and over more times than I have. If you don't want to participate, don't. If a company wants to take the position that it can defend itself and doesn't want to participate in real-time sharing with the Department of Homeland Security, that is its right.

I thank my colleagues who came to the floor in support of this bill and this managers' amendment yesterday: Senators MCCONNELL, REID, GRASSLEY, NELSON, MCCAIN, KING, THUNE, FLAKE, Senator CARPER in particular, Senator BLUNT, and others. They have all described the need for this bill, and I so appreciate their support.

I urge my colleagues to support cloture on this substitute managers' package so that we can start moving on to other amendments that are pending.

I also thank Senator BURR and his staff. Over the past couple of days, they have been going through comments, proposing technical changes, and perfecting changes to the substitute. It is my understanding that Chairman BURR will ask a unanimous consent agreement on that perfecting amendment shortly.

I also thank Senator COLLINS for agreeing to changes in her provision, section 407, to start to address concerns that were raised by its inclusion.

I also want to thank Senators WHITEHOUSE, LEAHY, and WYDEN for reaching an agreement on text that Senator WHITEHOUSE very much wanted to include, and I am pleased we were able to include it in this unanimous consent package.

So I appreciate the support of my colleagues. I urge a strong "yes" vote on the cloture vote to allow us to proceed to this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak against cloture on the substitute. This substitute would not have stopped the Target hack, the Anthem hack, the Home Depot hack, or the OPM hack. When it comes to real privacy protection for millions of Americans with this substitute, there is simply no "there" there.

We see that by looking at page 17 of the substitute. Companies have to remove only personal, unrelated information if they know that it is personal

and unrelated. How would they know under this amendment? Under this amendment, they are required to virtually do no looking. It is the most cursory review. That is why the Nation's leading technology companies have come out overwhelmingly against this legislation. They are not satisfied by this substitute.

The sponsors of the bill have been pretty vociferous about attacking these companies for coming out against the legislation. These companies know a lot about the importance of protecting both cyber security and individual privacy. These tech companies that are being attacked now have to manage that challenge every single day. The challenge gets harder all the time with things such as the EU ruling that I opposed. These companies know that customer confidence is their lifeblood, and the only way to ensure customer confidence is to convince people that if they use their product, their information is going to be protected both from malicious hackers and from unnecessary collection by the government.

The fact is, we have a serious problem with hacking and cyber security threats. The fact is, information sharing can be good, but a cyber security information sharing bill without real and robust privacy protections that this amendment lacks—I would submit millions of Americans are going to look at that, and they are going to say this isn't a cyber security bill, this is yet another surveillance bill.

With this amendment, colleagues, the Senate is again missing another opportunity to do this right and promote both security and liberty. Just because a proposal has the words "cyber security" in its title doesn't make it good. But that is, of course, why the leading technology companies in this country—companies that make a living every single day by being sensitive to cyber threats and privacy—have come out overwhelmingly against this bill.

I know my colleagues have tried to improve this issue, and I appreciate that. But the core privacy protections that America deserves in a bill like this are still lacking, and that is why I oppose cloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I wish to respond very briefly to what our colleague from Oregon has said.

Senator FEINSTEIN shared with me a copy of the actual text of the managers' amendment. I would maybe make two points. One, if a private company elects to share information—they don't have to, but if they elect to share information, as Senator FEINSTEIN has said, it is their call. But if they do, there is a requirement under the law that they scrub it. The reporting entity which is submitting the indicator—in this case to DHS, the Federal entity—has to scrub it. They have the responsibility, whoever is initiating this, to scrub and remove that personally iden-

tifiable information. If for some reason they don't, the way the legislation comes before us today, in order for a company that chooses to submit threat indicators to the Federal Government, in order to get help on the liability protection they are looking for, they have to submit it through the Department of Homeland Security, through the portal of the Department of Homeland Security, which is literally set up to do privacy scrubs. It is literally set up to do privacy scrubs, and then to share information it wants with other relevant Federal agencies. Very, very infrequently—very infrequently—will there be some reason to—the threat indicators coming through the portal at DHS, maybe less than 1 percent of the time, there might be a need to take a closer look at that information and make sure there is nothing that is personally identifiable or problematic. I think with the compromise that has been worked out, the issue that our colleague has raised has been addressed.

Let me just go back in time. Why is this important? We know the situation is grim. When the Secretary of Defense has his emails hacked by an entity, and we know not who, when we have 22 million personal records and background checks hacked by maybe the Chinese or maybe somebody else, that is not good. When companies such as DuPont in my own State and universities all over the country are having their R&D information—their intellectual seed corn upon which our economy is going to grow—stolen, and presumably stolen for bad reasons, so that they can beat us to the bunch in terms of economic opportunity, that is not good.

What are we going to do about it? It turns out we did quite a bit about it in the last Congress. Two Congresses ago, Senator FEINSTEIN proposed comprehensive cyber security legislation, the whole kit and caboodle. We tried very hard, as she knows, for a year or two to get that enacted. We couldn't get it done. Finally, we gave up at the end of I think the 112th Congress. We gave it up, and we started again in 2013.

Tom Coburn was the ranking member on Homeland Security. I was privileged to be chairman. He and I partnered with people on our committee and, frankly, with a lot of folks outside of the committee, to do three things: To strengthen the capability of the Department of Homeland Security to do its job, a much better job of protecting not just the Federal Government but the country as a whole against cyber attacks. We passed three pieces of legislation. They are helpful; they are not the whole package, but they are three very helpful bills to make DHS a better, more effective partner.

This year, the Intel Committee, under the leadership of Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN, came forward with their proposal. The administration, the President, came forward with an information sharing proposal as well. We took it up in a hearing in the

committee on homeland security, looking at the President's proposal, trying to figure out what we should retain and what we should change to make it better, and we did. We changed it and we made it better. I introduced it as a standalone bill. The Intel Committee reported out their legislation 14 to 1.

We have been working with Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN and their staffs ever since to try to infuse the elements of the President's proposal, modified by us on homeland security, to make a more perfect—not a more perfect union, but a more perfect bill. Is it perfect? No. Is it better? Sure, it is better. I think it is going to enable us to do a much better job protecting that which needs to be protected.

The last thing I will say is this: On this floor I have said more than a few times I love to ask people that have been married a long time, what is the secret to a long marriage? The best answer I have ever received is the two C's—communicate and compromise. I would add a third C, which is also important for a vibrant democracy. The third C is collaborate.

This legislation is a great example of communicating, talking with own another, with stakeholders on Capitol Hill, off Capitol Hill, across the country and around the world, but at the end of the day to figure out how to compromise and to do so by collaborating.

I think we have come up with a very good piece of legislation. At the end of the day, if an entity or business wants to share information—I hope they would, we need them to do that. If they want to share information with the Federal Government, the idea is to get liability protection and share it through the portal of the Department of Homeland Security; that information is scrubbed—cyber security scrubbed, piracy scrubbed. Share with other Federal agencies as appropriate after it has been dutifully scrubbed, and then we are in a better position to defend against those attacks in the future.

I think when people send us to work on big problems—and this is a big problem for our country—they want us to work together. They want us to get stuff done. We have been talking about this for 3 or 4 years, and now we have an opportunity to get something done. Let's pass this and accept this managers' amendment, and then let's take up some other amendments, and pass this bill and send it to the House. When they have done their work, let's go to conference.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise to support the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, long overdue and vital legislation designed to reduce our Nation's vulnerability to cyber attacks.

I want to commend the ranking member of my committee, Senator

TOM CARPER, and Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN, for their collaborative effort. This is an example of when we actually seek to find the areas of agreement that unify us versus exploit our divisions, then we can actually accomplish some pretty good things. This bill is one of those examples.

The cyber threat we face today is real and it is growing. Sophisticated nation-state adversaries such as China and North Korea are constantly probing American companies' and Federal agencies' computer networks to steal valuable and sensitive data. International criminal organizations are exploiting our networks to commit financial fraud and health fraud. Cyber crime is so pervasive that the former Director of the National Security Agency described it as the "greatest transfer of wealth in human history." Cyber terrorists are trying to attack cyber-connected critical infrastructure, thereby threatening our very way of life.

We have already experienced the impact of this threat. Within the last year and a half alone, more than 20 top American companies and Federal agencies have experienced major breaches. A breach of the Office of Personnel Management allowed a foreign adversary to steal 19.7 million Federal employees' background checks, over 5 million fingerprint files, and 4 million personnel records. A breach at IRS allowed cyber criminals abroad to access over 330,000 taxpayer financial records. A destructive cyber attack from North Korea on Sony Pictures resulted in the destruction of thousands of computers and theft of the company's most valuable intellectual property. Data breaches at both Anthem and JP Morgan resulted in the theft of 80 million health care subscribers' personal data and 83 million banking customers' personal information. Even the White House is not immune from attack. Six months ago, foreign adversaries breached White House networks, compromising the President's nonpublic schedule.

Federal agencies are neglecting to protect Americans' data and Federal law is preventing companies from defending their networks. Congressional oversight, including hearings held by my committee, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, has shown agencies are not doing enough to protect their sensitive data. Our committee's oversight hearings of the IRS and OPM data breaches revealed that basic cyber security hygiene and best practices would have stopped attackers in their tracks had they been in place at these agencies. The Department of Homeland Security has not yet fully implemented the cyber security programs we need to protect Federal agencies' networks.

Meanwhile, current law hinders private companies from sharing indicators that can be used to detect and stop attacks against their networks. To be ef-

fective, cyber threat indicators must be shared very quickly. The 2015 Verizon data breach investigation report revealed that 75 percent of attacks spread within 24 hours, and 40 percent spread within just 1 hour. Yet our current network of anti-trust and wiretap loss hampers companies from sharing that information quickly, creating a threat of lawsuit and prosecution for sharing that the information companies can use to identify and stop attacks.

There is no easy solution, but there are things Congress can do to improve cyber security that might make cyber attacks more difficult. That is why I am proud to have worked with Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN to create the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, which takes a significant first step in addressing both of these issues.

First, it enables information sharing to improve cyber security within private companies.

Second, it improves cyber security at Federal agencies.

I especially appreciate the collaboration of Senator CARPER in working with me to help craft title II of the bill—the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act—which was unanimously reported out of our committee. This bill will put Federal agencies on track to implement commonsense cyber security solutions already in use in many companies, thereby improving the security of Americans' data at the Federal agencies.

The Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act will achieve four key goals.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. JOHNSON. I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

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

Mr. JOHNSON. First, it will mandate deployment and implementation of a government-wide intrusion detection and prevention system for Federal networks.

Second, it will require OMB to develop an intrusion assessment plan so government agencies can hunt down and eradicate attackers already in their networks.

Third, it requires agencies to implement specific cyber security practices, such as multifactor authentication and encryption of sensitive data, which would have stopped previous attacks.

Fourth, and finally, it will give the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget the authority they need to oversee cyber security across the Federal Government.

In short, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, with the inclusion of the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act, will significantly improve our cyber security posture. This bill will not solve all of our cyber security woes, but it is an important step in the right direction, and I am glad to support it.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes before we move to the cloture vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I believe I have a couple of minutes left after the chairman speaks that I would like to use.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I am happy to extend the debate for a couple of minutes for each side, but I think it does need, in the interest of fairness for the proponents and opponents, to have equal time for the purposes of wrapping up, if my colleagues want to go further.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, let me modify my request. I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes on both sides.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, just so the record is clear, I was told I did not utilize my entire 5 minutes, and I want to make a very brief closing statement on my 5 minutes.

Mr. BURR. May I modify my request further? My unanimous consent would grant me 2 additional minutes and would grant the vice chair 2 minutes 45 seconds.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I don't want to prolong this. Reserving the right to object—do I have any additional time? I wasn't sure I had used my full 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon has 45 seconds remaining in his time from before.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that each side be given 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCAIN. I am about to object. Let's get going here.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I withdraw my request for my 5 minutes, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from North Carolina for 2 additional minutes for each side?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for allowing me the time.

Very quickly, it was said that this bill will not prevent and would not have prevented the attacks that took place at American companies. It is, in fact, right. The vice chair and I have never portrayed that this was a prevention bill. We said it is not a prevention bill. It is a bill designed to share information to minimize the loss of data.

As it relates to personal data, my colleague from Oregon forgets that the managers' amendment strengthens by making sure on the government side that they only draw in the fields that

the entire government collaborative group agrees need to be used for forensic purposes over and above what Senator CARPER pointed out are the responsibilities of the private sector companies.

It was said that the vice chair and I have been critical of technology companies that oppose this bill. I don't think we have been critical. We have been confused—confused that the companies that hold the most personal data on the American people in the country want to deprive every other business in America from having the ability to share their information when they are hacked. So I am not critical. I am challenged to figure out why they would take that position, but I have come to the conclusion that there are some questions in life that have no answers, and I have now reached one of those.

Given that we are at the end of this debate, let me once again thank Chairman JOHNSON and Ranking Member CARPER for the unbelievable contribution that both of them individually made in their committee, and on behalf of the vice chair and myself, I would urge our colleagues to support cloture and allow this process to move forward so we could conference with the House. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, thank you very much.

I just want to urge people to vote yes on cloture. We have been at this for 6 years. This is the third bill. We have been bipartisan. The bill is considered. This is a complicated and difficult arena. The bill is all voluntary. The moaning and groaning of companies, I say, if you don't want to participate, don't participate, but I can give you hundreds and thousands of companies that are desperate to participate to be able to protect themselves without a lawsuit, and this enables that. It is a first-step bill.

I particularly wish to thank the chair and ranking on the Homeland Security Committee. I very much appreciate this support and know that Senator BURR, I, and others will continue to work as we recognize this most serious threat on our economy and the privacy of individuals. To do nothing now is to admit that we cannot come up with a bill, and, in fact, we can. Please vote yes.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I hope colleagues will vote no. I have three quick points. No. 1, the chairman of the committee—and we work together often—acknowledged that this substitute would not have prevented these major hacks that we are all so concerned about. No. 2, once again we have heard an attack on the country's major technology companies. All of them, all of them, colleagues, are opposed to this legislation. We are talking about Apple and Dropbox and Twitter. The list goes

on and on. Why? Because these companies have to be concerned about both cyber security and protecting their employees and their customers privacy. Unfortunately, this legislation does very little to protect cyber security, which has now been acknowledged by the lead sponsor of the legislation and has major problems with respect to protecting the liberty of the American people. I urge colleagues to vote no.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, are we out of time on the Democrats' side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty seconds remain.

Mr. CARPER. Colleagues, keep in mind, EINSTEIN 1 and EINSTEIN 2 are already effective to detect but not block these intrusions. EINSTEIN 3, authorized by our legislation, puts a new player on the field—a defensive player—to be able to block these intrusions. This is new and requires these agencies to implement that. For no other reason than that, it is a good reason to support this proposal.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on amendment No. 2716 to S. 754, a bill to improve cybersecurity in the United States through enhanced sharing of information about cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Johnny Isakson, Richard Burr, John McCain, Shelley Moore Capito, Orrin G. Hatch, John Thune, Chuck Grassley, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, Jeff Flake, Lamar Alexander, Bill Cassidy, Deb Fischer, Susan M. Collins, Patrick J. Toomey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 2716, offered by the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR, to S. 754, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 83, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 281 Leg.]

YEAS—83

Alexander	Barrasso	Blumenthal
Ayotte	Bennet	Blunt

Boozman	Gillibrand	Nelson
Boxer	Grassley	Perdue
Burr	Hatch	Peters
Cantwell	Heinrich	Portman
Capito	Heitkamp	Reed
Cardin	Heller	Reid
Carper	Hirono	Risch
Casey	Hoeven	Roberts
Cassidy	Inhofe	Rounds
Coats	Isakson	Sasse
Cochran	Johnson	Schatz
Collins	Kaine	Schumer
Corker	King	Scott
Cornyn	Kirk	Sessions
Cotton	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Crapo	Lankford	Shelby
Cruz	Lee	Stabenow
Daines	Manchin	Sullivan
Donnelly	McCain	Tester
Durbin	McCaskill	Thune
Enzi	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	Mikulski	Toomey
Feinstein	Moran	Warner
Fischer	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Flake	Murphy	Wicker
Gardner	Murray	

NAYS—14

Baldwin	Leahy	Sanders
Booker	Markey	Udall
Brown	Menendez	Warren
Coons	Merkley	Wyden
Franken	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Rubio	Vitter
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). On this vote, the yeas are 83, the nays are 14.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2564, AS MODIFIED

There will now be 10 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote in relation to amendment No. 2564, offered by the Senator from North Carolina, Mr. BURR, for Mr. PAUL.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I wish to say to my colleagues that there is 10 minutes of debate in between these votes, so those Members who have conversations, I wish they would take them off the floor. If they are not going to have conversations, stay and listen to the debate.

Mr. President, from the floor, I have said to my colleagues that the information sharing bill is a very delicately balanced piece of legislation.

What we have attempted to do is to create a voluntary program that companies around this country can choose to participate in or not. Some have already expressed their opposition to it, and I would say that is very easy—pass the bill, and they just won't participate.

There are going to be amendments, though, that change the balance. I don't want to get into the details of every amendment. Let me just say to my colleagues that if we change the balance we have reached not just on both sides of the aisle but with the comfort level of businesses across this country to where they believe they can no longer participate in it, then we won't have a successful information sharing bill.

I think every Member of this body and every American knows that cyber attacks are not going to go away. They are going to continue, they are going

to become more numerous, and we are going to be on the floor debating something that is probably much more specific in the future. I wish we could prevent it, but right now our only tool is legislation that voluntarily asks companies to participate to minimize the loss of data.

I encourage my colleagues, as the vice chair and I have—we are going to oppose all the amendments that come up. We have gone through all the amendments, and those which we could accept and which we felt embraced the balance we had achieved and could still hold together the support across the country—we incorporated those in the managers' amendment, and that managers' amendment will be voted on when we come back on Monday or Tuesday.

With that, I yield the floor to my vice chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask the Senate to vote no on this amendment, and I would like to explain why. This amendment would create an exemption to the bill's narrowly tailored liability protections for companies that take responsible actions to look for cyber threats and share information about them if a company "breaks a user or privacy agreement with a customer, regardless of how trivial it may be."

The underlying cyber bill has been carefully drafted to ensure that it is totally voluntary and that activities can only be conducted on a customer's behalf with express authorization.

Let me read the language in the bill. The bill reads:

Nothing in this title shall be construed—
(1) to amend, repeal, or supersede any current or future contractual agreement, terms of service agreement, or other contractual relationship between any entities, or between any entity and a Federal entity.

There is tremendous objection to the Paul amendment that is coming in from the chamber of commerce, various companies, and the health industry. They understand what is in our bill. This amendment would actually fatally disturb what is in the bill, which is clear and concise.

I urge a "no" vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, this cyber security bill attempts to enhance security for transactions on the Internet but I think actually weakens privacy in the process. The bill would grant legal immunity to companies that, in sharing information, actually violate your privacy.

Most companies have a privacy agreement. You see it when you get on the Internet. It is supposed to guarantee that your information, individual choices, and consumer choices on the Internet are not revealed to anyone. This bill says that if the company violates it in sharing your information, there will be legal immunity

for that company. I think that weakens privacy. It makes the privacy agreement not really worth the paper it is written on.

I think privacy is of great concern to Americans. The government doesn't have a very good record with privacy. In the news today, a teenager is now reading the email of the CIA Director. It doesn't sound as though the government is very good at protecting privacy. I am not really excited about letting them have more information.

The government revealed 20 million individual records of their employees, private records of their employees. This is the same government that now says: Trust us, and let's give everybody involved immunity so the consumer has no recourse if their privacy is breached. This is the same government that allowed the ObamaCare Web site to be hacked and looked at. This is a government that doesn't have a lot of concern or ability to protect privacy. We are now asked to entrust this government with volumes and volumes of personal information sent across the vastness of the Internet. There is good reason that many of our largest technological companies oppose this legislation.

My amendment will give companies and Internet users clarity on what information is shared with the government, and it will protect the privacy agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I would like to respond to that because we have been told that for the industries that support this bill, this amendment is a bill killer, and the opposition to it has come in far and wide. We have 52 industrial associations in business, finance, banking, petroleum, waterworks, railroads, public power, real estate, and retail—52 associations that are on your desk—supporting it. In particular, the health industry has weighed in against this amendment.

We accomplished the purpose in our bill in a way that is acceptable. Please vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, let us be clear that most of the high-tech companies that have anything to do with the Internet and anything to do with information sharing oppose this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I think everybody would like to vote, but I will say one last thing to my colleagues.

Any company in America—any company in America—that chooses not to participate, doesn't have to. If for some reason they find there is something in this piece of legislation they are uncomfortable with or they are concerned about with regard to the transfer of any personal data, it is very simple: They do not have to participate. But to deny everybody who would like to participate is wrong.

I would encourage my colleagues to defeat the amendment and support moving on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2564, as modified.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

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

The result was announced—yeas 32, nays 65, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 282 Leg.]

YEAS—32

Baldwin	Daines	Merkley
Barrasso	Durbin	Murkowski
Bennet	Enzi	Murray
Booker	Franken	Paul
Boxer	Gillibrand	Sanders
Brown	Heinrich	Schumer
Cantwell	Heller	Sullivan
Cardin	Leahy	Udall
Coons	Lee	Warren
Crapo	Markey	Wyden
Cruz	Menendez	

NAYS—65

Alexander	Grassley	Peters
Ayotte	Hatch	Portman
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Reid
Boozman	Hoeven	Risch
Burr	Inhofe	Roberts
Capito	Isakson	Rounds
Carper	Johnson	Sasse
Casey	Kaine	Schatz
Cassidy	King	Scott
Coats	Kirk	Sessions
Cochran	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Collins	Lankford	Shelby
Corker	Manchin	Stabenow
Cornyn	McCain	Tester
Cotton	McCaskill	Thune
Donnelly	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	Mikulski	Toomey
Feinstein	Moran	Warner
Fischer	Murphy	Whitehouse
Flake	Nelson	Wicker
Gardner	Perdue	

NOT VOTING—3

Graham	Rubio	Vitter
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The amendment (No. 2564), as modified, was rejected.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for not longer than 10 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2194 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Madam 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. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEBT CEILING

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to give voice to concerns about the pending battle over what is referred to as the debt ceiling. We have been told that the ability of the United States to pay its bills on time and its interest on bonds will expire on November 3, which is only about a dozen days from now—less than 2 weeks.

This is of grave concern to Americans. In fact, if it hasn't been a concern to someone, it should be because it touches almost every American household. This is all about the question of whether we are going to pay a bill that is due for previous spending on time or not. This is all about whether we are going to pay the interest that will be due on Treasury bills on time or not.

Great Nations don't pay their bills late. They are expected to be organized and competent and have their act together, but there is also a tremendous incentive to pay on time because when you pay late, the interest rate on your debt goes up because you become less creditworthy. Many folks in this Chamber say we should operate like a family and think about family values when it comes to finance. Here is the connection with how families operate: They know if they don't pay their mortgage or insurance or their Target bill on time, then their cost of credit is going to go up and their credit score will go down.

Sometimes families simply don't have any possible way of paying a bill when it comes up, and they struggle to get the funds together, knowing the more cases that fail, the worse it is for their credit score, which means if they borrow money to buy a car, a house, or for any reason, the interest rate is going to be much higher, and they will have to pay a lot more and will not get anything more than they would have gotten before.

Families understand they have to pay their bills on time. That is fiscal responsibility. But some may have forgotten that this lesson is not just anchored in theory, this is in practice. In 2011, when we dillydallied over paying our bills on time, the United States credit rating was taken down a notch, which meant that we had to pay a higher interest.

How about 2013—just 2 years ago—when we failed to act responsibly and the government shut down and it cost us not only 120,000 jobs, but it also cost us, by our best estimates, about \$70 million more in interest that we wouldn't have otherwise had to pay because interest rates went up. Not paying your bills on time is fiscally irresponsible and, to put it more directly, it is a “Dumb and Dumber” tax on every American family. I am not sure why it is that advocates in the House and Senate are advocating for a “Dumb

and Dumber” tax. The worst tax is when it costs money and you buy nothing, but that is what happens when you don't pay your bills on time.

We know the cost of paying more on Treasury bonds doesn't just affect the U.S. Government. We also know that the Treasury bond rate is used as an index for items, such as home mortgages and car loans. So our families have to pay more because of the irresponsibility of the Republican “Dumb and Dumber” tax on America. It is irresponsible, and it is damaging to our country and to our families.

It is not often that I turn to Ronald Reagan for insight, but in this case he had it absolutely right. Ronald Reagan said that fiscal responsibility is paying your bills on time. There were a number of times when he spoke to Congress and said, don't do a “Dumb and Dumber” tax.

To put it in his own words when he was at a radio address in 1987, he said:

This brinkmanship threatens the holders of government bonds and those who rely on Social Security and veterans' benefits. Interest markets would skyrocket. Instability would occur in financial markets, and the federal deficit would soar.

He continued and said, “The United States has a special responsibility to itself and the world to meet its obligations.”

At another time he wrote a letter to the majority leader of the Senate and said:

The full consequences of a default—or even the serious prospect of default—by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate.

He continued:

Denigration of the full faith and credit of the United States would have substantial effects on the domestic financial markets and the value of the dollar in exchange markets. The Nation can ill afford to allow such a result. The risks, the costs, the disruptions, and the incalculable damage lead me to but one conclusion: the Senate must pass this legislation before Congress adjourns.

Let us listen to the voice of reason on fiscal responsibility to pay our debts on time. Let us not adopt the Republican “Dumb and Dumber” tax of failing to pay our bills that extracts huge costs, as President Reagan recognized, both on our Nation and on our families.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

PIONEER SPIRIT OF COLORADO AND 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FARMERS IMPLEMENT COMPANY

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, in the 1800s, Colorado found itself at the center of a nation—gold rushes and silver rushes, cattle barons and sheep barons, range wars pitting the rancher against the sod farmer. It is a State that, as it does today, had a little bit of something for everyone—a whole lot of space, breathtaking vistas, and pioneer dreams abound.

The 1860s ushered in the land rush across the country, extending to Colorado a few years later by the 1880s. People from the east looking for that

relief valve of western expansion were drawn to the high plains of Colorado with its fertile valleys, peaks and plateaus, places where the rain followed the plow, and the landmen knew no limit to the sale of aridity.

It was in the 1880s that one Raimond von Harrom Schramm, a wealthy baron, was moving his belongings from east to west when the train he was riding on derailed in a small eastern Colorado town. Detecting Divine providence at work—or most likely scared to get back on the train—he decided to stay put, declaring the site of the derailment was where God intended him to be.

He went on to build the first multi-story brick buildings in that town before the town's fathers decided against naming him the mayor. That the town council would subject such a man of possession to the humility of an election was too much for Baron Schramm, promptly causing him to move his brick buildings to a more aptly named town—you guessed it—Schramm, just down the road. It is 100 years later, and there are no brick buildings in his namesake town, just a nice feedlot bearing the name Schramm.

In the town he left behind, hard-scrabble businesses continued, squeezing just enough moisture out of the ground to provide pastures for the cows. Soon enough fortune and luck built up to break the sod on the eastern plains to begin Colorado's long romance with high-plains farming. It surely wasn't easy. Families crammed into tar paper houses, staking their claim on a patch of ground that knows only shades of brown and green.

It was around 1915 when three men came together to start an implement business—Roy Chilcoat, Jack Tribbett, and another partner—selling farm equipment. Steel-studded wheatland machinery, cream separators, and corn shellers tilled sandhills whose only previous disruptions were antelope, buffalo, and the crossing paths of the plains Indians.

It was no easy feat to be a pioneer in agriculture. There was an old saying at the coffee shop in that small town: How do you make a small fortune in agriculture? You start with a large one. The people there lived in sod houses, getting ice from ponds in the winter to store over the summer—if there was enough moisture for the pond. They endured sandstorms and dust bowls that were described in books and movies for generations to come.

These hardy men and women didn't leave when the hard times continued because they had made this their home. To survive was to succeed and to succeed was something that every American aspired to. Their wealth was measured in friends, family, and in the miles of prairie and the consistency of the windmills turning the lifeblood of the plains, their water. Perhaps nothing else has changed the face of Colorado or Western States more than the

application of water to dry land. They are what make Colorado today—boundless spirits of pioneers driven to succeed.

During the Great Depression, it was devastating for everyone. Neighbors saw neighbors' soil drive unrelentingly across the darkened country sky, carried by the wind borne atop the rain-deprived lands. People like Chilcoat and Tribbet knew they had to survive for themselves, their families, and their small, struggling community. They had to survive so that others in the community could survive too.

So they found ways to do it—diversifying the business; trading wheat for tractors; giving a price for the wheat that was at two or three times the money the wheat was actually worth just to keep families on their farms; storing the wheat, hoping that it would someday be worth more than the loss they had incurred. They gave tractors to poor farmers knowing they couldn't pay for them but knowing that without them, those family farms wouldn't make it; knowing that someday—or holding hope above fear—their neighbor would make good on it and pay what they could.

Businesses in these small towns scraped through the Depression, on to World War II when its sons and daughters left to fight for freedom in lands many had never heard of before, rationing, sacrificing, and dedicating new faces to the workforce, forever changing the landscape of small and big towns alike.

Eventually, businesses like Roy's and Jack's and their partners would pass on to a new generation—Howard Crowley and a new partner—and then again to a new generation still. That business still stands today as Farmers Implement Company. Chilcoat and Tribbet were joined by my great-grandfather, known as Daddy Bill, who would eventually sell their interests to my grandfather, Paul Gardner, and my father, John Gardner.

I spent years working there, trying to learn values, the business, but learning more about relationships—people and a way of life—than selling parts. In fact, based on how many wrong parts I sold, I am pretty sure that was one of the least of things I learned about. But I watched as generations of customers came through the door. I watched my grandfather refuse to sell something they could make money on in the dealership, but he knew the person who wanted it couldn't afford to buy it. Why did he do it? Because he wanted them to survive—a new generation of survivors continuing their fight to make a living on the windswept plains of eastern Colorado.

Tomorrow, Farmers Implement will celebrate its 100th anniversary as a family-owned farm implement business. I am proud of the values that dealership represents and honored to be a part of a great rural family heritage and our little town of Yuma. Congratulations.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HIGHWAY BILL

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, last Friday the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee released the bipartisan 6-year highway bill proposal. If everything goes as expected, the House transportation committee will mark up its legislation this week. From what I understand, House leadership is committed to taking up this crucial legislation in the coming weeks.

As many of you know, passing a long-term transportation bill has been one of my goals as a Member of this body. In fact, since my time in the Nebraska unicameral, I have made transportation infrastructure funding a top priority. Two of my signature accomplishments in the unicameral led to increased investment for Nebraska's infrastructure and helped local communities move forward with starting and completing vital transportation projects.

This August I welcomed our U.S. Transportation Secretary, Anthony Foxx, to Lincoln, NE, where we convened a roundtable at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Transportation Research Center. We were joined by local transportation stakeholders representing railroad, highway construction, trucking, passenger automobiles, and the aviation industry. At this important meeting, as well as at my listening sessions this summer throughout the State, the message from Nebraskans was loud and clear: Our businesses, consumers, workers, and families want a long-term highway bill.

Throughout the process of developing this bill, I worked with local stakeholders in Nebraska, including our State department of roads, highway builders and project managers, and transportation and community leaders.

Infrastructure is a wise investment. It keeps our country competitive in today's global marketplace. The safety of our traveling public depends on robust and reliable transportation infrastructure. That is why we passed a bipartisan multiyear highway bill here in the Senate. The DRIVE Act provides States and communities with 6 years of certainty for that highway funding without raising taxes on middle-class families.

As an active member of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I am proud of the work we have accomplished together. Our bill enhances safety, proposes much needed regulatory reforms, and it

increases investment in our Nation's infrastructure.

The DRIVE Act also includes significant reforms to accelerate highway project construction. The bill does so by advancing key provisions that ensure that local infrastructure projects in Nebraska and all across this country will move forward with a better and a more defined process from the very onset.

The meaningful changes that I championed will provide better coordination between the Federal Highway Administration and States by streamlining environmental permitting and reviews, as well as programmatic agreement templates when initiating new infrastructure projects.

Specifically, the bill will establish new procedures based on a template developed by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. This will allow our States, in addition to the Federal Government, to determine which State or Federal agencies must be consulted prior to beginning that infrastructure project.

In addition, the bill provides technical assistance to States that want to assume responsibility for the reviews of categorical exclusion projects, which are a category of projects that don't have a significant impact on the environment, triggering a less arduous level of environmental review. Rather than wasting time and taxpayer dollars waiting on the Federal Government to provide an assessment, my provisions would help States provide their own categorical certification regarding the appropriate level of environmental review of certain projects.

Given Nebraska's challenges with starting and completing infrastructure projects, these elements of the DRIVE Act offer a major step forward for transportation projects in my State.

The DRIVE Act also includes major components of a bill that I introduced earlier this year called the TRUCK Safety Reform Act. The legislation offers serious regulatory reforms to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Additionally, the bill encourages stronger regulatory analysis, more transparency, and wider public participation in the regulatory process.

The bill also provides regulatory relief to agricultural producers in Nebraska, reforms research at the Department of Transportation to reduce duplication across the modal administrations, and addresses the challenges of the Compliance Safety and Accountability truck scoring program.

I am pleased that the DRIVE Act establishes a new freight program that will prioritize, increase efficiency, and lower the costs for moving freight imports and exports throughout our Nation. The DRIVE Act's freight program will designate a national freight system and provide guaranteed dollars to Nebraska to enhance freight movement throughout our State on our railways and highways. The freight program will also help America's transportation system continue to facilitate expanding

U.S. trade flows. The freight program is crucial to our Nation's economic competitiveness, especially as international trade continues to increase.

The DRIVE Act further incorporates performance-based regulations into our Nation's transportation system. Performance-based measures will offer States more flexibility in meeting the goals of infrastructure-related regulations, something that I have strongly advocated as chairman of the surface transportation subcommittee.

In totality, I believe the Senate produced a thoughtful, comprehensive, and well-drafted highway bill. I greatly appreciate the House moving forward with a long-term highway bill, and I am eager to seek passage of this vital legislation so we can move to a joint conference committee.

I am also pleased to see that the House bill offers several critical provisions, including regulatory reform of the FMCSA and the CSA Program, hair testing for commercial drivers, a freight program, and streamlined permitting to initiate local highway projects at a faster pace. Ultimately, the House's legislative activity this week surrounding the highway bill is a strong step toward achieving a multiyear highway bill—one that will move our economy forward, create jobs, and strengthen safety on our roads, highways, and bridges all across America.

In the coming weeks I look forward to working with Chairman INHOFE, Chairman THUNE, Senator BOXER, and Chairman SHUSTER to produce a reform-oriented compromise that enhances the efficiency, reliability, and safety of our Nation's transportation system.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 224

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, on October 15, 2015, Senators DIANNE FEINSTEIN and PATRICK LEAHY released the following statement marking the 5-year anniversary of the arrest of Liu Xia, the wife of Chinese democracy activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo:

This week marks the five-year anniversary that Liu Xia was placed under house arrest in China. She has never been charged with a crime and remains confined to her apartment because her husband, respected democracy activist Liu Xiaobo, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.

Over the past five years, Liu Xia's health has sharply deteriorated. She suffers from anxiety, depression, severe back pain and had a heart attack last year. Her repeated requests to leave the country for medical treatment have been denied.

We urgently request the Chinese government allow Liu Xia to seek medical treatment abroad and release Liu Xiaobo, the world's only jailed Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Such action would be a welcome humanitarian gesture.

I could not agree more with the very wise sentiments expressed by Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator LEAHY. That is exactly right. The United States should speak with one voice in support of human rights and against the disgrace that China has jailed this Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

My resolution, following in the tradition of legislation that renamed the street in front of the Soviet Embassy in honor of the heroic Russian dissident and Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov in 1984, would do the same, it would rename the street in front of the People's Republic of China Embassy to be "Liu Xiaobo Plaza" after the equally heroic Chinese dissident and Nobel laureate who had been brutally imprisoned by the PRC since 2009 for peacefully advocating for basic political freedom.

I would note that the original legislation naming the street in front of the Soviet Embassy in honor of Mr. Sakharov was introduced by my colleague the senior Senator from Iowa who is on the floor with me today to support me in this request.

As I noted when I first asked unanimous consent for this legislation on September 24 on the eve of President Xi's visit to Washington, I, for one, think as Americans we should not be troubled by embarrassing Communist oppressors, and this issue is not abstract to me.

My family, like Dr. Liu, has been imprisoned for repressive regimes. My father as a teenager was imprisoned and tortured in Cuba. He had his nose broken. He had his teeth shattered. He lay in the blood and grime of a prison cell.

In Cuba, my aunt—my Tia Sonia—was a few years later imprisoned and tortured by Castro—my father by Batista, my aunt by Castro—imprisoned and tortured by an oppressive Communist regime.

The United States has a long history of standing with dissidents and speaking out for human rights. When this body acted to rename the street in front of the Soviet Embassy "Sakharov Plaza," that was a powerful statement that helped bring condemnation of the world on the Soviet Union's repressive human rights record. We should show the same bipartisan unanimity with regard to Communist China, standing together with a wrongfully imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate. We should say to the wrongfully imprisoned dissidents across the world: America hears you and we stand with you.

Some years ago I visited with Natan Sharansky in Jerusalem. He described how the prisoners in the Soviet gulag would pass notes from cell to cell: Did you hear what President Reagan said? Evil empire, ash heap of history, tear down this wall.

What this body does makes a difference. What this country does makes a difference, and we should not forget our core values.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 224; I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I wish to make a couple of remarks as to why.

Senator CRUZ, believe it or not, I have actually played a role—particularly in the 1990s—in helping dissidents be released by the Government of China and had some success. We did that by talking to the government.

I think to do this in this way will set back the cause and actually be deleterious to the release of these people, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I intend to continue pressing this resolution because I believe we have a moral imperative to speak for freedom. It is one thing to put out press releases, it is another thing to act. I agree with every word in the press release that was issued by Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator LEAHY, and my request is simply to put action to those words.

I tell you, when I visit with Chinese Americans in my State of Texas, I don't want to have to look them in the eyes and tell them I stood with the Chinese Communist Government, the oppressors, instead of standing with Dr. Liu, instead of standing with a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, for fear of embarrassing their oppressors.

There are few things more powerful than embarrassment, than public sunshine. When Ronald Reagan stood before the Brandenburg Gate and said "Tear down this wall," he didn't listen to the voice of timidity say: Now that is going to embarrass the Soviets.

I would note in the White House that the staffers repeatedly crossed out that line of his speech. They said: No, no, no, no, no. That will upset the Soviets. That will set us back diplomatically—the exact same argument, sadly, the senior Senator from California just presented. And each time President Reagan wrote that line back in with his own hand, explaining to those staffers: You don't understand, that is the entire point of giving the speech. That is why I am there because when we speak the truth, the truth has power.

This body—Democratic Senators in this body and Republican Senators in this body—should not be aiding and abetting the oppression of the Chinese Government. We should be standing

and speaking for truth and for freedom, and we should be following the pattern that was successfully demonstrated by Senator GRASSLEY in introducing the resolution naming “Sakharov Plaza” in front of the Soviet Embassy.

With that, I yield to my colleague, the senior Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I appreciate my colleague bringing up the history of Andrei Sakharov Plaza. A lot of people wonder whether this makes much of a difference, what the Senator is attempting to do in the case of the Chinese Embassy. I can tell you it made a big difference. All you have to do is measure the opposition as we were considering the one I introduced several years ago. When the State Department fights hard not to embarrass the Russians, when the city of Washington, DC, fights very hard not to rename a street, then you know you are on the right track, when you have those sorts of people in opposition to you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate has an order to proceed to executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Julie Furuta-Toy, of Wyoming, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; Dennis B. Hankins, of Minnesota, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Guinea; Harry K. Thomas, Jr., of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Zimbabwe; and Robert Porter Jackson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana.

VOTE ON FURUTA-TOY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Furuta-Toy nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 283 Ex.]

YEAS—93

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

NOT VOTING—7

Flake	Moran	Vitter
Graham	Rubio	
Kaine	Thune	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON HANKINS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hankins nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON THOMAS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thomas nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON JACKSON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Jackson nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING ACT OF 2015—Continued

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, that at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, October 27, the postcloture time be considered expired on amendment No. 2716 and the Senate vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed: Wyden, No. 2621, as modified; Heller, No. 2548, as modified; Leahy, No. 2587, as modified; Flake, No. 2582; Franken, No. 2612, as further modified; that following the disposition of the Franken amendment, the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings; that the time from 2:15 p.m. until 4 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form; and that at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, the Senate vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed: Coons, No. 2552, as modified; Cotton, No. 2581, as modified; Burr-Feinstein, substitute No. 2716, as amended, if amended; further, that if cloture is invoked on S. 754, all postcloture time be yielded back, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of S. 754, as amended, if amended, without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING OUR INFANTS ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 246, S. 799.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 799) to combat the rise of prenatal opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 799

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. ADDRESSING PROBLEMS RELATED TO PRENATAL OPIOID USE.

(a) REVIEW OF PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall conduct a review of planning and coordination related to prenatal opioid use, including neonatal abstinence syndrome, within the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services.

(b) STRATEGY.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall develop a strategy to address gaps in research and gaps, overlap, and duplication among Federal programs, including those identified in findings made by reports of the Government Accountability Office. Such strategy shall address—

(1) gaps in research, including with respect to—

(A) the most appropriate treatment of pregnant women with opioid use disorders;

(B) the most appropriate treatment and management of infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome; and

(C) the long-term effects of prenatal opioid exposure on children;

(2) gaps, overlap, or duplication in—

(A) substance use disorder treatment programs for pregnant and postpartum women; and

(B) treatment program options for newborns with neonatal abstinence syndrome;

(3) gaps, overlap, or duplication in Federal efforts related to education about, and prevention of, neonatal abstinence syndrome; and

(4) coordination of Federal efforts to address neonatal abstinence syndrome.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report concerning the findings of the review conducted under subsection (a) and the strategy developed under subsection (b).

SEC. 3. DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING AND TREATING PRENATAL OPIOID USE DISORDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a study and develop recommendations for preventing and treating prenatal opioid use disorders, including the effects of such disorders on infants. In carrying out this subsection the Secretary shall—

(1) take into consideration—

(A) the review and strategy conducted and developed under section 2; and

(B) the lessons learned from previous opioid epidemics; and

(2) solicit input from States, localities, and Federally recognized Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)), and nongovernmental entities, including organizations representing patients, health care providers, hospitals, other treatment facilities, and other entities, as appropriate.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall make available on the appropriate Internet Website of the Department of Health and Human Services a report on the recommendations under subsection (a). Such report shall address each of the issues described in subsection (c).

(c) CONTENTS.—The recommendations described in subsection (a) and the report under subsection (b) shall include—

(1) a comprehensive assessment of existing research with respect to the prevention, identification, treatment, and long-term outcomes of neonatal abstinence syndrome, including the identification and treatment of pregnant women or women who may become pregnant who use opioids or have opioid use disorders;

(2) an evaluation of—

(A) the causes of, and risk factors for, opioid use disorders among women of reproductive age, including pregnant women;

(B) the barriers to identifying and treating opioid use disorders among women of reproductive age, including pregnant and postpartum women and women with young children;

(C) current practices in the health care system to respond to, and treat, pregnant women with opioid use disorders and infants affected by such disorders;

(D) medically indicated uses of opioids during pregnancy;

(E) access to treatment for opioid use disorders in pregnant and postpartum women; and

(F) access to treatment for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome; and

(G) differences in prenatal opioid use and use disorders in pregnant women between demographic groups; and

(3) recommendations on—

(A) preventing, identifying, and treating the effects of prenatal opioid use on infants;

(B) treating pregnant women who have opioid use disorders;

(C) preventing opioid use disorders among women of reproductive age, including pregnant women, who may be at risk of developing opioid use disorders; and

(D) reducing disparities in opioid use disorders among pregnant women.

SEC. 4. IMPROVING DATA AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE.

The Secretary may continue activities, as appropriate, related to—

(1) providing technical assistance to support States and Federally recognized Indian Tribes in collecting information on neonatal abstinence syndrome through the utilization of existing surveillance systems and collaborating with States and Federally recognized Indian Tribes to improve the quality, consistency, and collection of such data; and

(2) providing technical assistance to support States in implementing effective public health measures, such as disseminating information to educate the public, health care providers, and other stakeholders on prenatal opioid use and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; that the committee-reported title amendment be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 799), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The Committee-reported title amendment was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: "To address problems related to prenatal opioid use."

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I was pleased to see the Senate pass by unanimous consent just now the bipartisan Protecting Our Infants Act. As prescription drug abuse and heroin use have increased in Kentucky and other States across the Nation, no demographic, socioeconomic status, age, or gender has been left untouched.

As the father of three daughters, particularly concerning to me is the increase in prenatal opiate abuse, which has resulted in a staggering 300-percent increase in the number of infants born suffering from withdrawal symptoms since 2000.

To address this crisis, I introduced the Protecting Our Infants Act, along with my colleague Senator BOB CASEY. The bill would direct the Health and Human Services Secretary to conduct a departmental review to identify gaps in research and any duplication, overlap, or gaps in prevention and treatment programs related to this issue. It would also direct the Secretary to work with stakeholders on recommendations to address the problem. Furthermore, this measure would encourage the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to work with States in an effort to help improve their public health response to this epidemic.

Also, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Senator from New Hampshire, Ms. KELLY AYOTTE. I know

that one of the things New Hampshire and Kentucky actually, unfortunately, share is that this has reached epidemic proportions. Nobody has been more involved in this issue than the Senator from New Hampshire. She has been on top of it from the very beginning. She shares the concerns of others, obviously, who have States that are suffering from this enormous problem.

I would also like to thank Representatives KATHERINE CLARK and STEVE STIVERS for leading the effort to advance a similar message in the House of Representatives. I look forward to the House taking up this bill and it being sent to the President for his signature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I want to thank our leader and thank Senator CASEY for introducing and pushing to pass this very important legislation. This legislation, the Protecting Our Infants Act, of which I was proud to be an early sponsor, will help address the increasing number of newborns born with opioid dependency. I thank the additional Members, including the chairman of the HELP Committee and Ranking Member MURRAY, for helping get that through this important committee.

New Hampshire is facing a public health epidemic. In fact, the heroin and prescription drug addiction crisis is the single most urgent issue facing my State right now. So many families who have lost children have come to me. The other day, I was buying something, and the woman behind the counter said to me: Keep working on this issue. I asked her why. She said: I lost my granddaughter.

Too many families are experiencing losing their loved ones, their family members who are struggling with addiction. Our first responders are inundated. They are saving lives with life-saving drugs such as Narcan. Public health and safety officials in our State—this is truly something on which we all need to work together to address.

One of the tragic results of this growing opioid abuse epidemic—it has often been overlooked—is the increasing number of infants who are born dependent on opioids and suffering from withdrawal.

Researchers estimate that almost every hour in this country, there is an infant being born who is suffering from withdrawal symptoms or born with dependency symptoms from opioid addiction.

This is an issue which I am so glad is being addressed in this bill, the Protecting Our Infants Act. How we treat our children and our infants is so much a reflection of who we are. That is why I was proud to cosponsor this bipartisan legislation which will call for the development of recommendations to prevent and treat prenatal opioid use, including neonatal abstinence syndrome.

This bill would also ask the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist States in data collection and increased surveillance to better monitor the prevalence and causes of neonatal abstinence syndrome so that we can work on more support for prevention, treatment, and recovery to help mothers get support and get into treatment so that we don't have infants who are born with opioid dependence and withdrawal symptoms.

As the leader said, across the Nation the number of infants diagnosed with newborn withdrawal has increased 300 percent since 2000. In my home State of New Hampshire, in May of this year, I visited the Catholic Medical Center in Manchester and heard directly from medical personnel there and first responders who have been treating and responding to cases of newborn withdrawal. Catholic Medical Center officials reported that 7 percent of newborn babies at that hospital were born with neonatal abstinence syndrome. That is a significant increase from last year. According to officials at Catholic Medical Center's Pregnancy Care Center, close to half of the mothers cared for are struggling with addiction.

I thank the leader. I thank Senator CASEY. Today's passage of the Protecting Our Infants Act is one very important step to address the crisis of opioid abuse seen in New Hampshire and across this country. Now that we have passed this in the Senate, I want to thank those Members in the House who have led this effort. I hope the House quickly passes this and sends it to the President of the United States.

I hope the Senate will continue to focus on this public health epidemic because there are many solutions that are bipartisan. One is called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. This is a bill I helped introduce with Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator PORTMAN, and Senator KLOBUCHAR. This is a bill which will deal with prevention so that we can make sure we get that message out to prevent people from overusing and misusing prescription drugs and also turning to heroin. It is so we can have more support for treatment and recovery where there is a big gap in my State and so we can support our first responders and make sure they have access to the lifesaving drug Narcan.

One experience I had recently was I went on a ride-along with our largest police department, and I had previously gone on a ride-along with our largest fire department. Within half an hour of the fire department ride-along, we went to a heroin overdose. I watched the emergency personnel—police, fire, emergency first responders—bring someone back to life using Narcan. When I did the police ride-along, within an hour and a half, we went to two heroin overdoses. Again, first responders saved those two individuals' lives.

I have to tell you, I was a murder prosecutor. I saw a lot of tough things

when I was attorney general. But I couldn't breathe when I was sitting in that room and watching that second individual, a young man, on the ground, the first responders doing everything they could, another dose of Narcan—I thought he was gone. This is what our first responders are dealing with every single day.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. AYOTTE. Yes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I naively thought that my State was uniquely afflicted with this scourge—we had the drug czar come down to Northern Kentucky, which is a part of my State, a suburb of Cincinnati—only to find that it is a problem all over the country. I was curious as to how this rates with the people of New Hampshire as one of the things they are concerned about.

Ms. AYOTTE. Leader, I will tell you, Director Botticelli came to New Hampshire as well, and he testified at a field hearing Senator SHAHEEN and I had in New Hampshire. For the people of New Hampshire right now, this is a crisis. It is a public health epidemic. I did a townhall last night, and the single biggest issue I got asked about was this because I believe this is one of the top issues, if not the top issue on the minds of people in New Hampshire because they see their friends and family being impacted by this. Every socioeconomic group is being impacted by, unfortunately, prescription drugs and then heroin, which is so cheap on our streets right now, also sometimes mixed with a deadly drug called Fentanyl. In fact, we had a 60-percent increase in drug deaths. There were 320 drug deaths last year.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now we are losing more to drug overdoses and heroin overdoses than we are losing in car accidents. Is that true in New Hampshire as well?

Ms. AYOTTE. It is the exact same thing in New Hampshire. In our State, more people are dying from heroin, Fentanyl, and abuse of prescription drugs than car accidents, which is staggering when you think about it. This is a national epidemic. That is why I appreciate the bill that was passed today. I think there is more that we in this body could do that would benefit the Nation and would benefit our States of Kentucky and New Hampshire to help give tools to the first responders, the public health officials, treatment providers, those supporting recovery and helping prevent this in the first instance. It is something that would obviously help address this crisis but also something that is a public health issue we should all care about.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for her outstanding work on this important issue. I have a feeling we will be grappling with this in all of its various forms for many years to come.

Ms. AYOTTE. I thank the leader for this bill today, which I am glad was passed, and I look forward to working on additional legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

THE BUDGET AND DEBT CEILING

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to address the budget standoff we are in and the looming debt ceiling issue we are facing. I wish to address this briefly. There will be more to say about this in the near future.

The administration tells us that November 3 is the date after which the extraordinary measures they have been taking run out, and they say that on that date, they will need to start borrowing more money. As we know, we have temporary legislation that funds the government through December 11, I think it is, after which we have not yet resolved how we keep the government operating. I would like to address this a little bit.

First of all, the fundamental problem we have on the debt ceiling increase is we are spending too much money. We are running annual deficits, and we have to borrow money to make up the shortfall. That is what is happening. That is why we reached the debt ceiling, and that is why and the administration wants to borrow more. What is particularly problematic is the President's position that we ought to increase the debt ceiling and allow him to borrow a lot more money without even so much as having a discussion on—much less actually addressing—the gross fiscal mismanagement that is requiring us to borrow all of this money in the first place.

Let's go back to a recent occasion in which we had this debate. In 2011, we reached the debt limit and had a big debate about how we should proceed, and what happened was Congress insisted on—and the President resisted but eventually agreed to—some very modest spending cuts. They established caps, or limits, on discretionary spending, which consist of 37 to 38 percent of all Federal spending that Congress controls through the annual appropriations process.

So some caps were put in place, and the idea was that for every dollar that we raised the debt ceiling, or for every new dollar of debt we would impose on the American people, we would at least cut one dollar of spending over the next 10 years, so that even though we were making a bad situation with our debt load worse by increasing the debt, we would at least be improving the underlying dynamic by diminishing the total spending so that in the future our deficits would be smaller. At least that was the idea.

If you take a look, there was actually a lot of progress in the category of Federal spending—the discretionary spending. We have a graph that shows the increase in Federal spending. This red line shows a huge surge that happened when the President insisted on that

massive stimulus spending bill. That is the big spike. It dropped off a little bit because that single, individual gargantuan bill wasn't replicated the next year. Then, a short time thereafter, we reached this agreement with the President where Congress said: Mr. President, you get the debt ceiling increase, but in return for that, let's reduce our discretionary spending over time, and then we will allow it to grow at the rate of inflation after a certain number of years. That was the nature of the agreement. The idea was to address the underlying problem of overspending that is requiring all of this debt.

As this chart demonstrates, this black line shows where we are today. We have made some progress. There is a gradual, modest decline. This is the big surge that came from that gigantic stimulus bill, but after that, there is a gradual, steady, modest decline, so that in this category of discretionary spending—as I said, almost 40 percent of the Federal budget—we actually limited that. It is the first time, that I am aware of, in years—maybe even decades—when we have had several consecutive years in which the Federal Government has actually spent less each year than the year before in discretionary spending.

By way of full disclosure, I voted against this overall agreement because I knew then, as I know now, that while this makes some progress, it doesn't solve the underlying problem. One could argue that it moves in the right direction, but it does not fix the huge debt problem that we have, and this chart illustrates that.

This chart shows that in recent years we have had a slight decline in the size of our deficits. If we go back further, we would see that the deficits were even higher earlier. We have made some progress. The annual deficit, which is the red line, is corresponding to each year since 2014. We can see that it has come down a little bit. This year the deficit will be \$426 billion. It is still too big of a number, but it is less than it was in recent years.

Here is the problem: There are people around this town who talk as though we have this problem solved. A few years ago, the deficit was \$1 trillion, and today it is \$426 billion; so everything is OK. Take a look at where this line is going. This isn't OK. This isn't 100 years from now. This is 5 years from now. This is 10 years from now. What is happening is our deficits are going to explode.

This isn't just my projection. This is the Congressional Budget Office, the nonpartisan CBO. By the way, their numbers are wildly optimistic. I will give three examples of assumptions they make, and you can judge whether you think these are reasonable assumptions or not.

First of all, as to the whole package of tax extenders, the individual tax cuts that we renew every year, they assume that we stopped renewing them and so there will be this surge of rev-

enue that will come into the Federal Government every year thereafter, and that is all baked into these numbers. They also assume that we are going to stick to the spending caps that I illustrated in the previous chart. In this body we all know that negotiations are underway right now to bust those spending caps, and the President is insisting on it.

In fact, the President has gone so far as to say that he is vetoing the National Defense Authorization Act in part because we haven't yet agreed to bust the caps on nondefense spending. Despite that, these numbers assume that the caps are all complied with. Finally, the Congressional Budget Office makes extremely optimistic assumptions, in my view, about economic growth going forward in the next several years, and that means they are making optimistic assumptions about how much revenue the Federal Government is going to be taking in. Despite that, as we can see, deficits are set to explode, and when deficits explode, the corresponding debt total goes right along with it.

This is our debt. This is the gross Federal debt, and the gross Federal debt is exactly a function of how much we borrow every year. The annual deficit is the shortfall between revenue and spending, and we make up the shortfall by going out and borrowing, and that adds to the borrowing from previous years, and the total is our debt.

If we go back to 1980, it was practically zero. The gross Federal debt was a very modest number. Now it is about \$18 trillion, and it is set to just continue rising. This is totally unsustainable. No country has been able to rack up debt on this scale and have it end well. It doesn't end well.

My point this afternoon is really a simple one. We have a choice before us. We are up against the debt limit, and the President says: Just give me more debt, and I don't even want to have a conversation about the underlying cause or what we might do differently to solve this issue. At the same time, they are saying: By the way, let's increase the rate at which we rack up this debt by busting the spending caps and abandoning the one element of spending discipline that we have been able to achieve in this town in I don't know how many years.

I think most Republicans—and I know this Republican Senator—think it would be a very bad idea to just rack up even more debt and do nothing at all about the underlying cause of it and bust the spending caps without finding some offsetting way to save money in other places.

By the way, when President Obama was Senator Obama, he thought it was a bad idea then too. In 2006, he said:

The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internation-

ally. Two years later, then-Senator Obama said in 2008: "Adding \$4 trillion in debt is irresponsible, it's unpatriotic."

Isn't it a little bit ironic that under President Obama we added \$8 trillion in debt and now he wants more? He wants more, and as I said before, his insistence is that we can't even have a discussion about dealing with the underlying problems. It is not clear to me why this President should be one of the only Presidents, if not the only President, who gets a debt ceiling increase without even having a conversation about underlying reforms.

In 1984, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings was a major, important budget deal that was done in the context of a debt ceiling increase.

In 1990, the Budget Enforcement Act imposed some spending discipline in return for a debt ceiling increase.

In 1997, we had the Balanced Budget Act, which actually achieved a balanced budget within a short period of time. That came up in the context of a debt ceiling debate.

In 2011, as I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, we established spending caps because we wanted to do something about the underlying problem at the same time we increased the debt ceiling. Unfortunately, as I said, the administration seems unwilling to even have the discussion.

There are two charges that I hear from this administration which are completely untrue, and I want to dispel this. One is this notion that I hear all the time, that raising the debt limit merely enables us to pay the bills that have already been incurred. They tell us how irresponsible we are for not raising the debt limit. After all, these bills have already been incurred. That is nonsense. It is completely untrue. However many times they repeat it doesn't make it true.

I can prove it very simply. If we started running balanced budgets tomorrow and kept running balanced budgets, we would never need to borrow any more money. It is as simple as that. If we didn't spend any more than we took in, we wouldn't need to borrow more money, and we wouldn't need to increase the debt limit.

The precise reason you need to raise the debt limit is because you need to borrow more money because you intend to spend more than you are taking in. That is what the President is planning. That is what he wants to do. That is what his budget calls for. We haven't committed to any spending going forward. We don't even have an appropriations bill. We don't have an omnibus. We don't have a CR. We haven't done that yet. How can it be that this is paying for bills that have already been incurred? It is not.

The second issue is that if we don't raise the debt ceiling by November 3, it is implied—they don't say it this way—that we will have a devastating and disruptive default in the markets and will not be able to pay our Treasury debts. That is ridiculous. It is never going to happen.

Ninety percent of all the money the government is going to spend comes in the door in the form of taxes. It is the other 10 percent that is the shortfall that we have to go out and borrow. Ninety percent of everything that the government is going to spend comes in the form of taxes. You know how much goes out in debt service? About 7 percent. For every \$1 of government spending about 7 cents is service on our debt at the moment, and 90 cents comes in from taxes. And you are going to default on the debt? You would have to willfully choose to do that, and I don't think even this administration would do that.

I will conclude by saying that I hate the idea of raising the debt ceiling because we already have too much debt, but I understand that it would be very difficult and not realistic to get from where we are to a balanced budget overnight. I get that. So I would be willing to raise the debt ceiling, and I think the obvious thing to do here is to tie it to some structural reforms, even if they are just modest reforms. I know the President is not willing to consider the kind of architectural changes to the entitlement programs that it will take to actually solve the problem, but could we at least make progress on the problem? Could we at least go after the low-hanging fruit?

There are dozens of reforms that would at least modestly improve this fiscal imbalance—the size of these annual deficits. We could have more means testing of Medicare. In other words, very wealthy Americans could contribute more to the cost of their Medicare. We could save tens of billions of dollars a year if we did that.

We could reduce some of the subsidies that go to big corporations, including big agricultural corporations. We spend many tens of billions of dollars a year on corporate welfare. Why don't we wipe that out?

We have green energy research, which is another way of forcing Americans to pay for inefficient production of electricity. We spend \$18 billion over the next several years on that.

Medical malpractice liability reform would save the Federal Government \$50 billion a year. These are not my numbers. This is according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Maybe we could reduce the size of the Federal workforce. Between the Departments of Energy, Agriculture, and Commerce, we have 163,000 employees. How much energy do they produce? How many crops do they grow? How much commerce do they really generate? I think we could probably do with a few less. There are hundreds of billions of dollars that could be saved.

We could slow down the growth of the entitlement programs for future beneficiaries. These would be reasonable things. Many of these suggestions have had some level of support by the President at one time or another. I am not looking for something radical. I am looking to make some progress. But I

think it is completely unreasonable for the President to insist that he simply have the opportunity to saddle us, our kids, and our grandkids with even more debt without even addressing the underlying problem that is causing us to rack up this debt in the first place.

I will have more to say about this next week. I think this will not get resolved between now and then. When it does get resolved, one way or another, I hope we will find offsets to any spending increase that we incur relative to the levels we have agreed upon in the spending caps of the 2011 agreement. If the debt ceiling increase occurs, I hope it will occur in the context of some improvement to the underlying situation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about some disappointing news. For only the third time in 40 years, Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, this year. This news will impact the nearly 60 million American retirees, dependent survivors, and disabled workers who rely on Social Security to make ends meet.

Social Security is the most effective anti-poverty program in U.S. history. Without Social Security, about 44.1 percent of America's seniors would be living in poverty.

In Hawaii, one in six residents depends on Social Security to help pay their bills and keep a roof over their heads. It is the only source of income for 25 percent of our seniors in Hawaii.

We live in a world where wages just aren't rising fast enough, and real pensions are disappearing. More and more workers are working longer and harder with less to show for it when they retire.

According to a 2014 Federal Reserve study, nearly 1 in 37 respondents reported having no retirement savings or pensions whatsoever, pointing out once again that Social Security benefits are essential to millions of working Americans and retirees.

For many who are already struggling to make ends meet, Social Security is all they can rely on. Absent a COLA, too many beneficiaries will see no increase in their primary source of income, making it harder to afford basic necessities, especially medical care.

One of my constituents from Wahiawa wrote to me recently and said:

I find it incredible that there are people who actually believe that Social Security is too generous. The average Social Security benefit is a whopping \$14,000 a year and we've only seen an average 2 percent COLA over the past five years. I can assure you my health care costs have far exceeded that tiny increase.

Another constituent from Honoka'a was more direct in her concerns. She wrote:

I have worked very hard my entire life and have planned to retire in a few years. My

worry is that I will not have enough money to live. I also may have to continue to work due to this deficit. My question is what are you going to do about it and what is your game plan? Year after year no one has done anything about it and has passed it down to the next person entering the Senate office or Congressional office. It is a problem that must be addressed immediately. Please help me and the rest of my baby boomer generation.

Congress needs to listen to these voices and act to responsibly strengthen and expand Social Security before it becomes yet another fiscal crisis.

That is why I introduced the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act with Representative DEUTCH of Florida. Our bill does two key things that will help seniors now as well as help to ensure the strength of Social Security for decades to come.

First, our bill would help Social Security recipients by having basic COLAs on a more accurate formula of what seniors actually purchase. This formula is called the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly, or CPI-E. The CPI-E more accurately recognizes the rising costs for seniors and gives them a benefit boost.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, if we were using the CPI-E right now, seniors would be getting a 0.6 percent COLA increase in 2016. That is about \$100 more in benefits for the average person on Social Security next year. And while small, seniors tell me that every bit counts. Changing to the CPI-E will mean increases in Social Security benefits to more accurately reflect the rising costs that our seniors experience.

Second, our bill will pay for this benefit increase by requiring millionaires and billionaires to pay the same rate into the Social Security trust fund that everybody else pays. Few know that this year, once workers earned above \$118,500, they stopped paying the payroll tax to support Social Security. In other words, Social Security contributions are capped for these high-wage earners.

But most workers, as we know, earn far less than \$118,500. So with every paycheck, all year, most workers pay into Social Security. This is not fair. It is not fair that millionaires and billionaires get a Social Security tax loophole.

A corporate CEO could earn \$118,500 in just one pay period and not contribute a single additional cent in payroll taxes for the rest of that year.

Our bill would gradually phase out the cap on payments into the Social Security trust fund over 7 years. That way, whether you earn \$50,000 or \$500 million a year, you keep paying at a fair rate to support Social Security in every paycheck all year long.

The Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act is a fair way to strengthen Social Security for decades to come, and it would give current seniors and beneficiaries a much-needed boost right away.

Social Security is one of the cornerstones of the middle class and the lifeline for millions of seniors. We must do

all we can to protect and improve it for not just the current recipients but for those who will rely upon it in the future.

This bill is supported by groups such as Social Security Works, the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

I urge my colleagues to join me in letting seniors in Hawaii and all across the country know that you are on their side by cosponsoring the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

9/11 HEALTH PROGRAM

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, two days ago another victim of the September 11 attacks died in New York. He is the eleventh first responder to die since this year's anniversary of the attacks.

His name was Sergeant Gerard Beyrodt. He served for decades in the New York Police Department. His entire career was devoted to serving his community and keeping the people around him safe, and when we were attacked on September 11, 2011, Sergeant Beyrodt didn't waver. He banded together with thousands of first responders from around the country—from every single State—and he rushed to Ground Zero to help.

These heroic men and women ran into the burning towers to try to save anyone they could. When the Twin Towers collapsed, our first responders worked day and night to clear the pile, breathing in toxic, poisonous fumes the entire time. These men and women were heroes. They refused to abandon their community in a time of terrifying confusion and intense grief.

But now, because of the poisonous fumes they were exposed to at Ground Zero, the burning metal and the toxic smoke, these men and women are sick. Many of them have cancer, and many are dying, and far too many have already died.

More than 14 years later, the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, are still claiming American lives. In the 6 weeks since the most recent anniversary of the attacks, we have lost 11 more responders to diseases that can be traced directly back to the work at Ground Zero.

I wish to take a moment to actually speak their names now: John P. McKee, Reginald Umphery, Kevin Kelly, Thomas Zayas, Paul McCabe, Ed Goller, Joseph Fugel, Ronald Richards, John Cedo, Dennis Needles, and Gerard Beyrodt.

The death toll is not going to stop rising. So what is Congress waiting for?

The bill authorizing funding for the 9/11 health program has already expired. It has expired. But these 9/11-related illnesses never expire. Neither should their health care. More than 33,000 first responders and survivors have an illness or injury caused by the 9/11 attacks or their aftermath. More

than 1,700 have passed away from 9/11-related illnesses. More police officers have died from 9/11-related diseases than those who died on 9/11 itself.

The participants in the 9/11 health program live in every single State. Every Senator in this Chamber has constituents who are sick and are registered in the 9/11 health program.

The first responders we have lost leave behind families, spouses, and children. They leave behind bills, mortgages, car payments, and college tuition payments. These 9/11 illnesses not only rob families of their loved ones but leave them to face expenses without, in many cases, their family's primary bread winner.

If Congress doesn't act now, how many more first responders and their families are going to suffer because we didn't do our job and reauthorize the program?

On the most recent anniversary of the attacks, many of my colleagues here released statements and made posts online to commemorate the anniversary and remember the victims of 9/11. Well, if you are a Senator and that is all you are doing—if all you are doing is just talking about the heroism, the courage, and what happened on 9/11—then we are not actually doing our jobs. If we are Senators and all we are doing is tweeting about 9/11 and the responders, then we are not fully fulfilling our duty as Senators.

There is a bill right here, right now, waiting for a vote. The majority of this Chamber already supports the bill as cosponsors. It is widely bipartisan, and not one person is opposed to it. So what are we waiting for? We must reauthorize and make permanent the World Trade Center Health Program and the Victim Compensation Fund. We must finish our job.

Let's truly never forget. Our 9/11 heroes deserve and desperately need this health care. So let's do our job. Let's vote on this bill. Let's pass it. The clock is ticking.

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

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the Export-Import Bank and to encourage my colleagues in the Senate to take up and pass bipartisan legislation scheduled for consideration in the House next week that would reauthorize the Ex-Im Bank until September 30, 2019.

The Export-Import Bank helps American companies export their goods and services across the globe, helping businesses grow and creating more demand for American manufactured goods and agricultural products. Over its 80-year

history, the Ex-Im Bank has provided loans to help businesses start exporting, open new markets, and access new customers. The Bank provides insurance to help businesses protect their bottom lines if a foreign buyer fails to pay and works with private lenders to fill gaps in financing that helps close deals that simply would never happen without its support. Most importantly, the Ex-Im Bank does all of this at no cost to the taxpayers. In fact, it makes money. Just last year, the Bank generated a \$675 million surplus to help reduce the deficit.

The Ex-Im Bank helps level the playing field for American companies in a tough global market. Last year it supported more than \$27.4 billion in U.S. exports and 164,000 jobs. More than \$10 billion of that total—nearly 40 percent—represented exports by small businesses. The Ex-Im Bank is dedicated to serving small businesses in Michigan and across the country. Ninety percent of its overall transactions directly supported small businesses, including many that served suppliers for large companies.

In 2013, I was proud to attend the opening of Ex-Im Bank's regional export finance center in Detroit with Governor Snyder and my colleague Senator STABENOW and Congressman John Dingell. In Michigan alone, the Bank has supported 229 exporter businesses selling \$11 billion worth of goods to places such as Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Canada. This support is particularly important for our manufacturing industry, including motor vehicles and parts, machinery and chemicals—all vital sectors to our economy.

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to visit a Michigan business, Mill Steel Company in Grand Rapids, which works with the Ex-Im Bank to export its products. Mill Steel is one of North America's premier flat-rolled steel companies. It is also a family-owned business that wanted to make Michigan products and hire Michigan workers. Mill Steel sells and ships its steel to auto suppliers in Mexico and Canada. The loan guarantees provided by the Ex-Im Bank reduce Mill Steel's risk when exporting to foreign buyers, providing certainty and allowing them to continue hiring new employees and providing good-paying jobs in Michigan.

Unfortunately, over the summer, despite bipartisan support for reauthorizing the Ex-Im Bank, a small, ideologically driven minority in Congress allowed the charter for the Export-Import Bank of the United States to expire, risking billions of dollars in exports, hundreds of thousands of American jobs, and putting our country at an economic disadvantage in a competitive global marketplace while also increasing the Federal deficit. The failure of Congress to act on this commonsense Federal program endangers jobs in Michigan and is simply unacceptable. General Electric has a plant in Michigan that employees 1,400

Michiganians. Over the summer, GE announced that it plans to relocate over 300 jobs from Wisconsin to Canada as a result of the Ex-Im Bank closing its doors. When this happened, my office was flooded with inquiries from a number of constituents concerned about what would happen to their communities and their own job security if a similar decision was made in Michigan. In the months since Ex-Im Bank's authorization has lapsed, GE has signed deals with export credit agencies in competitor foreign nations, creating jobs abroad instead of right here in the United States.

As a Senator from a State with world-class engineering and manufacturing talent, I am frankly appalled by these developments, especially when we have already seen the benefits that the Bank has produced for Michigan's economy and workers in my State as well as across the country.

The work done by the Ex-Im Bank is especially critical to Michigan manufacturers who fight to compete with countries using extreme and unfair measures such as direct subsidies or currency manipulation to boost their own manufacturing sectors. According to Ex-Im Bank's most recent annual report, there are 85 other competing foreign-sponsored export credit agencies helping their own domestic companies better compete on the global stage. Other countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany, use their own export credit agencies to boost their country's exports.

China, in fact, provided more financing through its export credit agency in the last 2 years—approximately \$670 billion—than our own Ex-Im Bank has offered in its entire 81-year history. These export financings are expected to significantly increase in coming years, which means that American firms and workers could fall further behind if we do not act now.

Without our own Export-Import Bank, American businesses will struggle to compete overseas and our economy will suffer. As global competition intensifies, it simply makes no sense to engage in unilateral disarmament. We must stop the self-inflicted wounds on our economy. We must pledge to our constituents that we will first do no harm, and we must stop letting ideology impair our economic growth.

I am pleased that a bipartisan, bicameral group of Senators and Representatives are saying that enough is enough, and are working to move a reauthorization forward. I am looking forward to working with them to get this done as soon as possible. Too much time has already been wasted, and too many jobs have already been jeopardized. We have to get back to the business of working together to find commonsense solutions to help, not hamper, our economic growth in America. Passing a long-term reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank is a great way to start.

Once the House passes the reauthorization next week, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to schedule a vote as soon as possible. We know we have the votes. The legislation the House will soon consider is identical to an amendment passed by the Senate with a vote of 64 to 29 in July while considering the long-term highway bill. We should do this now because there is not a moment to lose. American jobs hang in the balance.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

DEBT LIMIT DEADLINE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we are apparently pressing another deadline with regard to the statutory debt limit. I am reminded of the old paradoxical proverb: "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

We have dealt with the debt limit here in Congress on numerous occasions, and while there are significant differences this time around, there are some things that just don't change, particularly when we are dealing with the Obama administration.

One thing that is different is that our national debt is higher than it has ever been before, more than \$18 trillion—an astronomical number, when you think about it. That is \$57,000 of debt for every U.S. citizen—every man, woman, and child from age 1 to 101. Just for the people in my State of Utah, which has a relatively small population, that means \$167 billion of debt.

As a share of our GDP, the debt is higher now than at almost any time with the exception of a brief period surrounding World War II. Yet, even though our debt has gotten further and further out of hand under this President, the administration's approach has not changed. As we all know, Treasury Secretary Lew recently sent a series of letters urging Congress to raise the debt limit. In his latest communication, he projected that on November 3, the Treasury will begin to run dangerously low on cash, creating an unacceptably high risk of having to delay payments.

Of course, we don't have an ability to verify that projection. Treasury has long been uncooperative in Congress's

efforts to get more information as to how they arrive at those specific dates. Don't get me wrong, I take the November 3 date very seriously. I think we all should, but given the lack of hard data shared by the Treasury regarding those projections and the fact that the date has in just the last few weeks moved around a little bit, I do understand why some people appear to believe this latest best guess from the Treasury is fun-
gible.

In addition to providing the November 3 deadline, the latest debt limit letter from Secretary Lew includes what has become a stale set of talking points punctuated by the admonition that "only Congress can extend the nation's borrowing authority." I know no one wants to hear a civics lesson, but given the administration's repeated attempts to assign all responsibility relating to the debt limit to Congress, it means that a short refresher about how a bill becomes law might be helpful.

No one disputes that Congress must act to extend the government's borrowing authority, but the President can also sign or veto any debt limit legislation we pass. The same is true of any legislation authorizing or appropriating spending increases or reductions. Congress writes and passes. The President signs legislation into law, and hopefully he does his best to enforce it. In other words, both Congress and the executive branch share responsibility with regard to the debt limit and our Nation's overall fiscal health. Unfortunately, rather than trying to work with Congress on these issues, the Obama administration has repeatedly chosen to try to deflect responsibility with misleading statements about the various burdens borne by the separate branches of government.

Sadly, the Treasury Secretary's tired arguments with regard to the debt limit are not the only problem. In fact, when you examine this administration's record, you will find that the problems are much worse than most want to admit. I am talking, of course, about the massive accumulation of debt we have seen under this administration, as well as the lack of leadership and willingness to work with Congress to address what we know are the main drivers of our debt.

As the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has repeatedly made clear, the main drivers of our debt are unsustainable promises in the Social Security benefit programs and unsustainable spending on the Federal Government's major health care programs, Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance subsidies under the Affordable Care Act, and others.

True enough, we have seen some deficit reduction in recent years. These days, the President and his allies are always quick to point that out. Of course, we know that these temporary reduced deficits have resulted predominantly from increased tax receipts and only modest spending restraint. Still, even with these reduced deficits, our

debt remains well above the historic average and is expected to grow even more in the near future as, according to CBO, our deficits will start to go back up in the next few years.

Our deficit this next year has been brought down but I would have to say mainly because of the work that we have done in the Congress to restrain the growth, the reconciliation act. Had we not done that, this administration would not have done anything. We would be in worse shape than we are.

Simply put, no one in this administration should be bragging about supposed fiscal responsibility. Under this administration, the outstanding public debt has risen by more than an astounding \$7.5 trillion, a 71-percent increase just since this person has become President. Once again, as a share of the economy, our current debt remains at levels that, with a very narrow and understandable exception, are heretofore unseen in modern U.S. history.

According to CBO, by 2025, Federal debt felt by the public will be roughly twice the average of the past 5 decades. As CBO says, "Such high and rising debt would have serious negative consequences both for the economy and for the Federal budget." Given this risky path of debt accumulation, CBO also warns on increasing risks of a Federal fiscal crisis. Unfortunately, those dire warnings have been ignored by this administration. Instead, the administration seems to believe that a temporary lull in deficits is a good time to accelerate spending, even though spending grew well above growth in the economy last fiscal year, all while they continued to ignore the growing crisis in our entitlement programs.

We still have approximately one-half trillion dollars of debt. They are bragging about that. When he was serving in the Senate and a different party controlled the White House, President Obama famously argued that an increase in the debt limit was a sign of leadership failure. Now his definition of leadership is to assign all responsibility to Congress for the debt limit.

When he was running as then-Presidential candidate Obama, he pledged not to kick the can down the road on reforming entitlements, particularly Social Security. Now, he shirks responsibility and his proposed solution to the most immediate problem with Social Security—the Disability Insurance Trust Fund—is to kick the can much further down the road without any changes or reforms to the program. We are just going to borrow from the already dysfunctional general Social Security fund to pay for Social Security disability insurance. My gosh, when does it stop?

I believe that the debt limit has and can play a role in promoting fiscal discipline. Historically, debates over the debt limit have provided opportunities to reexamine our fiscal outlook and, where necessary, make corrections. Debt limit votes give a voice to Mem-

bers of Congress who do not serve on committees that make the spending and tax decisions.

Unfortunately, as we contemplate another debt limit increase, President Obama does not see the need to even talk to Congress about our fiscal future. In fact, the administration won't even take a clear position on how much of an increase it believes is appropriate or how long it should last.

Common sense would indicate that the President would like Congress to extend the debt limit past next year's election. That would be a debt limit hike of about \$1 trillion, and \$1 trillion would mean more than \$3,000 per person in the United States just to get us through next year. Utah's share of that would be about \$9 billion. Yet while the President undoubtedly wants at least that much of an increase, he refuses to make any such desire known.

Instead, we have gotten vague demands that borrowing authority be extended by certain dates and threats to veto any such extension that comes with even modest spending reforms. Essentially, President Obama's position is it's my way or the highway, but oddly enough, he does not want to explicitly define what his way is, and he repeatedly argues that he plays absolutely no role and bears no responsibility in getting us there. It is absurd, absolutely absurd.

Make no mistake, I don't want to see a default. Default on U.S. Treasury securities and failure to pay Federal obligations, which, by the way, are two separate things, is not a desirable or acceptable outcome. Ultimately, I don't believe Congress should shirk its responsibilities, even if President Obama refuses to acknowledge his.

Let's be clear. Neither the administration's uncompromising stance on fiscal reforms nor its selective use of information about our Nation's debt are productive. The President's refusal to work with Congress on a path forward and to share information about our Nation's finances is irresponsible brinkmanship. I want to talk about that information sharing for a few minutes because it is an important part of this continual impasse between Congress and the administration when it comes to the debt limit.

When we talk about our Nation's debt, there are other policy matters in play besides the periodic actions taken to raise the debt limit. The administration is charged with managing the debt in a responsible and effective manner. Toward that end, it has the obligation to preserve the integrity of Treasury securities markets. Congress has the duty to exercise oversight of these activities. As chairman of the Senate committee with jurisdiction over these issues, I have to say that when it comes to accountability and transparency on these matters, a great deal of improvement is necessary. That is putting it kindly.

For example, each time the debt begins to approach the statutory limit,

the administration makes a lot of noise about how it is difficult to deal with delayed payments on Treasury securities. Please note that I am talking about payments on securities, not general payment obligations of the Federal Government for spending programs, which is all together a separate matter. A number of scenarios could give rise to delayed payments on Treasury securities.

One of those scenarios is a debt limit impasse between Congress and the administration, but there are others, including weather events, cyber or terrorist attacks, or any number of known risks, that responsible debt managers must take into account. We know for a fact that the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve have developed contingency plans for these types of risks.

The existence of such plans has been made public in minutes of the Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee and in minutes of meetings involving Fed and Treasury officials and representatives of large financial firms. However, the administration has flat out—flat out—refused to share those contingency plans with Congress or to even openly acknowledge their existence.

I have been the lead Republican on the Senate Finance Committee since January 2011. I have been asking to see those plans since the summer of 2011. Over more than 4 years and through multiple requests for information, I have been told a number of things, usually stories that end with the claim that, even though plans have been discussed, nothing has ever been formalized.

So there are really only two plausible conclusions to be drawn: Either the administration is being dishonest with Congress and they have contingency plans in place, or the administration is being irresponsible by failing to account for the obvious potential risks. Apparently, they are comfortable with Congress, not to mention the American people, reaching either one of those conclusions if it means they don't have to share more information.

Simply stated, there is no reason for Treasury and the Fed, along with large financial firms participating in the Treasury securities markets, to formulate contingency plans for these markets without reporting them to Congress or sharing them with the Senate Finance Committee—no reason whatsoever. Yet here we are. Sadly, this lack of transparency does not end with obviously needed contingency plans. As I alluded to earlier, Treasury also shares very little information with Congress concerning cash forecasts, particularly as we approach the debt limit. I have asked for detailed, contemporaneous updates of cost forecasts in order to, among other things, properly verify Treasury's debt limit projections. In response, Treasury officials have told me that those projections are "highly market sensitive" and, at times, cannot be shared with Congress. Yet I have

to assume that a number of officials at Treasury and probably the Fed have access to this sensitive data.

I am not aware of any special security clearance assigned to these individuals. It is evidently the position of the administration that there are times where it is neither Congress's nor the American people's business to know how much cash Treasury expects to have in the Federal till. This needs to change. Given my oversight responsibilities as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am always interested in preserving the integrity and efficiency of markets for Treasury securities.

Unfortunately, under our laws, regulatory and oversight authority with respect to those markets spreads far and wide with responsibilities spanning across the Treasury, the Fed, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Commodities Future Trading Commission, and an alphabet soup of other groups. As we saw with the most recent financial crisis, this type of balkanization of authority inevitably leads to ineffective oversight and regulation.

When problems arise, all the various parties point their fingers at each other. Everyone has authority, yet no one ends up being accountable.

Unfortunately, the so-called Dodd-Frank legislation did not fix any of these problems. In fact, I would argue, all it did was give existing regulators yet more authority and of course added a few more acronyms into the mix.

All of this is relevant to current discussion about the debt limit because it speaks to the overall management of our Nation's debt and the lack of transparency among all these agencies. I can cite numerous examples where a lack of communication and accountability has been problematic. For now, I will briefly mention three such instances.

First, in 2013, Treasury began auctioning something called a "floating rate note," the first new Treasury security since inflation protection securities were introduced more than 15 years ago. This was a significant debt management decision. Yet very little information was shared with the Senate Finance Committee, even though Treasury had many discussions about the new note with representatives from large financial firms.

Second, Treasury recently decided again—after several meetings with large banks—that an average cash balance for the Federal Government of around \$50 billion per day was too low and that going forward the balance would need to be \$150 billion or more. Once again, prior to that decision being finalized, there was no communication from Treasury to the Senate Finance Committee.

Third, on one particular day in October of 2014, there were unusual and difficult-to-explain events in markets for Treasury securities. While all the various regulators and interest groups have issued staff reports and have held meetings and seminars relating to the

apparent volatility demonstrated by these events, I am not aware of any outreach or information sharing with the members or staff of the Senate Finance Committee.

Again, these are just three examples. There are certainly others, and all of them demonstrate that this administration is far too often unwilling to even provide simple updates about its debt management policies—all while insisting that Congress repeatedly raise the debt limit without asking questions or attaching reforms. This also needs to change. If the administration is going to continue to demand that Congress act to increase the debt limit, then it should, at the very least, be more forthcoming about its policies and decisionmaking when it comes to managing our debt.

While I agree we cannot and should not risk defaulting on our debt or obligations, it is essential that Congress receives a complete picture from the administration about its debt management policies. Therefore, I want to make clear to Treasury—and other agencies with responsibilities in this area—that there is an imminent need for improved communication and increased transparency on these matters.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I intend to do all I can to ensure greater accountability. That may include more hearings with officials brought before the committee or legislation to require more information flows between the administration and Congress. Ultimately, what specific actions we take will depend on the administration's ability to cooperate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, as we speak—as I am speaking on the floor of the Senate—in an act of stunning partisan politics, President Obama, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces, has decided he will veto the National Defense Authorization Act. He is choosing to hold our military hostage for a domestic political agenda, and he is doing so at a time when the crises we face around the world have never been greater, when U.S. leadership has never been weaker, and when our men and women in uniform need vital resources to defend and secure the Nation.

As I said, in an act of stunning partisan politics, President Obama, the Commander in Chief, has decided he will veto the national defense authorization bill, and he is right now in the act of doing so—holding our military hostage for his domestic political agenda.

I have been in the Senate and the House for a long time. I have never

seen an act of blatant partisanship with disregard for the men and women who are serving in the military than what the President is doing as we speak. For 53 years, Congress has fulfilled its constitutional duty to provide for the common defense by passing the National Defense Authorization Act. For 53 consecutive years, both bodies have passed, and the President has signed into law, the National Defense Authorization Act. In all my years, I have never witnessed anything so misguided, cynical, and downright dangerous as vetoing the Defense authorization for reasons that have nothing to do with defense—nothing to do with defense.

Presidents throughout history—Republicans and Democrats alike—have recognized the importance of this bill to our national defense. In the more than 50 years since Congress has passed an NDAA, a National Defense Authorization Act, the President of the United States has only vetoed the act four times. In each case, the President objected to an actual provision in the bill, and each time the Congress was able to find a compromise that earned the President's signature.

Let's be clear. The President's veto of this year's bill is not over any of its policies, it is over politics. In the President's case, politics has taken precedence over policies, and when we are talking about the lives of the men and women who are serving this Nation in uniform—disgraceful. For the first time in history, the Commander in Chief will sacrifice national security for his larger domestic political agenda.

This veto will not resolve the spending debate; it will not stop sequestration. That is something that can only be done through the appropriations process, not a defense authorization bill.

Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines have answered the call to protect our Nation. They want and need support. They don't care what budget category that support comes from. I wish to point out we authorized exactly the amount of money the President requested.

This is a Washington game. All the men and women who are serving in the military care about is that their mission is fully resourced. With this veto, their mission will not be fully resourced. We will put their lives in greater danger because of this political game of the President—holding the military men and women hostage for his agenda to fund the IRS and the EPA.

The legislation the President vetoed today authorizes the overall amount for defense that he requested, every single dollar of it.

By making clear that he will "not fix defense without fixing non-defense

spending," the President of the United States puts defense and the men and women in the military on the same level as the IRS. The President is using our military—using our military—as leverage to fight a battle that the Defense authorization bill cannot accomplish.

At a time of mounting threats around the world, it is disgraceful. It is disgraceful the President would refuse to authorize for our troops the resources they need to prepare for and engage in vital missions around the world and that deliver some of the most significant reforms to the Pentagon in more than 30 years.

By vetoing this legislation, the Defense authorization bill, let's be clear what the President is saying no to. He is saying no to pay increases and more than 30 types of bonuses and special pays for servicemembers, saying no to more portability of military health plans and greater access to urgent care facilities for troops and their families, saying no to enhanced protection against military sexual assault, saying no to significant reforms to a 70-year-old military retirement system that would extend retirement benefits to over 80 percent of servicemembers, saying no to the most sweeping reforms to our defense acquisition system in nearly 30 years, saying no to a ban on torture once and for all, saying no to \$300 million in lethal assistance for the Ukrainians to defend themselves against Russian aggression, and saying no to countless other important provisions that are greatly needed to combat the growing threats we see around the world today.

Perhaps, most importantly, the President of the United States is refusing to sign a bill at a time when—as our top military commanders and national security experts have testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee—the world has not seen greater turmoil since the end of World War II.

So, my friends, here is the context. Thanks to the President's failed policies, the results of leading from behind, the results of a policy of "Don't do stupid stuff," we now see a world in a state of turmoil—the likes of which we have not seen since the end of World War II.

On a bipartisan basis, we passed a defense authorization bill that has monumental consequences to the future security of this Nation, the present security of this Nation, and the welfare and ability of the men and women who are serving this Nation and their ability to defend this Nation, and the President—because he wants an increase in domestic spending, has vetoed it.

Never have I seen such irresponsibility on the part of a Commander in Chief. There have been Presidents I have disagreed with. There have been Presidents I have had spirited debates with—but never ever in history has there been a President of the United States who abrogated his responsibilities, his constitutional responsibilities,

as Commander in Chief. I say shame on him today, and this is a shameful day.

The House will vote to override this veto on November 5. I strongly urge my colleagues to reverse this dangerous action and put the interests of our military and national security ahead of politics. Our men and women serving around the world, many still in harm's way, deserve nothing less.

I spend a lot of time with the men and women who are serving in the military, including members of my own family, and they are not uninformed. They are very intelligent. They watch what we do—we, their elected representatives. Their voters trust us to defend them, care for them, to give them the weapons they need, the benefits they need, and the care they need when the wounded come back. They rely on us. They are going to see, as we watch Vladimir Putin on the march, as we watch the success of ISIS, as we watch Ukraine being dismembered, as we watch China commit more aggression in the South China Sea and fill in islands—and now? Now this Commander in Chief decides that this is a time to veto an authorization bill because he doesn't think there is enough domestic spending. It is a sad day, a very sad day. It is a sad day for America but most of all it is a very sad day for the men and women with whom we entrust our very lives and our security. It is a sad day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, next month our Nation will pause to honor the millions of men and women who have fought for our freedom and worked to advance peace around the world.

Veterans Day is our annual way to say thank you and to honor those who have sacrificed so much on our behalf. While I would like to stand on the floor and say our country is doing everything we can for the people we owe the most to, that we are fulfilling the promise we made to them when we sent them off to fight for us, unfortunately that is not currently the case because our Nation is falling far short of its goal of honoring our veterans when it comes to VA care.

Despite a sweeping bill intended to tackle some of the most pressing problems and give the VA new tools and a change at the top of the VA more than a year ago, I continue to hear from veterans across my home State of Washington about care that is inconsistent, outdated, and often downright dismissive of individual needs. I have heard from a number of veterans in my home State of Washington who are waiting on surgeries, MRIs, oncology appointments, mental health screenings—you name it—and far too

often they say they are told it will be months to see a doctor or a specialist.

I bring their stories today, to this "other Washington," to continue to make clear this kind of outdated, inefficient care is unacceptable.

This is a pivotal time for our VA, and the demands on the system will only go up as wars continue to wind down and the Vietnam-era veterans continue to seek more care for the injuries and illnesses they suffer from. As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I refuse to let standard care be the status quo. I won't accept long wait times, redtape, and understaffed hospitals as a reality for our veterans. I am not going to stop fighting to make sure we have a system that works no matter how long it takes, no matter how many obstacles we face, and no matter who is in charge at the VA.

The law we passed to give veterans more options for care has now had an opportunity to go into effect. We can see what is working, what is not, what we can build on, and what we need to tear apart.

Last year I supported the inclusion of an independent assessment of the VA health system in the Choice Act, and recently that assessment validated what we have been telling the VA for years: There is growing bureaucracy, and there are problems with leadership and staffing, and massive capital costs. While the independent assessment identified some bright spots in the VA system, it also found that care and patient experiences differ widely across the system and that best practices and important policies are not instituted across the country. That means we all have more work to do because we have a responsibility to our veterans.

Here is what we are up against. The VA still has multiple non-VA care programs, none of which talk to each other, none of which are coordinated. They all have different eligibility criteria, different procedures for patients and providers, and different reimbursement rates.

I hear frequently from veterans in my home State of Washington about how difficult the Choice Program has been. From VA staff who don't understand the program, to confusion about eligibility, to getting the runaround from contractors, veterans are sick and tired of having to fight just to get an appointment.

I hear how frustrating some of the bizarre rules and restrictions on Choice are. For example, an authorization for care only lasts 60 days. Well, if you are a woman veteran and you are pregnant, you are going to need more than 60 days of care.

At the VA, we are still hearing that the wait times are far too high. But with long wait times in the private sector and the burdensome process to even get into the Choice Program, veterans are finding they actually would have gotten care sooner if they had stuck with the VA. If the solution to the wait time problem takes longer than going to the VA, it is not working.

It is no wonder that veterans and providers alike turn their backs on the VA. The system is so complicated, it is impossible to get good health care.

It is time for the VA to implement one—one—non-VA care program for the future. As we now approach the end of this trial period for the 2-year Choice Program, the VA has to use this opportunity to finally get it right on non-VA care. It needs to design a new system that truly meets the needs of our veterans.

I believe that system must have five fundamental characteristics:

First of all, it has to be veteran-centered, with clear eligibility rules so veterans know what they can do and what they can expect and where they can go for what care and how that system works. It also means the experience for veterans trying to use the system has to improve. For example, veterans should never be turned away with a dismissive “We are not taking new patients.”

Secondly, it has to be easy for our providers, with simple and consistent procedures for them to deliver care, report back to the VA, and get reimbursed quickly. The contracting system needs to be simple and clear so that private providers can step in where the VA cannot.

Third, a new system must provide high-quality care that includes effective care coordination, and that requires that electronic medical records be returned to the VA. That includes oversight of the quality of care being delivered in the private sector. We have to know our veterans are being appropriately cared for.

Fourth, the new system has to be flexible enough to compensate for local needs, types of care where VA is deficient, or locations where the VA does not have a presence. Whether working with community providers to increase certain specialty appointments or seeing where the VA needs to move resources to hire more VA staff, the system has to maintain flexibility to adjust to new trends and new needs.

Finally, it has to be cost-effective for the VA and not shift the cost of care onto our veterans. Earlier this year, the VA nearly ran out of money, and they threatened to shut down the health care system. Well, we should invest whatever we need to to make sure our veterans are getting care. The new non-VA care system must be more efficient, and the VA needs to be clear with Congress about what it needs. Without a change, I would not be surprised if next year we don't find ourselves in the same position where we have underfunded the VA and need to come in and transfer funding to keep the VA operating. I will work with anyone and stand behind no one when it comes to getting veterans the funding they need.

Perhaps most important, when implementation begins, it simply must be better than what we saw with the Choice Program. VA staff have to be

trained and proficient, and third-party administrators in charge of the networks of private providers have to be efficient and responsive. Veterans deserve a system that works, not one that is torn apart and weakened over time.

So the answer isn't just to dismantle the VA and leave veterans to fend for themselves, as some proposals would do; the solution starts, finally, with a real conversation about what is going on at the VA, what the problems are, and then pursues an “all of the above” approach that finally strengthens the VA system, uses community providers to fill in the gaps where the VA cannot get the job done, and continues to make the best use of other Federal help programs, such as DOD and federally qualified health centers—all in an effort to truly build a veteran-centered VA health care system.

I stand ready to work with anyone to do this, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me and not make this a Democratic or Republican issue. Veterans issues have never been partisan, and, in my mind, there is no place for that when we sit at the table to solve a complicated problem. I hope the administration is ready to fundamentally reshape this program. I hope bureaucrats who spend more time defending the broken system are ready to get to work implementing solutions built around the needs of our veterans. And I hope providers—those who work with the VA and DOD and TRICARE, as well as those who currently do not provide care to veterans—play a role to improve veteran care.

The wars may no longer lead the nightly news, but that doesn't mean the cost of these wars is gone too. Our veterans are still there, they still need health care and services, and we will not forget them.

I expect the VA to do better. Our veterans have already sacrificed so much. They should not have to come back and fight the VA to get the care they have earned. Let's act and let's do something that truly honors our Nation's heroes.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I want to thank the Senator from Washington for her very thorough and passionate explanation of the problems with the VA. It is time we got it straightened out. We have a new director because there was a problem. We gave them more money because there was a problem. We did the Choice Act because there was a problem. I think the VA is kind of fighting the Choice Act because they want to make sure they keep it within their own clutches. But it is time that we got it straightened out and that we got some action.

All of us are getting calls from veterans we should never get. We could go into a variety of them. But I would like to work with the Senator, and I appreciate the comments she just made. I

thought they were very bipartisan and very much needed.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Senator very much.

GROWTH IN FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, it is often said that there are two constants in life—death and taxes—but I would like to add one more for your consideration: regulations. We often talk about the threat that America's growing debt poses to our economy and to our future, but the growth in Federal regulations also poses a serious threat to our Nation's long-term job creation and economic growth.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, the potential growth rate of our economy—or the rate of growth that is possible given the education of our workers, the quality of capital equipment, and the business formation rate—averaged 3.3 percent for the period from 1950 through 2014. However, CBO expects that annual rate to fall 2.1 percent in the period of 2015 through 2025. That is a 36-percent reduction in the potential growth rate of the economy. Why is this so critical? According to the President's own Office of Management and Budget, a 1-percent increase in the economy's growth rate will yield more than \$400 billion in new revenues without raising taxes. Yes, that is according to the President's own Office of Management and Budget. A 1-percent increase in the economy's growth rate—we are talking about the private sector, not the government sector; the private sector is where the revenues come from—would yield more than \$400 billion in revenues without raising taxes.

We are always talking about the need for more revenues, but we are doing the opposite. The administration is doing the opposite of what it takes to get that growth to happen. When the growth rate falls, when we grow more slowly than we could and aren't meeting our full potential, government revenues also fail to keep up with budget projections. If we reduce by 1 percent, we lose another \$400 billion in revenues. So what happens when the government revenue comes up even shorter in the face of growing overspending? That results in more borrowing, and it results in bigger overspending and in expanded debt.

Senators from the Western States know all too well the economic effects of regulations coming out of bureaucracy-bloated agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency. Today I want to focus not just on the impact of recent regulations on my home State of Wyoming's economy but the drag they are creating on the economy nationwide. And at the same time, they are hiring ad agencies at billions of dollars to improve their image. They can improve their image just by doing their job without putting more burdens on the American people and eliminating jobs.

The State of Wyoming is the largest coal-producing State in the Nation. Coal represents almost 40 percent of our share of electricity generation across the United States. My county provides 40 percent of all of the coal in the United States. It is abundant, it is affordable, and it is stockpilable. It is the only energy that is stockpilable. This is an energy source which has the potential to power our country for hundreds of years, to support jobs for thousands of people, and doesn't put us at the mercy of unstable regimes overseas, but this administration continues to denigrate and regulate coal out of existence.

Since 2012, two EPA rules—the mercury and air toxic standards rule and the ozone rule—are estimated to have cost in the tens of billions of dollars.

Let me talk just about the mercury and air toxic standards. That is supposed to help save, with benefits—without seeing any scientific evidence where these benefits come from—over a period of years, maybe \$500 million. What is the cost? The cost is \$73 billion a year. Why would anyone go for that small of a benefit at that big of a cost?

We are an inventive country. If we put incentives of just a couple billion dollars out there, people will solve the problem and get those benefits permanently for a very small number, not \$43 billion to \$73 billion a year. Those two rules don't include the billions of dollars lost to thousands more rules imposed by the EPA and other agencies every year.

If all those rules weren't onerous enough, in August the EPA doubled down on its war on coal when it released the final rule on the Clean Power Plan. With an estimated price tag of at least \$366 billion, this rule will not only devastate the coal industry by mandating unrealistic carbon reductions, it will also distress American families by causing double-digit electric rate increases in more than 40 States.

The coal industry in Wyoming is feeling the impact. The coal industry and businesses and the people who work there and rely on it are facing higher regulatory costs at the same time as energy producers are seeing a tougher market than they have in years. This is a bad combination for economic growth and job creation. At the end of July, Wyoming had 15 percent fewer energy industry jobs than it did a year earlier, and these are good-paying jobs. That is according to the U.S. Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of those lost jobs are in coal, oil, and gas, and the businesses that rely on them. We forget about that ripple effect. Given that close to half of Wyoming's GDP comes from this sector, and that nearly half of our State is federally owned and much is removed from development activity, we have always been concerned about any unnecessary government intrusion in our economic livelihood.

Why do we provide 40 percent of the Nation's coal? It is because it is a

cleaner coal, lower in sulfur and other chemicals, than any other State in the Nation. We ship coal to other coal States so they can mix it with their coal to meet the clean air standards. But that is not good enough.

The economic impact of the EPA and other Federal regulations is not just hurting Wyoming's economy and costing my State jobs. They are a major reason why the economy nationwide is not operating at its full potential for economic growth, and it has been stuck around 2 percent since the beginning of the so-called economic recovery. We are doing it to ourselves. Remember, a 1-percent reduction in the gross national product is \$400 billion less in taxes.

The onslaught of Federal regulations targeted directly at the coal industry are not just concerns; they are real threats to people's economic livelihood—the ability to support their families, the ability to support education in most of these States, and the ability to support entire communities across the country. With our \$18 trillion in debt, we can't afford to accept the notion that we are in what some are calling a new normal of economic anemic growth. We need to help our economy reach its potential, which will help each and every American. This cannot be done if the number and cost of significant Federal regulations continues to rise.

The Obama administration continues to push Federal regulations, such as the waters of the United States rule, which significantly expands Federal authority under the Clean Water Act. That rule has been taken to three courts already, and in each of those cases, it has been ruled illegal.

They are still pursuing other avenues. The recent National Labor Relations Board rulemaking redefined the meaning of an employer.

These regulations, taken by themselves, have the potential to impose billions of dollars in economic costs—on family farms, ranches, and particularly small businesses—which hinder the growth of America's entrepreneurial spirit, not to mention the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. It sounds like a great entity, but in banks alone, they have had to hire twice as many people to do paperwork as they used to have to have, just to keep from getting fined by an agency that has no control. I tried to get an inspector general to be over the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. After we got him, he said: You know, I don't have any authority to look at any of this stuff.

Where are the fines going?

We don't know. We are not allowed to see that.

That is because they get their money from the Federal Reserve before the money from the Federal Reserve comes from the U.S. Government. We shouldn't have anything as out of control as that.

I was meeting with some community bankers. I said: Well, my wife is kind of

interested in expanding our kitchen in Gillette, and I was thinking maybe we ought to get a loan and do that. The house is all paid for. I was wondering how long it would take.

They said: Well, about 78 days, and then you get 1 week. In case you don't like the deal you made, you can rescind it. I remember the last time we needed to do something in the house before it was paid for. I had to get a second mortgage, and I got it in a matter of a couple of days. They could just write the check so I could go ahead and do it. Now it is 78 days plus another week. That is what government regulations are doing. That doesn't speed up the economy. There isn't a contractor that can go to work until they get an assurance of being paid.

Over the next few months and weeks, I am going to share with my colleagues new information from leading economists that shows there is a real relationship between the growth of regulations and our struggling economy. This is a relationship that is clear to the people who experience the difficulties of complying with more and more regulations that make it harder to succeed. I hope that what is clear to business owners, to their employees, and to the communities across the country can be understood here in Washington.

I will share new statistics and data showing the lost income and jobs due to Federal regulations, the effects of regulation on key industries, the breakdown of how specific Federal agencies are impacting our economy, and the regulatory burden the Federal Government has placed on hard-working Americans in economic sectors in every State. It is crucial for lawmakers and hard-working Americans to understand the true cost of the regulations that are being issued by this administration. Shining a light on these regulations and the burden they impose on each and every American is the only way to hold government accountable and to begin the process of reining in out-of-control agencies so we can halt the flood of regulations choking our economy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

MIDDLE EAST REFUGEE CRISIS AND UKRAINE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, I left for Greece with a Senate delegation that included DICK DURBIN from Illinois, AMY KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota, and ELIZABETH WARREN from Massachusetts. In my capacity as lead Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, I was honored to head our delegation. We were there to witness firsthand the plight of refugees arriving by sea on the island of Lesbos. In Greece and later in Germany, we received in-depth

briefings on the refugee crisis and Europe's response to it. In Kiev, we conferred with the Ukrainian Prime Minister and President about their country's struggle to create a stable democracy in the face of ongoing Russian aggression.

Nearly a quarter of a million Syrians have been killed during the current conflict in the Middle East. An estimated 8 million Syrians have been displaced internally. Another 4 million have left the country. They are fleeing hunger, unspeakable violence, and a land that no longer offers any hope for their children. They have endured barrel bombs, chemical attacks, indiscriminate shelling, the barbarity of ISIS, and now a military offensive sponsored by Russia and Iran.

To reach Europe, these refugees have been preyed upon by traffickers and other criminals, some selling refugee children for sex, for slavery, or for organs. The refugees have risked drowning at sea and suffocation in locked vans, and they will soon confront the freezing temperatures and snows of winter.

While we were traveling, we heard accounts from the refugees of paying smugglers thousands of dollars to get on small boats with motors that barely work, boats built for a few but loaded with 40 to 50 refugees. I use the term "boats" loosely. What I am talking about are rubber rafts that were built to hold maybe 10 to 15 people and were loaded with 40 to 50 refugees. The Greek Coast Guard told us that refugees pay exorbitant prices for life preservers that are more like the children's inflatables that you see at swimming pools. When refugees set off from Turkey across the Aegean to Lesbos, they are instructed by the smugglers to puncture their raft with a knife if they encounter the Greek Coast Guard so that the Greeks will be forced to rescue them.

I was profoundly moved by my conversations with refugees from Syria and other conflict zones in the Middle East. It is one thing to hear about millions of Syrian refugees fleeing the war; it is something else entirely to actually meet and talk with individual refugees, including children who have been separated from their parents.

I was struck by the fact that many of these refugees have endured extreme hardship for weeks, if not years. Their future is filled with extreme uncertainty. Yet so many of them were filled with optimism and hope. In Athens, we met a 6-year-old Afghan boy who had made the trip to Greece with his 13-year-old cousin. This boy proudly gave us all sticks of gum. In Germany, we met young men from Syria—a former English teacher, a Ph.D. student, and an engineer. One young man looked ahead to a brighter future and said one day he wanted to be the President of Syria. These refugees were weary and they were anxious, but they were also deeply grateful and hopeful about their future lives in a safe, secure Europe.

Altogether, we met and talked with a couple dozen refugees. They are men, women, and children who are no different from loved ones in our own families and citizens in our own communities. They aspire to the very same things, including a decent life for their children. They told us about the desperation and despair they left behind in Syria, Iraq, and other conflict areas. Multiply these desperate stories by countless thousands of refugees—up to 10,000 entering Europe daily and more than 1 million so far this year. It adds up to a humanitarian crisis of staggering dimensions.

Now, to be sure, Europe is being challenged, but this crisis also challenges the United States and the world. At critical moments in history, the international community has faced similar challenges: Jews seeking refuge from persecution and later genocide in Nazi Germany; famine killing millions in Biafra in the late 1960s; the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur, and Bosnia. Faced with these crises, the world confronted a stark choice: to turn away or to engage.

The United States cannot turn away from the refugee crisis unfolding in the Middle East and Europe. On Lesbos last week, we talked with Greeks who operate small businesses that depend on tourism, which has dried up because of the crisis. They said that the refugees must be their first priority, that Greeks must help people who are in need.

In Athens, we visited a facility for refugee children run by a group called Praxis. Praxis workers told us about Afghan children being sold in Europe as sex slaves for as much as \$10,000. Praxis and scores of similar organizations are doing everything possible, with very limited means, to meet the refugees' desperate needs.

In Germany, we met with officials at the Finance Ministry and the Chancery, as well as people in and out of government who are rising to the challenge of the refugee crisis. Chancellor Angela Merkel has demonstrated extraordinary moral leadership in addressing this crisis. Millions of ordinary German citizens—indeed, people all across Europe—have mobilized to meet the needs of the refugees.

However, it was clear to me and to the other Senators in our delegation that these noble efforts are not enough. The refugee crisis is too big; the scale of human suffering and needs is overwhelming.

President Obama has offered to take in 10,000 refugees over the next year. But Germany is taking in as many as 10,000 refugees in a single day—day after day, week after week, with no end in sight. My State of New Hampshire has been welcoming to refugees fleeing conflict, as have other States. I think people are eager to do more across this country. Turkey needs to secure its borders, and it needs to crack down on smugglers and criminal gangs exploiting and trafficking in refugees. Front-

line countries, including Greece and Italy, need more resources to help process and register refugees. In fact, the same is true of Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, which have taken in millions of refugees.

As I said, Germany has earned our admiration for its leadership, offering to take in as many as 1 million refugees this year. But for all its resources, Germany can't do this alone. It is already reaching a point where its communities can't keep up with the influx.

We are confronting the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time. Europe is responding. The European Union will use the coming winter months, when the flow of refugees will slow, to come up with a more effective plan to share the burden and address this challenge. However, European nations, Turkey, Jordan, and other frontline states, such as Lebanon, can't meet this challenge alone. The international community must give more generous support to humanitarian efforts by the World Food Program and others. By all means, the United States, as leader of the Atlantic Alliance, must play a more robust role in addressing the refugee crisis.

I am heartened by the bipartisan bill that is sponsored by Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina and Senator LEAHY of Vermont, which would provide \$1 billion in assistance to meeting the needs of refugees. The Obama administration has proposed taking in 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year. That is a start. It is not enough given the scale of this crisis. We have the resources to safely vet and process more refugees for asylum in the United States, even as we need to do so more efficiently.

As Senator GRAHAM said recently, "I don't see how you can lead the free world and turn your back on people who are seeking it." To turn away families fleeing violence, says Senator GRAHAM, is to "take the Statue of Liberty and tear it down . . . because we don't mean it anymore."

We also need to deal with the root of the problem, the violence in Syria. We must redouble our diplomatic efforts as well as our campaign against the Islamic State in both Syria and Iraq. Unfortunately, there is a new dimension to the chaos and conflict in Syria. In recent weeks, Russia has sent combat planes, heavy armor, and military personnel to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Russia is threatening to send thousands of so-called volunteer troops to Syria to fight on the frontline.

A newly aggressive and reckless Russia is a problem not only in the Middle East but also in Ukraine, where our Senate delegation visited after leaving Greece. The Ukrainians are struggling to fight corruption and build a stable democracy. But those efforts have been severely undermined by Russian subversion and aggression. President Putin was not content to invade and annex Crimea. He has also sponsored the establishment of Russian-controlled provinces in eastern Ukraine.

This conflict in the east of Ukraine is designed by Russia to destabilize democratic Ukraine and to drain its resources.

While in Kiev, our delegation met with senior government officials, including Prime Minister Yatsenyuk and President Petro Poroshenko. We were briefed on Russia's efforts on many fronts to destabilize the country. We were also briefed on Ukraine's efforts to boost its economy and to root out corruption in the country's government and institutions.

The European Union and the United States are standing by Ukraine, and this solidarity is making a difference. It appears to have moderated Russia's ambitions, at least for now. The countries of Western Europe and the United States have demanded that Russia fully implement the Minsk II agreement to contain the conflict, and we heard some encouraging signs. Elections in the breakaway provinces—elections that might have led to succession—have been delayed. Russia is redeploying light armor away from the region. But, of course, this is not adequate.

Sanctions on Russia must remain in place until President Putin and the rebels he backs fulfill all of their obligations under the Minsk II agreement. I left Ukraine with a strong sense that despite living under an ever-present threat from Russia, this is a nation that continues to stand strong and move forward. It was an honor to personally reaffirm to Ukraine's leadership and citizens that the United States is an ally and partner and that we strongly support the government's agenda of reform and modernization.

Our European allies are confronting an array of challenges unprecedented since the end of the Second World War: not only the refugee crisis but also rising threats from Russia, economies that continue to be held back by debt and austerity, and a resurgence of nationalistic and nativist political parties. However, our delegation witnessed firsthand a creative and resourceful Europe that is capable of meeting these challenges. Europe needs and deserves American support and partnership, beginning with a more robust U.S. response to the refugee crisis, which is the greatest humanitarian challenge of our time. I hope we in this Chamber and in Congress will rise in response to that challenge to do our part.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CYBERSECURITY INFORMATION SHARING ACT

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the Intelligence

Committee bill we are currently debating, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015, or CISA.

This Chamber sees its fair share of disagreements, so it is worth noting when there is something we can all agree on, and I think we can all agree on the need for congressional action on cyber security. We face ever-increasing cyber attacks from sophisticated individuals, organized crime syndicates, and foreign regimes. These attacks pose a real threat to our economy and to our national security. It is clear that we must respond to these new threats because the cost of complacency is too high, but it is critical, in deciding how we protect our information networks, that we also continue to protect the fundamental privacy rights and civil liberties of Americans. In short, there is a pressing need for meaningful, effective cyber security legislation that balances privacy and security. Unfortunately, as it now stands, the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act falls short.

Since this legislation was first introduced, I and a number of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have raised serious concerns about the problems the bill presents for Americans' privacy and for the effective operation of our Nation's cyber defense. My colleagues and I are not alone. Serious concerns have been raised by technologists and security experts, civil society organizations from across the political spectrum, and major tech companies, such as Apple, Dropbox, Twitter, Yelp, salesforce.com, and Mozilla. Neither the Business Software Alliance nor the Computer & Communications Industry Association supports CISA as written.

In a letter I received from the Department of Homeland Security this summer, the agency—which has a leading role in cyber security for the Federal Government—expressed concern about specific aspects of CISA. DHS explained that under the bill's approach, “the complexity—for both government and businesses—and inefficiency of any information sharing program will markedly increase.” The letter explained that CISA would do away with important privacy protections and could make it harder, not easier, to develop “a single, comprehensive picture of the range of cyber threats faced daily.”

Senator BURR and Senator FEINSTEIN, the bill managers, have worked very hard over the last months to improve various aspects of the bill, and their substitute amendment offers a significantly improved version of CISA. I really appreciate their efforts, but it is clear to me and others that the improvements did not go far enough. Major concerns raised in the letter from DHS and voiced by security experts, privacy advocates, and tech companies still have not been resolved. Let me briefly describe three of them.

First, the bill gives companies a free pass to engage in network monitoring

and information sharing activities, as well as the operation of defensive measures, in response to anything they deem a “cyber security threat,” no matter how improbable it is that it constitutes a risk of any kind.

The term “cyber security threat” is really the linchpin of this bill. Companies can monitor systems, share cyber threat indicators with one another or with the government, and deploy defensive measures to protect against any cyber security threats. So the definition of “cyber security threat” is pretty important, and the bill defines “cyber security threat” to include any action that “may result in an unauthorized effort to adversely impact” cyber security. Under this definition, companies can take action even if it is unreasonable to think that security might be compromised.

This raises serious concerns about the scope of all of the authorities granted by the bill and the privacy implications of those authorities. Security experts and advocates have warned that in this context, establishing the broadest possible definition of “cyber security threat” actually threatens to undermine security by increasing the amount of unreliable information shared with the government.

I have written an amendment, which is cosponsored by Senators LEAHY, WYDEN, and DURBIN, which would set the bar a bit higher, requiring that a threat be at least “reasonably likely” to result in an effort to adversely impact security. This standard gives companies plenty of flexibility. They don't need to be certain that an incident or event is an attack before they share information, but they should have at least determined that it is a plausible threat.

The definition of a cyber security threat isn't the only problematic provision of the bill. This brings me to the second concern that I would like to highlight. The bill provides a blanket authorization that allows companies to share information “notwithstanding any other provision of law.” As DHS explained this past summer, that statutory language “sweeps away important privacy protections.” Indeed, it means that CISA would override all existing privacy laws, from the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, ECPA, to HIPAA, a law that protects sensitive health information.

Moreover, this blanket authorization applies to sharing done with any Federal agency. Companies are free to directly share with whomever they may choose, including law enforcement and military intelligence agencies. This means that, unbeknownst to their customers, companies may share information that contains customers' personal information with NSA, FBI, and others. From a security perspective, it also means we are setting up a diffuse system. I want to emphasize this. This is setting up a diffuse system that, as DHS's letter acknowledged, is likely to be complex and inefficient, where it is

actually harder for our cyber security experts to connect the dots and keep us safe.

These are all reasons why privacy experts, independent security experts, and the Department of Homeland Security have all warned that CISA's blanket authorization is a problem.

Earlier this year, the House avoided this problem when they passed the National Cybersecurity Protection Advancement Act by a vote of 355 to 63. That information sharing bill only authorizes sharing with the government through a single civilian hub at the Department of Homeland Security—a move toward efficient streamlining of information that is also good for privacy. But understand that this is the House of Representatives, 355 to 63, saying: Let's make this easier for the government to have all the information in one place.

Finally, CISA fails to adequately assure the removal of irrelevant personal information. This, of course, is a major concern. The bill allows personal information to be shared even when there is a high likelihood that the information is not related to a cyber security threat. Combined with the bill's overly broad definition of "cyber security threat," this basically ensures that private entities will share extraneous information from Americans' personal communications. If companies are going to receive the broad liability protection this bill provides, they should be expected to do better than this.

Senator WYDEN has offered an amendment, which I am proud to be the cosponsor of, which would require companies to be more diligent and to remove "to the extent feasible" any personal information that isn't necessary to identify a cyber security threat. The "extent feasible" is a crucial improvement, but it is hardly novel; in fact, it is basically the same standard that is in place today when information is shared between private companies and the Department of Homeland Security. There is no justification for lowering that standard in CISA, especially because the bill also provides companies with significant liability protection.

Mr. President, the amendments I have talked about today, as well as a number of other pending amendments, would make CISA a better deal, one that is significantly more protective of Americans' privacy and more likely to advance cyber security. I want to encourage my colleagues to support these amendments. Without them, I fear that, however well intentioned, CISA would do a disservice to the American people.

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

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

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I would just note that the Presiding Officer and I are on the same schedule, because I come here a couple of times a week, but you are here more often than not when I am speaking. I am sorry. This is cruel and unusual punishment, I suspect, for you. But I welcome the opportunity. Thank you for showing up. Otherwise, I would not have a chance to share these thoughts today with the folks that are in the Chamber and anybody else who might have tuned in.

Earlier this year, the Senate actually took up legislation that was reported out of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which was a 6-year Transportation authorization bill. A lot of people who don't work here don't realize that for us to spend money—taxpayer money—in most cases we have to authorize a program at certain funding levels. Then we have to come back and do a second step, and that is to actually appropriate the money to spend that has been authorized.

Usually, if we are authorized to spend \$100 in a program, we cannot come in and just appropriate a lot more money than that. We have to do it within the levels set by the authorization bill.

Well, we took up on the floor of the Senate the Environment and Public Works Committee's 6-year Transportation bill, coauthored by Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER, Republican and Democrat, and reported out of the committee unanimously. Most people think we fight about everything. Well, we don't. Environment and Public Works Committee Senators BOXER and INHOFE have been very good at working together on these authorization bills.

Now, the authorization bill does not contain the funding, but it says: These are our transportation policies, and this is the level that we think is appropriate. But it does not actually fund a dollar to go to those programs.

Well, over in the House of Representatives today, they got in the act. As I understand it, the House transportation committee has reported out—I think on a voice vote—their own 6-year authorization bill. This is good. It has not passed the House yet, but at least it is out of committee, with apparently a fair amount of broad support, which is good.

This is the Senate-passed bill called the DRIVE Act, reported out by the committee a couple of months ago and passed the Senate here more recently. As you know, we have names for our bills, such as the names for cars. But the DRIVE Act, the Senate-passed bill, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act, has a number—3763. It is a 6-year authorization for transportation programs.

Do these bills have any good ideas in them? Well, they really do. As it turns out, there is a fair amount of common ground that these two pieces of legislation share, the Senate-passed bill and the bill out of the House committee.

One of them is that there is a new focus on making freight transportation

more reliable, more affordable, and more efficient. When you look at an outfit called McKinsey & Company, a big international consulting firm, they have an entity, an appendage of McKinsey, that is called the Global Institute. A year or so ago, they opined that a fully funded, robustly funded transportation program in the United States would provide 1.8 million new jobs in this country—1.8 million new jobs in this country—and that it would grow GDP, gross domestic product, by 1.5 percent per year—not just one time, but per year. Those are pretty amazing numbers, actually, for me.

Well, one of the things that actually drives the increase in employment and the growth in GDP is a more efficient freight transportation system and one that actually focuses—as in this legislation—on freight, and not just moving our cars, trucks, and vans but actually figuring out how we move freight from place to place in a more efficient way.

The second area where there seems to be some agreement is that both pieces of legislation prioritize—especially the Senate version—bridge safety and large facilities of national importance. Think big bridges; think big tunnels. We have a bunch of bridges in this country—I forget what the percentage is—that are substandard, not safe—maybe one out of every nine. So take your choice for the bridges you are going over. Think about that. One in nine is deemed to be essentially unsafe.

Both of those bills say: Well, that ought to be a priority and we would like to authorize higher spending for that. These bills focus on clean air funding and toward some of the most dangerous sources of emissions—diesel emissions. A lot of it comes from road-building—road and highway—and bridgebuilding equipment that is diesel powered and puts out harmful emissions.

Actually, our bill in the Senate does some good things to reduce those emissions while we go about building these transportation projects. One of the things that I especially like about our bill is that it says that eventually we ought to have an approach to funding roads, highways, and bridges.

Maybe it should be something that reflects vehicle miles traveled. We don't have that kind of magical system now. In Oregon, they have been trying to do it for 10 years. They call it RUC, a road user charge. They have maybe 5,000 families that are actually using this. But it is a long way from 5,000 families in Oregon to having a national system that we can use to come up with money to pay for roads, highways, bridges, and transit.

But our Senate-passed bill establishes research to develop alternative user fees to replace, maybe eventually, the gas and diesel tax somewhere down the line—not next year, probably not this decade, but somewhere down the line. I think that should be a growing part of the source of revenues to pay for transportation.

The Senate bill even increases—bumps up not hugely but bumps up a little bit—the baseline funding and funding for transportation. I wish it had been more, but at least it is an effort to do that. Our next chart is one of my favorite charts. I have a friend from Montana, a former attorney general, former Governor, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, whose name is Marc Racicot. Folks from his State like to talk about cowboys who really are not cowboys.

They have a saying out there. They say: All hat, no cattle. In this case, we can have all the transportation authorization bills until the cows come home, but unless we actually fund them, they are just words on a piece of paper, and we don't build a road or a highway or a bridge or do anything on the transit side unless we actually fund them. I don't know who this guy is, but I love this poster. All hat, no cattle. That is where we are right now because we don't have agreement on how we are really going to pay for robustly funding transportation projects.

There is an idea out there that goes beyond lousy pay-fors. I think the kind of stuff goes like this: We steal money for 10 years out of TSA, instead of making our skies safer, and we put that money of 10 years of revenues into 3 months of helping to fund transportation projects. That is not too smart, but we do that. Instead of making border crossings in this country safer, where folks are trying to get into our country, we use Customs fees for that purpose. But instead of using it to make our border crossings safer and our ports of entry safer, we put 10 years of Customs fees collected into 3 months or so of transportation projects.

We look at the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, for which we bought the petroleum. We try to buy it low and not use it very much. But we will see what we spent in the last couple of years buying and refilling our Strategic Petroleum Reserve, at \$80, \$90, maybe \$100 a barrel, and now we are selling it at basically half of that price.

You are supposed to buy low and then sell high. That is where you end up making your profits. What we are doing with our Strategic Petroleum Reserve is to buy high, sell low, and use whatever money we realize to help pay for some transportation projects—not a real smart investment strategy.

What Senator DICK DURBIN and I have introduced is something we called the TRAFFIC Relief Act. It is an acronym. Tax Relief and Fix the Trust Fund for Infrastructure Certainty Act of 2015. Here is the real thing we need to know about. It raises \$220 billion over the next 10 years. We raise \$220 billion in the next 10 years to go into the transportation trust fund.

If we just want to go, frankly, not to a level of spending that actually addresses the problem, then, in fact, we have our roads, highways, and bridges get a D-plus. Civil engineers across the country every year evaluate our trans-

portation infrastructure. They give us a D-plus. "D" as in "dog." "D" as in "dangerous." "D" as in "degraded." That is when you spend \$90 billion a year, which is maybe contemplated in the authorization legislation—maybe a little bit more. We don't really make much of a dent in the work that needs to be done.

What we propose in our legislation is \$220 billion, and we would have \$130 billion for new investments in repairs and upgrades. I should be able to do some new projects and make a bigger dent in the ones that need our attention.

Let's see what we have in our next chart. I think there is a fair amount of support for doing that from what I hear. Let's take a look.

We looked at a couple of recent editorials that basically say what day—I think from these newspapers are from coast to coast, from North to South, East to West. Believe it or not, they say we ought to pay for transportation—roads, highways, and bridges. It should be that the user pays to use the roads, highways, and bridges. They ought to pay for them. It is what we have done for years. If we raise the gas and diesel tax from 1993—22 years ago, about 18 years ago for the gas tax, 23 cents for the diesel tax—in today's purchasing power, adjust for inflation. So the gas tax is worth less than a dime, not 18 cents, but less than a dime. The diesel tax is not worth 23 cents, but less than 15 cents—probably closer to 12 cents.

Here is what some of the people say. The New York Times says: "Highways Need a Higher Gas Tax." They are essentially saying restore the purchasing power of the gas and diesel tax. All right? Not add \$1, not add 50 cents or 25 cents, but restore the purchasing power.

USA TODAY says: "Raise the gas tax: Our view." They also add: "Highway funding hijinks: Our view"—which actually coincides with mine.

Let's see if we have any others. The Washington Post says, and this is a very recent one: "Highway Transportation Fund needs a permanent and simple fix." Even more recent, editorial board said: "Congress recklessly refuses to top up the Highway Trust Fund." Then even more recently: "Congress should fix the gas tax."

Again, restore the purchasing power of the gas and diesel tax, not to use it for extraneous stuff, not to use it for foreign aid, not to use it for Afghanistan or other places around the world, not to use it for health care, not to use it for education, but to use it to take these roads, highways, and bridges that are deteriorating and actually put the money, any extra money we generate, into those. Bangor, ME: "The nation's highway fund doesn't have to continue to lose ground."

The Register-Guard—I am trying to remember where that is. I am not sure where the Register-Guard is, but it said "Just raise the gas tax" in an editorial in July.

Again, the Washington Post opined the same message earlier in January of this year. Let's look at that one again. They said: "With oil prices low, now's the perfect time for Congress to raise the gas tax." That is what they said in January of this year.

As it turns out, we did some checking. We found out last week, at 29,000 gas stations across the country, they are selling gas for less than \$2 a gallon. Think about that: 29,000 gas stations across America. The gas station in my neighborhood is at \$2.09, and the Washington Post opined 7 months, 8 months, 9 months ago that "With oil prices low, now's the perfect time for Congress to raise the gas tax." Actually, gas prices are about half a dollar lower now than they were then.

If the Iran agreement is fully implemented, Iran—which now produces about 200,000 barrels of oil a day—a year from now they are going to be producing about 1 million barrels a day. This suggests to me that a world already awash in oil might actually continue to be awash in oil for a while, so with the low oil prices, I think there is reason to believe they are not going to spike back up any time soon.

There are more editorials and headlines. The Miami Herald: "Fix our roads." Akron Beacon Journal, Akron, OH: "Raise the gas tax and make better policy." The JournalStar, which is in Nebraska: "Follow the logic on gas tax."

Those are major newspapers across the country. We have also had some polling done, not by us, but by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association and also by Mineta. Some of us remember Norman Mineta, former mayor of San Jose, the Secretary of Transportation who worked in both the Republican Bush administration and the Clinton administration. In these two recent nationwide surveys, clear majorities have indicated support for increasing fuel taxes as a fair way to invest in transportation projects.

This is from the American Road & Transportation Builders Association:

A Strong Majority Supports Payments to Keep Up With Inflation

By more than a 2:1 margin, voters support increased payments directed to upkeep of the nation's infrastructure, given the need to keep up with inflation. About 68 percent to 70 percent support, strongly support, or somewhat support doing that. We have another recent poll, and these are just representative samples. There are others that are coming out almost weekly now.

The Mineta Transportation Institute Poll—there is one that gives a variety of different options in gas tax, sales tax, and vehicle-miles-traveled fee. The one that actually gets the most support is a 10-cent increase with revenue used just for transportation—not for any other purpose, just for transportation—71 percent. I was surprised it was this high. People want us to fix their roads, highways and bridges. They are tired of paying for repairs to their vehicles.

The next quote is from the Philadelphia Inquirer today. They are talking to people who read their paper. "The next time your axle snaps or a tire rim is bent on a bumpy highway, consider delivering the broken car parts to your congressional representatives"—your representatives in Congress, your House Members, and your Senators.

The average amount of money that we spend on repairs of cars, trucks, and vans every year that is related to bad roads and bad bridges is anywhere from \$350 a year to as much as \$500 per year. That is the range there.

I wish to close with sometimes people say you can't vote—we can't vote here to do this stuff. None of us will ever get reelected.

Well, wait a minute. How about the 12 States where in the last 2 years they actually voted to do this stuff. State highway transportation departments get about half of their money from the Federal Government, and they raise about half of their money locally. Their major sources of revenues locally are taxes and user fees on gas and diesel.

In 12 States in the last 2 years they voted to do this. These are mostly red States because there are more red States, at least with legislatures and Governors, than blue. But 95 percent of the Republican legislatures voted to raise user fees on gas and diesel in their States; 95 percent of them were reelected last fall. They won their primary; they won their general. They were reelected.

Who wasn't elected as much? The people who voted against doing that. So the folks who actually voted to raise the user fees actually were reelected more than the people who voted against it.

On the Democratic side, in the States where they voted to raise the user fees to pay just for transportation—not for anything else—90 percent of the Democrats were reelected. More legislators were reelected than did not get reelected. So just keep that in mind.

I have said enough. The majority leader is waiting, and I thank him for his patience, but here is the long story short: There is a need out there. The American people expect us to do something about it. They want us to work together. We need not just to have a hat. This can't be all hat; there has to be some cattle. Where is the beef? Where is the money to pay for all of this stuff?

I will be back next week to talk about it some more, and I thank the majority leader for his patience.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

BURMA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on November 8, just a few weeks away, the people of Burma will hold national elections. This promises to be a momentous event for a country many of us have studied and followed for a very

long time—in my own case for over 20 years. This is going to be a momentous election for at least two reasons.

First, for Burma's citizens—or for many of them, at least—this election represents a chance to finally choose their own leaders, which is, indeed, a rare occurrence in recent Burmese history. That is significant in itself, but there is another reason these elections are so important, because the manner in which they are conducted will serve as a key indicator of the progress of reform in that country.

There are some encouraging signs that the election will be freer and fairer than what we have seen in the past. Unlike recent Burmese elections, for example, international election observers have been permitted into the country. That is an important departure from the past, and it is encouraging. At the same time, there have been troubling signs during the election cycle. Allow me to share a few of them with you now.

First, the Constitution was not amended prior to the election. As many of my colleagues will recall, the Burmese Constitution unreasonably restricts who can be a candidate for President, a hardly subtle attempt to bar the country's most popular opposition figure from even standing for office. That is certainly worrying enough, but the Burmese Constitution goes even further, ensuring an effective military veto over constitutional change—over, for instance, amendments about running for the Presidency by requiring more than three-fourths parliamentary support in a legislature where the Constitution also reserves—listen to this—more than one-fourth of the seats for the military. So in order to change the Constitution, you have to get some military votes and obviously, so far, that hasn't happened.

Allowing appropriate constitutional changes to pass through the Parliament would have represented a tangible demonstration of the Burmese Government's commitment to both political reform and to a freer and fairer election this November. But when the measures were put to a vote on June 25, the government's allies exercised the very undemocratic power the Constitution grants them to stymie the effort.

So what kinds of messages do these actions send us? They bring the Burmese Government's continued commitment to democracy into question. If you were truly committed to democracy, why would you continue a provision like that, which to most of the world is simply quite laughable or outrageous?

They also raise fundamental questions about the balloting this fall, increasing the prospect of an election being perceived as something other than the will of the people, even if its actual conduct proves to be free and fair. It is hard to see how that is in anybody's interest.

The second deeply troubling consideration is the apparent widespread, if

not universal, disenfranchisement of the Rohingya population. For all the ill treatment the Rohingya have had to endure in their history, at least they had once been able to vote and run for office in Burma. They voted and fielded a candidate for office in both the 2010 election and the 1990 election, but, alas, no more.

Reports indicate that otherwise eligible Rohingya, more than half a million of them, have been systematically deprived of the right to vote and the right to stand for election. That poses another serious challenge to next month's elections being seen as free and fair, and there is another serious challenge I would note as well.

Finally, while media activity in Burma is far more open than it was before 2010, there have been troubling signs that indicate a recent and worrying backslide. In fact, just a few days ago, news circulated of individuals being arrested for Facebook postings.

These are very disturbing reports. Campaigns can be conducted only when a free exchange of ideas is permitted. Arresting citizens for free expression runs directly counter to that idea. It is at odds with notions of free speech and democracy, and it seems designed to send chilling signals to the Burmese people.

It is clear that Burma faces substantial challenges. From the undemocratic elements in Burma's Constitution, to the disenfranchisement of the Rohingya, to troubling incidents regarding the curtailment of citizens' basic rights, these challenges are significant. They need to be addressed.

At the same time, we should not allow these things to completely overshadow what Burma has accomplished. It has actually come a long way in recent years. There are many positive things to be built upon as well. In short, there is still hope for Burma's upcoming election.

Thein Sein's government has an opportunity to make these last few weeks of campaigning as free and as fair as possible. The Burmese Government can still hold an election that, despite the troubling things I mentioned, can be embraced by Burmese citizens and the international community alike.

That will mean ensuring these final weeks of campaigning are as free and as fair as possible. That will mean ensuring freedom of expression is protected.

These are the kinds of minimum goals that Burmese officials must strive toward in the final weeks of the campaign season. If the Burmese Government gets this right, if it ensures as free and fair an election as possible, with results accepted by competing parties, the government, and the military, that would go a long way toward reassuring Burma's friends around the globe that it remains committed to political reform and progress in the bilateral relationship. Indeed, both the government and the military have committed to standing by the election results.

Now, let me be clear. While I have always approached this relationship and the role of sanctions realistically, this election is a test the government must pass. Simply holding an election without mass casualties or violence, while vitally important, isn't good enough. Let me say that again. Just holding an election without mass violence is not enough. It has to do a lot more than just have the absence of violence.

As I stated on the Senate floor earlier this year, if we end up with an election not accepted by the Burmese people as reflecting their will, it will make further normalization of relations—at least as it concerns the legislative branch of this government—much more difficult. It would likely hinder further enhancement of U.S.-Burma economic ties and military-to-military relations. It would likely erode confidence in Burma's reform efforts. It would also likely make it more difficult for the executive branch to include Burma in the Generalized System of Preferences Program or to enhance political military relations.

Those of us who follow Burma want this country to succeed. We want to see the government carry out an election that is as free and as fair as possible. We are prepared to continue doing what we can to encourage more positive change in that country, and we will be realistic about what is possible.

As I just mentioned, that is the kind of approach I have always tried to take—a hopeful but still realistic one when it comes to this relationship, not just on the role of sanctions but also on the possible steps toward closer relations and on the individual programs and policies that would aid Burma's development and capabilities.

So we are hoping the Burmese Government gets this right. This is a big opportunity to send a signal to the rest of the world that Burma has indeed truly changed. We are hoping the Burmese people continue moving along the path of greater freedom and greater reform, but whatever the result, Burmese Government officials should be assured that Burma's partners in the United States and in the international community will be watching intently to see what happens in the coming weeks with a realistic assessment in what Burma can achieve.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LEESBURG "STOLEN GIRLS"

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, it is with a sense of solemnity that I recognize a low moment during the civil rights movement in my home State of Georgia 52 years ago.

During the height of the movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested for protesting racial segregation in Albany, GA, on December 16, 1961, and held in the Sumter County jail. The arrest galvanized the community and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, efforts to establish the Sumter County movement. Largely

comprised of preteen and teenage students, the movement repeatedly challenged segregation from 1963 to 1965. On July 15, 1963, a number of school-aged girls were arrested, transported to a jail in Dawson, GA, and held overnight. Early the next morning, they were transported to Leesburg, GA, without parental consent. The girls were held 20 miles from their homes in a Civil War-era stockade following their arrest for protesting, and they were not released until mid-September 1963.

After a SNCC photographer revealed the terrible, unsanitary, and dangerous conditions, the young girls, dubbed the "Stolen Girls," gained national attention. However, the incident has not received the attention it deserves.

The young ladies who were jailed are ready to tell the stories of their untold mistreatment after 52 years. I encourage my fellow Georgians and Americans to learn more about the civil rights movement so that all might find healing.

HEAD START AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to express my appreciation to the students, parents, staff, and alumni of the Head Start Program and to join them in celebrating Head Start Awareness Month. The dedicated individuals at Head Start have served our Nation's most vulnerable children and families for 50 years.

Since its founding in 1965, this program has provided comprehensive social and emotional development services to children from birth to age 5. Because of Head Start, many young parents have been able to get the support they need during the crucial first years of their child's life.

These services go far beyond what any parenting book could ever achieve. Head Start staff provides real-life guidance for young parents who, for example, may need the name of a local dentist or help finding adequate housing to keep their families healthy and safe.

In Oregon, we have 336 program locations that enrolled more than 13,000 individuals and families last year. You can find a Head Start location anywhere from Clatskanie, OR, all the way to Chiloquin. Earlier this month, Clatsop County celebrated Head Start's anniversary by holding simultaneous block parties at the county's three locations. These Head Start and Early Head Start centers are helping Oregon families who want to see their children reach their full potential.

The Head Start Program fosters literacy and prepares Oregon's children for success in school. Early learning through Head Start can put children on a path toward high school graduation and a better future. In my view, the Head Start Program is a critical investment in the development of our Nation's youngest children.

I speak today to honor those who are working to make a difference for our young people at all the Head Start lo-

cations in Oregon and across the country. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to continue to support early childhood education programs like Head Start.

NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated this week as National Forest Products Week to recognize the important contribution of forest products to our economy and environment. This week means a great deal to industries and employees in the State of Idaho and citizens nationally.

In Idaho alone, forestry, logging, wood products, and pulp and paper production support more than 10,600 jobs, contribute over \$430 million to the local economy through wages, and produce a value of shipments of over \$2.6 billion. The industry continues to grow and is taking on new and innovative projects like the development of tall wood buildings. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the U.S.—with more architects opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, and high-performing tall buildings in urban dense settings.

Years of research and real-life experience have proven that wood buildings can withstand the effects of major wind and seismic events. These structures, when properly designed and constructed, protect lives and preserve building function. Wood buildings are durable and can be designed to last a lifetime. For example, a mass timber system was used in the 1974 rebuild of the nine-story Butler Square Building in Minneapolis. Heavy timber post and beam construction provided an adaptable solution and has allowed the building to stand strong since 1900.

As we celebrate forest products this week, let us all thank and congratulate those in the industry for their considerable contributions to economies the world over and their development of cutting-edge technologies that create better, stronger, and greener buildings.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, during National Forest Products Week, I am glad to join my colleagues in highlighting the important role that the forest products industry plays in Oregon and nationwide.

Many rural communities throughout Oregon were founded on the success of the forest products industry. With fresh innovations and a focus on sustainability, the industry continues to bolster these communities year after year. In Oregon, the industry supports more than 37,000 jobs, pumping over \$2 billion in wages directly into local economies. Overall, the industry produces a combined product value of over \$7.8 billion. By encouraging a sustainable forest products industry in Oregon

and across the country, we can help strengthen markets for wood products, both here and abroad, and continue to ensure the success of rural economies.

When harvested in a sustainable manner, wood can reduce carbon emissions, and new state-of-the-art technologies using wood as a building material have made timber more fire resistant and stronger than ever. Wood has the potential to contribute vastly to a low-carbon economy by locking up the carbon that trees draw out of the atmosphere when they grow. Wood products like cross laminated timber also bring down construction costs for multiple story buildings in large cities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has already recognized a project in my hometown of Portland that will demonstrate the unique benefits of timber as a building material for a new age. I'm proud that the Agriculture Department gave one of two Tall Wood Building Prize Competition awards to Portland, OR, and I'm looking forward to seeing the 12-story wood building as a new addition to the Portland skyline.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, as we come together to celebrate National Forest Products Week, I want to highlight the impacts and contributions of the forest products industry to my home State of Oregon. In my State, the forest products industry produces over 37,000 jobs; contributes over \$2 billion in wages to local economies; and produces a combined product value of nearly \$8 billion.

Oregon has forest land that covers over 29 million acres. We have 72 sawmills, millwork, and treating facilities, 49 engineered wood and panel products facilities, and 11 other types of wood products facilities, combining to make a total of 132 wood products facilities in the State of Oregon. Forest products produce \$262 million annually in tax payments to support the rural and local economies in the State of Oregon.

Forest products provide a clear value both for our economy and for the environment. Currently, America's forests store 2.5 trillion metric tons of carbon and capture nearly 13 percent of total U.S. CO₂ emissions annually. One-half of the dry weight of wood is carbon; and the lumber, wood products, and the wood used in buildings each provide a carbon storage system. With advanced technologies, we are seeing taller and stronger buildings made of wood—buildings that will last for generations and help move us towards a more sustainable future.

In closing, I would like to express my support for the forest products industry and their ongoing efforts to positively contribute to the environment and submit these comments as part of this year's National Forest Product's Week.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, in support of National Forest Products Week, I would like to recognize the nearly 18,000 hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in the great State of Maine.

Maine is home to about 40 wood products and paper manufacturing facilities, which contribute over \$900 million to the economy through jobs and wages and over \$4 billion in industry shipments of products, making the forest products industry one of the largest manufacturing sectors in the State.

Our Nation's forests are an essential element of our urban and rural landscape. Covering more than 750 million acres across America, they create opportunities for recreation and habitats for wildlife, and their products play an integral role in our daily lives.

As the only renewable building material, wood requires less energy to transport, construct, and produce in comparison to alternative building materials. By increasing the use of wood products in construction, we have the opportunity to reduce greenhouse emissions and improve the environmental performance of buildings. Design and building professionals are increasingly recognizing wood's environmental attributes and helping to create strong markets for wood products.

The industry continues to grow and is taking on new and innovative projects like the development of tall wood buildings. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the U.S., with more architects opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings.

Even with the advances of digital communications, paper also continues to play a valuable role in our daily lives: from enhancing education through written communications to capturing and preserving life's most memorable moments. In my State, I continually hear from men and women for whom paper is not only a preference, but for some, a necessity. Forty-one percent of Americans over 65 years of age do not use the internet. Eliminating paper as an option for vital government communications—like the IRS tax instruction manual—impedes access to critical information every citizen has a right to receive.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in Maine. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and reflect on the positive economic, social, and environmental impacts paper and forest products have on our everyday lives.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the important role of the forest products industry as we celebrate National Forest Products Week.

Montana's forests are a treasured part of our State's heritage which many of us hold so dear—not only are Montana's forests where we hunt, fish, explore, and live, but our forest prod-

ucts industry provides thousands of jobs for Montana families and a boost to our State's economy.

Sadly, many forest products jobs in Montana have been lost this year in large part due to an insufficient supply of logs from Federal lands. I'm fighting for commonsense reforms to restore active management across Montana so we can get more Montanans back to work, improve forest health, increase access to public lands, and provide much-needed sustainable revenues to our forested counties. These reforms must give the Forest Service the tools and resources it needs to increase responsible timber harvests and protect their work from obstructionist tactics that continue to encumber a substantial portion of the timber volume from Montana's national forests. Congress should enact these reforms swiftly.

Further, as we seek to improve the performance of our buildings, we should encourage the use of wood in the construction of Federal and other commercial buildings. Montana is home to approximately 5 engineered and panel products facilities and 12 sawmills, millwork, and treatment facilities that employ several thousand people across the State. These facilities are working to advance innovative new technologies, for example, cross laminated timber. I am proud to have SmartLam, Inc., the very first and only manufacturer of cross laminated timber, CLT, products in the U.S. located in the great State of Montana.

CLT products are creating opportunities in the U.S. to build taller wood buildings. Advancements in new technology utilizing engineered "mass timber" panels are creating new possibilities for wood. This concept is gaining momentum in the U.S. as many successful demonstration projects have been built and proven to be a safe and cost-effective solution in urban dense settings. With more than 17 tall wood buildings of seven stories or more having been built around the world serving as demonstration projects, building officials, designers, contractors, and consumers are increasingly confident in the safety of these buildings.

I want to thank the individuals in the forest products industry for their important contributions to my home State and for their efforts to expand tall wood building projects across the Nation.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to join my colleagues in support of the 55th National Forest Products Week and to recognize the more than 26,000 hard-working men and women that work in the forest products sector in Michigan.

Forests in Michigan and nationwide help keep our air and water clean, provide wildlife habitats, and places for recreation. These forests aren't just an environmental treasure; they are an economic powerhouse. Michigan is home to nearly 200 businesses that manufacture everything from office paper to wood pellets for home heating.

Nationwide, our forests provide more than 900,000 jobs, creating almost \$240 billion in economic output every year.

This economic activity leads to new opportunities in rural communities around the country. That's one reason why, as chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, I worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers to ensure the 2014 farm bill strengthened forestry programs and helped bolster rural economic development.

Forest product companies are also leaders in the effort to increase recycling. Today, 96 percent of all communities across the country have access to curbside or drop-off paper recycling programs. On top of that, the millions of Americans who recycle at home, work, and school have helped recover more than 60 percent of the paper consumed in the U.S. in each of the last 3 years. Picture this: each day our paper companies around the country recycle enough paper to fill a 15-mile-long boxcar train.

That type of leadership is great news for our planet and has some serious economic savings as well. Already more than 110 mills around the country are making paper using only recovered materials. And efforts are on track to recover more than 70 percent of all paper used by 2020. At the same time, paper can only be recycled a limited number of times, so it's important that steps are taken to ensure sustainable production of paper and forest products from our renewable forest resources.

Forest products can also help us become more energy independent. Manufacturers across the industry now use carbon neutral biomass that comes from forest waste—materials like bark, wood scraps, byproducts, and other unusable products—to help power their plants, reduce emissions, and save energy.

For all these reasons, I am proud to serve as co-chair of the Paper and Packaging Caucus with my colleague from Arkansas, Senator BOOZMAN.

Thank you for the opportunity to recognize the hard-working professionals of the forest products industry in the great State of Michigan. I would urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and applaud the thousands of hard-working Americans who are working hard every day to keep America as the leader in forest products.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize National Forest Products Week and the many women and men in Arkansas who rely on forestry and the forest products industry.

As co-chair of the Paper and Packaging Caucus, I am glad to work with my fellow co-chairs—Senator DEBBIE STABENOW and Representatives REID RIBBLE and GWEN GRAHAM—to highlight the role that this vital industry plays in our country.

About 25,000 Arkansans are directly employed in the forestry and forest

products sector. Arkansas is home to over 100 wood products, paper, and packaging manufacturing facilities that make nearly \$7 billion in products each year. Large and small employers dot the Arkansas landscape. I regularly hear from and meet with Arkansas families who earn a living and make great products at places like Green Bay Packaging, Domtar, Deltic Timber, and Georgia-Pacific. Every year, I meet with family tree farmers and small business operators who rely on our forestry sector to build a successful future. And I track and support efforts to responsibly manage and utilize our renewable Federal forest resources. According to the University of Arkansas, the forest and forest products industry produces \$2.3 billion in wages that are pumped into the Arkansas economy each year. This economic activity creates and supports countless other jobs.

I also serve as the co-chair of the Senate Recycling Caucus. In this dual capacity, I have seen the forest products industry's success in pairing economic growth with respect for the environment. The industry is making great strides in promoting sustainability and energy conservation, especially by using carbon neutral biomass, which meets about two-thirds of the industry's energy needs. Other successes include boosting exports and encouraging recycling. Paper recycling programs now reach 96 percent of the American people, and the industry is on target to recover and recycle about 70 percent of its products in the next few years.

At the same time, the industry is facing challenges—from problems with our transportation policies and infrastructure to a regulatory maze that is too difficult and costly to navigate. Here in Congress, we need to solve these challenges together, through common sense, cooperation, negotiation, an open process, and a clear-eyed analysis of the facts.

We also need to support the industry as it transitions. While more information is available digitally, paper and packaging products are still indispensable to our modern economy. For example, many Americans, particularly those in rural settings or with limited resources or computer skills, have difficulty accessing information digitally. That's why in general, and particularly at government agencies, the format of information should be a consumer choice.

In conclusion, paper, packaging, and other wood products are at the heart of modern life and a modern economy. I am glad to join my colleagues in celebrating National Forest Products Week. These recyclable and renewable resources make our lives better, and forestry is truly an Arkansas success story—and an American success story. Thank you.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to join Senator CRAPO and my colleagues in recognizing National Forest Products Week and in recog-

nizing the men and women of the forest products industry for their contributions to our Nation and, in particular, my home State of Washington.

The forest products industry employs nearly 30,000 people in Washington, contributing \$1.9 billion dollars in jobs and wages. Employees work both in wood products facilities and in paper manufacturing; and these facilities, and the jobs and wages they create, have been a dynamic part of our economy.

I would like to commend the industry for its recent technological advances and for continually looking toward the future. Forest products have contributed greatly to improvements in energy efficiency in buildings and their overall environmental performance. I am particularly excited about new "mass timber" technologies, such as cross laminated timber, CLT, that are now opening an entirely new suite of opportunities. New technologies create new markets for wood and healthy working forests.

Throughout our State, there is great interest in CLT. We are already seeing this new product bringing innovation to the design and construction of buildings. Tall wood buildings are now being built around the world. The U.S. market is ripe for applying this new technology to new construction. I appreciate the support that the administration is providing for builders that want to use CLT. I expect to see an increase in the use of CLT and an increase in the number of facilities that create it.

Our forests and forest products play an important role in sequestering and storing carbon. The use of wood in buildings provides a great opportunity to make our buildings more environmentally and energy efficient. This is a great example of the use of forest products creating a healthier economy and environment.

Even though I have talked so much about CLT, I would like to commend the men and women who comprise this industry for their many contributions in Washington and around the U.S.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I appreciate this opportunity to recognize the men and women of the forest products industry as we celebrate National Forest Products Week. These folks represent a critical part of my State's outdoor heritage and economy.

The forestry and forest products industries support nearly 5,000 jobs in Montana and generate approximately \$22 million in State and local taxes. Today, Montana is home to 20 facilities that rely on forest products, from sawmills to engineered wood and panel production sites. In a time of increased global competition, when the U.S. Forest Service has to spend over half its budget on wildfire costs instead of managing our forests, the men and women who work in this industry deserve our support. These are the folks who cut trees, transport them from the forest to mills, process lumber, and make a wide variety of products that

we use every day. I remain committed to pursuing sound forestry and trade policies that will ensure this important industry can compete fairly, contribute to sustainable forest management, and continue to provide good jobs in Montana.

The forest products industry is also looking forward to find new ways to put our wood fiber to good use and create additional value for local economies in Montana. In Whitefish, SmartLam, Inc. is the first manufacturer of cross laminated timber, CLT, products in the Nation. This Montana company is on the cutting edge of engineered-wood technology for building construction materials. SmartLam is producing more than a million board feet of CLT products a month and hopes to open a new facility due to increasing demand. These products can aid in the construction of taller, more fire-safe wood buildings and help reduce the carbon footprint of the construction process. Innovative wood construction systems are flexible and can be easily combined with other building materials, offering alternatives for construction in urban areas while supporting sustainable development in rural communities.

In addition to providing good jobs, the forest products industry plays a key role in the sustainable management of the more than 25 million acres of forests in Montana. Most of the forested lands in Montana are managed by the U.S. Forest Service. We have seen industry come together with a wide array of stakeholders in Montana to develop collaborative recommendations for projects aimed at supporting local economies, improving forest health, reducing wildfire risks, and restoring watersheds. On private lands, industry has partnered with conservation organizations to keep forested lands forested as development pressures have grown.

In addition to National Forest Products Week, this week also marks the fifth annual Montana Forest Products Week. There is no better time to say thanks to the folks who work in Montana's forest products industry.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to speak today about the many contributions of the forest products industry, as we recognize their important work during National Forest Products Week.

Wood products play a significant role in our economy. The U.S. wood products industry employs more than 548,000 people in manufacturing and forestry, and U.S. private forest owners support 2.4 million jobs and \$87 billion in payroll. In Maine, there are a number of wood products manufacturing facilities, including sawmills, millwork, and treatment plants, engineered wood and panel product facilities, and paper mills.

The environmental benefits associated with wood products—from renewability to responsible forest practices to a light carbon footprint—are helping

to strengthen markets for wood products, in turn stabilizing the wood industry's ability to create jobs and support local economies. Moreover, sustainable forest management practices in the United States maintain important forest values such as biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Strong markets for wood products provide a financial incentive for landowners to invest in their forests and keep them healthy for future generations.

Design and building professionals are increasingly recognizing wood's environmental attributes and helping to create strong markets for wood products. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation technologies. Today, the concept is gaining traction in the United States where more architects are opting for a sustainable solution for attaining safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings, particularly in urban dense settings. As the only renewable building material, wood requires less energy to transport, construct, and produce than other building materials.

In closing, I encourage my colleagues to support policies that maintain and grow strong markets for wood products. As we celebrate National Forest Products Week, I thank the employers and employees of the forest products industry for their contributions to Maine and the Nation.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, in support of National Forest Products Week, I would like to recognize the more than 25,000 hard-working men and women employed by the forest products industry in the great State of South Carolina. With an annual payroll of almost \$1.7 billion and an estimated value of products manufactured in the State exceeding \$9 billion, the forest products industry is among the largest manufacturing sectors in my State and the largest valued agricultural crop.

This is the 55th consecutive year that we are recognizing the forest products industry for its contributions to our economy and to sustainable manufacturing. The world has changed a lot since the first National Forest Products Week in 1960 and so has the industry.

Over the last few years, with new advancements in lumber and mass timber technologies, the U.S. has begun innovative projects to build tall wood buildings. Over 17 tall wood buildings with over seven stories or more have been built around the world, which served as demonstration projects. Due to the success of these tall wood buildings, contractors and consumers are more confident than ever in the safety and high performance of these buildings. Additionally, with the right safety measures, tall wood buildings can be designed to meet and exceed fire safety requirements.

Wood buildings are durable and can be designed to last a lifetime. Years of

real-life experiences and research have shown that wood buildings can also withstand effects of major wind and seismic events. When designed and constructed properly, these structures are high performing and provide the necessary strength and ductility to preserve building function and provide life safety protection.

Similarly, paper and packaging products have grown with the demands of a 21st century global economy. Made from a recyclable and renewable resource, paper and paper-based packaging transport food, medicine, and manufactured goods faster, further, safer, and more environmentally friendly than ever before.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Forest Products Week and reflect on the sustainable uses of America's forests and the important contributions they make to our economy and our national life.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I wish to honor National Forest Products Week. I would simply like to express my support for newly available and continuously evolving opportunities to build with wood.

In the State of Idaho, the forest products industry makes significant contributions to our local, State, and national economies. In Idaho alone, we have 19 sawmills, millwork, and treating facilities and 4 facilities making engineered wood and panel products. These products are increasingly used in buildings all around the globe.

As we all know, U.S. and global populations are rapidly growing. Over the past several years, a number of tall wood projects have been completed around the world, demonstrating successful applications of next generation lumber and mass timber technologies.

Today, the concept is gaining traction in the United States. More architects are opting for a sustainable solution to attain safe, cost-effective, high-performing tall buildings in urban dense settings—many of these projects already do or will use engineered wood products.

With more than 17 tall wood buildings of seven stories or more having been built around the world serving as demonstration projects, building officials, designers, contractors, and consumers are more confident than ever in the safety of these buildings.

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize the many forest products facilities and employers in my home State that are helping make these tall wood building projects become a reality.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO OTTO MERIDA

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Otto Merida on his retirement after nearly 40 years of service to the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce. It gives me great

pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to Las Vegas' Hispanic business community. I am proud to call Otto a friend.

Otto was born in Havana, Cuba, and came to the United States in the early 1960s through a historic U.S. mission in Cuba known as Operation Peter Pan. He attended high school in Wilmington, DE, and received an associate degree from North Florida Junior College and a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Florida. After graduating, he worked with Volunteers In Service to America, VISTA, in Massachusetts as a community organizer and social worker. He then left VISTA and worked for the Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce.

He later came to Las Vegas in 1974 and began working for Nevada's Department of Education and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Program. As someone who has traveled to Cuba and spent time with the people, I recognize the importance of normalizing some relations with this country. This is why I support lifting travel restrictions to and from Cuba. I am proud to see Otto represent his country in such a positive manner within our Nevada community. Beginning in 1976, Otto helped organize Las Vegas' Latin Chamber of Commerce, LCC, and in 1978 became the executive director. In 2005, he was named president and chief executive officer of the LCC and the LCC Community Foundation. This successful body now has over 13,000 members and is the premier Latin chamber serving the great State of Nevada. I am grateful that our State has had someone like Otto leading this incredible organization for so many years. He is one of a kind and will be missed.

Without a doubt, Otto's work has had a great impact on Las Vegas' Hispanic businesses both large and small. Through his unwavering commitment, the Hispanic business community continues to grow and prosper. Otto has not only worked to build Las Vegas' Hispanic businesses in times of economic stability, but also helped to keep hard-working southern Nevada businessowners on their feet in times of great downturn. Along with his work to support local businesses, he has also focused on philanthropic work, helping foster young Hispanic leaders through the Latino Youth Leadership Conference since 1993. In addition, he has contributed greatly in helping to grow scholarship funds to go towards higher education for Las Vegas' Hispanic youth. This community is fortunate that Otto has served as an ally and leader for decades. To say he has had a positive impact on Las Vegas' Hispanic business community would be an understatement. The strong foundation he has built will be felt for years to come.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in thanking Otto for his dedication to both Las Vegas' Hispanic business community and the LCC and

in congratulating him on his retirement. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and service and should be proud of his long and meaningful career. I wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

TRIBUTE TO WALTER GALVIN

● Ms. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize and thank Walter Galvin for his years of service with Emerson, a great employer for 125 years in the State of Missouri. Walt joined Emerson in 1973 and has had an enormous impact on the company and the St. Louis community.

Walt's service with Emerson began as the controller at the Ridge Tool subsidiary. In 1993, he was named chief financial officer of Emerson and served in this role for 17 years. During his time as CFO, he served as a management member of Emerson's Board of Directors and as vice chairman. Walt retired from Emerson in February of 2013, but worked for Emerson for another 2 years to lend his expertise and knowledge to the next generation of company leaders.

Walt's experience working at Emerson provided him with the insight necessary to influence positive change in U.S. lawmaking. In 2004, he was directly involved in the passage of the American Jobs Creation Act, which included many provisions intended to incentivize and expand domestic manufacturing. He appeared as a witness many times before committees in the House and Senate, shedding light on the struggle American companies face in such a competitive international environment and lending his expertise to discussions of our Tax Code and comprehensive tax reform.

He served as a member of the Board Of Directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and as vice chairman and later, chairman of the Chamber's tax committee in Washington, DC. He also served on the board of the National Association of Manufacturers, NAM, and, for a time, as the chairman of NAM's tax committee. Other companies such as Ameren Corporation, F.M. Global Insurance, and Aegion Corporation also count Walt as a director.

In addition to his service to Emerson and broader policy discussions, Walt was active in charitable endeavors in the St. Louis community. He served on the board of Interco Charitable Foundation, the United Way of Greater St. Louis, and is the past president of the Saint Louis Zoo Association and Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital.

St. Louis and the entire State of Missouri are very lucky to have such a dedicated community leader making a difference on a local, State, and national level. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Walter Galvin's impact on American businesses and leaders nationwide.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3116) to extend by 15 years the authority of the Secretary of Commerce to conduct the quarterly financial report program.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 10:46 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3116. An act to extend by 15 years the authority of the Secretary of Commerce to conduct the quarterly financial report program.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 10:54 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1362. An act to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to clarify waiver authority regarding programs of all-inclusive care for the elderly (PACE programs).

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 692. An act to ensure the payment of interest and principal of the debt of the United States.

At 1:42 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 10. An act to reauthorize the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2193. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2200. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to strengthen equal pay requirements.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3238. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pesticides; Agricultural Worker Protection Standard Revisions" ((RIN2070-AJ22) (FRL No. 9931-81)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3239. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Administration's 2015 compensation program adjustments; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3240. A communication from the Acting Director of the Legislative Affairs Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "NRCS Procedures for Granting Equitable Relief" (RIN0578-AA57) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 15, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3241. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Olives Grown in California; Increased Assessment Rate" (Docket No. AMS-FV-14-0105) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3242. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Clarification of United States Antitrust Laws, Immunity, and Liability Under Marketing Order Programs" (Docket No. AMS-FV-14-0072) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3243. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Cotton and Tobacco Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cotton Research and Promotion Program: Procedures for Conduct of Sign-up Period" (Docket No. AMS-CN-12-0059) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3244. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Suspension of Community Eligibility" ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA-2015-0001)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3245. A communication from the Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendments Relating to Small Creditors and Rural or Underserved Areas Under the Truth in Lending Act (Regulation Z)" (RIN3170-AA43) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 13, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3246. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry;

to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3247. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Kentucky Regulatory Program" ((SATS No. KY-253-FOR) (Docket No. OSM-2009-0014)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3248. A communication from the Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Ohio Regulatory Program" ((SATS No. OH-254-FOR) (Docket No. OSM-2012-0012)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3249. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pennsylvania Regulatory Program" ((SATS No. PA-154-FOR) (Docket No. OSM-2010-0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3250. A communication from the Division of Legislative Affairs and Correspondence, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the final map and corridor boundary description for the Crooked Wild and Scenic River, Segment B, in Oregon; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3251. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2012 Annual Report for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3252. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Arizona, Phoenix-Mesa; 2008 Ozone Standard Requirements" (FRL No. 9935-56-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3253. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Low Emission Vehicle Program" (FRL No. 9935-58-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3254. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Minnesota; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2008 Ozone, 2010 NO₂, 2010 SO₂, and 2012 PM_{2.5} NAAQS" (FRL No. 9935-17-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3255. A communication from the Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch,

Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for *Diplacus vandenbergensis* (Vandenberg Monkeyflower)" (RIN1018-AZ33) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3256. A communication from the Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 4(d) Rule for the Georgetown Salamander" (RIN1018-BA32) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3257. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for *Trichomanes punctatum* ssp. *floridanum* (Florida Bristle Fern)" (RIN1018-AY97) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3258. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling" (RIN1018-AZ58) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3259. A communication from the Acting Chief of the Endangered Species Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Status for 16 Species and Threatened Status for 7 Species in Micronesia" (RIN1018-BA13) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3260. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2015-2016 Refuge-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations" (RIN1018-BA57) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3261. A communication from the Chief of the Foreign Species Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Listing the Honduran Emerald Hummingbird (*Amazilia luciae*)" (RIN1018-AY64) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3262. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Migratory Bird Hunting; Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations on Certain Federal Indian Reservations and Ceded Lands for the

2015-16 Early Season" (RIN1018-BA67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3263. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Migratory Bird Hunting; Early Seasons and Bag and Possession Limits for Certain Migratory Game Birds in the Contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands" (RIN1018-BA67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3264. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Migratory Bird Hunting; Final Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations" (RIN1018-BA67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3265. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Migratory Bird Hunting; Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations on Certain Federal Indian Reservations and Ceded Lands for the 2015-16 Late Season" (RIN1018-BA67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3266. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Migratory Bird Hunting; Late Seasons and Bag Possession Limits for Certain Migratory Game Birds" (RIN1018-BA67) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3267. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Visas: Documentation of Nonimmigrants under the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended" (RIN1400-AD17) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 14, 2015; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3268. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107-243) and the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution of 1991 (P.L. 102-1) for the June 15, 2015-August 14, 2015 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3269. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 15-069); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3270. A communication from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's FAIR Act 2012 and 2013 Commercial Activities Inventories, the FAIR Act 2012 and 2013 Inherently Government Inventories, and the 2012 and 2013 FAIR Act Executive Summary; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3271. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Default Investment Fund" (5 CFR Part 1600; 5 CFR Part 1601; 5 CFR Part 1651) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 19, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3272. A communication from the Deputy Chief of the Cybersecurity and Communications Reliability Division, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Ensuring Continuity of 911 Communications" (FCC 15-98) (PS Docket No. 14-174) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 13, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3273. A communication from the General Counsel, National Science Foundation, transmitting draft legislation entitled "Antarctic Nongovernmental Activity Preparedness Act of 2015"; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3274. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Amendment of Section 73.1216 of the Commission's Rules Related to Broadcast Licensee-Conducted Contests" (FCC 15-118) (MB Docket No. 14-226) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 1, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-78. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urging the United States Congress to take all necessary action to prohibit any force structure changes, to prohibit any transfer of AH-64 Apache helicopters from the National Guard, and maintain the Army National Guard at 350,200 soldiers until the National Commission on the Future of the Army has reported its findings to Congress in February 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 149

Whereas, The United States Army plans to transfer all National Guard AH-64 Apache helicopters to active duty as part of the United States Army's Restructuring Initiative; and

Whereas, The United States Army has marked Pennsylvania's 55th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) for inactivation; and

Whereas, The 55th ABCT is headquartered in Scranton, extends over the eastern portion of Pennsylvania and approximately 3,500 Pennsylvanians serve with the 55th ABCT; and

Whereas, Congress established the National Commission on the Future of the Army, which is tasked with completing an independent study on the proper size, force mixture and force generation requirements for the army, and this commission is required to report its findings during February 2016; and

Whereas, This comprehensive assessment will provide Congressional members the opportunity to review and legislate in response to the commission's recommendations; and

Whereas, There are 24 AH-64 Apache helicopters authorized for the Pennsylvania

Army National Guard (PAARNG) with a significant portion of the allotment stationed at the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport; and

Whereas, Transferring the Apache helicopters would result in the loss of 350 part-time personnel from the 1-104th Attack Battalion and the stationing of PAARNG is an important economic driver in the Johnstown area with an estimated impact of nearly \$45 million; and

Whereas, The economic necessity and the maintenance of critical national defense units in the Johnstown area, including the 1-104th Attack Battalion PAARNG and its complement of Apache helicopters, dictates that the United States Army reverse its decision to redeploy the helicopters; and

Whereas, Units from the 55th ABCT have deployed multiple times since 9/11, including deployments to Kosovo, Kuwait, Egypt, Iraq and Afghanistan and units from the brigade have earned multiple Navy Unit Commendations and Meritorious Unit Commendations; and

Whereas, The army's current force proposals reduce the total Army National Guard end strength from 350,200 to 342,000 during fiscal year 2016, and further, from 342,000 to 335,000 during fiscal year 2017; and

Whereas, Since 2000, the army has cut the Army National Guard by 14 Brigade Combat Teams and increased the active army by 12 Brigade Combat Teams, which have resulted in a shift from the majority of force structure residing with the Army National Guard to the majority of the force structure contained within the active army; and

Whereas, The geographical location of Pennsylvania in relation to the entire northeast corridor places the Pennsylvania National Guard in a strategically accessible position that can effectively respond at the Federal and State level when needed for domestic emergencies or armed conflicts; and

Whereas, The National Guard represents the best economic value for the United States validated by the Department of Defense stating in 2013 that a drilling guardsman is about 15% the cost of an active component soldier; and

Whereas, When Title 10 mobilized duty, a national guard soldier only cost 80 to 95% as much as an active component soldier: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved (the House of Representatives concurring), That the General Assembly urge the United States Army to reverse its decision to deactivate the 55th Armored Brigade Combat Team and to reverse its decision to transfer any National Guard AH-64 Apache helicopters to active duty; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Assembly urge Congress to take all necessary action to prohibit any force structure changes, to prohibit any transfer of AH-64 Apache helicopters from the National Guard, and maintain the Army National Guard at 350,200 soldiers until the National Commission on the Future of the Army has reported its findings to Congress in February 2016; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.

POM-79. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to consider imposing tariffs on imported anthracite coal in order to preserve American jobs; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 54

Whereas, The anthracite coal industry accounts for more than 1,000 Pennsylvania jobs; and

Whereas, The anthracite coal industry contributes \$200 million to the Pennsylvania economy; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania anthracite coal production accounts for 2 million tons annually; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania coal fueled a large part of the Industrial Revolution and the industrial efforts which helped to win two world wars; and

Whereas, Government-sponsored anthracite coal production in China, Russia and Ukraine provides unfair competition with domestically mined anthracite coal by providing government subsidies which reduce their prices far below market rates: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the President and the Congress of the United States to consider imposing tariffs on imported anthracite coal in order to preserve American jobs; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States and to the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.

POM-80. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Delaware memorializing a commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and Delaware, to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 17

Whereas, Taiwan and the United States are long-standing friends with a shared historical relationship and dearly cherished values of freedom, democracy, and human rights; and

Whereas, 2015 marks the 15th anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Delaware and Taiwan; and

Whereas, for the past 14 years, the sister-state relationship with Taiwan has been strengthened through the efforts of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) resulting in better mutual understanding; and

Whereas, Taiwan is the United States' tenth largest trading partner, with the two-way trade volume between the United States and Taiwan reaching \$67 billion in 2014, and the United States is Taiwan's second largest trading partner; and

Whereas, Taiwan signed an agreement with Delaware to recognize driver's licenses issued by each side on June 11, 2014, reflecting the friendship, trust, and cooperation between two sides, and benefitting the people of Taiwan and Delaware in terms of travel and business; and

Whereas, Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFA) are an important channel for dialogue on trade and investment issues between the United States and Taiwan, it not only helps to forge a closer relationship but also boosts Taiwan's chances to participate the Trans-Pacific Partnership: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the 148th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, That we hereby reaffirm our commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and Delaware; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, and the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

POM-81. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California memorializing the United States Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965

forthwith, with adequate funding to reflect the growing populations of Americans who benefit from the act's programs and services; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Whereas, 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Older Americans Act of 1965; and

Whereas, During the past 50 years, the implementation of the Older Americans Act of 1965 has contributed to the economic well-being of millions of older Americans, and has improved the quality of life for those individuals; and

Whereas, One of the key elements contributing to the successful implementation of the Older Americans Act of 1965 has been the establishment of an aging network composed of local area agencies on aging, providers of congregate and home-delivered nutrition, and many other community service providers; and

Whereas, The federal Administration on Aging in the United States Department of Health and Human Services was created by the Older Americans Act of 1965, and has been empowered to act as an effective advocate for the concerns and needs of older individuals; and

Whereas, The Older Americans Act of 1965 serves as a model for the development of community-based services, including services that provide alternatives to the institutionalization of older individuals; and

Whereas, Some of the programs authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965 were created to address the specific concerns of those older Americans with the greatest social and economic needs, especially minority older Americans; and

Whereas, Many services under the Older Americans Act of 1965, including long-term care ombudsman and legal services providers, have acted as powerful advocates for older individuals; and

Whereas, The Older Americans Act of 1965 has brought together thousands of dedicated professionals and volunteers and has provided inspiration to those individuals; and

Whereas, Services authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965 have provided important part-time community service employment opportunities for low-income older individuals; and

Whereas, Many older individuals, and those who serve them, have benefited greatly from the research, training, and education that programs established under the Older Americans Act of 1965 have provided; and

Whereas, Some of the programs under the Older Americans Act of 1965 were designed to address the special needs of older Native Americans; and

Whereas, In recognition of the changing needs of a rapidly aging society, the Older Americans Act of 1965 has been periodically amended; and

Whereas, The Older Americans Act of 1965 served as the foundation for an effective human services policy for millions of Americans as the United States entered the 21st century: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature recognizes the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Older Americans Act of 1965, and the successful implementation of that act; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature applauds the many and varied contributions at all levels of the aging network fostered by the Older Americans Act of 1965; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature affirms support for the Older Americans Act of 1965, and

the primary goals of that act of providing services to maintain the dignity of older Californians, and promoting the independence of those individuals; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature memorializes the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965 forthwith, with adequate funding to reflect the growing populations of Americans who benefit from the act's programs and services; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from the State of California in the Congress of the United States.

POM-82. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Illinois affirming support for the Older Americans Act of 1965; and urging the United States Congress to reauthorize the act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 561

Whereas, 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Older Americans Act of 1965; during the past 50 years, the implementation of the Older Americans Act of 1965 has contributed to the economic well-being of millions of older Americans and has improved the quality of life for those individuals; and

Whereas, One of the key elements contributing to the successful implementation of the Older Americans Act of 1965 has been the establishment of an aging network composed of local area agencies on aging, providers of congregate and home-delivered nutrition, and many other community service providers; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging was created by the Older Americans Act of 1965; the agency has been empowered to act as an effective advocate for the concerns and needs of older individuals; and

Whereas, The Older Americans Act of 1965 serves as a model for the development of community-based services, including services that provide alternatives to the institutionalization of older individuals; and

Whereas, Some of the programs authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965 were created to address the specific concerns of those older Americans with the greatest social and economic needs, especially minority older Americans; and

Whereas, Many services under the Older Americans Act of 1965, including long-term care ombudsman and legal services providers, have acted as powerful advocates for older individuals; and

Whereas, Services authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965 have also provided important part-time community service employment opportunities for low-income older individuals; and

Whereas, Many older individuals, and those who serve them, have benefited greatly from the research, training, and education that programs established under the Older Americans Act of 1965 have provided; and

Whereas, During Fiscal Year 2015, Illinois Area Agencies on Aging will serve an estimated 515,700 persons 60 and over, accounting for 22% of the 2.3 million seniors in Illinois; the agencies will also develop and coordinate comprehensive systems of home and community-based services to enable older adults with chronic illnesses and disabilities to live in the least restrictive setting and avoid unnecessary hospital readmissions and placements in long term care facilities; and

Whereas, Thirteen Area Agencies on Aging in Illinois collaborate with 179 provider agencies to provide a myriad of home and community-based services for older adults and their caregivers, including information and assistance for older adults to help them make informed decisions about programs, benefits, and services and live independently for as long as possible, transportation programs, in-home services, home-delivered meals, congregate meals, Multi-Purpose Senior Centers, recreation programs, legal assistance, health promotion and disease prevention, and evidence-based health promotion programs; and

Whereas, In recognition of the changing needs of a rapidly aging society, the Older Americans Act of 1965 has been periodically amended and reauthorized; and

Whereas, The Older Americans Act of 1965 served as the foundation for an effective human services policy for millions of Americans as the United States entered the 21st century; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Ninth General Assembly of the State of Illinois, That we affirm our support for the Older Americans Act of 1965 and the primary goals of the Act of providing services to maintain the dignity of older Illinoisans and promoting the independence of those individuals; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge Congress to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965 without delay and with adequate funding to reflect the growing populations of Americans who benefit from the Act's programs and services; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and the members of the Illinois congressional delegation.

POM-83. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California relative to the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923, and calling upon the President of the United States and the United States Congress to formally and consistently reaffirm the historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people constituted genocide; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Whereas, Armenians have resided in Asia Minor and the Caucasus for approximately four millennia, and have a long and rich history in the region, including the establishment of many kingdoms, and despite Armenians' historic presence, stewardship, and autonomy in the region, Turkish rulers of the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey subjected Armenians to severe and unjust persecution and brutality, including wholesale massacres beginning in the 1890s; and

Whereas, The Armenian nation was subjected to a systematic and premeditated genocide officially beginning on April 24, 1915, at the hands of the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire from 1915-1919 and continued at the hands of the Kemalist Movement of Turkey from 1920-1923 whereby over 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were slaughtered or marched to their deaths in an effort to annihilate the Armenian nation in the first genocide of modern times, while thousands of surviving Armenian women and children were forcibly converted and Islamized, and hundreds of thousands more were subjected to ethnic cleansing during the period of the modern Republic of Turkey from 1924-1937; and

Whereas, During the genocides of the Christians living in the Ottoman Empire and

surrounding regions, which occurred during the first one-half of the 20th century, 1.5 million men, women, and children of Armenian descent, and hundreds of thousands of Assyrians, Greeks, and other Christians, lost their lives at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the Republic of Turkey, constituting one of the most atrocious violations of human rights in the history of the world; and

Whereas, These crimes against humanity also had the consequence of permanently removing all traces of the Armenians and other targeted people from their historic homelands of more than four millennia, and enriching the perpetrators with the lands and other property of the victims of these crimes, including the usurpation of several thousand churches; and

Whereas, In response to the genocide and at the behest of President Woodrow Wilson and the United States State Department, the Near East Relief organization was founded, and became the first congressionally sanctioned American philanthropic effort created exclusively to provide humanitarian assistance and rescue to the Armenian nation and other Christian minorities from annihilation, who went on to survive and thrive outside of their ancestral homeland all over the world and specifically in this state; and

Whereas, Near East Relief succeeded, with the active participation of the citizens from this state, in delivering \$117 million in assistance, and saving more than one million refugees, including 132,000 orphans, between 1915 and 1930, by delivering food, clothing, and materials for shelter, setting up refugee camps, clinics, hospitals, and orphanages; and

Whereas, The Armenian nation survived the genocide despite the attempt by the Ottoman Empire to exterminate it; and

Whereas, Adolf Hitler, in persuading his army commanders that the merciless persecution and killing of Jews, Poles, and other people would bring no retribution, declared, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"; and

Whereas, On November 4, 1918, immediately after the collapse of the Young Turk regime and before the founding of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1923, the Ottoman Parliament considered a motion on the crimes committed by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP): "A population of one million people guilty of nothing except belonging to the Armenian nation were massacred and exterminated, including even women and children." The Minister of Interior at the time, Fethi Bey, responded by telling the Parliament: "It is the intention of the government to cure every single injustice done up until now, as far as the means allow, to make possible the return to their homes of those sent into exile, and to compensate for their material loss as far as possible"; and

Whereas, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk made a historic admission in an interview published in the Los Angeles Examiner on August 1, 1926: "These leftovers from the former Young Turk Party, who should have been made accountable for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven, en masse, from their homes and massacred"; and

Whereas, The Parliamentary Investigative Committee proceeded to collect relevant documents describing the actions of those responsible for the Armenian mass killings and turned them over to the Turkish Military Tribunal. CUP's leading figures were found guilty of massacring Armenians and hanged or given lengthy prison sentences. The Turkish Military Tribunal requested that Germany extradite to Turkey the masterminds of the massacres who had fled the country.

After German refusal, they were tried in absentia and sentenced to death; and

Whereas, Unlike other people and governments that have admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor regimes, and despite the Turkish government's earlier admissions and the overwhelming proof of genocidal intent, the Republic of Turkey inexplicably and adamantly has denied the occurrence of the crimes against humanity committed by the Ottoman and Young Turk rulers for many years, and continues to do so a full century since the first crimes constituting genocide occurred; and

Whereas, Those denials compound the grief of the few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate the memory of the victims, cause continuing pain to the descendants of the victims, and deprive the surviving Armenian nation, both on individual and collective levels, of their ancestral land, property, culture, heritage, financial assets, and population growth; and

Whereas, The Republic of Turkey has escalated its international campaign of Armenian Genocide denial, maintained its blockade of Armenia, and increased its pressure on the small but growing movement in Turkey acknowledging the Armenian Genocide and seeking justice for this systematic campaign of destruction of millions of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, and other Christians upon their biblical-era homelands; and

Whereas, Those citizens of Turkey, both Armenian and non-Armenian, who continue to speak the truth about the Armenian Genocide, such as human rights activist and journalist Hrant Dink, continue to be silenced by violent means; and

Whereas, There is continued concern about the welfare of Christians in the Republic of Turkey, their right to worship and practice freely, and the legal status and condition of thousands of ancient Armenian churches, monasteries, cemeteries, and other historical and cultural structures, sites, and antiquities in the Republic of Turkey; and

Whereas, The United States is on record as having officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in the United States government's May 28, 1951, written statement to the International Court of Justice regarding the Reservations to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, through President Ronald Reagan's April 22, 1981, Proclamation No. 4838, and by congressional legislation including House Joint Resolution 148 adopted on April 9, 1975, and House Joint Resolution 247 adopted on September 12, 1984; and

Whereas, Even prior to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the United States has a record of having sought to justly and constructively address the consequences of the Ottoman Empire's intentional destruction of the Armenian people, including through United States Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 adopted on February 9, 1916, United States Senate Resolution 359 adopted on May 11, 1920, and President Woodrow Wilson's November 22, 1920, decision entitled, "The Frontier between Armenia and Turkey," which was issued as a binding arbitral award, yet has not been enforced to this date despite its legally binding status; and

Whereas, President Barack Obama entered office "calling for Turkey's acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide" and on April 24, 2013, and similarly on April 24, 2014, he further stated, "A full, frank, and just acknowledgment of the facts is in all of our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger, and build a more just and tolerant future, by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past"; and

Whereas, California is home to the largest Armenian-American population in the

United States, and Armenians living in California have enriched our state through their leadership and contribution in business, agriculture, academia, government, and the arts, many of whom have family members who experienced firsthand the horror and evil of the Armenian Genocide and its ongoing denial; and

Whereas, Every person should be made aware and educated about the Armenian Genocide and other crimes against humanity, and this state has been at the forefront of encouraging and promoting a curriculum relating to human rights and genocide in order to empower future generations to prevent the recurrence of genocide; and

Whereas, April 24, 1915, is globally observed and recognized as the commencement of the Armenian Genocide and April 24, 2015, will mark the centennial anniversary since the commencement of the Armenian Genocide; and

Whereas, Armenians in this state and throughout the world, have not been provided with justice for the crimes perpetrated against the Armenian nation despite the fact that a century has passed since the crimes were first committed; and

Whereas, The Armenian people, in this state and elsewhere, remain resolved and their spirit continues to thrive a century after their near annihilation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature hereby designates the year of 2015 as "State of California Year of Commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923" and in doing so, intends, through the enactment of legislation, that the Armenian Genocide is properly commemorated and taught to its citizens and visitors through statewide educational and cultural events; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature hereby designates April 24, 2015, as "State of California Day of Commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature commends its conscientious educators who teach about human rights and genocide, and intends for them, through the enactment of legislation, to continue to enhance their efforts to educate students at all levels about the experience of the Armenians and other crimes against humanity; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature hereby commends the extraordinary service which was delivered by Near East Relief to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and the Assyrian Genocide, including thousands of direct beneficiaries of American philanthropy who are the parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents of many Californian Armenians and Assyrians, and pledges its intent, through the enactment of legislation, to working with community groups, non-profit organizations, citizens, state personnel, and the community at large to host statewide educational and cultural events; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature deplores the persistent, ongoing efforts by any person, in this country or abroad, to deny the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature respectfully calls upon the President of the United States and the United States Congress to formally and consistently reaffirm the historical truth that the atrocities committed against the Armenian people constituted genocide; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls on the President of the United States to work toward equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relations; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Governor of California, to every member of the California State Legislature, and to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

POM-84. A resolution adopted by the City Council of New Orleans, Louisiana, recognizing August 6, 2015, as the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-85. A resolution adopted by the Michigan Senate encouraging the United States Forest Service to issue the owners of privately-held hunting camps on leased acres within the Ottawa National Forest special use authorization under the Recreation Residence Program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 79

Whereas, Starting in the late 1950s, Michigan residents were offered an opportunity to lease privately-owned land from the Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) to build recreational hunting camps. In 1991, the UPPCO announced intentions to sell the land currently under lease to an intermediary who would simultaneously sell the land to the United States Forest Service (USFS). Existing leaseholders were offered an option to sign a 25-year, nonrenewable lease on the land that was to be sold or to immediately vacate the property. The leases were signed in March of 1992, and the United States Forest Service (USFS) took control of the land in June 1992. The land currently under private lease accounts for less than 1,100 acres in the Ottawa National Forest; and

Whereas, Hundreds of people have experienced the wonders of Michigan's great outdoors at these hunting camps. The Ottawa National Forest is almost one million acres of rolling hills, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, and abundant wildlife. Those who lease land in the forest have built outdoor recreational traditions with their families. The hunting camps allow them to experience the seclusion and isolated environment of the Ottawa National Forest while engaging in varied recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, canoeing, and snowshoeing; and

Whereas, The USFS has informed leaseholders that leases will not be renewed at the end of 2016 because it is national policy not to lease national forest land to individuals. The holders of the active leases will have 90 days after the leases expire to remove the hunting cabins and return the land to its natural state; and

Whereas, The expiration of the leases will hurt local economies in Ontonagon and Gogebic Counties. It will result in over \$35,000 in lost lease fee revenue to the townships and almost \$10,000 in tax revenue to the counties. Even a greater loss will be realized by local businesses, including gas stations, grocery stores, hardware stores, and restaurants that benefit from the patronage of the camp families; and

Whereas, The expiration of the leases will eliminate refuge for people from the occasionally harsh and unexpected shifts in weather conditions. The Ottawa National Forest covers a large area in the western Upper Peninsula. Camp owners often leave their cabins or outbuildings unlocked to the relief of individuals stranded in the woods who have sought shelter. A Boy Scout troop once sheltered at the Twin Pines camp after being caught in a storm, and a group of snowmobilers is known to regularly rest at one of the camps; and

Whereas, The USFS Recreation Residence Program provides private citizens an opportunity to own single-family cabins in designated areas of national forests. Currently, 15,570 recreation residences occupy national forest system lands throughout the country; and

Whereas, Although the National Forest Service placed a moratorium on the establishment of new tracts under the Recreation Residence program in 1968, the authority to issue special use authorization under the Recreation Residence program remains in federal regulations (36 CFR Part 251). Therefore, lifting that moratorium for the limited purpose of establishing a Recreation Residence tract in the Ottawa National Forest and issuing special use authorization permits is possible and would allow the many families currently leasing in the Ottawa National Forest an opportunity that is provided to thousands of people elsewhere in the country; and

Whereas, Converting to the Recreation Residence Program would maintain a tax base for local governments, provide continuing support for the local economy, and ensure that hunting and recreational traditions held so dear by Michigan residents continue to be experienced in the Ottawa National Forest; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we encourage the United States Forest Service to issue the owners of privately-held camps on leased acres within the Ottawa National Forest special use authorization under the Recreation Residence Program; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Chief of the United States Forest Service and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-86. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to regulate airline baggage fees and processes for consumers as it relates to transportation of passenger luggage and passenger delays resulting from lost, damaged, or delayed luggage; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 207

Whereas, deregulation of the airline industry in the United States began more than three decades ago in 1978; and

Whereas, a consequence of deregulation was the elimination of federal control over many airline business practices, including pricing and domestic route selection; and

Whereas, though deregulation limits federal control of airline business practices generally, the federal government continues to legislate and enforce certain consumer protections for airline passengers; and

Whereas, the United States Congress largely determines the degree to which certain rights of airline passengers are codified in law or developed through regulatory rule-making; and

Whereas, since deregulation, the primary means of competition amongst airlines has progressively centered on price, not service; and

Whereas, certain concerns for passengers of airlines include increasing baggage fees and passenger delays resulting from lost, damaged, or delayed passenger luggage; and

Whereas, the airline industry began to charge passengers a checked baggage fee per bag to curtail rising jet fuel costs and to supplement marginal revenue during times of economic decline; and

Whereas, as a result of increasing airline baggage fees charged by airlines for checked luggage, passengers are encouraged to increase the contents of carry-on luggage to avoid the extra cost of baggage fees; and

Whereas, increased carry-on luggage of boarding airline passengers may be correlated to the claims of lost, damaged, or delayed passenger luggage, because passengers are oftentimes asked to check carry-on luggage at the boarding gate, which may require passengers to wait for such luggage after deboarding an aircraft, or luggage and contents may become damaged during the process of fitting carry-on luggage onto boarded aircrafts; and

Whereas, although checked luggage may be lost, damaged, or delayed for a variety of reasons, baggage handling systems, airline negligence, and the act of luggage offloading to accommodate extra fuel have also been discussed as reasons for lost, damaged, or delayed passenger luggage; and

Whereas, the aforementioned concerns of airline passengers are issues of consumer protection for which the United States Congress has the constitutional power to address and determine fair and reasonable solutions through codified law or regulatory rulemaking: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to regulate airline baggage fees and processes for consumers as it relates to transportation of passenger luggage and passenger delays resulting from lost, damaged, or delayed luggage; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-87. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional Delegation to take such actions as are necessary to rectify the revenue sharing inequities between coastal and interior energy producing states; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 167

Whereas, since 1920, interior states have been allowed to keep fifty percent of the oil, gas, and coal production revenues generated in their states from mineral production on federal lands within their borders, including royalties, severance taxes, and bonuses; and

Whereas, coastal states with onshore and offshore oil and gas production face inequities under the federal energy policies because those coastal states have not been party to this same level of revenue sharing partnership with the federal government; and

Whereas, coastal energy producing states have a limited partnership with the federal government that provides for them to retain very little revenue generated from their offshore energy production, energy that is produced for use throughout the nation; and

Whereas, in 2006 congress passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) that will fully go into effect in 2017; an act that calls for a sharing of thirty-seven and five tenths percent of coastal production revenues with four gulf states with a cap of \$500 million per year; and

Whereas, the Fixing America's Inequities with Revenues (FAIR) Act would have addressed the inequity suffered by coastal oil and gas producing states by accelerating the implementation of GOMESA as well as by gradually lifting all revenue sharing caps but the legislation died with the close of the previous congress; and

Whereas, with the state and its offshore waters taken alone, Louisiana is the ninth largest producer of oil in the United States

in 2014 while including offshore oil from federal waters, it was the second largest oil producer in the country; and when taken alone Louisiana was the fourth largest producer of gas in the United States in 2013 while including the Gulf of Mexico waters, it was the second largest producer in the United States; and

Whereas, with nineteen operating refineries in the state, Louisiana was second only to Texas as of January 2014 in both total and operating refinery capacity, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the nation's total refining capacity; and

Whereas, Louisiana's contributions to the United States Strategic Petroleum Reserve with two facilities located in the state consisting of twenty-nine caverns capable of holding nearly three hundred million barrels of crude oil; and

Whereas, with three onshore liquified natural gas facilities, more than any other state in the country, and the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, the nation's only deepwater oil port, Louisiana plays an essential role in the movement of natural gas from the United States Gulf Coast region to markets throughout the country; and

Whereas, it is apparent that Louisiana plays an essential role in supplying the nation with energy and it is vital to the security of our nation's energy supply, roles that should be recognized and compensated at an appropriate revenue sharing level; and

Whereas, the majority of the oil and gas production from the Gulf of Mexico enters the United States through coastal Louisiana with all of the infrastructure necessary to receive and transport such production, infrastructure that has for many decades damaged the coastal areas of Louisiana, an impact that should be compensated through appropriate revenue sharing with the federal government; and

Whereas, because Louisiana is losing more coastal wetlands than any other state in the country, in 2006 the people of Louisiana overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment dedicating revenues received from Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas activity to the Coastal Protection and Restoration Fund for the purposes of coastal protection, including conservation, coastal restoration, hurricane protection, and infrastructure directly impacted by coastal wetland losses; and

Whereas, the state of Louisiana has developed a science-based "Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast" which identifies and prioritizes the most efficient and effective projects in order to meet the state's critical coastal protection and restoration needs; and

Whereas, the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is making great progress implementing the projects in the "Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast" with all available funding, projects that are essential to the protection of the infrastructure that is critical to the energy needs of the United States; and

Whereas, in order to properly compensate the coastal states for the infrastructure demands that result from production of energy and fuels that heat and cool the nation's homes, offices, and businesses and fuel the nation's transportation needs, revenue sharing for coastal states needs to be at the same rate as interior states that produce oil, gas, and coal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to treat mineral and gas production in the Gulf Coastal states in a manner that is at least equal to onshore oil, gas, and coal production in interior states for revenue purposes; and to rectify the revenue sharing in-

equities between coastal and interior energy producing states in order to address the nationally significant crisis of wetland loss in the state of Louisiana; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-88. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Missouri calling on the President of the United States to support the increased importation of oil from Canadian oil sands and to approve the newly routed TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline to reduce our oil dependency on unstable governments, and to support and facilitate permitting for oil production off the northern coast of Alaska to decrease our dependence on foreign oil and spur investment in the American economy; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15

Whereas, high oil prices are having a major detrimental impact on families, farms, and businesses in Missouri and are likely to undercut the prospects for an economic recovery; and

Whereas, the United States currently imports almost half of its oil and petroleum products, making it dependent on foreign sources and subject to interruptions and price fluctuations stemming from geopolitical forces; and

Whereas, such instability has damaging consequences both for our economy and our national security; and

Whereas, the United States Geological Survey estimates a resource of up to 27 billion barrels of oil in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas of Alaska, providing a vast domestic oil reserve, but opposition and regulatory hurdles are keeping energy producers from accessing these resources; and

Whereas, the TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline project seeks to link expanded oil production from the Canadian oil sands to refineries in the United States and to facilitate the flow of oil from the Dakotas to the Gulf Coast, thereby decreasing our dependence on oil from outside of North America; and

Whereas, Canada is a close friend and ally, with whom we share links of infrastructure and energy networks and other ties, so that dollars spent on Canadian oil will likely contribute to the success of the American economy; and

Whereas, the TransCanada pipeline project is projected to create construction and manufacturing jobs in the United States, adding billions of dollars to the United States economy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the members of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-eighth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, hereby call upon President Barack Obama and administration officials to:

(1) Support the increased importation of oil from Canadian oil sands and to approve the newly routed TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline to reduce our oil dependency on unstable governments, strengthen ties with an important ally, and create jobs for American workers;

(2) Support and facilitate permitting for oil production off the northern coast of Alaska to decrease our dependence on foreign oil and spur investment in the American economy; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for President Barack Obama, Vice

President Joe Biden, Secretary of State John Kerry, United States House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner, and each member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

POM-89. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reestablish a right-of-way through the Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge in order to provide access to property owned by the Avoyelles Parish School Board; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 228

Whereas, Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge, located in Avoyelles Parish and named for its most prominent water body, the 350-acre Lake Ophelia that was at one time a channel of the nearby Red River, was established in 1988 to protect the Mississippi and Red River floodplain ecosystem; and

Whereas, due to its location in east-central Louisiana, this area is prime waterfowl hunting territory influenced by both the Mississippi and Central Flyways which are the highways in the sky for bringing millions of duck and geese each spring and fall to the area; and

Whereas, another species found in the Avoyelles Parish area is the Louisiana black bear which was listed as threatened within its historic range of southern Mississippi, Louisiana, and east Texas under the Endangered Species Act on January 7, 1992, due to extensive habitat loss and modification, as well as human-related mortality; and

Whereas, Louisiana currently supports three core bear populations; the Tensas River Basin population in the north, the upper Atchafalaya River Basin population in central Louisiana, and the coastal population in the southern Atchafalaya River Basin; and

Whereas, the Black bear management efforts in Louisiana by both the state and the federal agencies have had a great deal of success with a likely result that the central Louisiana and northern Louisiana populations expanding towards each other through the area set aside for the Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge; and

Whereas, because of the likelihood that the two populations will merge in the area, the Department of the Interior has designated a certain parcel of land in the Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge as a Black bear habitat which in turn has prevented ingress and egress to a six hundred forty acre tract owned by the Avoyelles Parish School Board; and

Whereas, through the years, this sixteenth-section land owned by the Avoyelles Parish School Board has been available for public hunting, camping, and other recreational activities, activities from which there has been great economic benefit to Avoyelles Parish; and

Whereas, without these outdoor activities, businesses in Avoyelles Parish that rely on recreational activities in the area including hunting, fishing, and camping for their income have been and will continue to be negatively impacted by the loss of access to the acreage owned by the Avoyelles Parish School Board; and

Whereas, simply having the Department of the Interior allow a limited right-of-way access to the school board owned land will solve the problem: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reestablish a right-of-way through the Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge in order to provide access to property owned by the Avoyelles Parish School Board; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-90. A resolution adopted by the Michigan Senate urging the United States Congress to restore Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to 300 million dollars for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 42

Whereas, the Great Lakes are a critical resource for our nation, supporting the economy and a way of life in Michigan and the other seven states with the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes hold 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and 95 percent of the United States' surface freshwater. This globally significant freshwater resource provides drinking water for more than 30 million people and is an economic driver that supports jobs, commerce, agriculture, transportation, and tourism throughout the region; and

Whereas, The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) provides essential funding to restore and protect the Great Lakes. This funding has support long overdue efforts to clean up toxic pollution, reduce runoff from cities and farms, combat invasive species like the Asian carp, and restore fish and wildlife habitat. Since 2010, the federal government has invested nearly \$2 billion in more than 2,000 projects through the GLRI. Over its first five years, the GLRI has provided more than \$280 million for 580 projects in Michigan alone; and

Whereas, GLRI projects are making a significant difference. They have restored more than 115,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat; opened up fish access to more than 3,400 miles of rivers; helped implement conservation programs on more than 1 million areas of farmland; and accelerated the cleanup of toxic hotspots. In Michigan, GLRI funding has been instrumental in removing contaminated sediments from Muskegon Lake, the River Raisin, and the St. Mary's River, restoring habitat along the St. Clair River, Cass River, Boardman River, and the Keweenaw Peninsula; and developing improved methods for sea lamprey control; and

Whereas, While this is a significant investment, there is still more work to be done with numerous ready-to-go projects that need funding. Toxic algal blooms, beach closings, fish consumption advisories, and the presence of contaminated sediments continue to limit the recreational and commercial use of the Great Lakes. The 2014 shutdown of the city of Toledo's drinking water system due to a toxic algal bloom, forcing more than a half million people to find another source of drinking water, is just one example of how much still needs to be done; and

Whereas, Proposed cuts to GLRI funding would jeopardize the momentum from a decade of unprecedented regional and bipartisan cooperation. The FY 2016 executive budget recommends a \$50 million cut in federal funding to \$250 million. This cut would be a shortsighted, cost-saving measure with long-term implications. Restoration efforts will only become more expensive and more difficult if they are not addressed in the coming years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the Congress of the United States to restore Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to \$300 million for fiscal year 2016; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United

States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-91. A resolution adopted by the Michigan Senate opposing the United States Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to study or commission a study that could lead to regulations on grills and barbecues; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 56

Whereas, Barbecues are an American tradition enjoyed by families from all walks of life across the country. Whether tailgating for a football game, hosting a backyard get-together, or just grilling a summer meal, barbecues are a quintessentially American experience and an opportunity to eat and socialize with family and friends; and

Whereas, Cooking outdoors on a grill during the summer saves electricity. Using a grill prevents the release of heat into the kitchen and other living spaces. While cooking indoors heats up a kitchen, forcing cooling systems, such as the refrigerator and air conditioner, to work harder and use more energy; and

Whereas, The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), our nation's environmental regulatory agency, has funded a University of California-Riverside student project to develop preventative technology to reduce emissions from residential barbecues. By funding this project, the EPA is apparently intent on finding a solution to a problem that does not exist and demonstrating an unnecessary interest and concern over the impact of backyard barbecues on public health; and

Whereas, Based on the EPA's past practices, today's study, no matter how small, is a concern to Michiganders and Americans, as it is inevitably the first step towards tomorrow's regulation of this American pastime. To fulfill its mission to protect human health and the environment, the EPA's primary tool has been, and continues to be, regulatory mandates that I time and again ignore the financial, economic, and social burdens to the state and the country. The regulation of barbecues would be the latest, egregious example of overreach by the EPA; and

Whereas, Funding such a study is a poor use of taxpayer dollars. In the face of record national debts, annual budget deficits, and other profound problems the country is facing, surely the federal government can better use our resources than on a study of grills and backyard barbecues: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we oppose the United States Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to study or commission a study that, if consistent with the agency's past practices, many fear will serve as the first step towards the regulation of grills and barbecues: and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-92. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts promoting a multilateral approach to the potential crisis in the Dominican Republic; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

RESOLUTIONS

Whereas, Massachusetts, the first cradle of liberty, has a long history of diverse activism and advocacy regarding the issue of equality and civil rights; and

Whereas, The connection between Massachusetts and Haiti dates back to the civil

war during which time U.S. Senator Charles Sumner, who served Massachusetts from 1852 to 1874, fought for the passage of federal legislation in 1862 which enabled the United States of America to recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation; and

Whereas, In 1871, in recognition of his diplomatic work on this issue, president of Haiti Nissage Saegert presented Senator Sumner with a gold medal on behalf of the Haitian people, which currently resides in the Massachusetts state house in Boston; and

Whereas, Despite their shared history and geographical proximity, Haiti and the Dominican Republic have often faced challenging diplomatic relations; and

Whereas, In September 2013, the constitutional court of the Dominican Republic issued a ruling that would denaturalize people born in the Dominican Republic after 1929 whose parents were noncitizens, the majority of whom are Dominicans of Haitian descent; and

Whereas, The constitutional court's ruling effectively stripped these persons of their identity and affiliation with the Dominican Republic, rendering them stateless and subjecting them to the risk of deportation from the country of their birth; and

Whereas, In May 2014, the Dominican Republic passed special law 169-14, which required persons affected by the 2013 constitutional court's decision to be re-recognized as citizens or apply to gain state recognition based on their birth status and year; and

Whereas, The deadlines set forth in the 2014 naturalization law allowed for only a fraction of this population to be re-recognized thereby rendering tens of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent vulnerable to deportation, discrimination and loss of livelihood; and

Whereas, Later that same year, in response to a ruling by the inter-American court of human rights deeming the 2013 and 2014 actions of the Dominican Republic to be in violation of the American convention to which the Dominican Republic is party, the Dominican Republic's constitutional court declared the country would no longer recognize the authority of the inter-American court; and

Whereas, Both the rulings of the constitutional court and special law 169-14 have further separated Dominicans of Haitian descent from the larger Dominican community; and

Whereas, The majority of Dominicans of Haitian descent, threatened by deportation, have no family or support networks in Haiti nor are they fluent in French or Haitian creole; and

Whereas, Article 15 of the universal declaration of human rights, of which the Dominican Republic and the United States of America are signatories, states that, "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality"; and

Whereas, Recognizing the impact that this crisis will have on all nations in the western hemisphere, the Caribbean community and Common Market Secretariat (Caricom) has called for a moratorium on this law; and

Whereas, At the urging of other concerned nations, the organization of American states sent a special mission to the Dominican Republic and Haiti in order to investigate the situation between the two countries to prepare a report for the secretary general of the organization of American states; and

Whereas, A broad coalition of humanitarian, academic, legal, political and civil rights groups from across Massachusetts, including but not limited to: the Irish International Immigrant Center, Haitian Americans United, Inc., Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, Catholic Charities' Haitian Multi-service Center of Boston, as well as

the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti call for immediate action by the Dominican government to reverse the effects of the constitutional court rulings and special law 169-14: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts general court requests the U.S. State department and the U.S. Secretary of State to pursue a multilateral approach to promptly address the potential crisis in the Dominican Republic that could render tens of thousands of dominicans of haitian descent stateless; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States of America, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, Secretary of State John Kerry and United States Ambassador to the Dominican Republic James Brewster.

POM-93. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts supporting the friendship between Massachusetts and Taiwan in the international community; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

RESOLUTIONS

Whereas, The United States and Taiwan share an important relationship supported by common values of freedom, democracy, rule of law and a free market economy; and

Whereas, President Ma Ying-Jeou has worked to uphold democratic principles in Taiwan, ensure the prosperity of Taiwan's more than 23 million people, promote Taiwan's international standing and to strengthen relations between the United States and Taiwan; and

Whereas, The Commonwealth has enjoyed a close friendship with Taiwan, marked by strong bilateral trade, educational and cultural exchange, scientific and technological development and tourism; and

Whereas, New England exported more than \$1 billion in goods to Taiwan of which the Commonwealth exported \$825 million in commodities, mostly in machinery, computer and electronic products and chemicals; and

Whereas, the United States has maintained and developed its robust commercial ties with Taiwan and Taiwan is the tenth largest trading partner of the United States while the United States is Taiwan's largest foreign investor, Taiwan has worked to enter a bilateral investment agreement to further enhance its trade and investment relations with the United States; and

Whereas, Taiwan has been a member of the United States visa waiver program since November 1, 2012, reflecting the cooperation between the United States and Taiwan and making travel for business and tourism more convenient; and

Whereas, Taiwan has made significant contributions toward peace in the region through discussions regarding the use of resources in the surrounding seas and has worked diligently to propose East and South China Sea Peace Initiatives; and

Whereas, Taiwan is a key transport hub in the Asia-Pacific region and has jurisdiction over the 176,000 square nautical miles of the Taipei flight information region and has attended the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, assembly as a special guest since 2013; and

Whereas, Taiwan is committed to ICAO standards and seeks to expand its meaningful participation in the ICAO, including attending technical and regional meetings and related activities; and

Whereas, Taiwan strives to be included in the work of the United Nations framework convention on climate change and has expressed a keen interest in the global effort to address climate change: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts General Court hereby reaffirms the friendship between the Commonwealth and Taiwan; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States, to the presiding officer of each branch of Congress and the members thereof from the Commonwealth, to the Honorable Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth, to the Honorable Ma Ying-Jeou, President of Taiwan and Scott Lai, Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the City of Boston.

POM-94. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to work to adopt policies that will help with the stability and the viability of the domestic shrimp industry, including support for the Imported Seafood Safety Standards Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 225

Whereas, consumption of seafood is one of the fastest growing areas of our nation's food supply with shrimp being one of the most consumed seafood products in the United States; and

Whereas, over three-fourths of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported from other countries around the world with shrimp as the leading fresh or frozen product imported into the United States accounting for about twenty-eight percent of all seafood imports by weight; and

Whereas, most of the shrimp consumed in the United States is grown in man-made ponds along the coasts of Thailand, Vietnam, Ecuador, and other tropical countries rather than being harvested from the waters of the Gulf of Mexico; and

Whereas, the countries that produce most of the shrimp consumed worldwide support their shrimp hatcheries with large state subsidies to keep the price of their shrimp lower than the prices that our domestic Gulf of Mexico shrimpers need to charge in order to just break even; and

Whereas, the Tariff Act of 1930, a law originally introduced to protect farmers from imports, allows United States industries to "petition the government for relief from imports that benefit from subsidies provided through foreign government programs"; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Commerce launched an investigation in 2013 to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to support the claim that the seven largest shrimp-producing countries were subsidizing their shrimp industries, an investigation that will run concurrently with the International Trade Commission's (ITC) examination of whether the subsidies are causing significant injury to United States producers with both investigations needing to call for countervailing duties before any penalties could be applied; and

Whereas, in September 2013, the ITC voted to throw out the shrimp countervailing duty case based on the fact that injury to the domestic industry was not proven, thus removing the possibility of a countervailing duty and terminating the shrimp subsidy investigation against Ecuador, China, India, Malaysia, and Vietnam; and

Whereas, the ITC's decision has had a devastating impact on the domestic shrimp industry, including the shrimpers trawling the Gulf of Mexico and landing their shrimp at Louisiana docks; and

Whereas, without relief from the unfair foreign competition undercutting the domestic shrimp prices, the prices that shrimpers

are getting at the dock have dropped over fifty percent from last year making it almost impossible for shrimpers to earn enough money to provide for their families; and

Whereas, the Imported Seafood Safety Standards Act introduced in the United States Senate by Louisiana Senator David Vitter is being supported by the American Shrimp Processors Association and it specifically targets foreign food imported into the United States with hopes of tightening testing standards, increasing inspection standards on foreign imported seafood, requiring placement of United States safety standards for foreign exporters, and increasing severe penalties for exporters who fail food safety inspections, ultimately benefiting the American shrimp industry: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to work to adopt policies that will help with the stability and the viability of the domestic shrimp industry including support for the Imported Seafood Safety Standards Act; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-95. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Michigan urging the United States Congress to enact legislation that requires uniform and science-based food labeling nationwide; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 59

Whereas, In the absence of a federal genetically modified organism (GMO) labeling standard, some states and localities have developed a patchwork of labeling proposals that can be confusing and misleading to consumers. Multiple local regulations increase agriculture and food production costs, requiring food companies operating in Michigan to create separate supply chains to be developed for each state; and

Whereas, GMOs are found in 70 to 80 percent of the foods we eat and play a vital role in maintaining Michigan's agriculture, food processing, and other industries. In 2014, 100 percent of all sugar beets, 93 percent of all corn, and 91 percent of all soybeans grown in Michigan were genetically modified; and

Whereas, A maze of regulations would cripple interstate commerce throughout the food supply and distribution chain and ultimately increase grocery prices for consumers by hundreds of dollars each year. A Cornell University study found that a patchwork of state labeling laws would increase food costs for a family by an average of \$500 per year; and

Whereas, On July 23, 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation—the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act (H.R. 1599)—to avoid this patchwork of regulations and the costly challenges it creates; and

Whereas, Senate passage of the Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act will allow consumers to have access to accurate and consistent information on products that contain GMOs by ensuring that labeling is national, uniform, and science-based. The bill also establishes a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-administered certification and labeling program, modeled after the USDA National Organic Program for non-GMO, organic foods: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the United States Congress to enact legislation

that requires uniform and science-based food labeling nationwide; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States House, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM-96. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California commemorating the 43rd anniversary of Title IX, and commending the national movement toward increased equality and fair treatment of all students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 23

Whereas, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that specifically states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance; and

Whereas, All public and private elementary schools and secondary schools, school districts, colleges, and universities receiving any federal funding must comply with Title IX; and

Whereas, Title IX requires equal access in recruitment, admissions, counseling, financial assistance, discipline, employment, and athletics; protection from sex-based harassment; and equitable treatment of pregnant and parenting students; and

Whereas, Prior to the enactment of Title IX, many women and girls faced discrimination and limited opportunities in athletics, academics, and extracurricular activities; and

Whereas, Discrimination on the basis of sex can include sexual harassment or sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion; and

Whereas, Title IX has been used as a basis in a number of complaints alleging sexual violence on college campuses, as sexual violence interferes with a student's right to receive education free from discrimination; and

Whereas, Of the 109 colleges and universities under investigation by the United States Department of Education for their handling of sexual violence cases, 11 are located in California; and

Whereas, Title IX, which governs educational equity generally, is widely known for ensuring equal access to women and girl athletes; and

Whereas, The members of the United States Women's National Soccer Team, which is ranked #2 in the world and continues to make our nation proud, all played collegiate level soccer; and

Whereas, Title IX regulations require that pregnant and parenting students have equal access to schools and activities, and that all separate programs for pregnant or parenting students be completely voluntary; and

Whereas, Title IX has been the basis for California laws that protect graduate students from discrimination on the basis of pregnancy in research projects in California universities, laws requiring affirmative consent, and current legislation requiring lactation accommodations in California schools; and

Whereas, The educational equity guaranteed in Title IX does not solely apply to women. It protects everyone from sex-based discrimination, regardless of real or perceived sex, gender identity, or gender expression; and

Whereas, Although Title IX has increased opportunities for girls and women in academics, sports, and other educational activi-

ties, it has not yet achieved the goal of full equality: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges Californians to continue to work together to achieve the goals set by Title IX of increased opportunities for girls and women in academics, sports, and other educational activities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of the State of California, on June 23, 2015, commemorates the 43rd anniversary of Title IX, and commends the national movement toward increased equality and fair treatment of all students; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

POM-97. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to craft a balanced and workable approach to reduce incentives for and minimize unnecessary patent litigation while ensuring that legitimate patent enforcement rights are protected and maintained; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Whereas, The principle of intellectual property is enshrined in the United States Constitution, specifically under clause 8 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution, which empowers Congress 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"; and

Whereas, A robust patent system is critical to promote economic growth and innovation and ensure just compensation for the labor and proliferation of beneficial ideas and innovations; and

Whereas, California accounts for 25 percent of the nation's patents; and

Whereas, The state recognizes and respects the importance of patent protections and patent enforcement rights to driving continued research, investment, technological innovation, and job creation across multiple sectors of our economy; and

Whereas, Small businesses depend on patents to secure investments, and firms with fewer than 25 employees hold nearly one-quarter of United States-held patents in innovative emerging technologies; and

Whereas, Enforcement of legitimate patent rights is essential to promoting an innovation environment that fuels economic growth; and

Whereas, There is increasing concern about litigation by predatory Patent Assertion Entities (PAEs), which are built on a rent-seeking business model that exploits the patent legal system for financial gain without producing or manufacturing anything of value for society; and

Whereas, Many PAEs attain ambiguous patents with the sole intent of filing patent infringement lawsuits. PAEs assert these patents against businesses of all sizes and in all industries, often years after the product has become standard and widely used; and

Whereas, PAEs rarely earn successful judgments in court, underscoring the questionable merits of these particular patent cases. However, given the high cost and risks associated with patent litigation, most defendants choose to settle in order to avoid further financial loss. Indeed, many PAEs will offer royalty settlements below market value in order to encourage settlement and avoid trial; and

Whereas, Predatory PAEs have a detrimental impact on the economy and innovation. PAE activities cost businesses \$29 billion directly, mostly borne by small- and medium-sized businesses; and

Whereas, The growth of patent litigation is directly tied to aggressive PAEs in recent years. In 2010, PAEs were responsible for 29 percent of patent litigation, and by 2012 PAEs represented 62 percent of all patent suits; and

Whereas, The California economy is especially vulnerable to lawsuits directed at information technology patents; and

Whereas, Federal legislation is necessary to prevent and deter abusive patent litigation; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the President and the Congress of the United States to craft a balanced and workable approach to reduce incentives for and minimize unnecessary patent litigation while ensuring that legitimate patent enforcement rights are protected and maintained; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate, and each member of the California delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-98. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California urging the United States Congress to further amend the GI Bill of Rights to make benefits available to veterans for use as startup capital in the establishment of first businesses; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 7

Whereas, Men and women of the State of California volunteer to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States in greater numbers than those from any other state; and

Whereas, California is currently home to more than 1,800,000 veterans of our Armed Forces; and

Whereas, California veterans have been grateful recipients of the financial support of their fellow Americans through the Veterans Administration and the GI Bill; and

Whereas, The Congress of the United States passed, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed, the GI Bill of Rights in 1944 to support our veterans of World War II in their transition back to civilian life; and

Whereas, The Congress of the United States in 2008 added significant new benefits for those who enlisted to serve the nation in the wake of the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001; and

Whereas, Up to 10 percent of veterans choose to start, run, and own their own businesses; and

Whereas, Over 30 percent of veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and other fronts on the war against terrorism are receiving disability ratings from the federal Veterans Administration; and

Whereas, More than five million Americans, including over one-half million Californians, served in those conflicts; and

Whereas, The State of California is the recognized national leader in the establishment and success of veteran business owner procurement support programs, and

Whereas, Veteran businesses make a significant contribution to the state's economy and serve as a source of employment for fellow veterans; and

Whereas, Finding enough capital to successfully launch a new business or buy an existing business is the largest challenge that

new business owners face: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature requests that the Congress of the United States of America further amend the GI Bill of Rights to make benefits available, with all appropriate safeguards, to all veterans for use as startup capital in the establishment of first businesses; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 1868. A bill to extend by 15 years the authority of the Secretary of Commerce to conduct the quarterly financial report program (Rept. No. 114-157).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2194. A bill to promote the use of clean cookstoves and fuels to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2195. A bill to prohibit the indefinite detention of persons by the United States and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 2196. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2197. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the risk adjustment under the Medicare Advantage program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 2198. A bill to establish a grant program to encourage States to adopt certain policies and procedures relating to the transfer and possession of firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 2199. A bill to require agencies to conform to concurrent resolutions when promulgating rules; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 2200. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to strengthen equal pay requirements; read the first time.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2201. A bill to promote international trade, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2202. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain farming business machinery and equipment as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2203. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make residents of Puerto Rico eligible for the earned income tax credit and to provide equitable treatment for residents of Puerto Rico with respect to the refundable portion of the child tax credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 2204. A bill to respect the Constitutional entitlement to liberty by recognizing the right of an individual to have personal control over the medical assistance and treatment necessary to alleviate intolerable physical suffering; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 2205. A bill to establish a grant program to assist tribal governments in establishing tribal healing to wellness courts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 292. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the availability of high-quality childcare for working parents should be increased; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. AYOTTE, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 293. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, commending domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence victim service providers, crisis hotline staff, and first responders serving victims of domestic violence for their compassionate support of victims of domestic violence, and expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should continue to support efforts to end domestic violence and hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 294. A resolution designating October 26, 2015, as Day of the Deployed; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COONS, Mr. GARDNER, Mr.

MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. Res. 295. A resolution designating the week of November 2 through November 6, 2015 as "National Veterans Small Business Week"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 441

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 441, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 564

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 564, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to include licensed hearing aid specialists as eligible for appointment in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 579, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, and for other purposes.

S. 746

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 746, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 804

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 804, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to specify coverage of continuous glucose monitoring devices, and for other purposes.

S. 864

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 864, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes.

S. 946

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr.

CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 946, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate transportation in a motor vehicle containing 2 or more levels stacked on top of one another.

S. 1122

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1122, a bill to provide that chapter 1 of title 9 of the United States Code, relating to the enforcement of arbitration agreements, shall not apply to enrollment agreements made between students and certain institutions of higher education, and to prohibit limitations on the ability of students to pursue claims against certain institutions of higher education.

S. 1195

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1195, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to update reporting requirements for institutions of higher education and provide for more accurate and complete data on student retention, graduation, and earnings outcomes at all levels of post-secondary enrollment.

S. 1539

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a permanent, nationwide summer electronic benefits transfer for children program.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1562, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 1565

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1565, a bill to allow the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to provide greater protection to servicemembers.

S. 1617

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1617, a bill to prevent Hizballah and associated entities from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 1757

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1757, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to promote health care technology innovation and access to medical devices and services for which patients choose to self-pay under

the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 1775

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1775, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept additional documentation when considering the application for veterans status of an individual who performed service as a coastwise merchant seaman during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1961

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1961, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to make improvements to the treatment of the United States territories under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2015

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2015, a bill to clarify the treatment of two or more employers as joint employers under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 2066

At the request of Mr. SASSE, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2066, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of a child who survives an abortion or attempted abortion.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2075

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2075, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage and to express the sense of the Senate that the resulting revenue loss should be offset.

S. 2103

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2103, a bill to modify a provision relating to adjustments of certain State apportionments for Federal highway programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2119

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan

(Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2119, a bill to provide for greater congressional oversight of Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 2123

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2123, a bill to reform sentencing laws and correctional institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to provide appropriate protections to probationary Federal employees, to provide the Special Counsel with adequate access to information, to provide greater awareness of Federal whistleblower protections, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 2152, a bill to establish a comprehensive United States Government policy to encourage the efforts of countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop an appropriate mix of power solutions, including renewable energy, for more broadly distributed electricity access in order to support poverty reduction, promote development outcomes, and drive economic growth, and for other purposes.

S. 2193

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2193, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

S. RES. 275

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 275, a resolution calling on Congress, schools, and State and local educational agencies to recognize the significant educational implications of dyslexia that must be addressed and designating October 2015 as "National Dyslexia Awareness Month".

S. RES. 283

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 283, a resolution designating October 2015 as "Filipino American History Month".

S. RES. 287

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, his name and the names of the Senator

from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Kaine), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator

from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 287, a resolution condemning the senseless murder and wounding of 18 individuals (sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, cousins, students, and teachers) in Roseburg, Oregon, on October 1, 2015.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2194. A bill to promote the use of clean cookstoves and fuels to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Clean Cookstoves and Fuels Support Act. This bill addresses a serious global public health and environmental issue. I am very pleased to be joined in this effort by my friend and colleague Senator DURBIN.

Nearly half of the world's people cook over open fires or inefficient, polluting, and unsafe cookstoves using agricultural waste, coal, dung, wood or other solid fuels. Smoke from these traditional cookstoves and open fires is associated with chronic and acute diseases that affect women and children disproportionately. The black carbon from these traditional cookstoves is also a significant driver of air pollution and climate change.

Alarmingly, the World Health Organization found that in 2012 this type of air pollution claimed 4.3 million lives. Millions more are sickened from the toxic fumes, and thousands suffer

burns annually from open fires or unsafe cookstoves. The Global Burden of Disease Study of 2010 doubled the mortality estimates for exposure to smoke from cookstoves, referred to as “household air pollution,” from 2 million to 4 million deaths annually. That is more than the deaths from malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS combined. This same study ranks household air pollution as the fourth worst overall health risk factor in the world and is the second worst health risk factor in the world for women and girls.

Traditional cookstoves also create serious environmental problems. Recent studies show that the emissions of black carbon or common soot from these cookstoves significantly contribute to regional air pollution and climate change. In fact, black carbon emissions from residential cookstoves in developing countries are responsible for as much as 25 percent of black carbon emissions. Moreover, each family can require up to two tons of cooking fuel, and where the demand for fuel outstrips the natural regrowth of resources, local environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity can result.

The collection of this fuel is also a burden that is shouldered disproportionately by women and children. In some areas, women and girls risk rape and other violence during the up to 20 hours per week they spend away from their families gathering fuel. This often means these women and girls have far less time to pursue an education, to generate income or to participate in other community activities, and this marginalizes their role in society. A new report by McKinsey Global Institute estimates that the world economy could increase by between \$12 trillion and \$28 trillion over 10 years if the participation of women was to equal that of men.

Replacing these cookstoves with modern alternatives would help reverse these alarming health, environmental, and economic trends, and it would be relatively inexpensive. In fact, there are stoves that are coming on the market that cost as little as \$20 that are 50 percent more efficient than the traditional cooking methods. It could also be done quickly. It is what scientists call the low-hanging fruit of environmental and health fixes.

In 2010, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves was formed to help support the adoption of clean cookstoves in 100 million households in the developing world by the year 2020. Recognizing the serious health and environmental issues posed by traditional cookstoves, the Alliance aims to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and combat pollution by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking stoves. Alliance partners are working together to help overcome the market barriers that currently impede the production, development, and distribution of clean cookstoves in developing countries.

During the first 5 years of the Alliance, the U.S. Government played a

key role in supporting this important endeavor, including through financial assistance that surpassed the original funding commitments. Led by the Department of State, 11 Federal agencies have invested more than \$114 million in clean cookstoves and fuel initiatives to date. For the next 5 years of the Alliance, our government has announced anticipated commitments of another \$175 million.

To date, our government has focused its efforts on applied research and development, diplomatic engagement to encourage a market for clean cookstoves and to improve access to them, international development projects to support clean cookstove businesses engaging women entrepreneurs, and supporting the adoption of clean and efficient cooking solutions by providing some financial assistance.

The legislation Senator DURBIN and I are introducing today strengthens these important commitments by requiring the Secretary of State—in consultation with the relevant Federal agencies and in coordination with international NGOs and private and other government entities—to advance the goals and work of the Alliance. In addition, the bill would formally authorize the funding commitments already made by our government for the next 5 years, through the year 2020, to ensure that these important pledges toward preventing unnecessary illness and reducing pollution around the globe are met.

By supporting the work of the Alliance and the commitment of the U.S. Government to replace traditional cookstoves with modern versions that emit far less soot, this bill aims to benefit directly some of the world’s poorest people and to reduce the harmful pollution that affects all of us. It offers a way for us to address the second largest contributor to climate change in a way that is inexpensive, not burdensome to the people of our country, and that will benefit poor people living in developing nations.

There is lots of disagreement on many proposals that have been advanced to address climate change, but this is one that should unite all of us. It will help to improve the health of women and children, in particular, who bear the burden of working over these dirty cookstoves in developing countries, and it will reduce carbon soot in our atmosphere—the second biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. It will do so without requiring those of us in our country to change our ways.

I urge my colleagues to join Senator DURBIN and me in supporting the Clean Cookstoves and Fuels Support Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 292—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE FOR WORKING PARENTS SHOULD BE INCREASED

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 292

Whereas working parents depend on high-quality childcare so they can work and support their families;

Whereas over 60 percent of children under 5, and ½ of grade school-aged children, are in a regular childcare arrangement;

Whereas United States businesses lose \$3,000,000,000 annually due to employee absenteeism resulting from child care challenges, which weakens the stable and reliable childcare system that is essential for the economy;

Whereas childcare is difficult to find for millions of families, particularly the nearly 9,000,000 parents who work non-standard hours, because only 8 percent of childcare centers provide evening or weekend care;

Whereas most middle-class families struggle to afford high-quality childcare;

Whereas the median annual aggregate cost of full-time care for an infant and a 4-year-old in a childcare center is nearly \$16,000;

Whereas the average annual cost of center-based childcare for an infant is over ½ of the income of a family of 3 living at the poverty level in 21 States;

Whereas high-quality childcare and early education, especially for disadvantaged children, helps children thrive in school and beyond by—

- (1) decreasing special education placement and reducing grade retention;
- (2) decreasing child abuse and neglect and juvenile arrests;
- (3) increasing high school graduation and college attendance; and
- (4) increasing employment;

Whereas the eligibility requirements to receive assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the “CCDBG”), the primary source of Federal funding support for childcare, exclude most United States children from Federal childcare assistance;

Whereas the CCDBG serves only a fraction of families eligible for Federal support, with only 17 percent of eligible children receiving Federal childcare assistance, the lowest percentage since 1997;

Whereas these issues affect all families, but disproportionately affect women because—

- (1) over 95 percent of the formal childcare workforce is comprised of women; and
- (2) women do most of the unpaid childcare work in families;

Whereas increased pay for workers in the childcare industry improves the quality of childcare for young children;

Whereas to recruit and retain a qualified childcare workforce for young children, childcare staff for young children should be paid as much as K-12 staff with equivalent education and experience;

Whereas a full-time living wage of at least \$15 per hour is needed for childcare workers to meet the essential needs of their families, but the average childcare center worker earns \$10.60 per hour and has experienced no increase in real earnings since 1997;

Whereas high-quality childcare that works for everyone is essential for a strong economy and future;

Whereas each working family needs, in order to support its well-being—

- (1) universal preschool;
- (2) child nutrition programs that promote health and wellness;
- (3) a fair work schedule;
- (4) a living wage;
- (5) paid family and medical leave;
- (6) paid sick days; and
- (7) credit in the Social Security system for time spent caregiving; and

Whereas when families are guaranteed high-quality, flexible, available, and affordable childcare—

- (1) business productivity improves;
 - (2) parents have a greater likelihood of finding and keeping employment; and
 - (3) children do better in school and in life:
- Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports efforts—

- (1) to provide childcare assistance to each working family that needs childcare assistance, including—
 - (A) middle-class families that struggle to afford the costs of high-quality childcare; and
 - (B) underpaid families that are often left behind;
- (2) to make childcare affordable—
 - (A) such that no working family must pay more than 10 percent of its income for childcare; and
 - (B) by providing additional help to families most in need;
- (3) to ensure that childcare is available so that parents in the 24-hour economy can access high-quality care—
 - (A) when and where the parents need it (during weekends, nights, and as their job schedules change); and
 - (B) with options across school, center, and home settings;
- (4) to guarantee that each family eligible for childcare receives childcare by creating a system that expands with need;
- (5) to improve the quality of childcare by—
 - (A) guaranteeing childcare workers a living wage and wage parity with K-12 staff with equivalent education and experience;
 - (B) improving training opportunities; and
 - (C) giving workers a voice on the job to advocate for higher workplace standards and standards of care for the children the workers serve; and
- (6) to provide sufficient Federal, State, and local investment to ensure resources for high-quality jobs and affordable childcare.

SENATE RESOLUTION 293—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH, COMMENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM ADVOCATES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS, CRISIS HOTLINE STAFF, AND FIRST RESPONDERS SERVING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FOR THEIR COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT CONGRESS SHOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOLD PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACCOUNTABLE

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. AYOTTE, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 293

Whereas domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence service providers, domestic violence first responders, and other individuals in the United States observe the month of October, 2015, as “National Domestic Violence Awareness Month” in order to increase awareness in the United States about the issue of domestic violence;

Whereas it is estimated that each year up to 9,000,000 individuals in the United States are victims of intimate partner violence, including—

- (1) physical violence;
- (2) rape; or
- (3) stalking;

Whereas more than 1 in 5 women in the United States and more than 1 in 7 men in the United States have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner;

Whereas domestic violence affects women, men, and children of every age and background, but women—

- (1) experience more domestic violence than men; and
- (2) are significantly more likely than men to be injured during an assault by an intimate partner;

Whereas women aged 18 to 34 typically experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics;

Whereas most female victims of intimate partner violence have been victimized by the same offender previously;

Whereas domestic violence is cited as a significant factor in homelessness among families;

Whereas research shows that households in which children are abused or neglected are likely to have a higher rate of intimate partner violence;

Whereas millions of children are exposed to domestic violence each year;

Whereas victims of domestic violence experience immediate and long-term negative outcomes, including detrimental effects on mental and physical health;

Whereas crisis hotlines serving domestic violence operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, and offer important—

- (1) crisis intervention;
- (2) support;
- (3) information; and
- (4) referrals for victims;

Whereas staff and volunteers of domestic violence shelters and programs in the United States, in cooperation with 56 State and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, serve—

(1) thousands of adults and children each day; and

(2) at least 1,000,000 adults and children each year;

Whereas law enforcement officers in the United States put their lives at risk each day by responding to incidents of domestic violence, which can be among the most volatile and deadly disturbance calls;

Whereas Congress first demonstrated a significant commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence through the landmark enactment of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.);

Whereas Congress has remained committed to protecting survivors of all forms of domestic violence and sexual abuse by making Federal funding available to support the activities that are authorized under—

- (1) the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (42 U.S.C. 10401 et seq.); and
- (2) the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925 et seq.);

Whereas there is a need to continue to support programs and activities aimed at domestic violence intervention and domestic violence prevention in the United States; and

Whereas individuals and organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending domestic violence should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate supports the goals and ideals of “National Domestic Violence Awareness Month”; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that Congress should—

(A) continue to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and the corresponding devastating effects of domestic violence on survivors, families, and communities; and

(B) pledge continued support for programs designed—

- (i) to assist survivors;
- (ii) to hold perpetrators accountable; and
- (iii) to bring an end to domestic violence.

SENATE RESOLUTION 294—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 26, 2015, AS DAY OF THE DEPLOYED

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 294

Whereas more than 2,000,000 individuals serve as members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas several hundred thousand members of the Armed Forces rotate each year through deployments to 150 countries in every region of the world;

Whereas more than 2,700,000 members of the Armed Forces have deployed to the area of operations of the United States Central Command since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks;

Whereas the United States is kept strong and free by the loyal military personnel from the total force (the regular components, the National Guard, and the Reserves), who protect the precious heritage of the United States through their declarations and actions;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces serving at home and abroad have courageously answered the call to duty to defend the ideals of the United States and to preserve peace and freedom around the world;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces personify the virtues of patriotism, service, duty, courage, and sacrifice;

Whereas the families of members of the Armed Forces make important and significant sacrifices for the United States; and

Whereas the Senate designated October 26 as “Day of the Deployed” in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 26, 2015, as “Day of the Deployed”;

(2) honors the deployed members of the Armed Forces of the United States and the families of the members;

(3) calls on the people of the United States to reflect on the service of those members of the Armed Forces, wherever the members serve, past, present, and future; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to observe Day of the Deployed with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 295—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 2 THROUGH NOVEMBER 6, 2015 AS “NATIONAL VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK”

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. COONS, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 295

Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States train individuals with the skills, discipline, and leadership necessary to establish and operate a successful business;

Whereas there are approximately 2,500,000 veteran-owned small businesses in the United States, employing nearly 6,000,000 individuals;

Whereas veteran-owned businesses make up nearly 10 percent of all businesses in the United States;

Whereas veterans account for more than \$1,200,000,000,000 in business receipts every year;

Whereas veterans are 45 percent more likely to be self-employed than non-veterans;

Whereas the number of veteran owned small businesses grew at nearly double the rate for non-veteran owned small businesses from 2007 to 2012;

Whereas women veterans’ business ownership has increased significantly, from 97,114 in 2007 to 384,549 in 2012;

Whereas the Office of Veterans Business Development of the Small Business Administration is dedicated to maximizing the availability and usability of small business programs for veterans, members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States, members of the Armed Forces of the United States serving on active-duty, transitioning service members, and the spouses, dependents, or survivors of those members and veterans;

Whereas the Small Business Administration serves more than 200,000 veterans, service-disabled veterans, women veterans, and military spouses annually;

Whereas, in 2014, the Small Business Administration increased loans to veterans by more than 100 percent, guaranteeing more than \$1,000,000,000 in small business loans;

Whereas the entrepreneurship training program of the Small Business Administration, Boots to Business, has trained more than 30,000 service members, veterans, and spouses of service members and veterans since launching in 2013;

Whereas the Small Business Administration will be hosting events honoring National Veterans Small Business Week from November 2 through November 6, 2015;

Whereas the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate will be commemorating National Small Business Week during the week of November 2 through November 6, 2015; and

Whereas November 2 through November 6, 2015 would be an appropriate time to designate as “National Veterans Small Business Week”; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of November 2 through November 6, 2015 as “National Veterans Small Business Week”; and

(2) expresses appreciation for the continued service to the United States by the Nation’s veterans through small business ownership and entrepreneurship.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 22, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 22, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 22, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 22, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND FEDERAL MANAGEMENT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 22, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, “Improving Pay Flexibilities in the Federal Workforce.”

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5 p.m.

on Monday, October 26, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 140; that there be up to 30 minutes of debate on the nomination; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 308 through 320; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army Nurse Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 624 and 3064:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Barbara R. Holcomb

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Jack Weinstein

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Michael E. Flanagan

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. David W. Silva, II

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Philip R. Sheridan

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Timothy J. LaBarge

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Kristan L. K. Hericks

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Jody J. Daniels

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Vice Adm. Frank C. Pandolfo

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. Raquel C. Bono

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Rear Adm. David C. Johnson

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601, and for appointment as a Senior Member of the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations under title 10, U.S.C., section 711:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr.

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade of lieutenant general while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. William D. Beydler

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 202, S. 1493.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1493) to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2015, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 1493) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1493

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2015, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2015, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2015, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in subsection (b), as increased under subsection (a), not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2016.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 264, S. Res. 274.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (S. Res. 274) commemorating the 25th anniversary of the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to considering the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 274) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 1, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 283 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 283) designating October 2015 as "Filipino American History Month."

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 283) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 8, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

CONDEMNING THE SENSELESS MURDER AND WOUNDING OF 18 INDIVIDUALS IN ROSEBURG, OREGON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 287 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 287) condemning the senseless murder and wounding of 18 individuals (sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, cousins, students, and teachers) in Roseburg, Oregon, on October 1, 2015.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 287) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 8, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all Senators be added as cosponsors to the resolution.

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

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE HIGHWAY BEAUTIFICATION ACT OF 1965

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 288.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 288) commemorating October 22, 2015, as the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 288) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of October 19, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

DAY OF THE DEPLOYED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 294, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 294) designating October 26, 2015, as Day of the Deployed.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 294) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 295, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 295) designating the week of November 2 through November 6, 2015 as "National Veterans Small Business Week."

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 295) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2200

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2200) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to strengthen equal pay requirements.

Mr. McCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, October 26; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, at 5 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session under the previous order.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2015, AT 3 P.M.

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:55 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 26, 2015, at 3 p.m.

DISCHARGED NOMINATION

The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of the following nomination under the authority of the order of the Senate of 01/07/2009 and the nomination was placed on the Executive Calendar:

*ANN CALVARESI BARR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

*Nominee has committed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 22, 2015:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY NURSE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. BARBARA R. HOLCOMB

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. JACK WEINSTEIN

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. MICHAEL E. FLANAGAN

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID W. SILVA II

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. PHILIP R. SHERIDAN

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. TIMOTHY J. LABARGE

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. KRISTAN L. K. HERICKS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JODY J. DANIELS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED

WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. FRANK C. PANDOLFE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. RAQUEL C. BONO

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. DAVID C. JOHNSON

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601, AND FOR APPOINTMENT AS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 711:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. KENNETH F. MCKENZIE, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. WILLIAM D. BEYDLER

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JULIE FURUTA-TOY, OF WYOMING, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA.

DENNIS B. HANKINS, OF MINNESOTA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA.

HARRY K. THOMAS, JR., OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE.

ROBERT PORTER JACKSON, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA.