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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 18, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

LEGISLATION FOR IMPROVING THE 21ST CENTURY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate what I believe to be the most significant legislation of the 21st century. Of course, I am referring to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Mr. Speaker, as I travel my State of Kansas and across the country, people invariably share with me what they feel their priorities should be for this Federal Government.

Number one, almost everyone will say within 5 or 10 minutes that they think national security is very, very important.

Next, people typically talk to me about how important they feel education is.

Thirdly, people will talk about how important they feel infrastructure is: roads, bridges, railroads, high speed internet, and those types of things.

Mr. Speaker, no matter what your priorities are as an American, none of those will happen unless we have a strong, healthy economy; and that is what I believe the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act does. It helps to continue the strong economy that we have created.

Mr. Speaker, we are so fortunate this year. We are about to celebrate our third quarter in a row of GDP growth over 3 percent. It seems like just January and I was coming here as a rookie Congressman. All the experts and all the press said this country will never see GDP growth again, yet we are about to have our third quarter in a row of it. It just amazes me to hear people continually tell me what we can and cannot do.

I took a second to look at that. Why do we have this strong economy? Why is GDP growth going so well?

I think it is very simple. We have rolled back regulations and slowed that down.

So many people I have talked to have been sitting on the sidelines for the last 8 years, waiting for some certainty. This new President has given them the certainty to invest in this economy. Now it is time to pass this tax reform bill and make this economy even stronger.

From day one, from the first day we got here, we talked about common visions and goals for what tax reform would look like.

Number one, we wanted to make sure that we gave relief to hardworking Americans so that they would be able to keep more of the money they have earned through their labors.

Number two, we wanted a simpler process.

Number three, we wanted to grow a healthier economy that would create more jobs and pay higher wages.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be here this week and say that we have delivered for the American people.

Let's take a look at this bill.

Number one, it gives relief to hardworking Americans. In Kansas, with the House bill, the average hardworking couple with two children is going to keep $1,400 more of their money.

But as we continue this process, we tried to make each rendition of this bill better and better. Now, the average Kansas family will be able to keep up to $2,000 more of their hard-earned money.

But more than that, there are another 5 million Americans who will get another $2,000 bonus this next year. Those are the people who paid for the ObamaCare health insurance penalty that they refused to take because the insurance was not worth anything.

Many hardworking Americans will keep up to $4,000 more of their money.

Next, it is simpler. Ninety percent of Americans will be able to do their taxes on the back of a postcard.

Is that not simpler?

Of course, it is. I don't think anybody can argue those first two points.

Thirdly, the goal was to figure out how we grow the economy, how we grow jobs, how we increase wages for people. That is what we have done. We have lowered taxes on small businesses, which will be the main job creators of this economy. By lowering those taxes, they are going to invest more in their people, in labor, and in capital items. Those will all lead to growing this economy.

This is a very easy bill to support, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a Ph.D. in

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economy, but I come from the school of hard knocks and hard work. Having ran several companies myself, I think the job pattern that we have going on will keep growing.

We have a 16-year high in consumer confidence, a 16-year low in unemployment. That is mostly due to rolling back regulations. But as we go forward with this tax reform, we are going to grow more jobs and have more opportunities for Americans.

This is the start of a new year with the greatest tax reform, the most important legislation of the 21st century, and I am so proud to be part of this process.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BUDD) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Dan C. Cummins, Peoples Church, Jacksonville, Texas, offered the following prayer:

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the Earth. When we consider the heavens and the Earth, the works of Your fingers, what is man that You are mindful of us?

In our troubles, we cry out to You, and You hear us. Your ear is not deaf, Your arms of mercy never refuse our salvation.

Great is the Lord, greatly to be praised. You are our refuge, our very present help in times of trouble.

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to its people.

Forgive us O Lord, where we have sinned and come short of Your glory. Let Your grace wash over us. Though our sins be as scarlet, wash us and make us whiter than snow.

Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord. Let us exalt the Lord together, and He will heal us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SHIMKUS 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.

CONGRATULATING GENERAL BEN HODGES

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate General Ben Hodges on his 37 years of active military service and his retiring on December 15.

Ben and I entered West Point together in 1976, and both graduated as Goats in 1980. We both branched infantry and attended ranger school together, graduating in the spring of 1981. While I went Active Duty and Reserves, Ben continued his active military service.

We met in Kirkuk, Iraq, as he commanded the brigade in the 101st Air Assault Division.

We bumped into each other as he headed the Army legislative liaison here in Washington, D.C., and we saw each other numerous times in his last assignment commanding the United States Army in Europe. In that position, Ben gave comfort to our NATO allies in the east, creating a permanent rotational mission.

Congratulations, Ben, on a job well done. Pride and excellence, and beat Navy. May God bless you and your future endeavors.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1630

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) at 4 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

RECOGNIZE, ASSIST, INCLUDE, SUPPORT, AND ENGAGE FAMILY CAREGIVERS ACT OF 2017

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3759) to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Family Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3759

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 ''Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act of 2017'' or the ''RAISE Family Caregivers Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The term ''Advisory Council'' means the Family Caregiving Advisory Council convened under section 4.

(2) FAMILY CAREGIVER.—The term ''family caregiver'' means an adult family member or other individual who has a significant relationship with, and who provides a broad range of assistance to, an individual with a chronic or other health condition, disability, or functional limitation.

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

(4) STRATEGY.—The term ''Strategy'' means the Family Caregiving Strategy set forth under section 3.

SEC. 3. FAMILY CAREGIVING STRATEGY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, shall develop jointly with the Advisory Council and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the State agencies responsible for carrying out family caregiver programs, and make publicly available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services, a Family Caregiving Strategy.

(b) CONTENTS.—The Strategy shall identify recommended actions that Federal (under existing Federal programs), State, and local governments, communities, health care providers, long-term services and supports providers, and others are taking, or may take, to recognize and support family caregivers in a manner that reflects their diverse needs, including with respect to the following:

(1) Promoting greater adoption of person- and family-centered care in all health and long-term services and supports settings, with the person receiving services and supports and the family caregiver (as appropriate) at the center of care teams.

(2) Assessment and service planning (including care transitions and coordination) involving family caregivers and care recipients.

(3) Information, education and training supports, referral, and care coordination, including with respect to hospice care, palliative care, and advance planning services.

(4) Respite options.

(5) Financial security and workplace issues.

(6) Delivering services based on the performance, mission, and purpose of a program while eliminating redundancies.

(c) DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary, in carrying out subsection (a), shall oversee the following:

(1) Collecting and making publicly available information submitted by the Advisory Council under section 4(d) to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the State agencies responsible for carrying out family caregiver programs, including evidence-based or promising practices and innovative models (both domestic and foreign) regarding the provision of care by family caregivers or support for family caregivers.

(2) Coordinating and assessing existing Federal Government programs and activities to recognize and support family caregivers while ensuring maximum effectiveness and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

(3) Providing technical assistance, as appropriate, such as disseminating identified best practices and information sharing based on reports provided under section 4(d), to State or local efforts to support family caregivers.

(d) INITIAL STRATEGY; UPDATES.—The Secretary shall—

(1) not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, develop, publish, and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the State agencies responsible for carrying out family caregiver programs, an initial Strategy incorporating the items addressed in the Advisory Council's initial report under section 4(d) and other relevant information, including best practices, for recognizing and supporting family caregivers; and

(2) biennially update, republish, and submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the State agencies responsible for carrying out family caregiver programs the Strategy, taking into account the most recent annual report submitted under section 4(d)(1)—

(A) to reflect new developments, challenges, opportunities, and solutions; and

(B) to review progress based on recommendations for recognizing and supporting family caregivers in the Strategy and, based on the results of such review, recommend priority actions for improving the implementation of such recommendations, as appropriate.

(e) PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INPUT.—The Secretary shall establish a process for public input to inform the development of, and updates to, the Strategy, including a process for the public to submit recommendations to the Advisory Council and an opportunity for public comment on the proposed Strategy.

(f) NO PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this Act preempts any authority of a State or local government to recognize or support family caregivers.

(g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to permit the Secretary (through regulation, guidance, grant criteria, or otherwise) to—

(1) mandate, direct, or control the allocation of State or local resources;

(2) mandate the use of any of the best practices identified in the reports required under this Act; or

(3) otherwise expand the authority of the Secretary beyond that expressly provided to the Secretary in this Act.

SEC. 4. FAMILY CAREGIVING ADVISORY COUNCIL.

(a) CONVENING.—The Secretary shall convene a Family Caregiving Advisory Council to advise and provide recommendations, including identified best practices, to the Secretary on recognizing and supporting family caregivers.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The members of the Advisory Council shall consist of—

(A) the appointed members under paragraph (2); and

(B) the Federal members under paragraph (3).

(2) APPOINTED MEMBERS.—In addition to the Federal members under paragraph (3), the Secretary shall appoint not more than 15 voting members of the Advisory Council who are not representatives of Federal departments or agencies and who shall include at least one representative of each of the following:

(A) Family caregivers.

(B) Older adults with long-term services and supports needs.

(C) Individuals with disabilities.

(D) Health care and social service providers.

(E) Long-term services and supports providers.

(F) Employers.

(G) Paraprofessional workers.

(H) State and local officials.

(I) Accreditation bodies.

(J) Veterans.

(K) As appropriate, other experts and advocacy organizations engaged in family caregiving.

(3) FEDERAL MEMBERS.—The Federal members of the Advisory Council, who shall be nonvoting members, shall consist of the following:

(A) The Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (or the Administrator's designee).

(B) The Administrator of the Administration for Community Living (or the Administrator's designee who has experience in both aging and disability).

(C) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (or the Secretary's designee).

(D) The heads of other Federal departments or agencies (or their designees), including relevant departments or agencies that oversee labor and workforce, economic, government financial policies, community service, and other impacted populations, as appointed by the Secretary or the Chair of the Advisory Council.

(4) DIVERSE REPRESENTATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the membership of the Advisory Council reflects the diversity of family caregivers and individuals receiving services and supports.

(c) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Council shall meet quarterly during the 1-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and at least three times during each year thereafter. Meetings of the Advisory Council shall be open to the public.

(d) ADVISORY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Advisory Council shall submit to the Secretary, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and the State agencies responsible for carrying out family caregiver programs, and make publicly available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services, a report concerning the development, maintenance, and updating of the Strategy, including a description of the outcomes of the recommendations and any priorities included in the initial report pursuant to paragraph (2), as appropriate.

(2) INITIAL REPORT.—The Advisory Council's initial report under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an inventory and assessment of all federally funded efforts to recognize and support family caregivers and the outcomes of such efforts, including analyses of the extent to which federally funded efforts are reaching family caregivers and gaps in such efforts;

(B) recommendations—

(i) to improve and better coordinate Federal programs and activities to recognize and support family caregivers, as well as opportunities to improve the coordination of such Federal programs and activities with State programs; and

(ii) to effectively deliver services based on the performance, mission, and purpose of a program while eliminating redundancies, avoiding unnecessary duplication and overlap, and ensuring the needs of family caregivers are met;

(C) the identification of challenges faced by family caregivers, including financial, health, and other challenges, and existing approaches to address such challenges; and

(D) an evaluation of how family caregiving impacts the Medicare program, the Medicaid program, and other Federal programs.

(e) NONAPPLICABILITY OF FACA.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Advisory Council.

SEC. 5. FUNDING.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried out using funds otherwise authorized.

SEC. 6. SUNSET PROVISION.

The authority and obligations established by this Act shall terminate on the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3759.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3759, the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act of 2017, otherwise known as the RAISE Family Caregivers Act.

Mr. Speaker, not all Americans have the luxury of complete independence. They may struggle to dress themselves, manage their retirement, or take their medications adequately. When we think of these instances, we may think mostly of seniors, but that is not always the case. Veterans, Americans

with physical and mental disabilities, wounded warriors, and even children with medical conditions rely on a family caregiver to help them live their daily lives.

Though they may have physical or functional limitations or an illness or chronic health condition that impedes their ability to fully care for themselves, many are able to remain safe and comfortable in their homes due to the important role of the family caregiver.

Nationwide, there are roughly 40 million family caregivers who provide physical and emotional care for parents, spouses, children, and other loved ones in need of assistance. These caregivers are unsung heroes who devote both their time and resources to the day-to-day activities that are necessary to provide a disabled loved one with care.

These activities may be to drive their loved ones to doctor appointments, provide them with meals, assist in the management of their finances, and administer at-home nursing and care so that their loved ones may continue to live at home.

Taking on the role of a family caregiver is a deeply personal decision, characterized by selflessness and compassion for a relative in need. It is estimated that, on average, the Nation's caregivers dedicate about 18 hours each week to carrying out their caregiver tasks, while almost a third provide over 60 hours a week of care. These activities provide an annual economic value of $470 billion each year.

About 60 percent of caregivers have full- or part-time jobs in addition to their caregiving roles, leaving them to juggle their caregiving obligations with their work hours and their personal and family time.

The RAISE Family Caregivers Act will direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a Family Caregiving Advisory Council to make recommendations regarding best practices on recognizing and supporting family caregivers. The council will include members from the public and private sectors, family caregivers, elderly Americans and people living with disabilities, State and local officials, and healthcare providers. The Secretary will then publish the council's findings so that the family caregivers may be equipped with the information that they need to be successful in their roles.

The council will provide information about streamlining Federal and State activities to maximize efficiency, and it will preserve the integrity of family rights and person-centered care. This is an opportunity to help improve the quality of life of millions of Americans who both provide and receive familial care.

One important provision of the RAISE Family Caregivers Act ensures that the Secretary of Health and Human Services is prohibited from mandating best practices or expanding the Federal authority in any way.

Additionally, the bill does not authorize any additional funds for the formation of the council and, after 3 years, the council and its related activities will sunset.

The RAISE Family Caregivers Act is an important step we can take to recognize the essential role of family caregivers and share important information so that they can better care for others. This legislation fulfills a bipartisan recommendation of the Federal Commission on Long-Term Care. The Senate passed this bill earlier this year by unanimous consent, and the House of Representatives now has the opportunity to have this bill signed into law.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation so that family caregivers are recognized for the important role they play in our communities.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) today and rise in support of H.R. 3759, the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act. I want to congratulate all the cosponsors of this bill for their good work in terms of bringing this forward, and, again, it looks very promising that it will be passed and signed into law shortly.

Mr. Speaker, the number of Americans over the age of 65 is expected to reach 70 million by 2030, roughly doubling the number that existed in 2005. As those Americans age and require assistance with their daily routines—taking medication, getting dressed, cooking, and attending medical appointments—family caregivers will step in to make sure that their loved ones are safe and cared for.

This is difficult work. For an adult child, caring for an aging parent can quickly become a full-time job. Between juggling appointments, understanding medications, helping make informed medical decisions, a caregiver's own priorities can take a backseat. Most caregivers have jobs of their own, and many care simultaneously for an aging parent as well as their own children.

But caregivers are not only providing care for older Americans or even younger Americans with developmental disabilities. They also serve those who have served our country.

I recently met with a caregiver from my district, Jessica, who cares for her husband, a veteran who suffered serious traumatic brain injury during the battle of Fallujah. Her experience managing her husband's complex medical needs while also raising their children goes to show that ensuring caregivers are supported is a national priority.

The bill under consideration today would recognize the contribution that family caregivers make toward the safety and health of older Americans. It would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and maintain a strategy to support family caregivers by establishing an advisory body to bring together caregivers, older adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, employers, and State and local officials. This advisory council would make recommendations for how to support, assist, and engage family caregivers.

Caregivers are needed to help Americans live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. In my home State of Connecticut, there are 459,000 family caregivers who provide an estimated $5.9 billion in unpaid care, annually. Supporting older and disabled Americans through caregiving and ensuring caregivers are equipped to take on this important role benefits all Americans. Evidence has shown that, when caregivers are supported, patients delay placement in a nursing home, continuing with lower-cost, long-term support in the home for much longer periods of time.

Caregiving is foundational to our long-term care system in the United States. This legislation is an important step to ensure this work is recognized and supported.

Again, as the gentleman pointed out, the Commission on Long-Term Care, which was actually created by this body in 2012 as part of one of the budget bills that passed that year, was a group of stakeholders from all across the country, in various sectors, that came together and issued a report that, unfortunately, I don't think has gotten the focus and attention it needs with the demographics that our country is experiencing right now: the aging of our society.

However, this is one of those recommendations for which signs of intelligent life appeared in Congress, and we are taking up their call for passing legislation like the RAISE Act.

So again, I want to congratulate all the sponsors for coming together, and I am looking forward to sending this bill to the President for his signature.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER).

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3759, the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act of 2017, or the RAISE Family Caregivers Act. This is a bipartisan and bicameral bill.

I introduced the RAISE Act in the House along with Representative KATHY CASTOR as well as Representatives STEFANIK and LUJAN GRISHAM. There are now 107 cosponsors of the bill. An almost identical bill, S. 1028, introduced by Senator COLLINS and Senator BALDWIN, passed the House unanimously on September 26.

The RAISE Act is supported by a broad coalition of over 60 organizations, from AARP to United Cerebral Palsy. But I was particularly inspired to introduce the RAISE Act because, frankly, like many of our constituents, my wife and I are caregivers for our

family, for our adult son, Livingston, who has fragile X syndrome.

About 12 million people of all ages need the support of family caregivers today, and this number will more than double by the year 2050. By supporting family caregivers, we can help people live at home, where they want to be, helping to delay or prevent costlier institutional care and unnecessary hospitalizations, saving taxpayer dollars.

The bill creates an advisory council within the Department of Health and Human Services to identify and recommend actions that Federal, State, and local governments, communities, healthcare providers, long-term services and support providers, and others are taking, or may take, to recognize and support those family caregivers. The idea is to enhance coordination of and implementation under existing programs.

I appreciate the support we have received from the Education and the Workforce Committee on this legislation, particularly the chair, VIRGINIA FOXX. My office has worked closely with the committee, AARP, as well as with Representative CASTOR, Senator COLLINS, and Senator BALDWIN, to develop a bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation with broad coalition support that we could successfully bring to the floor.

CBO has scored the bill at $1 million over 50 years, but it sunsets in 3 years, and no new funds are authorized to be appropriated.

This bill gives hope and comfort to the large number of family caregivers across the country who are often struggling to look after their loved ones, whether a special-needs child, a loved one with traumatic brain injury, or an elderly parent or a spouse.

It is important that the Congress and the administration send this message of caring and support for the family caregivers across our Nation. I ask that Members vote ''yes'' on this bill.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR), a cosponsor of the bill, a former member of the Education and the Workforce Committee; and even though she has migrated to other committees, her heart still is with the mission of the Education and the Workforce Committee, which is obviously shown by her cosponsorship of this legislation.

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. COURTNEY, for yielding the time and for his advocacy on behalf of America's families.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3759, the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, and I want to thank my good friend and colleague Congressman GREGG HARPER for being my partner in this endeavor to bring more attention to the struggle of so many families across the country for more balance, more support, when they must take care of a sick family member or a friend.

I would also like to thank Senator SUSAN COLLINS and Senator TAMMY BALDWIN, who have been tireless champions for caregivers and their families.

Family caregiving has become the new normal in healthcare here in America because it is oftentimes astronomically expensive to hire a caregiver or to get a little respite. Some do, but for many families, the better decision is a tough one, oftentimes, to make a very significant personal sacrifice: quit your job or go part-time while they devote themselves to their loved one.

All too often, caregivers are the only support system for their child with special needs or an aging family member, and they have little to no support for themselves.

Many of America's veterans stay integrated in communities because of the sacrifices of their family members to make sure that they get out and about and get to their appointments and get the care and interaction that they need.

□ 1645

Family caregivers help with many basic activities, like eating, dressing, transportation, bathing; and sometimes they are called upon to do things that are a little more complicated, such as even a little bit of medical care or nursing care.

Here are some of the shocking statistics: about 40 million family caregivers provide about $470 billion annually in unpaid care to their loved ones, and about 3.7 million family caregivers provide care to a child under the age of 18 due to a medical or behavioral condition or disability.

Because of the massive commitment of time, many caregivers leave the workforce. Caregivers age 50 and older, who leave the workforce to care for a parent, lose, on average, nearly $304,000 in wages and benefits over their lifetime. Women are most often the main caregivers and their average is even higher, about $324,000 in lost benefits and wages.

In my home State of Florida, there are almost 3 million caregivers at any given time and they provide over 2.6 billion hours of care.

A closer look at the work-related effects, as well as the personal, financial, and emotional hardships, demonstrates an increasing need to come together to better understand the unique needs of our caregivers and what we can do to support them.

That is why Congressman HARPER and I introduced the bipartisanship Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage—RAISE—Family Caregivers Act. The RAISE Family Caregivers Act will create and maintain a common national family caregiver strategy led by the Secretary of Health and Human Services so that we can develop some additional support systems for the folks back home.

Our bill will bring together a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, experts, folks who are working every day to take care of their loved ones to be a part of the advisory council that will help develop some additional recommendations, hopefully for this Congress.

We must ensure that family caregivers have the resources and tools they need to face lost wages and the personal demands of taking care of their loved one while ensuring that their loved one does receive the best care.

I would like to thank the AARP, the Alzheimer's Association, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, the Family Caregiver Alliance, and so many more that have encouraged us on this important piece of legislation.

As the complexity and intensity of family caregiving increases, I believe that this legislation will help boost families and allow us to be smart and efficient with our resources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this important bipartisanship bill.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the sponsors of this legislation and also just note that the Elizabeth Dole Foundation is a strong supporter. This is a group that has been formed to help wounded warriors in terms of getting the caregiving help that they need from other family members who are sometimes overlooked in terms of our country's appreciation for those who wear the uniform of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I call for support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, before I came to Congress in April, I served as the Kansas State treasurer. In that role, I had the opportunity to implement the ABLE Act, which was legislation that was passed here in the last few years.

Talking with a lot of parents, as they were abled and concerned about how do they care for their disabled children, led to the creation of the ABLE Act. During that process, we also talked with a lot of other caregivers who cared for maybe senior citizens, maybe adult children who were in their home, and wanted to make sure that that burden that they faced in providing that family care was ameliorated and supported in any way that it could be.

The RAISE Family Caregivers Act will help recognize the essential role of family caregivers and share important information so that they may better care for others.

This legislation fulfills a bipartisanship recommendation from the Commission on Long-Term Care, and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3759.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3759, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR USE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO BRING COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION TO MORE K–12 CLASSROOMS

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 95

Whereas 9 in 10 parents want their child to study computer science, but only 40 percent of schools teach computer programming;

Whereas low-income students and students from small towns and rural communities are less likely to attend a school that offers computer science programming;

Whereas computing makes up two-thirds of all projected new jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields;

Whereas there are over 500,000 open computing jobs nationwide and such job openings are projected to grow at twice the rate of all other jobs;

Whereas significant workforce shortages in computing fields, particularly in cybersecurity, can pose significant threats to our national security; and

Whereas computing occupations are among the highest paying jobs for new graduates: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress expresses support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms throughout the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 95.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 95, expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, science, technology, engineering, and math education, known collectively as STEM education, all play a critical role in how we educate and prepare the next generation of America's workforce.

Many of our Nation's most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs place an emphasis on modern coding and computer skills. These skills are a result of a STEM education.

As an engineer who worked for many years in the private sector, I would like to emphasize the need for more of our students to be equipped with backgrounds in STEM.

The American economy and workforce have undergone a rapid transformation, thanks to the rise of technology, and its role in America's future is only going to increase.

As advancement continues, it is critical that the country's students are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to compete at the global level. These skills can be gained through the expansion of K–12 STEM education.

America has long been a pioneer of innovation in medicine, energy, agriculture, and other new technologies. We take pride in our ability to cultivate, innovate, and change the world for the better as new trends in every corner of the economy require a workforce equipped to meet those demands. However, if we do not adequately prepare our future scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and computer scientists, other countries will outpace us. We cannot allow this.

Of all the projected new jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematic fields, computing is estimated to make up two-thirds of those positions. At the present, there are over 500,000 unfilled computing jobs nationwide, and those numbers are projected to grow at twice the rate of other jobs.

In my district in Kansas, we need students to learn STEM in order to fill new jobs in advanced manufacturing.

When Congress passed landmark legislation earlier this year to strengthen career and technical education, or CTE, it sent a clear message to students and employers that Members of the House of Representatives recognize the growing skills gap in this country, and we are committed to improving alignment with in-demand jobs so that the 6 million job openings nationwide may be filled with students equipped with the necessary tools to make our workforce even stronger.

Congress has once again had the opportunity to help close the skills gap by launching more American students into fulfilling STEM careers. These careers are not only in high demand, but they are also high skilled and among the highest paying jobs for new graduates.

Students who enter this field are not only helping to close the skills gap in our country, but they are setting themselves up for a lifetime of meaningful work and personal fulfillment. In fact, 9 in 10 parents want their children to study computer science, but less than half—only 40 percent—of schools teach the subject. Low-income students and students hailing from small towns and rural communities are especially at a disadvantage. Their schools are much less likely to offer computer science courses than schools in urban areas and those that serve middle class students.

A ZIP Code and economic data does not determine whether a child will need to excel in computer science, and it should not determine whether that child receives computer science education. We need coders and computer scientists from a wealth of backgrounds to build the most capable and robust workforce in the world.

Encouraging public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms nationwide is a commonsense solution to develop STEM education around the country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will support this resolution to encourage efforts to provide more students access to these important skills so that they are prepared to join our Nation's workforce.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in appreciation of the sentiment that is expressed in the resolution. However, I just feel that the content of this resolution, if it is examined closely, particularly in juxtaposition with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was the K–12 reauthorization signed into law almost exactly 2 years ago on December 10, 2015, a bipartisanship measure—Congressman Kline, who was the Republican chairman of the House Education Committee, was at the White House with his counterparts from the Senate at the bill-signing ceremony—if people go back and read that, they will see that actually the road map and the pathway to achieve the goal of this resolution was actually laid out by folks from both sides of the aisle in terms of boosting authorized funding for K–12, particularly for low-income students, raising the authorizing for title I schools, which has been the workhorse of the Federal Government in terms of trying to help target resources for kids who come from distressed sectors and areas in terms of urban areas and rural areas, and also had many voluntary permissive authorizations for STEM.

Now, if anything, this resolution understates the scope of the demand that is out there for computer science and for STEM skills. There is not a sector in the American economy, from agriculture, where the gentleman comes from in Kansas, farmers are out there using STEM skills every single day in terms of food production. It exists in manufacturing.

I come from a district that is a shipbuilding district. We are in the process of boosting submarine production up in Groton, Connecticut. The metal trades workers are out there using computer

skills on the shop floors to make sure that that precision manufacturing happens accurately.

Certainly, financial services up in Hartford, Connecticut, the home of insurance companies like Travelers and The Hartford, they just started a couple years ago the Insurance and Finance Academy, which is a magnet school that brings in Travelers, Smith Barney, and The Hartford to collaborate with the public school system to make sure that kids, particularly low-income kids, from Hartford, Connecticut, are getting the opportunity to learn about things like finance, banking—giving them those skills—which are intrinsically connected to computer science.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there is great appetite in the private sector for public-private partnerships. I would stipulate to that and again argue that, in fact, the resolution almost understates what is out there.

What is missing is the public investment, which ESSA authorized, whether it was title I, whether it is funding to boost teaching skills in the STEM area. We try to give permissive authority to school districts to find math teachers, science teachers, computer science teachers, engineering folks and their curriculum, which every school district is crying out for. There isn't a Member in this body who isn't hearing about that back home.

We want to solve that problem. A resolution like this is certainly not going to get in the way of that, but what we need to do is make sure we fund the authorizations that, on a bipartisanship basis, we passed in 2015.

Unfortunately, if you look at the budget that came over from the White House back in May, the White House proposed a 13.5 percent cut to the Department of Education, elimination of all Federal funding for K–12 teacher professional development, and after-school programs, which I was up at one of them, the 21st Century Learning After School Program in Norwich, Connecticut, a distressed municipality. They had kids, after school, working on their computer skills, their math skills, their science skills to give them the chance to keep up with their grade level and to be school ready when they go into high school.

□ 1700

Again, the big one was the cut to title 1, which, as I said, is the workhorse making sure that low-income kids actually have funding levels that at least come somewhat close to their counterparts in more wealthy parts of the country in wealthy school districts. So, again, this resolution is not certainly going to be a negative, but it certainly misses the opportunity that we really should be focused on as Members of Congress for bolstering the public side of the public-private partnership.

As I said, the private sector is speaking loud and clear that they are looking for these skills and actually stepping forward like companies like General Dynamics at the shipyard that I described in southeastern Connecticut or The Hartford and Travelers up in the capital city of the State of Connecticut.

What we need to be doing is match them in terms of our commitment to make sure we are funding magnet school programs, again, title 1 programs, that help the 90 percent of kids who are in public schools so that we actually are going to achieve the goal which this resolution sets forward.

So, again, I certainly commend the sentiment of the sponsors of this, but it leaves out, really, what I think is the real question of the day, which is whether or not we are going to step up as a nation and truly fund public-private partnerships to boost computer science skills.

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

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FLEISCHMANN).

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 95, and I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their advocacy in this regard. We need a strong public-private partnership to address computer science education in this country.

I want to talk about a school in my district, Howard High School. The great Reggie White went there. It is a school that I proudly adorned the hat when we played baseball. It is an inner city school. I went there this year, as I also did at Barger Elementary in Chattanooga—inner city schools.

The students have a great desire for computer science literacy. They actually taught me to code. I am basically computer science illiterate. I use pads and the like, and that is okay. But we know that the jobs of the future—no, the jobs of today—are not being filled due to a lack of skill. It is projected that, by 2020, we are going to have about 1 million unfilled jobs that require computer science education. We are filling about 10 percent—only 10 percent of them.

What does that mean? I am a champion of workforce development, and I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle champion workforce development. What does that mean? That means that we will have jobs to fill that we can't fill. For national defense, we will need computer science literacy. This is something that we have got tremendous bipartisan support for.

I can say this: as a proud appropriator—to my friend from the other side of the aisle—as a proud appropriator and a member of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee on Appropriations, I am committed to that funding. We actually have language this year in that bill.

So let us all come together, I would say in not only a bipartisan and nonpartisan way, to support computer science literacy. The private sector is there, the public sector will step up, and America's children in K–12 will be the beneficiaries. It will truly make America a greater and stronger place.

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

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, in Thomas Friedman's latest book, he gives this anecdote that I believe helps to define the world that we live in today. He says that in 1999, the world's strongest supercomputer was the size of a tennis court, and the power to power that supercomputer could power the equivalent of 800 homes. Fast forward to 2005 or 2006, and that same computing power was found in the Sony PlayStation.

Think about that for a second. Each one of us has the same computing power of the world's strongest nation-state just 20 years ago. If we don't see how that affects business, national security, public policy, or education, then we are already behind.

Throughout its history, America has faced struggles that define a generation. Economic depressions, world wars, dying industries, and new technologies have changed the way that we view and respond to the new period. For this digital native generation growing up now, and for the foreseeable future, the first challenge for them will be education.

Now, education and lifelong learning are not only requirements in this changed world, they are the difference between failure or success, hopelessness or optimism, pessimism or ambition. Our children are and will grow up in a fast world, faster than ours, very different, and a blurring reality between the physical and virtual worlds. We need a revolution in the way that we educate our Nation.

By 2020, there will be 1 million more computing jobs than graduates. This gap represents $500 billion that our children will never see because they were never taught, and that gap is only growing, and it is growing larger. Right now, only one out of four schools in America teaches computer science. Low-income and rural students have even less access.

Now, you don't have to be able to view the future to see the writing on the wall. As the education gap widens, the American Dream shrinks. We as Members of Congress have a duty and responsibility to reject that path for our country and help and lead to chart a new course for our American future. Ninety percent of parents want computer science taught in their kids' schools. This resolution today calls for exactly that.

I am grateful for the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Representatives LIPINSKI, FLEISCHMANN, and KILMER, as we stand together to help bring computer

science education to classrooms across America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for and support this important measure, H. Con. Res. 95.

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

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, this resolution is a sentiment that is hard to dispute or argue, but, unfortunately, it is just that, a resolution that really, beyond sort of expressing a goal, an aspirational goal, doesn't move the ball forward in terms of actually implementing what I think this resolution seeks to do, which is to make sure that school districts—every school district—particularly those with low-income kids from urban areas and rural parts of the country, have the resources which the Every Student Succeeds Act signed into law 2 years ago and laid a pathway out for us to achieve, but, unfortunately, because of the funding levels that have not come close to the authorized levels, we are falling short.

I couldn't agree more with the speakers, the proponents of this, that what is at stake here, really, I think, pervades almost every priority and every sector of our country's economy and our national policy.

In 1958, when the Russians fired Sputnik, then-President Dwight Eisenhower stepped forward and advocated the National Defense Education Act because he recognized that, from a national security standpoint, having a national policy to make sure that there are adequate resources out there for our Nation was really central to our national defense. That triggered, again, a revolution in American education, whether at the higher education level or even at the elementary level; and following that lead in 1965, we passed the ESEA Act, which funded, for the first time, title 1 that gave resources to low-income districts.

That commitment has deteriorated. It has deteriorated over the last 6 years with budgets that have underfunded this program. If you really took title 1 in terms of the full measure of eligibility for low-income students and school districts, we are funding it at about half of what the real need is out there for those types of school districts.

So, again, hopefully maybe this resolution will be an awakening for people in this Chamber, particularly as we are on the verge of taking up the 2018 budget, that funding education is as important to our economy and is as important to our national defense, frankly, as any other part of the Federal budget, because that gives us the tools to succeed as a nation, not just in 2018, but in many years forward.

So, again, I certainly am friends with some of the sponsors of this resolution. I salute the sentiment that was offered when this was introduced just a week or so ago, but, frankly, it falls short of the true commitment that we need to make as a Congress to fund and give the resources to make sure that this aspirational goal is achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, we try to endeavor to look at how do we prepare students and young adults for their career and look at ways to prepare them not just from starting with an engineering degree or a technical degree at college, but actually making sure that in their K–12 education they are better prepared as well.

As an engineer, I saw this firsthand how my education through high school and into college helped prepare me for the career that I had in the private sector before I went into the public service role. We see this continuously with the importance of having a trained workforce ready to work in our industries.

In my district, Wichita is known as the Air Capital of the World, and the one thing that I hear over and over again from aerospace companies is there is a shortage of trained, skilled workforce ready to work.

STEM education plays such a critical role in terms of how we educate and prepare the next generation of America's workforce, and so we need to encourage public and private partnerships in order to increase computer science education in K–12 classrooms. It is just a commonsense solution to try to increase STEM education in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Con. Res. 95, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 95, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KEEP AMERICA'S REFUGES OPERATIONAL ACT

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3979) to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3979

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 ''Keep America's Refuges Operational Act''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM VOLUNTEER SERVICES, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, AND REFUGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

Section 7 of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742f) is amended in subsection (g), by striking ''2011 through 2014'' and inserting ''2018 through 2022''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HANABUSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3979, the Keep America's Refuges Operational Act, reauthorizes the National Wildlife Refuge System volunteer, community partnership, and education programs for fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

I am proud to have joined with my good friend from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) to support conservation efforts at our Nation's wildlife refuges in a way that is also fiscally responsible.

Each year the refuge system's volunteer, community partnership, and education programs facilitate more than 1.4 million hours of service from more than 40,000 volunteers in support of our Nation's wildlife refuge system. The valuable contributions of these volunteers help maintain our Nation's 566 refuges, 14 of which I am proud to say are in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

These programs help ensure that Americans can visit, explore, fish, hunt, and study wildlife for generations to come. As a kid, I spent most of my time outdoors, and today, I still frequently visit the Rappahannock River Wildlife Refuge in my district. I have long appreciated the value of nature and wildlife in our society as well as the importance of environmental stewardship.

Volunteers perform a wide variety of tasks to assist with our refuge operations. Examples of these tasks include habitat improvement projects, laboratory research assistance, leading refuge tours, conducting fish and wildlife population surveys, and much more. All of these tasks help the Fish and Wildlife Service more efficiently fulfill its mission while also providing an opportunity for individuals and groups to contribute to the preservation and protection of our Nation's wildlife and public lands.

□ 1715

H.R. 3979 reauthorizes the cost-efficient resource that helps the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service fulfill its mission to protect and preserve the Nation's fish and wildlife. These volunteer programs are very popular with folks throughout the country, with more applicants than available volunteer slots.

This legislation has broad support from several recreational and conservation organizations, as well as bipartisan support across the Congress.

I thank Chairman BISHOP for moving this legislation and, again, extend my great appreciation to Mr. JEFFRIES for sponsoring this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HANABUSA) for yielding, as well as for her leadership. I also thank Chairman BISHOP for his leadership in helping to move this legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3979, the Keep America's Refuges Operational Act, a bipartisan bill that will reauthorize the volunteer, community partnership, and education program for our National Wildlife Refuge System.

Let me begin by thanking my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from the Commonwealth of Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), who has partnered with me on this legislation and is a strong champion for our country's refuges.

This commonsense, bipartisan legislation will support conservation efforts at our Nation's refuges in a way that saves taxpayers dollars and stimulates jobs and economic opportunity.

Our National Wildlife Refuge System is comprised of 566 refuges located in every U.S. State and territory. Refuges make up over 800 million acres of habitat dedicated to the conservation of fish and wildlife.

Each year, 47 million Americans visit refuges, which help to support local economies by generating over $2 billion in revenue and more than 35,000 local jobs. People visit refuges from all over the country to explore, hunt, fish, and experience America's natural beauty.

Refuges also help to mold the next generation of conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts by providing learning experiences and cherished memories for America's families. Refuges have a tremendous impact for communities all over America, even in my hometown of Brooklyn, New York.

But this wouldn't be possible without help from dedicated volunteers, who donate 20 percent of the total service work at our refuges. They support full-time staff by helping to operate visitor centers; conduct fish and wildlife population surveys; maintain visitor structures, roads, and paths; fight invasive species; and protect native plants and animals.

While volunteers may vary in age, background, and skill set, what they all have in common is their dedication to preserving our country's natural beauty so that we can all enjoy it for years to come.

Advancing this legislation has been a collaborative process, and I greatly appreciate the hard work of Mr. WITTMAN and Members on both sides of the aisle. Through this bipartisan legislation, we will demonstrate the economic benefits to be gained from protecting America's natural beauty and being good stewards of the environment God has given to us all.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3979.

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the passage of H.R. 3979 extends the authorization of volunteer and educational programs on the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

This bill highlights the importance of community partnerships and volunteers and the value they bring to our public lands. In 2016, refuge volunteers donated 1.3 million hours, which equals $30.6 million of labor value.

Volunteers are critical for the daily operation of the National Wildlife Refuge System and other Federal lands. I know, in many cases, visitors would not have access to these unique places without the participation of volunteers and other partners.

I serve as ranking member of the Federal Lands Subcommittee, where we held a hearing on this bill in November and heard testimony from the National Wildlife Refuge Association about the importance of sustaining the volunteer program. I am pleased we can work in a bipartisan fashion to move this important message through the House.

I commend the sponsor, Representative JEFFRIES of New York, for his hard work and dedication to this issue. This is a good bill, and I urge my colleagues to support its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I echo the sentiment of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This truly is what makes our Nation great: individuals willing to give of their time to work on these refuges.

Many times, the ability to access those refuges is dependent upon those volunteers. We take a few resources and stretch them across the Nation on many of these refuge lands, and it is our volunteers who, many times, help in maintaining these lands and making sure that there is access and making sure that people who come to visit understand the true value and nature of the resources that are there.

It is, truly, I think, a great example of what makes our country great: people willing to put their time and effort into these refuges and making sure they, indeed, can be enjoyed by all. This is why I think this bill enjoys the support of folks on both sides of the aisle. This truly is, I think, an issue that should bring us all together.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3979, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION, AFG, AND SAFER PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4661) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4661

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 ''United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION.

Section 17(g)(1)(M) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216 (g)(1)(M)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2017'' and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2023''; and

(2) by inserting ''for each such fiscal year'' after ''$2,753,672''.

SEC. 3. REAUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS PROGRAM AND THE FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANTS PROGRAM.

(a) SUNSET.—Section 33(r) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229(r)) is amended by striking ''the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012'' and inserting ''September 30, 2024''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 33(q)(1)(B) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229(q)(1)(B)) is amended, in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2023''.

(c) AUTHORIZATION FOR CERTAIN TRAINING UNDER ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS

PROGRAM.—Section 33(c)(3) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229(c)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(N) To provide specialized training to firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical service workers, and other first responders to recognize individuals who have mental illness and how to properly intervene with individuals with mental illness, including strategies for verbal de-escalation of crisis.''.

SEC. 4. REAUTHORIZATION OF STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) SUNSET.—Section 34(k) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(k)) is amended by striking ''the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2012'' and inserting ''September 30, 2024''.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 34(j)(1)(I) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(j)(1)(I)) is amended, in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2023''.

(c) MODIFICATION OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 34(b)(3)(B) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(b)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''of subsection (a)(1)(B)(ii) and (F)'' and inserting ''of subsection (a)(1)(F)''.

(d) MODIFICATION OF LIMITATION.—Section 34(c)(2) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(c)(2)) is amended by striking ''prior to the date of enactment of this section'' and inserting ''prior to the date of the application for the grant''.

(e) MODIFICATION OF WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Section 34(d)(1)(B) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(d)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''subsection (a)(1)(E) or subsection (c)(2)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)(1)(E), (c)(2), or (c)(4)''.

(f) EXPANSION OF STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM; REPEAL OF AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS TRANSFERRED TO ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS PROGRAM.—Section 34(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a(a)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''or to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call (as defined in section 33(a)) firefighters to full-time firefighters'' after ''firefighters''; and

(2) by striking ''and to provide'' and all that follows through ''of crises''.

SEC. 5. TRAINING ON ADMINISTRATION OF FIRE GRANT PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, acting through the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration, may develop and make widely available an electronic, online training course for members of the fire and emergency response community on matters relating to the administration of grants under sections 33 and 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229 and 2229a).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall ensure that any training developed and made available under subsection (a) is—

(1) tailored to the financial and time constraints of members of the fire and emergency response community; and

(2) accessible to all individuals in the career, combination, paid-on-call, and volunteer fire and emergency response community.

SEC. 6. FRAMEWORK FOR OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING OF THE ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANTS PROGRAM, THE FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANTS PROGRAM, AND THE STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) FRAMEWORK.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, acting through the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration, shall develop and implement a grant monitoring and oversight framework to mitigate and minimize risks of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement relating to the grants programs under sections 33 and 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229 and 2229a).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The framework required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Developing standardized guidance and training for all participants in the grant programs described in subsection (a).

(2) Conducting regular risk assessments.

(3) Conducting desk reviews and site visits.

(4) Enforcement actions to recoup potential questionable costs of grant recipients.

(5) Such other oversight and monitoring tools as the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency considers necessary to mitigate and minimize fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement relating to the grant programs described in subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4661, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 reflects a bipartisan, bicameral agreement reached between the House and the Senate authorizing committees.

I want to particularly thank our chairman and ranking member and my friend, Senator MCCAIN, for his leadership on this bill in the Senate, in helping us get this agreement today. I note we all appreciate his service as well as his commitment to the service of all those here whom we are working for today.

Fire prevention and safety is literally a matter of life and death. In 2015, there were 1.34 million fires reported in the United States, causing more than 3,000 civilian deaths and 15,000 injuries. In addition to this devastating human loss, fires cost $14.3 billion in property damage.

As I travel throughout my district and visit with firefighters and paramedics, I am constantly reminded of the sacrifices they make to protect our neighbors. Certainly, as we have seen the raging fires in California, that is brought to mind also.

One thing I consistently hear from our volunteer and professional firefighters is how critical these grants are to their stations. Whether they help by providing training for additional firefighters or providing upgraded respirators to ensure their safety, towns and communities around the district are safer as a result of these grants.

Sadly, last year, 69 of our firefighters across the country lost their lives in the line of duty.

Fire prevention has improved dramatically since Congress passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act in 1974, which created the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy. This has certainly professionalized all of this work, but there are still areas for improvement.

Firefighting activities and funding are primarily the responsibility of States and local communities. The USFA and NFA, however, are responsible for national data collection, public education, and research and training programs to reduce fire deaths and make our communities and residents safer, as well as make our firefighters safer.

For the last 15 years, the Federal Government has also awarded competitive grants directly to local fire departments and unaffiliated emergency medical services, or EMS, organizations to help with a variety of equipment, training, and other needs.

FIRE Act awards provide funding and equipment training to ensure the safety of our Nation's first responders.

SAFER Act awards help local departments to recruit, hire, and retain trained firefighters. Many firefighting departments in my district rely on these grants in order to maintain high-quality fire and emergency services for their communities.

Loudoun County, in particular, received $2 million through this grant program. According to Fire Chief Brower: ''These programs greatly assist localities in the areas of firefighter safety, fire and life safety education, and improved resourcing for tactical fire operations.''

More than 80 people lost their lives in the horrific Grenfell Tower fire in London that occurred earlier this year.

Closer to home, it was just 2 years ago that a Metro fire injured 70 and killed a Virginia resident who was a grandmother of three, who was on her way to work.

California's huge wildfires are in today's headlines and remind us that, as communities continue to expand into wildland areas, wildfires pose growing risk for human life, home and property losses, and entire communities.

When fires occur, first responders run toward the flames and put themselves

in danger in order to prevent lives from being lost.

This bill will reauthorize the USFA and the FIRE and SAFER programs for 6 years and ensure that our Nation's firefighters and paramedics have the tools and training they need to fight and prevent devastating fires.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2017.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: I am writing to you concerning the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Homeland Security in H.R. 4661, the ''United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017.'' The bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security.

I recognize and appreciate the desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Homeland Security will not assert its jurisdictional claim over this bill by seeking a sequential referral. The Committee takes this action with the mutual understanding that by foregoing action at this time we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation.

This waiver is also given with the understanding that the Committee on Homeland Security expressly reserves its authority to seek conferees on any provision within its jurisdiction during any House-Senate conference on this or any similar legislation, and requests your support for such a request.

I ask that a copy of this letter and your response be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of this bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Home Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee on Homeland Security's jurisdictional interest in H.R. 4661, the ''United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017,'' and your willingness to forego consideration of H.R. 4661 by your committee.

I agree that the Committee on Homeland Security has a valid jurisdictional interest in certain provisions of H.R. 4661 and that the Committee's jurisdiction will not be adversely affected by your decision to not request a sequential referral of H.R. 4661. As you have requested, I will support your request for an appropriate appointment of outside conferees from your Committee in the event of a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation should such a conference be convened.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2017.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: I write concerning H.R. 4661, the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that foregoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. Lastly, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

I would ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest as well as the mutually agreed upon changes to be incorporated into the bill be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor, to memorialize our understanding.

I look forward to working with the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2017.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's jurisdictional interest in H.R. 4661, the ''United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017,'' and your willingness to forego consideration of H.R. 4661 by your committee.

I agree that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has a valid jurisdictional interest in certain provisions of H.R. 4661 and that the Committee's jurisdiction will not be adversely affected by your decision to not request a sequential referral of H.R. 4661. As you have requested, I will support your request for an appropriate appointment of outside conferees from your Committee in the event of a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation should such a conference be convened.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017.

I hope we can all agree on the urgency of reauthorizing this program before the sunset in current law would terminate this program in January. We heard from the local, State, and Federal experts at our hearing in July just how essential these programs are to ensuring both firefighter and community safety in all of our districts across the Nation.

This bill authorizes funding at the 2017 levels for the U.S. Fire Administration, Assistance to Firefighters Grants, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants.

□ 1730

It also directs establishment of a grant monitoring and oversight framework. It makes important technical fixes to current law. It ensures lesser resourced fire departments have the tools to successfully apply for grants. These are critical programs to ensure the safety and security of all Americans, and they must be reauthorized.

Unfortunately, I must also express my disappointment and frustration with the majority's insistence on including a new sunset clause in this bill. The sunset currently in law is putting these programs at risk as we speak. Congress shouldn't need sunsets to do a job properly. In this case, arbitrary program sunsets puts lives at risk. Every single firefighting organization wants this sunset out. On a bipartisan basis, the Senate has voted to remove this sunset, yet here we are today running up a program termination that nobody wants, and senselessly adding a future program termination date that nobody wants.

Legislating by self-created emergency is bad for Congress and bad for our country. Here we are in December desperately trying to avoid terminating assistance to firefighters. At the same time, we are desperately trying to keep the Federal Government from shutting down and we are desperately trying to provide disaster assistance to Americans who are suffering. Of course, we have already missed the deadline on CHIP, and now 9 million children all across our country are in danger of losing health coverage. This is no way to run a country.

So we will vote on this bill today and, in 7 years, probably be right back in the same boat we are today. We can and should do better than this.

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

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. MIMI WALTERS).

Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4661, the United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, 2017 has been the most devastating year in California wildfire history. Thousands of California residents were displaced, over 1 million

acres burned, and thousands of homes and businesses were destroyed by this year's fires.

Now, more than ever, it is critical that California's fire departments are fully staffed. SAFER grants provide resources for fire departments that struggle to meet their staffing needs, including Orange County Fire Authority in my district.

SAFER grants will undoubtedly help fire departments across the country meet the needs of their communities, while ensuring firefighters are ready and able to assist with wildfire suppression efforts.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to offer my sincerest condolences to CAL FIRE and the family of Cory Iverson, who tragically lost his life this past week battling the Thomas fire.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM).

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the reauthorization of the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program, and the SAFER grant program.

These programs are vital to protect the public and the Nation's firefighters. Recent trends have shown that fire safety and prevention remains a serious national concern. Data from the U.S. Fire Administration shows that, while there are fewer fires and fire-related deaths overall, fires are becoming more severe and costly in both lives lost and property damage per fire. The best-trained, best-equipped firefighters cannot always overcome the dangers associated with today's severe fires.

This alarming trend jeopardizes the economic health of our communities and our national goal of increased resilience to fire. Adequate funding for the brave men and women who fight fires is essential, but we must also be effective in reducing these trends by preventing the fire's ignition and growth, in the first place, through robust fire prevention.

I will work with the Science, Space, and Technology Committee to request that the U.S. First Administration and FEMA investigate the upward trend in fatalities and property damage per fire.

Mr. Speaker, I thank both Chairman SMITH and subcommittee Chairwoman COMSTOCK for their leadership and hard work on the reauthorization bill, and I hope to work with them to address these issues moving forward.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that the International Association of Fire Chiefs has endorsed this bill.

I appreciate, again, the bicameral, bipartisan support we were able to bring together for the sixth year reauthorization—actually, the seventh year, also, for extra room there.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program, and the Fire Prevention and Safety programs.

As an original author of these critical grant programs, I understand their importance to the firefighting community. It is often local firefighters who are the first on the scene before help from elsewhere can arrive. Our first responders provide immediate assistance to those in need; and these grants enable local firefighters across our nation to receive the training and equipment necessary to fulfill this important mission.

The proper training and equipment provided to local firefighters by the AFG and SAFER grant programs and Fire Prevention and Safety programs can often mean the difference between life and death.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that it took so long for the House to act on reauthorizing these important federal grants. We have had nearly an entire year for the Majority to introduce a bill, have it considered in committee, and see action on the House floor. Or simply, we could have just considered S. 829, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent on August 2, 2017.

I even introduced H.R. 3881, a House version of the Senate-passed legislation and co-led a letter with 153 members of this House to show support for reauthorizing these grant programs. However, no action was taken to reauthorize these critical grant programs until today.

The bill before us today makes meaningful and technical changes to the administration of these grant programs. One important change this bill makes, that I know is significant to my home state of New Jersey and fire departments across the nation, is permitting the use of these grants to permit the use of grants to change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters.

However, unlike the Senate bill, the bill before us today continues to have a dreadful sunset clause. Typically, the Congress sunsets programs to ensure there is an opportunity to review the importance of a program's continuation and that there is no waste, fraud, or abuse. Since the establishment of these fire programs, there have been no major issues with waste, fraud, or abuse—and we certainly cannot dispute the major benefits these programs provide. So it is a wonder why some are insisting on sunsetting these critical grant programs in this bill.

This sunset causes needless anxiety, which many have been feeling this year as the House is only now reauthorizing these programs just two weeks before they're set to expire. This is a situation where states and localities and tens of thousands of fire departments across our nation are left wondering about the future of critical funding they rely on to keep their communities safe. This sunset is unnecessary and we should eliminate it.

It is not an understatement to say that the funding provided by these programs has saved countless lives. The federal resources these grants have provided fire departments with the equipment, training and staffing needed to swiftly respond to over 30 million calls annually. These programs also have improved firefighters' response capabilities and prevented numerous fires through safety programs targeted toward high-risk populations.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues Congressman PETER KING, STENY HOYER and DAVE REICHERT as co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus and for their tireless work on behalf of our nation's fire service.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues in this Chamber to support the reauthorization of these critical grant programs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4661.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STEM RESEARCH AND EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4375) to provide for a study on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4375

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 ''STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act''.

SEC. 2. BROADENING PARTICIPATION IN STEM PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall submit a report to Congress on the effectiveness of all National Science Foundation research and education programs for broadening the participation of women and other historically underrepresented individuals in STEM studies and careers, including—

(1) development or identification of performance metrics to evaluate such programs;

(2) information on student outcomes using all available data, including dropout rates, enrollment in graduate programs, internships or apprenticeships, and employment;

(3) identification of any data gaps for evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of National Science Foundation programs to broaden participation; and

(4) recommendations for maintaining, translating, and disseminating outcomes data for STEM programs funded by the National Science Foundation.

(b) DEFINITION OF STEM.—In this section, the term ''STEM'' has the meaning given the

term in section 2 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 6621 note).

SEC. 3. COLLECTION AND REPORTING OF DATA ON FEDERAL RESEARCH GRANTS.

(a) COLLECTION OF DATA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each Federal science agency shall collect standardized record-level annual information on demographics, primary field, award type, review rating, budget request, funding outcome, and awarded budget for all applications for merit-reviewed research and development grants to institutions of higher education and Federal laboratories supported by that agency.

(2) UNIFORMITY AND STANDARDIZATION.—The Director shall establish a policy to ensure uniformity and standardization of the data collection required under paragraph (1).

(3) RECORD-LEVEL DATA.—

(A) REQUIREMENT.—On an annual basis, beginning with the deadline under subparagraph (C), each Federal science agency shall submit to the Director of the National Science Foundation record-level data collected under paragraph (1) in the form required by such Director.

(B) PREVIOUS DATA.—As part of the first submission under subparagraph (A), each Federal science agency, to the extent practicable, shall submit comparable record-level data for the 5 years preceding the deadline under subparagraph (C).

(C) DEADLINE.—The deadline under this paragraph is not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) REPORTING OF DATA.—The Director of the National Science Foundation shall publish statistical summary data collected under this section, disaggregated and cross-tabulated demographically and by years since completion of doctoral degree, including in conjunction with the National Science Foundation's report required by section 37 of the Science and Technology Equal Opportunities Act (42 U.S.C. 1885d; Public Law 96–516).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

(2) FEDERAL LABORATORY.—The term ''Federal laboratory'' has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3703).

(3) FEDERAL SCIENCE AGENCY.—The term ''Federal science agency'' means any Federal agency with at least $100,000,000 in research and development expenditures in fiscal year 2017.

(4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given such term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4375, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4375, the STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, contains two provisions aimed at providing better information on how to make taxpayer-funded investments in STEM and research and development more effective, transparent, and fair.

First, the bill requires the National Science Foundation, for the first time, to report and make recommendations to Congress regarding the effectiveness of its research and education programs aimed at broadening the participation of women and historically underrepresented individuals in STEM.

This report will give Congress, the National Science Foundation, and other stakeholders objective information about what kinds of interventions and assistance are efficient, scalable, and effective.

In order to have a vibrant economy that provides opportunity and prosperity for all, we must be the leader in STEM fields. To do that, we need to develop the talent of all Americans. This report will help us focus resources on what works.

According to the Society of Women Engineers, which partnered with the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California's Hastings College of Law, women represent only about 15 percent of the engineering workforce.

This is an important issue because studies have found that companies with higher female representation tend to achieve more and have higher profits. According to Catalyst research of Fortune 500 companies, firms with the most female representation showed a 35 percent higher return on equity and 34 percent higher return to shareholders.

Second, the bill requires all Federal science agencies to collect standardized information, including demographics, for each application received for research and development grants. Agencies are to submit the information annually to the National Science Foundation, which is directed to publish an annual statistical summary.

This information will provide better transparency to how taxpayer dollars are spent on research and scientists, who are involved in that research, across the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Ms. JOHNSON, for joining me in sponsoring this bill, which, as I mentioned, also applies to really getting a much more diverse workforce, and understanding that our diverse workforce is a strength; and by only embracing that strength, are we going to be able to have and lead in STEM throughout the world. So I appreciate Ms. JOHNSON's longtime commitment to ensuring STEM reaches into all communities and provides opportunities for all.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4375, the STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bill, and I thank the Research and Technology Subcommittee chairwoman, Mrs. COMSTOCK, for introducing it.

Research shows that the underrepresentation of women and minorities in STEM fields is not due to a lack of interest or motivation. There are real institutional and cultural barriers preventing talented individuals from realizing their dreams of working in STEM careers. We must better understand these barriers so that we may develop and support the most effective policies and programs.

H.R. 4375 directs the NSF to report on the effectiveness of current portfolio of broadening participation programs. This bill also includes one provision from my STEM Opportunities Act that requires all Federal science agencies to collect and report annually on data for all research grant applications and awards.

This would enable researchers to conduct a cross-agency assessment of the participation and success of Federal grant applicants across demographic groups. With information about the participation and success of women and minorities throughout the process of applying for Federal research funding, including such details as the award size, we can identify and root out any inequities that reflect implicit bias in the process.

This bill is a small, but important, step in the right direction toward ensuring equitable access to STEM education and careers.

I want to take a moment to advocate for this House considering my STEM Opportunities Act, H.R. 2653, in its entirety. That would allow us to continue the steps we are taking today to broaden participation in STEM in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. JOHNSON for her work on this legislation in moving this forward. I know as I go around my district and I see young people, and I see the engagement of a very diverse population in STEM, this is really going to be the future of our workforce. It is exciting to be able to know that we will be able to have a small role in that today, to make sure that we are reaching everybody, because we cannot leave anybody behind with our need for more STEM resources, and to be able to make sure that we have that workforce of the 21st century. I know in Virginia alone, we have 34,000 or so cyber jobs that we are still looking for people

for. So this will help with that pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4375, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1745

WOMEN IN AEROSPACE EDUCATION ACT

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4254) to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4254

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 ''Women in Aerospace Education Act''.

SEC. 2. ROBERT NOYCE TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–368; 42 U.S.C. 1862n et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 10(a)(3)(A)(iv), by inserting '', including research experiences at national laboratories and NASA centers'' before the semicolon; and

(2) in section 10A(c)(4)—

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

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

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) providing internship opportunities for fellows, including research experiences at national laboratories and NASA Centers.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to grants awarded on or after October 1, 2018.

SEC. 3. NASA INTERNSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

Not later than October 1, 2018, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (in this section referred to as ''NASA'') shall institute a process to prioritize the recruitment of qualified candidates who are women or individuals who are historically underrepresented in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and computer science for internships and fellowships at NASA with relevance to the aerospace sector and related fields.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4254, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to speak on an important initiative to strengthen our aerospace workforce. H.R. 4254, the Women in Aerospace Education Act, directs the National Science Foundation through the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and NASA, to shape their fellowship and internship opportunities to encourage more women to get aerospace expertise while they are training to be teachers.

Female aerospace professionals must be placed in the classroom in greater numbers. A full fifth of U.S. aerospace engineers are of retirement age today. They are beginning to exit our workforce, which will create an enormous shortfall in our national security preparedness.

Meanwhile, women represent only one-quarter of all STEM workers and represent only about 15 percent of all aerospace engineers. We need to improve our STEM education pipeline—from ensuring STEM classes are available to students at a young age to encouraging young Americans to pursue STEM education all the way through to completing their degree.

But the gender gap that is so prevalent in this industry will persist until we make STEM and aerospace more inclusive of women and encourage women at a young age to pursue these fields.

Attitudes about career paths are formed at a very young age. The role models and leaders from which young women learn have an enormous impact on the decisions they make throughout their formal education as they enter the workforce.

I introduced the Women in Aerospace Education Act to make better use of some of the Federal Government's best teacher training programs to increase the number of women teachers who have seen, worked on, and can relate to the Nation's leading aerospace programs to young female students.

Robert Noyce scholars, who get teacher certification assistance from the National Science Foundation, are already, in small numbers, getting experience in NASA centers and the national labs.

Once they become certified and go teach in the K–12 system, they draw upon the work they did on major public initiatives in science and technology. Schools love having Noyce program teachers because their strong positive attitudes about STEM are cultivated in the students. It will strengthen our STEM pipeline to enhance the connection between the Noyce scholarship program and our schools.

The second provision of this bill directs NASA to more actively promote its internship and fellowship opportunities to women or members of other historically underrepresented groups.

Together, the two provisions of this bill will help a necessary and fundamental shift in our education system in aerospace workforce.

I would like to thank Ms. ESTY for her help on this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of H.R. 4254, the Women in Aerospace Education Act.

I want to thank Mr. KNIGHT and Ms. ESTY for introducing this bill. Women continue to be woefully underrepresented in the aerospace sector. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women made up only 8 percent of aerospace engineers last year. While we are inspired by the career of NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, who holds the U.S. record for days in space, we must do more to ensure that successes like hers are the rule and not the exception.

H.R. 4254 will help address the underrepresentation of women at all levels in aerospace education and in the workforce by privatizing the recruitment of qualified women to apply for NASA internships and fellowships. Some of these women will go on to be STEM teachers, and others will have research or industry careers. They will all benefit from participating in the NASA programs, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY).

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Women in Aerospace Education Act. I want to thank my friend and colleague, Congressman KNIGHT, for working with me to address critical workforce needs and bridge the gender gap in the aerospace industry.

Mr. Speaker, quite simply, we do not have enough skilled aerospace workers in America, and the problem is growing worse. According to a 2015 Aviation Week Workforce Study, nearly one-fifth—one-fifth—of our aerospace engineers are now eligible for retirement. What is more, women only account for

about 15 percent of all aerospace engineers. That means that women represent a tremendous opportunity, an untapped resource for a sector vital to our economy and to our national security.

Bringing women to the table is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart and necessary thing to do in order to keep America competitive in a 21st century economy.

Women provide new and essential perspective in the workplace, driving innovation and strengthening our ability to address new challenges. With an aging workforce, we must do everything in our power to broaden and deepen the pool of skilled workers and provide all Americans with the skills they need to compete in a global economy.

Aerospace companies in northwest and central Connecticut, like Ensign-Bickford, Praxair, and United Technologies Corporation, have shared with me for years their concerns about this aging workforce. That is because they are looking down the line, and they know that if they don't diversify their workforce soon, shortages of skilled workers could force these companies to relocate or even leave the United States.

Our bill, the Women in Aerospace Education Act, addresses the need to expand and diversify the STEM workforce in two ways.

First, our bill supports hands-on experiences for teachers. The Women in Aerospace Education Act does this by encouraging universities applying for Noyce grants to incorporate aerospace working and learning experiences at the national laboratories and NASA centers into their fellowship programs.

Second, our bill specifically targets diversifying the aerospace workforce by allowing the National Science Foundation to prioritize women and other underrepresented groups working in aerospace engineering when awarding the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship grants.

Noyce teacher grants play a vital role in placing STEM teachers in rural or lower-income school districts, which all too often do not have access to the resources, to give students robust hands-on science. Our bill will help ensure that more female STEM teachers will enter classrooms with firsthand knowledge of how aerospace technologies are strengthening America's future.

This is important. This is important because it is a fact that girls who have women science teachers are more likely to consider a career in the sciences, and teachers who are exposed to hands-on, real-life science are better able to kindle that interest in science among their students.

Let me give you an example of what a difference these efforts will make. Kelley Johnson is a member of my STEM Advisory Board. She is a founder and president of Doors to Explore, Incorporated, a startup in my district that provides an online resource for young people to explore STEM careers.

Growing up, Kelley had no idea what aerospace engineering was; that is, until a local company donated a Wang computer to her high school, which allowed her to take her first computer science classes. Kelley went on to work at NASA where she designed electronics for two satellites. Her time at NASA was instrumental in developing her critical thinking skills and provided her with an even stronger foundation in STEM that she has used in every job since.

Kelley's early exposure to computer science and her work at NASA launched her into a successful career in STEM, and she is now sharing that with a new generation of students.

I am committed to making Kelley's experience available to young women and men all across this country who would thrive from mentorship from female science teachers or work experience at NASA or the national labs.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman KNIGHT for his leadership on this bill and on this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support the Women in Aerospace Education Act.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I urge passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I think Members can hear that we have got passion here, and Ms. JOHNSON, Ms. ESTY, and I believe that talk is cheap, and this is actually going to do something. If we are going to talk about STEM continually, and we are going to try and push this maybe into an arena that hasn't been pushed before, then let's do something. That is exactly what this is doing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4254, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL SPACE COOPERATION ACT

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1159) to provide for continuing cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Israel Space Agency, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1159

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 ''United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) authorized in 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) supports and coordinates United States Government research in aeronautics, human exploration and operations, science, and space technology;

(2) established in 1983, the Israel Space Agency (ISA) supports the growth of Israel's space industry by supporting academic research, technological innovation, and educational activities;

(3) the mutual interest of the United States and Israel in space exploration affords both nations an opportunity to leverage their unique abilities to advance scientific discovery;

(4) in 1996, NASA and the ISA entered into their first agreement outlining areas of mutual cooperation, which remained in force until 2005;

(5) since 1996, NASA and the ISA have successfully cooperated on many space programs supporting the Global Positioning System and research related to the sun, earth science, and the environment;

(6) the bond between NASA and the ISA was permanently forged on February 1, 2003, with the loss of the crew of STS–107 including Israeli Astronaut Ilan Ramon;

(7) the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–296) designated Israel as a Major Strategic Partner of the United States; and

(8) on October 13, 2015, the United States and Israel signed the Framework Agreement between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States of America and the Israel Space Agency for Cooperation in Aeronautics and the Exploration and Use of Airspace and Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.

SEC. 3. CONTINUING COOPERATION.

The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration shall continue to work with the Israel Space Agency to identify and cooperatively pursue peaceful space exploration and science initiatives in areas of mutual interest, taking all appropriate measures to protect sensitive information, intellectual property, trade secrets, and economic interests of the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1159, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act deserves

our support. The peaceful use of outer space and cooperation with our friends and allies lie at the very heart of NASA's mission.

The United States has been a partner and a friend to the Israeli space program since its creation three decades ago. Our voyages have brought us closer together as nations, as partners, and as friends. Our shared quests for peace, knowledge, and friendship echo our experiences together on Earth.

But sadness and sorrow have tested that relationship. Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon, flew to space for the first time on the ill-fated Space Shuttle Columbia. Even though that accident tragically ended the life of Ilan and six U.S. crew members, the U.S. and Israel turned that tragedy into hope, working together even more closely.

In 2015, the U.S. and Israel again renewed their partnership with another 10-year commitment to peaceful cooperation in space. That mutual commitment to the peaceful exploration of outer space has grown even stronger with the passage of this act under consideration today.

Peaceful space exploration offers all humanity a common, noble goal, extending our collective reach further into the heavens. Reaching farther and broadening our understanding of the universe is one of the most important and honorable challenges that we can face together. I believe that working together with our allies and partners on the peaceful exploration of space is an essential part of what makes NASA a vital national asset. This bill strengthens NASA's ability to do this important work.

I am also pleased that the bill includes a recognition that sensitive and proprietary information should be protected.

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, I invite all of my colleagues to join me in support of the United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1159, the United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act. The cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA, and the Israel Space Agency is just one example of peaceful international cooperation that has been a hallmark of NASA's approach since its inception in 1958.

In fact, when Congress passed NASA's founding legislation, the Space Act of 1958, one of the primary objectives established for the agency was: ''7, Cooperation by the United States with other nations and groups of nations in work done pursuant to this act and in the peaceful application of the results thereof.''

NASA has followed this objective over the years in a variety of ways. Since its establishment in 1958, NASA has entered into over 5,000 original agreements with international entities, and currently NASA has over 800 active cooperative agreements across a range of disciplines with over 120 countries and international organizations.

These international partnerships have led to a range of benefits in scientific advancement, access to scientific data, partnering in exploration, and sharing the costs and risks of space missions.

NASA has had a long and fruitful relationship with the country of Israel, and that cooperative relationship continues to this day. Current activities with Israel include the involvement of almost 200 Israeli schools in the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, GLOBE, educational project; collaboration on atmospheric and climate research; and numerical cloud modeling, among other activities.

I think it is also fitting to remember that the crew of the ill-fated Space Shuttle Columbia mission, STS–107, included an Israeli astronaut, Ilan Ramon, who, along with the entire STS–107 crew, tragically perished with the loss of the space shuttle orbiter on February 1, 2003.

Israel has shared in the great achievements of NASA as well as great losses that have paved the way for future space explorers. Their sacrifice will be held in our hearts as we work to further space exploration for the benefit of mankind.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the sponsor of this legislation, Mr. KILMER, for introducing the bill.

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

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. KILMER).

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, but before I do, I want to just briefly acknowledge the members of my community who were affected by a tragic Amtrak derailment in Pierce County, Washington, today. The families of those we lost and all the folks affected by this are in my prayers tonight.

Mr. Speaker, on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy came before this body and gave an urgent special address. He laid out the costs of supporting the space program and of going to the Moon, and he said: ''We choose to go into space because whatever mankind must undertake, free men must fully share.''

Today, Mr. Speaker, that journey continues as we take a vote to formalize sharing a space partnership between our Nation and a close ally and friend, the nation of Israel.

This partnership began in 1985 when NASA and the Israel Space Agency began cooperating on a limited basis. A decade later, our Nation signed an agreement to allow Israeli astronauts to begin training with their American counterparts.

In 2003, Israeli Air Force Colonel Ilan Ramon became the first Israeli astronaut. He traveled to space aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia. It was a 16-day mission, and the crew of six Americans and one Israeli conducted 80 experiments that helped us understand our place in the universe just a little bit better.

Tragically, the celebration of this partnership turned to shared mourning as Columbia was lost on reentry, but the tragedy did not stop our shared journey into space. To this day, we continue to cooperate, including on projects everyone benefits from, including the Global Positioning System, and research that helps us better understand the Sun, and even research related to our environment here on Earth.

In 2015, NASA and the Israel Space Agency signed a civil space framework agreement to formalize and expand cooperation in civil space activities.

Mr. Speaker, today's vote continues a deep and lasting partnership among free societies. I have been proud to work with a number of my colleagues and NASA and everyday Americans who know that all mankind benefits when we explore our universe.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman for his leadership on these issues and the ranking member, who has been such a champion in support of smart policies in the arena of science, space, and technology. I also would like to thank the majority and minority staff from the committee for the work that they do.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I urge passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1159, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM CAREERS ACT

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4323) to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer

science, and scientific research, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4323

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 ''Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term ''Director'' means the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(2) FOUNDATION.—The term ''Foundation'' means the National Science Foundation.

(3) STEM.—The term ''STEM'' has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 6621 note).

(4) VETERAN.—The term ''veteran'' has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. SUPPORTING VETERANS IN STEM EDUCATION AND COMPUTER SCIENCE.

(a) SUPPORTING VETERAN INVOLVEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND STEM EDUCATION.—The Director shall, through the research and education activities of the Foundation, encourage veterans to study and pursue careers in STEM and computer science, in coordination with other Federal agencies that serve veterans.

(b) VETERAN OUTREACH PLAN.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a plan for how the Foundation can enhance its outreach efforts to veterans. Such plan shall—

(1) report on the Foundation's existing outreach activities;

(2) identify the best method for the Foundation to leverage existing authorities and programs to facilitate and support veterans in STEM careers and studies, including teaching programs; and

(3) identify a method for the Foundation to track veteran participation in research and education programs of the Foundation, and describe any barriers to collecting such information.

(c) NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD INDICATORS REPORT.—The National Science Board shall provide in its annual report on indicators of the state of science and engineering in the United States any available and relevant data on veterans in science and engineering careers or education programs.

(d) ROBERT NOYCE TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE.—Section 10 of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 1862n–1) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5)—

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

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

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(C) higher education programs that serve or support veterans.'';

(2) in subsection (b)(2)(F)—

(A) by striking ''and students'' and inserting '', students''; and

(B) by inserting '', and veterans'' before the period at the end;

(3) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting ''and veterans'' before the period at the end; and

(4) in subsection (d)(2), by inserting ''and veterans'' before the period at the end.

(e) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS AND MASTER TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS UPDATE.—Section 10A(d) of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 1862n–1a(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(F)—

(A) by striking ''and individuals'' and inserting '', individuals''; and

(B) by inserting '', and veterans'' before the period at the end; and

(2) in paragraph (4)(B), by inserting ''and veterans'' before the period at the end.

(f) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION COMPUTER AND NETWORK SECURITY CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS UPDATE.—Section 5(a) of the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (15 U.S.C. 7404(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''and students who are veterans'' after ''these fields''; and

(2) in paragraph (3)—

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

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (J) as subparagraph (K); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the following:

''(J) creating opportunities for veterans to transition to careers in computer and network security; and''.

(g) GRADUATE TRAINEESHIPS IN COMPUTER AND NETWORK SECURITY RESEARCH UPDATE.—Section 5(c)(6)(C) of the Cyber Security Research and Development Act (15 U.S.C. 7404(c)(6)(C)) is amended by inserting ''or veterans'' after ''disciplines''.

(h) VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES STEM EDUCATION INTERAGENCY SUBCOMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall establish a subcommittee under the Committee on STEM Education of the National Science and Technology Council (established under section 101 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010) to coordinate Federal programs and policies for transitioning and training veterans and military spouses for STEM careers.

(2) DUTIES OF SUBCOMMITTEE.—The subcommittee established under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) coordinate Federal agency STEM outreach activities and programs for veterans and military spouses; and

(B) develop and facilitate the implementation by participating agencies of a strategic plan, which shall—

(i) specify and prioritize short- and long-term objectives;

(ii) specify the common metrics that will be used by Federal agencies to assess progress toward achieving such objectives;

(iii) identify barriers veterans face in reentering the workforce, including a lack of formal STEM education, career guidance, and the process of transferring military credits and skills to college credits;

(iv) identify barriers military spouses face in establishing careers in STEM fields;

(v) describe the approaches that each participating agency will take to address administratively the barriers described in clauses (iii) and (iv); and

(vi) identify any barriers that require Federal or State legislative or regulatory changes in order to be addressed.

(3) DUTIES OF OSTP.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall encourage and monitor the efforts of the Federal agencies participating in the subcommittee to ensure that the strategic plan required under paragraph (2)(B) is developed and executed effectively and that the objectives of such strategic plan are met.

(4) REPORT.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall—

(A) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, submit to Congress the strategic plan required under paragraph (2)(B); and

(B) include in the annual report required by section 101(d) of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act a description of any progress made in carrying out the activities described in paragraph (2)(B) of this subsection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4323, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4323, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act, is about helping expand veterans' job and education opportunities in the sciences.

The bill requires the National Science Foundation to develop a veterans outreach plan and to publish data on veterans' participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields in its annual Indicators report.

The bill also updates the Noyce Teacher Scholarship program, its fellowship programs, and cyber grant programs to include outreach to veterans.

Additionally, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is tasked with overseeing an interagency working group to examine how to increase veteran participation in STEM career fields, including addressing any barriers for servicemembers and their spouses.

In the next 5 years, between 1 and 1.5 million members of the United States Armed Forces will be leaving the military, according to the Department of Defense. Many of these veterans will be seeking new careers. By a great margin, veterans cite finding employment as their number one need when returning home.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupations in the STEM fields are projected to grow to more than 9 million between 2012 and 2022, an increase of 1 million jobs.

Research shows that many military veterans already have skills and training that align with STEM careers, particularly in information technology. However, research has also shown that veterans face many barriers as they reenter the workforce, including a lack of formal STEM education, career guidance, and the difficult task of transferring military credits to civilian credits.

Our Nation's veterans deserve every opportunity to transition to a healthy

and successful civilian life. This bill will help our servicemembers to continue to serve our Nation in many new ways by filling 21st century jobs and keeping America on the cutting edge of innovation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. TAKANO, the ranking vice chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and a fellow member on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, for cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation. I also salute all of my fellow veterans on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee who joined me in introducing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4323, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act, and I thank Mr. DUNN and Mr. TAKANO for introducing this good legislation.

The demand for a workforce equipped with STEM skills is growing. At the same time, many veterans developed valuable technical skills during their service. We must do more to take advantage of those skills and increase veteran participation in STEM careers if we are to meet the workforce demands.

This summer, I was pleased to see the passage of the Forever GI Bill, which extended GI benefits for veterans enrolled in STEM degree programs. Now that STEM degrees are more accessible for veterans, we must do more to support veterans during their transition into STEM degree programs and careers.

H.R. 4323 directs the National Science Foundation to report data on veterans in STEM studies and careers and develop a plan to increase outreach to veterans.

This bill also creates an interagency committee that will examine how Federal programs and policies can best be leveraged to equip veterans with the skills they need to transition into STEM careers.

H.R. 4323 is a good step toward strengthening our STEM workforce and creating opportunities for an eminently deserving sector of our citizenry.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman, the ranking member, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4323, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act.

I led this bill with the gentleman from Florida because finding ways to improve higher education for veterans is essential to our economy and critical to keeping our promise to those who serve.

This legislation advances the great work being done by the National Science Foundation by requiring NSF to develop a plan to help more veterans enter science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

In addition, it requires NSF to report available data on veterans participating in STEM fields.

NSF will also be required to recruit veterans for existing NSF programs, including the Noyse Teacher Scholarship program, and for cybersecurity-specific education and training programs.

Finally, this bill creates an interagency committee to help veterans and their spouses transition to STEM careers, including reporting on their progress.

All of us understand the challenges veterans face when trying to further their education, but we have also seen what happens when former servicemembers are empowered to success as civilians. After World War II, soldiers returned home to a GI Bill that sparked an era of innovation and economic growth.

By helping veterans enter STEM education and research programs, this bill will help build a workforce that is prepared to succeed in the modern economy. At the same time, it will drive some of our best and brightest into fields where they can make new discoveries and create new technologies that will redefine the world for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to work with my Republican colleague, Mr. DUNN, and I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

□ 1815

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I urge support of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4323, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended (50 U.S.C. 3043), I have enclosed the National Security Strategy of the United States.

This National Security Strategy sets forth my guidance and direction for an America First foreign policy and charts a path to achieving the goals and objectives that will make America great again.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *December 18, 2017*.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 4 of rule XVI, I move that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow for morning-hour debate and 10 a.m. for legislative business.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on the motion to fix the convening time will be followed by 5-minute votes on motions to suspend the rules on:

H.R. 4375, by the yeas and nays; and

H.R. 3979, by the yeas and nays.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 216, nays 169, not voting 46, as follows:

[Roll No. 685]

YEAS—216

Abraham	Babin	Barton
Aderholt	Bacon	Bergman
Allen	Banks (IN)	Biggs
Amodei	Barletta	Bilirakis
Arrington	Barr	Bishop (MI)

Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—169

Adams
Aguilar
Amash
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gottheimer
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
Pallone
Panetta
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—46

Boyle, Brendan F.
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Capuano
Carter (TX)
Clarke (NY)
Collins (NY)
Crawford
DeSantis
Deutch
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Gutiérrez
Higgins (LA)
Hudson
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kennedy
Labrador
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Loudermilk
McCollum
Mooney (WV)
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pascrell
Pocan
Rohrabacher
Rooney, Francis
Rosen
Rush
Sánchez
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Speier
Tiberi
Wagner
Walz
Webster (FL)

□ 1858

Messrs. TAKANO, BRADY of Pennsylvania, PETERS, COSTA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Mr. RASKIN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. WALDEN, CALVERT, and CARTER of Georgia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to fix convening time was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

STEM RESEARCH AND EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4375) to provide for a study on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. COMSTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 376, nays 9, not voting 46, as follows:

[Roll No. 686]

YEAS—376

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gomez
Goodlatte
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)

Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—9

Amash
Biggs
Duncan (TN)
Gaetz
Gohmert
Gosar
Grothman
Harris
Massie

NOT VOTING—46

Boyle, Brendan F.
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Capuano
Carter (TX)
Clarke (NY)
Collins (NY)
Crawford
DeSantis
Deutch
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Gutiérrez
Higgins (LA)
Hudson
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kennedy
Labrador
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Loudermilk
McCollum
Mooney (WV)
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pascrell
Pocan
Rohrabacher
Rooney, Francis
Rosen
Rush
Sánchez
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Speier
Tiberi
Wagner
Walz
Webster (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1906

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

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill provide for a report on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KEEP AMERICA'S REFUGES OPERATIONAL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3979) to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 371, nays 14, not voting 46, as follows:

[Roll No. 687]

YEAS—371

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Arrington
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gomez
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Guthrie
Hanabusa
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Huffman
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Nadler
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—14

Amash
Babin
Biggs
Buck
Gaetz
Gohmert
Grothman
Hunter
Massie
Perry
Sanford
Weber (TX)
Williams
Yoho

NOT VOTING—46

Boyle, Brendan F.
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Bucshon
Capuano
Carter (TX)
Clarke (NY)
Collins (NY)
Crawford
DeSantis
Deutch
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Gonzalez (TX)
Gutiérrez
Higgins (LA)
Hudson
Katko
Kennedy
Labrador
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Loudermilk
McCollum
Mooney (WV)
Murphy (FL)
Napolitano
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pascrell
Pocan
Rohrabacher
Rooney, Francis
Rosen
Rush
Sánchez
Scalise
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sinema
Smith (TX)
Speier
Tiberi
Wagner
Walz
Webster (FL)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1914

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO VOTE ON A SOLUTION FOR DREAMERS

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, there are very few legislative days left this calendar year, and the House has yet to debate and vote on the Dream Act or any legislative proposal that would shield our DREAMers from deportation.

The administration created an arbitrary deadline of March 5 before the DACA program begins to phase out. However, Mr. Speaker, we cannot, we should not, and we must not wait until the very last minute to take action.

Every day that goes by, DREAMers are losing protections; they can't get that job they so desperately need; and they can't apply to the school that they want. Simply put, their lives have been put on hold.

Mr. Speaker, Members have seen me come to the floor time after time to advocate for these hardworking, young Americans because I wholeheartedly believe that we need to get this done rapidly. The American people agree, and many of our colleagues from both sides of the aisle agree.

So I urge each one of my colleagues to look at the ideals of compassion and opportunity that have long characterized our generous and great country and allow a vote to help our DREAMers. The time for Congress to take action is now.

HONORING U.S. ARMY COLONEL JOSEPH TOPPIN'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Joseph Toppin of Edison, New Jersey, on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

Colonel Toppin entered the military in 1948, the same year that a wavering President named Harry Truman finally prohibited racial discrimination in the Armed Forces. Colonel Toppin rose to become the first African American to serve as battalion commander for the Army's 40th Infantry Division.

The colonel has dedicated his life to improving the quality of our democracy and making the world a safer place. He helped with postwar planning for the development of Korea. He also was the principal planner for the Army's ship-to-shore discharge operations along the west coast of France. And Colonel Toppin was the inspector general for Fort Dix in New Jersey.

Upon leaving the Army, he had an illustrious career at Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

Colonel Toppin is now retired, but he has still not stopped inspiring those around him, which is why I stand here tonight. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Colonel Toppin on his 100th birthday and for his service to the United States of America.

DISAPPEARANCE OF RHINOS AND ELEPHANTS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, wildlife trafficking is a much larger problem than many realize. This illegal activity is connected to two major concerns: one, extinction of species; and, two, the funding of terrorist organizations.

Rhinos are killed for their horns, and elephants are killed for their tusks. The handful of rhinos in Africa are almost extinct, and 100 African elephants are killed by ivory poachers a day.

Illegal wildlife trade serves as a source of cash flow for thugs like terrorists and international criminal organizations. They fund many of their deadly activities by poaching animals and then selling the parts internationally.

Adding to the problem is the fact that some foreign authorities are corrupt and complicit in trafficking.

All nations must take an aggressive stand to prevent this trafficking. This starts with the stopping of the illegal transport of ivory and rhino horns.

The nations of the world must tighten the screws against those who participate in this destruction of wildlife; otherwise, the only place our kids will see rhinos and elephants is on the Disney Channel.

And that is just the way it is.

AMTRAK CASCADES ACCIDENT

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

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, no Member of this body ever wants to come to this dais and say what I am about to say.

This morning, a train derailed as it crossed Interstate 5 near DuPont, Washington, in the heart of my district, sending railcars to the roadway below.

Lives were lost and families were shattered. Loved ones are severely injured, including a family member of one of my staffers. All this, of course, right in the middle of the holiday season.

Right now, many questions beg for answers. We need to determine what went wrong, and the NTSB will be investigating. But, for now, I am grateful for our first responders and the community for stepping up. So many set aside their grief and reported for duty, including many first responders who came in on their day off.

Our hearts go out to the families impacted by this horrific tragedy, and we ask for everyone's prayers for the victims to continue to recover.

IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR END-STAGE RENAL DISEASE PATIENTS

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor and supporter of the bipartisan Dialysis PATIENTS Demonstration Act, which provides better care for patients who are suffering from end-stage renal disease, also known as kidney failure.

Currently, there are about 9,000 Minnesotans who suffer from end-stage renal disease. Many of these patients spend hours and hours enduring multiple hospital visits each and every week to treat this disease; and, on top of that, they oftentimes also have to travel to a different location to get treatment for other health conditions they may have as well.

This legislation will allow dialysis centers to provide integrated care for patients by bringing in providers so that people can receive comprehensive treatments all in the same place. These patients will also be able to see additional benefits, like transportation services, dental care, and vision care.

Mr. Speaker, let's pass this bill so we can improve the quality of life for this vulnerable patient population by coordinating the care system and making it easier for them to receive their treatments.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

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

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the Members of the House will cast a vote on the tax conference committee report, the final version of the Republican tax plan.

The Republican leadership rushed this bill to the finish line at the expense of small-business owners and working families. I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

As a former small-business owner, I understand firsthand the importance of tax simplification. Unfortunately, this bill does the opposite: it complicates our Tax Code while giving companies fewer than 2 weeks to adjust before it goes into effect. This creates serious uncertainty for small-business owners who create jobs and invest in our communities.

I support reforming our Tax Code, but I ask my colleagues to stop rushing this process and to put working families first. There is simply too much at stake.

We can simplify our tax system without exploding the national debt and spiking healthcare premiums. For the sake of our economy and our future, we need to kill this bill.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today marks 50 years since President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill into law officially establishing the National Park Foundation.

The National Park Foundation works to enrich America's national parks and programs, safeguard our heritage, and engage the next generation of national park enthusiasts.

Celebrating 50 years, the National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service.

Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help protect more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts. It works to connect all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture, and rich history. And, the National Park Foundation helps to engage the next generation of park stewards.

In 2016, we proudly commemorated the National Park Service's 100th anniversary. The National Park Foundation launched the Centennial Campaign for America's national parks, a comprehensive effort to strengthen and enhance the future of our parks.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly thank the National Park Foundation for all that it does to support our national treasures for another 100 years.

Congratulations.

RECOGNIZING JOHN ANDERSON

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

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of John Anderson of Kia Motors. John is retiring at the end of this year, after 33 years in the auto industry.

From General Motors, to Delphi, to Kia, John has seen the ups and downs of the auto industry and has more than earned his retirement. But, this is a bittersweet moment for many of us in my hometown of West Point, Georgia.

Kia opened a Washington office in conjunction with opening its manufacturing plant in 2010. The plant opened when I was mayor and Sonny Perdue was Governor. John was on the job then and has been there every day as the head of Washington's office since it opened.

From the beginning of his career at Disney's Epcot Center, when he was the General Motors guy explaining the future of the industry, to his current role at Kia, John has made the automotive industry better; and he has done it with a remarkable touch of humanity and friendship along the way.

John has been a great advocate for my hometown, for my district, and for the industry of Kia that now calls it home. As he moves into retirement with his wife, Joanna, as they get to spend a little time together, we wish him well in his retirement.

RECOGNIZING DR. LESTER B. JOHNSON, JR.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Dr. Lester Johnson, Jr., who passed away on November 29, 2017, at 91 years of age. Dr. Johnson's work to provide a high-quality education to all students in Savannah, Georgia, has truly made our community a better place to live.

His teaching career spanned 43 years, with 20 of those years teaching at Alfred E. Beach High School, a place where he was a student himself. Dr. Johnson passionately taught industrial arts and mathematics classes, and he received the Beach High School Teacher of the Year Award in 1961.

In 1969, Dr. Johnson began to teach students at Savannah State University, where he later received the university's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1991.

Dr. Johnson's accomplishments don't stop with education. A few of his many accomplishments include being a former State representative and the first African-American Eagle Scout in Savannah.

Dr. Lester Johnson's students leave his legacy throughout the First Congressional District and the rest of our Nation. He will truly be missed.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

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

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Wreaths Across America Day, a tribute held annually to honor and remember those servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great Nation.

Since Congress designated Wreaths Across America a national day of remembrance in 2007, Americans have joined together at Arlington National Cemetery and in their local communities to honor our veterans who have passed on.

This year, more than 1 million wreaths were laid at over 1,300 cemeteries throughout the country. 245,000 wreaths were placed by thousands of volunteers at Arlington National Cemetery.

On Saturday, in a virtual blizzard, I had the distinct honor of joining the Rome-Utica Chapter of the Military Officers Association; the Navy ROTC students from Proctor High School in Utica, New York; and members of the Marine Corps League at Saint Peter's Church in Rome, New York.

As we laid wreaths on the graves of our fallen servicemen and -women, we took a moment to say each veteran's name, to remember each individual's life of service, sacrifice, and the families they left behind.

Divided by distance but not by spirit, on Saturday, millions of Americans came together in a common mission to honor and remember our fallen heroes.

□ 1930

CONGRATULATING SHASTA HIGH SCHOOL WOLVES

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to offer a hearty congratulations to the Shasta High School Wolves of Redding, California, for their football championship this year. They won the north section. They won the Northern California Championship and made their first ever visit to the California State Championship, where they played down in southern California over the weekend.

Though they came up a little bit short, they did have an early lead in that game after all that travel. So, indeed, congratulations to that program at Shasta High School and to the Wolves of Redding, California.

It is teamwork that really makes this happen, and that is exemplified by the north State's leading rusher, Vince Smith, when he was quoted: ''The thing that was different about this season was that we actually really cared about each other and we were family. Every play, we'd use our hearts and fight for each other.''

That is teamwork. That is the spirit. Congratulations, Shasta High School Wolves.

TAX BILL IMPACTING VETERANS AND ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, wherever I go throughout my district and speak to an audience, I always acknowledge the veterans and Active-Duty military. I think that is one unifying factor for this Congress and for this Nation.

Today, the President offered a national security strategy. During his first 12 months, that strategy has been haphazard and lacking understanding. All of us, however, want to have a strong military, strong military families, and strong resources for our Active Duty and our veterans.

It is sad, however, that in the next 2 days we will be voting on a tax bill that will take $2.3 trillion out of our budget and create a debt. It will raid Medicare and Medicaid, impacting some of those very soldiers and veterans' families. As well, in this new bill, the top 1 percent will get 83 percent of this tax bill.

Isn't it interesting, if you are a family of four making $59,000, there will be $1,800 not given to you but taken away?

We can't have it all, Mr. Speaker. We can't have a strong strategy, of which

there was none today, by taking $2.3 trillion away from the men and women of this Nation.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be on the floor tonight with my colleagues on the Republican and Democrat side as we pay tribute and honor to the great State of Illinois on the anniversary of our bicentennial.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with my colleagues in recognition of our home, the great State of Illinois. It has been the highest honor of my life to serve our State as a Member of Congress, and I am sure it is for the other speakers that we will have here tonight.

2018 represents something special for us and for every Illinoisan. It is our 200th anniversary of statehood. It was December 3, 1818, that Illinois was admitted into the United States. Today I wish to recognize and honor all that Illinois has offered our great Nation.

Illinois' path to statehood began in the 17th century, with Europeans first settling the territory that had been home to many Native American Indian Tribes. The territory would exchange hands several times over the following century, eventually ending up as part of the Northwest Territory after the Revolutionary War. Only a few short years later, Congress would finally agree on its borders and name Illinois the 21st State in the Union.

At that time, I am sure few expected that the largely unsettled area of land would go on to house the third largest city in our country with over 2.7 million residents, or produce agriculture goods that would feed people all over the globe. That these things came to pass is a testament to the hard work and determination of the people of Illinois.

That is why the theme for this year's bicentennial celebration is ''Born, Built, and Grown''—again, ''Born, Built, and Grown''—a chance to highlight not just the many goods and services our State offers, but also the many great Americans born and raised in Illinois, who have gone on to shape the world we live in.

I am proud to represent Illinois' 18th Congressional District, a district made up of 19 counties in central and west central Illinois, including parts of Peoria; Bloomington-Normal; Springfield, our State capital; Jacksonville; Quincy; Macomb; and all places in between. My district borders Missouri and Iowa along the Mississippi River, on the western part.

It is a district with no shortage of great accomplishments and history. In fact, who knows where our entire Nation would be without the leadership of one Abraham Lincoln, a lawyer from Springfield, who represented nine of the counties in my current district. During his one term in the United States House of Representatives, he served from 1847 to 1849. People forget that he was Congressman Abraham Lincoln before he was President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln would spend most of his life in Springfield, Illinois, as a lawyer; and also in Menard County, working in the post office there. He would also take river boats down the Sangamon River of the Illinois River, down to New Orleans.

Returning to Springfield to practice law in between his sole term in the House and running for President in 1860, during his administration, America would weather a bloody Civil War but come out having rooted out the evil of slavery. While he would die in office, Lincoln's leadership is why he continues to be named our greatest President. He earned the nickname ''Honest Abe.'' Illinois would continue to play a role in the abolishment of slavery when it became the first State to ratify the 13th Amendment in 1865. While he would die in office, Lincoln's leadership is why he continues to be our greatest President today.

Over a century later, another man with ties to Illinois would be sworn in as President: President Ronald Reagan from Illinois. He is the only President who was born and raised in Illinois. President Reagan would go on being the Governor of California—from the Governor of California to the Presidency in 1981.

Born in Tampico, Illinois, Ronald Reagan spent his formative years growing up in Illinois. His father was a traveling salesman. They lived in Monmouth, in Galesburg, in Dixon, in Chicago for a short time, and also in Tampico. Of course, Ronald Reagan got a scholarship to play football at Eureka College in Woodford County, in my district. He was a student there, played football, and graduated from there.

His time as President and Governor was defined by optimism and a faith in the American spirit and a way of life, a faith that was instilled during his formative years at Eureka and growing up in Illinois. Like Lincoln, his leadership during tough times remains a point of pride for not only Illinois, but for the entire Nation.

Outside of politics, our congressional district is home to other famous Illinoisans who all called central Illinois home, including: the venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen of the Catholic faith, future Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Jim Thome of Bartonville, two-time NBA champion Shaun Livingston from Peoria, former Major League Baseball manager and World Series champion Joe Girardi, and even the late comedian Richard Pryor. Just imagine where America's sports and entertainment industries would be without their talents.

Despite Chicago being our Nation's third largest city and serving as a hub for many great industries, the largest sector of our economy remains agriculture. Last year, Illinois was the sixth largest producer of agriculture in the Nation, producing over $8 billion worth of agriculture exports. Our district was no slouch, coming in as the eighth largest congressional district in the country in terms of agriculture production, proving once more that our State has some of the most fertile farmland in the entire world. Illinois farmers continue to grow soybeans, corn, and much more that keep America's economy growing and plates all over the globe full.

My district also has the distinction that 96 percent of the pumpkins produced in the world come from central Illinois, within a 100-mile radius of Peoria, and we are proud of that. So the next time you have a pumpkin latte or a pumpkin beer or pumpkin pie, it originated somewhere in central Illinois.

Our State's ties to agriculture don't just end there, but they also include several companies that are worldwide leaders in farming equipment and Earth-moving products. Whether it is John Deere or Caterpillar, just to name a few, they are known across the globe as producers of the finest construction, farming, and Earth-moving machines out there.

The Archer Daniels Midland Company, or ADM, is another Illinois agriculture institution with strong ties to Illinois' 18th District. Formerly headquartered in Decatur, the global agricultural giant is now headquartered in Chicago, operating more than 270 plants and 420 crop procurement facilities worldwide. This is where cereal grains and oilseeds are produced.

So not only is Illinois leading the way in growing crops, but also in turning them into products that show up in grocery stores across our country and across the globe.

Finally, we cannot conclude without noting the presence of Forbes' 33rd ranked business in the country: State Farm Insurance in Bloomington-Normal. The insurance giant has been providing insurance coverage and financial services for 95 years and is headquartered in my district in Bloomington, Illinois. Our ''local good neighbor,'' State Farm, brings not only peace of mind to millions of Americans as they buy or rent a home or an automobile, but they also assist in planning for the future.

I couldn't be prouder to be here tonight with my colleagues. Those are

some of the ways that Illinois' 18th District has contributed to the State's story and how it will keep Illinois at the forefront of our Nation and global economy.

Now I would like to recognize a number of my colleagues that are here tonight. I yield to the gentleman from southern Illinois (Mr. BOST), my colleague.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Peoria, Illinois, for hosting this Special Order on the State's bicentennial year.

You know, Illinois is a State of threes. You know, we had three State capitals: Kaskaskia, Vandalia, and Springfield. We have three State seals. A lot of people don't know that.

If you know Illinois well, you know that there is three distinct parts of Illinois involved. Whether you are in politics or business, it is always referred to as Cook County, the Collar counties, and southern Illinois. In southern Illinois, we like to capitalize the ''S'' on ''southern.''

There is one other thing that is in threes. If you listen to the Illinois song, three people are mentioned: Lincoln, Grant, and Logan.

Now, the reason why I bring those up is because, tied with southern Illinois and Illinois' 12th Congressional District—the district that is the most southern and most western of the State of Illinois, which I am proud to represent—actually was and had the first State capital. Also, it has John A. Logan in that mentioning of those three names.

John A. Logan, if you heard that name before, if you are in D.C., there are many things that are named after Logan, including ''Logan Circle.'' Logan was actually the gentleman who was laid in state—the eighth person laid in state here in this Capitol, and that was because he had established himself from deep southern Illinois. As a matter of fact, his hometown was—my hometown was his farm, which was subdivided to make that hometown.

□ 1945

As a matter of fact, the deed in abstract of the home that I was born and raised in and the house that I later bought from my parents and raised my children for the first 10 years of my marriage in that home, my great-grandmother actually bought that property from his father.

John Logan established himself, which is really wild, and he actually was such a large part of Illinois history. He first ran as a Democrat; he was a district attorney. He then became a State representative, then a State senator, then went on to be a Member of the U.S. Congress and later a U.S. Senator.

It was during the time of the Civil War, when the Civil War broke out, that there were questions on what would happen, because deep southern Illinois was split during the war, though stayed united as a State.

John Logan came back and led troops for the North. What is really wild is after becoming a field grade general and a decorated war general, he came back to southern Illinois, then went back into politics as a Republican, and stayed a U.S. Senator but as a Republican and was part of the reconstructionists.

The amazing thing about John Logan is that he actually ran for vice president. They lost, he and Blaine. He then was running for president and gave a long speech, actually, in the gentleman's hometown who is hosting this tonight, for about 8 hours in the rain, got on a train, came back to the capital here, and passed away with pneumonia.

Another great thing that happened in deep southern Illinois in the Illinois 12th is the Lincoln-Douglas debates. I am blessed to have the only district in the State of Illinois that has two Lincoln-Douglas debate sites.

I am being questioned here that maybe there is one other.

Jonesboro, September 15, 1858; Alton, October 15, 1858. Very proud of that. And, you know, these two went on after Douglas wins as Senator, but then Lincoln ends up winning the Presidency.

There are several other things, but one other thing about deep southern Illinois, look, many people don't realize that deep southern Illinois has the smallest national forest in the Nation. The Shawnee National Forest is located in JOHN SHIMKUS' and my district. We share it. It is truly a beautiful part of Illinois, wonderful rolling hills, deep forests, much good there.

Also the Illinois 12th has Murphysboro, my hometown, which is the barbecue capital of Illinois. We have teams that have won as many as four grand championships and went on to create businesses all over this Nation in that business and in the barbecue business, and we are very proud of that. I would argue that maybe it is the barbecue capital of the world. There may be others that would argue different with that.

How many of you, as children, remember the cartoon ''Popeye'', who came from Chester, Illinois, in the Illinois 12th?

I am sure many of the other people who speak here tonight, Mr. Speaker, are also proud of their home districts in the State of Illinois, and should be, because I am going to tell you, whether it is from Cairo, to Galena, to Chicago, to Mulkeytown, from Danville, to East St. Louis, the State of Illinois is a great State. We love it.

We have good things and bad things that happen, but it has been a great State that has helped this Nation, provided great leaders, provided great people involved in all kinds of fields throughout this Nation and this world.

I have no reservations in saying, and I am sure others would say this about theirs, but I am so blessed, because I live in the most beautiful part of Illinois, the most beautiful part of Illinois where it starts out as the flatlands, what is commonly known as the prairies of Illinois up around St. Louis and Alton, and it comes south. When you get down to my area, it turns into rolling hills, rolling hills that produce peaches and apples and grapes, the beautiful wineries, areas of tourism, the land between the lakes, the land known as Little Egypt, and I am so privileged to be able to represent that part of the State of Illinois.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know we are going to have a lot of other speakers tonight, but I do want to tell you that Illinois, as I said, has had good times and bad times, but there are a whole lot more good times to come. It is a great place to live, it is a great place to raise your children, and I thank God that I had the opportunity to be born and raised there.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BOST for his comments here tonight. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Speaker, next I want to yield to and recognize the Congresswoman from Matteson, Illinois, ROBIN KELLY, who we are so glad found her way from New York to Bradley University as a student in Peoria, Illinois, and has served our State well in the State legislature and throughout government there. We are happy to have her here tonight.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAHOOD for yielding and for organizing tonight's Special Order about our great State, Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am Illinois proud, and I rise today to celebrate our State's upcoming 200th birthday.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to represent Illinois' Second Congressional District—in my opinion, the best district in the entire country. This community starts at 53rd and Cornell around the Museum of Science and Industry, it then reaches south to include many suburbs in Cook and Will Counties. It stretches all the way to the border of Indiana and the border between Kankakee and Iroquois Counties, to include some of our Nation's most productive family farms.

While I am humbled and honored to represent the remarkable people and families of Illinois' Second District, as you have heard, I first moved to Peoria to attend Bradley University.

While at Bradley, I joined the Zeta Phi chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho and completed my BA in psychology and my MA in counseling. I am proud to have been a Bradley University trustee, since 2003, and to continue to be a part of this amazing institution that is preparing the next generation of leaders.

I lived in Peoria until 1992, when I moved to Matteson, Illinois, my current home in the great Second Congressional District, to become the village's director of community affairs.

In 2002, I was elected to the Illinois General Assembly, where I first met many of my current colleagues in the

Illinois delegation while serving together in Springfield. At the time, I also served with the State senator who would eventually go on to become President of the United States, Barack Obama.

As someone who has been privileged to live throughout Illinois and travel it extensively while working as a chief of staff to the State treasurer, I couldn't be more proud to represent this great State and the great people who will call it home, especially those who call the Second District home.

The Second District is truly a microcosm of Illinois and the entire U.S. It is urban, suburban, and rural. It includes parts of the city of Chicago and more than 1,200 farms.

In the Second District, Nucor makes American steel and our Ford facility makes American cars. We grow corn, soybeans, and raise American pork. We have local breweries and giants like Amazon, alongside world-class bike trails, scenic vistas, and the historic Pullman neighborhood, and we will soon be home to the new Obama Presidential Library and Museum.

Mr. Speaker, the Second District is home to many universities and Blue 1647, a tech incubator, that are training the next generation of businesses, tech, and innovation leaders.

Our small, medium-sized, and family businesses like Pullman Cafe, K&S Tire, SA Piggush Financial Consultants, South Creek Animal Hospital, Two Whisks Bakery, Homewood Bat, and Affordable Flooring By Rodrigo drive forward our regional economy and create local jobs for Illinois families.

Our farms, like Van Drunen Farms and FutureCeuticals, feed people in more than 70 countries around the world, and our manufacturers, including Crown Cork and Seal, Best Diamond Plastics, and Chicago Heights Steel continue the proud tradition of Make It In America.

While we are proud to build and grow products used around the State, country, and globe, you might be surprised to learn that many of the things you buy every day cross through the Second District. For generations, Chicago has been the crossroads of America, a hub for transcontinental and global commerce, and the Second District is the beating heart of that transportation infrastructure that creates good-paying American jobs.

The Second District is also home to a vibrant faith community that is committed to serving their community by putting their faith into action. Leaders in these movements have their houses of worship in the Second or they serve many people in the Second: Reverend Dr. James Hunt of New Hope Christian Community Church; Rami Nashashibi, executive director of the Inner-City Muslim Action Network and a recent MacArthur Foundation Fellow; Rabbi Ellen Dreyfus, B'nai Yehuda Beth Sholom; Father Mike Pfleger, a tireless champion to end gun violence; Pastor Andrew Singleton from Victory Apostolic; Apostle Ron from Full Gospel Christian Assembly.

Our local nonprofits are helping to create a better, fairer, and more just world, organizations like Chicago Family Health Center; Aunt Martha's; Polished Pebbles; Alliance of the Southeast; the Dovetail Project; Centro de Trabajadores Unidos; and Kids Off The Block, which provides at-risk young people with positive alternatives.

In the Second District, our young people are active and engaged. They are dedicated to being a force for positive change in their communities, in our country, and in their world. In the face of any darkness, they stand proud and allow their personal life to shine through circumstance.

Now, we have had a few famous people coming through the Second also: Quinn Buckner, the basketball player; Shonda Rhimes, famous from ''Scandal,'' ''Grey's Anatomy,'' and ''How to Get Away With Murder;'' Eddy Curry, basketball; Tom Dreesen; Mary Matalin, who worked for Dick Cheney; and Mike Tomczak, who was a player for the Bears.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I am Illinois proud. As we, the congressional delegation of families throughout the State, celebrate our 200th birthday over the next year, we are focusing on what makes Illinois great, things that I have discussed and you will hear tonight.

Illinois greatness is born, it is built, it is grown, and we are proud of it. Happy birthday, Illinois. Here is to 200 more years of growth, innovation, and leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAHOOD for yielding.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman KELLY very much for those inspiring words about Illinois. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Speaker, next I yield to Congressman RANDY HULTGREN from Plano. Congressman HULTGREN served in our Illinois State senate. He is a proud Illinoisan, he serves our Nation very well. I yield to him now for a few comments.

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I am grateful to Congressman LAHOOD for hosting this, pulling this together, and it really is a great beginning of an anticipation of celebration for the next year's bicentennial of the statehood of my home, Illinois.

Tonight, we are mentioning just a few things that make Illinois such a great State, and I look forward to continuing to highlight many more important facts, figures, stories, and pieces of history about the Prairie State and, more specifically, about the 14th Congressional District throughout 2018, all the way up until our 200th birthday on December 3, 2018.

Illinois is the breadbasket that feeds the Nation and the world. Our State enjoys a global city with world class transportation hubs and small towns filled with the hardworking Americans who make this country what it is. The suburbs of Chicago, where I grew up, are opportunity-filled and family friendly.

I was born in Illinois, grew up in Illinois, and am proud to be raising my family in Illinois. By the way, for the record, just to set it clear, it is Illinois, not Illi-noise—phonetic—so we just make sure that is out there.

I am so proud to represent the 14th Congressional District, the Fox River Valley, the Chain O'Lakes, and so many dozens and dozens of wonderful small- and medium-sized towns that, again, are the heartbeat of Illinois and the heartbeat of this Nation.

Tonight, I also would like to take a moment, as has already been done, to highlight a special giant that hovers over our State, Honest Abe himself.

As a history buff, especially Illinois history, I cannot emphasize enough the impact that Abraham Lincoln has had on our State and also on our Nation and our world.

While he wasn't born in Illinois, his formative years were spent there, and no doubt our State helped shape his vision for what America was meant to be. His moral leadership, his persistent fight against the evils of slavery, his ability to bring diverse coalitions of people to unify the country, all this and more is why we have proudly called Illinois the land of Lincoln.

So, again, it is a great honor and privilege for me to be able to be with my great colleagues, bipartisan, celebrating our State that we are so proud of, and we are looking forward to these next 12 months of ongoing celebration of the great State of Illinois.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman HULTGREN for those important words and comments about our great State.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to and recognize Congresswoman CHERI BUSTOS, who represents the 17th District of Illinois. We share Peoria, Illinois, together in our district. Mrs. BUSTOS was born and raised in Springfield, currently lives in the Quad Cities in East Moline. I yield to the gentlewoman tonight for some comments.

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Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAHOOD for putting this together as we celebrate the 200th birthday of our great State of Illinois.

The congressional district I serve stretches from Rockford to the north; the western border is the Mississippi River; and then we go into central Illinois, as Congressman LAHOOD said, to the city of Peoria. I am very proud to be able to share that city with Congressman LAHOOD.

My congressional district also represents the Quad Cities, which is where I call home. So in between all of these towns is 7,000 square miles of scenic farmland and vibrant towns like Monmouth and Canton and Thomson. We are a proud region with a proud history of manufacturing, agriculture, and service to our Nation.

Let me tell you a little bit about the congressional district I serve. We are the home to John Deere in Moline, the birthplace of Caterpillar in Peoria, and home of the iconic Sock Monkey, which was created in Rockford, Illinois. I kid you not.

In Rockford, we hosted the Nation's very first National Football League game at Douglas Park, where the Rock Island Independents defeated the St. Paul Ideals 48–0, a real romping.

More than 40 years before the world also fell in love with them through a movie called ''A League of Their Own,'' the Rockford Peaches were the four-time champions of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League—also, I kid you not. This is amazing history.

I want to mention a few athletes as well. Jim Thome, Congressman LAHOOD knows him. He was the five-time all-star who played for eight different major league teams. He also came from the city of Peoria, and my brother was very close with him. My brother, my late brother, was a baseball coach at Eastern Illinois University and Southern Illinois University, and he was good friends with Jim Thome.

We have also had several other brilliant performers come out of our region. Comedian Richard Pryor was born and grew up in Peoria. The town of Aledo in Mercer County is the hometown of two country megastars: Suzy Bogguss and Margo Price. And we even have a member of Destiny's Child, Michelle Williams, who came from Rockford. So we are a proud people.

We also are very proud of our agricultural heritage. Our region is one of the top corn producers in the country. We have corn and soybean farms all across Illinois that have been worked by generations of farm families. And they even go through the rolling hills of the Driftless Area in the Galena Territory. What the Driftless Area means is that this is a gorgeous stretch of land where the last ice age actually didn't flatten, and so we have wonderful farmland in that region as well.

A little bit to the east of the Galena Territory, we have a town called Freeport, which is also known as Pretzel City, USA, and it is home to the Union Dairy, which recently celebrated its centennial birthday.

Our region has played a pivotal role not just in our State's history, but also in our Nation's history. Senator Everett Dirksen, a Senate office building right down the road here is named after Senator Dirksen. He came from Pekin, Illinois, which is in my congressional district. If you don't know the history of Everett Dirksen, he was actually one of the authors of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968.

Let's go to where I live, Rock Island County. It was the location of the very first railroad bridge over the Mississippi River, built in 1856. And since we are all getting into this Abraham Lincoln part of our State's history, Abraham Lincoln was the attorney for the bridge company that I just mentioned. Then, 2 years after that bridge was built, our region was the host—I know Congressman BOST said that his district was the only district that had two Lincoln-Douglas debates. Well, there is actually another congressional district that had two debates. One was in Freeport in 1858, in August of that year, and then another was in Galesburg in October of 1858.

So, in fact, President Lincoln's congressional district—I know Congressman DAVIS is going to lay real claim to Congressman Lincoln, but he also—let's see. Congressman DAVIS had part of his district; Congressman LAHOOD had part of his district; and he also represented Tazewell County, which is part of my congressional district.

Another legend of the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant, made his home in Galena, Illinois, and his Presidential campaign headquarters was in a place called the DeSoto House, which is a hotel today in downtown Galena. It is a place where my husband and I like to stay when we visit Galena.

During the Civil War, Rock Island was used as a Union prison camp before it was converted into the Rock Island Arsenal, where, today, it is the Army's only active foundry. The hardworking men and women of the Rock Island Arsenal have produced munitions for every single one of our conflicts and our wars dating back to the Civil War.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the northwestern and central and western part of Illinois have always had a special connection to the veterans who have served in our country. There is one particular street, the last point I want to make talking about my congressional district that I am lucky enough to serve, and its place in history over the last 200 years, but we are very, very proud of the street that we call Hero Street in Silvis, Illinois. It is a 1½-block street, and there is no street of that similar size that has had more men and women serve in the military than Hero Street USA in Silvis, Illinois.

More than 100 people have come from that street of a block and a half long to serve in the military, and 8 of them, all Mexican Americans, made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II and the Korean war. Hero Street has long been a source of pride for the congressional district that I am lucky enough to serve, and I am proud to mention them as part of this Special Order tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I know all of us from this great State of Illinois who are speaking tonight are only scratching the surface about how important our region of the State is to our State's history. I am very proud to be part of this.

I thank Congressman LAHOOD for putting this together so we can talk about the bicentennial of the State of Illinois.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman BUSTOS for her valuable comments and advocacy for the State of Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to a colleague from Taylorville, Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS), somebody who serves a district just to the south of me. We share Springfield together. He represents some of the best institutions of higher learning in our State, and I am proud to share many of the Lincoln sites with my friend.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Congressman LAHOOD, and all my good friends from the Illinois delegation who are here today.

This is really a privilege for me to be able to be here to talk about Illinois' 200th anniversary. It is my home State. It wasn't always my home State. As a matter of fact, my family moved us from our hometown of Des Moines, Iowa, to Taylorville, Illinois, when I was 7 years old, in 1977.

Taylorville was a new experience for me, but it was a home that we established. My parents were able to achieve their dream of owning their own business, which gave my family the chance to achieve the American Dream, and it was right here in Illinois. It was in our home State that celebrates our 200th anniversary.

Taylorville is the place where my wife grew up, and it is where we choose to raise our three children. But it is also my proud hometown, and I love to talk about it because it is where I grew up, but it is also where so many things have happened. Because I have taken this job as a Member of Congress, this opportunity, I have learned a lot more about my hometown.

A couple of highlights that I want to bring out: one, of course, was Taylorville's basketball team from the 1940s still holds the IHSA record. I believe they were 45–0, with big-name players like Johnny Orr and Ron Bontemps.

Edward Mills Purcell was born in Taylorville and raised in Taylorville. He actually was the Nobel Peace Prize winner in physics. He actually created nuclear magnetic resonance, which is the backbone of what we know today as an MRI. It came out of my hometown in Taylorville, Illinois.

I am so honored that, since 2013, I have been blessed to be able to walk this floor and serve the 13th Congressional District with these great colleagues from our home State. The 13th Congressional District goes way beyond my hometown of Taylorville. It stretches in 14 counties, and one area that I know that has been talked about tonight is Springfield, the State capital, Lincoln's hometown.

I have got to give it to my colleague, Mr. LAHOOD. Yes, he represents more geography that Lincoln represented in his one term here in Congress, and Mrs. BUSTOS represents part of Lincoln's old district. I understand that. But as somebody who represents Lincoln himself in Lincoln's tomb, I think I represent Lincoln the most.

What this tells you, this friendly rivalry that we three have, it goes to show you that, in one term in Congress and then his time as the President of our great Nation, Abraham Lincoln took three Members of Congress to follow in his footsteps in his one district. There is no way any of us in this institution can follow in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, but it is such a privilege to know that we three share such history. And that is exactly why we are here today, to talk about the 200th anniversary of our home State, and we would not be talking about Illinois without Abraham Lincoln.

There is a story and a statue in my hometown that has Lincoln and a pig. The old stories are that Lincoln came to practice when he was a lawyer and complained about the pig squealing under the steps of our local courthouse. So we in Taylorville honor Abe and his comments on the pig. Come visit, see the statue, and come celebrate Abraham Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln was a leader that, obviously, our Nation needed at that time. We stand here in the House of Representatives and we debate issues that may seem important today, but, compared to what our great President Abraham Lincoln and the Members of Congress at the time leading up to our Civil War, the issues that they had to discuss and they had to debate, I believe history has shown us that we will never—and, hopefully, never ever—experience what those elected officials did in Lincoln's time.

But it took the courage of Abraham Lincoln to actually keep our Nation together and keep the stability and the growth of the great State of Illinois as part of this United States of America for 200 years. His leadership and ability to unite people is something I strive to do in Congress every day.

We certainly have a diverse State, and I want to highlight some of the things that Abraham Lincoln is probably not known for.

Abe Lincoln actually was the inspiration for landmark legislation that he signed that created the Morrill Land-Grant Acts that gave us land-grant universities, including the greatest land-grant university that I joke with my colleagues about from throughout this great Nation. The greatest land-grant is the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which I am proud to have in my district.

As we move on to talk about important issues, I cannot leave this floor tonight without talking about the importance of agriculture in our home State of Illinois. This past August, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue; chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, MIKE CONAWAY; and so many Members, including Congressman LAHOOD, Congresswoman BUSTOS, and others, joined me and other members of the House Agriculture Committee for a farm bill listening session at the largest outdoor farm event in the country, the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, Illinois. Just the fact that this show is in Illinois every other year truly highlights the importance of Illinois agriculture to the rest of the world.

I am proud to be able to serve on the House Agriculture Committee and serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research. And when we talk about agriculture and our ability to feed the world, it stems right from our home State of Illinois.

With 72,000 farms and over 2,600 food manufacturers, Illinois is a national leader. We are the leading producer of soybeans, corn, swine, and one of the largest producers of ethanol. As we move ahead into the next farm bill debate, I am proud to be able to take Illinois' voice to the House Agriculture Committee with my colleague Congressman BOST and my other colleague Congresswoman BUSTOS.

I am proud to represent central Illinois and the 13th District here in Washington, and I hope that those who follow us for the next 200 years enjoy legislating in a bipartisan way as much as we do together in the Illinois delegation.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman DAVIS for those wonderful words regarding Illinois. I think we can agree there is enough Lincoln history and heritage to go around to all of us. So I thank the gentleman for his advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Deerfield, Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER), who represents many of the northwest suburbs and part of Cook County.

□ 2015

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in honoring our home, the great State of Illinois, on its bicentennial anniversary of its statehood in 1813.

Over the next year, we are celebrating all that Illinois has contributed to American history, culture, innovation, and more over the past 200 years.

On December 3, 1818, Illinois became the 21st State to join this Union. From humble beginnings with only 34,000 people, today, Illinois is the fifth most populous State, with almost 13 million people. Then a frontier prairie State, Illinois now sits firmly at the center of our national life, playing an indelible role in fueling, building, and transporting America's rise.

We are proud of our history as the Land of Lincoln, where, arguably, our greatest U.S. President began his career, raised his family, and first ran for office.

As we have talked about, Abraham Lincoln was not the only President with roots in Illinois. President Grant and President Obama all called Illinois home, and President Reagan was the only President who was actually born in Illinois.

Illinois is my home, too, and like those Presidents, I wasn't born in Illinois. I moved to Illinois 35 years ago—hard to believe it has been that long—to attend college at Northwestern University, immediately falling in love with this great State.

At Northwestern University, I met my wife. She grew up in Glencoe, we settled in Deerfield. We have raised two boys, made our career and our home in Illinois, and, most importantly, made our family in Illinois.

Some of the interesting things to share about Illinois: Illinois had the first aquarium built in Chicago in 1893. The very first skyscraper in the entire world was built in Chicago in 1885. The tallest building in North America, formerly the Sears Tower, now the Willis Tower, is in Chicago. Evanston, home to Northwestern University, is also the home to the ice cream sundae.

Illinois has a lot to be proud of, and will continue to be. Illinois has offered me and my family a tremendous opportunity, but now the task before us—the 18 members of the Illinois delegation who stand before you today thank you for organizing this. Our task now is to make sure that Illinois continues to work to create the same and better opportunities for the next generation.

Personally, I am incredibly lucky to represent the 10th District of Illinois, which stretches from the edges of Cook County all the way north along Lake Michigan to the borders of Wisconsin, from the lake all the way west to Fox Lake. It is an incredible district. It is one of the most thoughtful, engaged constituencies in all of Congress.

My constituents reach out and talk to me about what matters, what they care about. They freely share their opinions, and I welcome the opportunity to hear what is important, to hear their priorities and values, and I have the greatest privilege in my life to represent them in this great body.

What I hear about from my constituents is hope for the future, the belief that Illinois, Chicago, the 10th District, is going to lead this Nation. My district is a district that focuses on education because we know that educating every one of our children, from kindergarten all the way through high school, to college and even grad school, to making sure all of our kids have the skills and lessons they need to succeed, is the way we are going to continue to lead in a global economy.

When it comes to economy, my district has the fourth largest concentration of manufacturing jobs of any district in the entire country. We have innovation, we have manufacturing, we have transportation, because we know, if we are going to grow our economy, we are going to invent things in America, make them in America, and ship them around the world; and Illinois and the 10th District of Illinois is leading the way.

Our district has a great focus on the environment. I have the privilege of representing the largest part of Lake Michigan in the Illinois delegation; Lake Michigan that provides fresh

water to 30 million people. But Illinoisans know that we need to protect our environment to invest in our future, to make sure that our children have clean air, fresh water, and a good, healthy future. That all comes out of Illinois.

For 200 years, Illinois has been a place where people could achieve the promise of a better future. Looking to the future, we will continue to succeed by offering high-quality education, good, well-paying jobs, and a secure, dignified retirement for all our citizens.

I am proud to represent this great State. I am proud to have the privilege to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, fighting for the priorities and values of Illinois. I am proud of the history our State has provided; of the example we have given not just today, but for 200 years. 2018 is going to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of the State of Illinois, but I know that our best days still lie ahead of us. I know that, together, we are going to work to make our future solid and our kids' opportunities secure.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman SCHNEIDER for his very complimentary words of his district and the State of Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, I next yield to the gentleman from the Illinois delegation, Congressman RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHI, one of our newest members whose hometown is Schaumburg, Illinois, but his roots go downstate to Peoria, Illinois. We are proud to have him as a Peorian. His parents live in my district as constituents. He has hit the ground running here in Congress and is proud of his Illinois roots both downstate and now representing the suburbs of Chicago.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAHOOD for organizing this Special Order. I am so honored to be a part of it.

As the Congressman mentioned, my name is RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHI, a Congressman representing the great Eighth District of Illinois, which are the west and northwest suburbs of Chicago.

I am proud to join my colleagues tonight in celebrating Illinois' bicentennial—the 200th year—of statehood. There is something special in celebrating the anniversary of Illinois' entry into the Union, as it was the State which produced the man who would save it.

I am proud to be from the Land of Lincoln, but for all of its national and historic importance, my love of our home State is also very personal. I did not have the honor of being born in Illinois, but it is my home and always will be because our State welcomed my family with open arms, as it has for so many others over the last 200 years.

You see, I was born in New Delhi, India, and when I was 3 months old, my parents brought our family to the United States so my father could continue his education and our family could embrace all the opportunities of this great country.

It wasn't easy and there was struggle, but my family came to know that the American Dream of building a better life was possible because the people of Illinois made it so.

We had our challenges, but everything changed for the better when my father was offered a position as an engineering professor in a mysterious place called Peoria, Illinois. They did not know where Peoria, Illinois, was at the time. They unfurled the map, found out where Peoria was, packed the U-Haul in New York State, and started driving and driving and driving. They made it to Peoria, but that was when the golden years in our family started. That is where they educated their two sons in wonderful public schools. That is where they bought their first home. That is where they entered the middle class.

Every night, my father would say something at the dinner table along the lines of: Think of the greatness of this country and of Illinois, and make sure that the governments in both places are there for the next families who need it.

My father began teaching. My brother and I went to school in Peoria, and Peoria became our home. More than three decades have passed. My father is still teaching at Bradley University, and he and my mother still live in the house I grew up in.

Though I went away for college, I always knew where I would be when it was time to start my own family. My wife, Priya, and I were married in Illinois, and all three of our children are being raised there. It will always be our home, for all the joys of the Cubs' wins and for all the challenges of its winters.

As I look back on the opportunities my family had, that I have had, and that my children will have, I will feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude to Illinois.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman KRISHNAMOORTHI for those heartfelt words about Illinois. I appreciate those very, very much.

Mr. Speaker, next I yield to one of the deans of our delegation from the city of Chicago, a strong advocate for our State and the city, Congressman DANNY DAVIS.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank Representative LAHOOD for organizing this opportunity for all of us from Illinois to talk about the greatness of our State.

We have had on the floor individuals from very different parts of the State, but Illinois has always had a reputation of having one of the most congenial delegations in Congress any way you cut it. We have always had that during the time that I have been here, and to be able to talk about the diversity.

As Representative KRISHNAMOORTHI was making his comments, you could hear the emotion in his voice as he talked about how Illinois had welcomed his family. And that is what Illinois has done. It has welcomed individuals from all parts of the world. Individuals, large numbers of Puerto Ricans who came from Puerto Rico; Mexican Americans; individuals who were immigrants; African Americans, like myself, who migrated from the rural South.

No, I didn't grow up in Illinois. I wasn't born in Illinois. As a matter of fact, I was born in Arkansas. Of course, it is the only State in the Bible that Noah looked over his ark and saw.

Large numbers of individuals from my State, from Mississippi, from Louisiana, from Texas, from Tennessee, from Alabama, and from other places migrated to Illinois, and especially to Chicago.

I have the opportunity to represent what I consider to be the most fascinating piece of geography in North America that is compressed into a political subdivision. My district begins at Lake Michigan. You can't go any further east. It abuts the lake. It is downtown Chicago. It is The Loop. It is the Magnificent Mile. It is Water Tower Place. It is the future's industry. It is the big banks. It is home to corporate America. Major corporations have their headquarters in downtown Chicago.

But it also has more hospitals than any other single district in America, which means that it is a health mecca. It also has some of the first of the community health centers, the federally qualified health centers, that were organized, the Mile Squares, the Near Norths, the Martin Luther Kings, Access Healths.

It is a fascinating place, but then a part of it is home to Ernest Hemingway. There are more Frank Lloyd Wright structures in my district in a place called Oak Park than any other place in the world.

With the exception of a few places, it is the museum capital of the Nation, every kind of entity. But the diversity of its people, some very wealthy individuals, but then the areas that were devastated by the riots after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

But some of the greatness of people like John H. Johnson, who started, developed, and owned Johnson Publishing Company. Parker House Sausage. We don't do a great deal of farming, but we do a lot of other kinds of things, businesses like Ariel Capital, Loop Capital.

□ 2030

These businesses provide an opportunity for others to interact. Great people, I have had the good fortune to just know a whole bunch of young athletes: Isaiah Thomas, Kevin Garnett, Doc Rivers, and Darryl Stingley. All of these guys grew up in my district—not just in Chicago, but in my district.

I represent the Chicago Bulls. I represent the Bears, the Black Hawks, and a little bit of the White Sox. Unfortunately, the Cubs are a little further

north where Congressman MIKE QUIGLEY is and represents, but we embrace them also.

President Barack Obama lived right at the edge of my district.

Chicago, Illinois, is filled with inclusivity. Carol Moseley Braun was the first African-American woman to be elected to the United States Senate from the State of Illinois. Of course, Barack Obama was also elected to the Senate. Roland Burris was a member of the Senate, and Abraham Lincoln.

I grew up as a fan of Abraham Lincoln because of the role that he and Illinois played in the abolition of slavery. My mother was a great Abraham Lincoln fan, so as a little boy, I knew every story that you could think of about Abraham Lincoln.

The thing that I am most proud of, though, is the inclusivity and the diversification of our State.

Representative LAHOOD has represented and demonstrated what Illinois is all about, and that is bringing all of us together to extol some of the virtues of our great State. I thank the gentleman for his leadership, and I thank the gentleman for his action.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman DAVIS for those wonderful words about the State of Illinois, its history, and the city of Chicago and all his advocacy.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, as you can see, each of our districts has played a role in not only shaping Illinois' history, but that of the entire Nation and the whole world. Whether it is the business hub of Chicago, the farmers downstate, or the many Main Street businesses in every city, Illinois' influence can be seen every day no matter where you are.

That is why our bicentennial theme of ''Born, Built, and Grown'' is so appropriate. As 2018 begins and we continue to get closer to our State's birthday on December 3, 2018, bicentennial events all across Illinois will help us recognize the important people and products that our State has to offer. For example, a bicentennial beer has already been judged and selected, hailing from the Hand of Fate Brewing Company in Petersburg, Illinois, within my congressional district.

I encourage everyone to check out the full list of events at illinois200.com. I am sure I will be running into many of my colleagues at several of them throughout the year as they happen across the State.

While Illinois' first 200 years have included both struggle and success, our State should be a point of pride for all of us. I think we heard that tonight. While we have accomplished so much, as my colleagues and I have talked about here tonight, there remains much to be done. Illinois remains on the path of prosperity, and the hard work and determination that the people of Illinois are known for will surely get us there.

Mr. Speaker, I will just close by wishing Illinois a happy early birthday. We look forward to celebrating over the next year.

I am proud to be born and raised in the State of Illinois and that my wife and I are raising our three boys in Illinois. We hope they stay and prosper in Illinois, and we look forward to this next year of celebration for 200 years of Illinois being in this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GRADING THE GOP TAX PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it was really fun interacting with my colleagues and learning about the great State in which we live and have the opportunity to represent.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to vote on the GOP tax plan, I decided that I would grade the bill and look a little bit at the difference between what has been promised and the reality of what is in the final legislation.

We were told that there would be middle class tax relief and that nobody in the middle class is going to get a tax increase. We have been looking for it, but instead, after 10 years, millions of middle class taxpayers will be paying more, and the majority of the tax cuts will go to the corporations and to the 1 percent.

We were told that it would eliminate tax breaks for the wealthy and that wealthy proponents of the bill will personally take a hit from the GOP tax plan—another failure. This bill and this plan violates every principle and every tenet of economic justice.

The vast majority of the benefits go to the large corporations and the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans. All major tax breaks remain and many new ones have been added, including the insidious new 20 percent deduction for so-called passthrough entities like real estate developers and others. Because of the fact that the new language wasn't in the bill passed by the House and Senate, floor amendments to eliminate the provision will not be permitted.

The alternative minimum tax, that safety net designed to thwart clever tax dodgers, is gone. The biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska is handed over to oil companies for minimal return of Federal tax dollars.

We were told that Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid would be protected, that this was going to be a revenue-neutral tax reform and that the bill would pay for itself—failure again. The trillion-plus dollars in new deficit spending will be blamed on these programs, and pressure to cut them will begin shortly after the new year.

We were told that tax cuts will spur economic growth—again, failure. U.S. corporate profits are already historically high, but corporations are not making investments in plants, research, and new technology to grow the economy.

What we need is increased demand, higher wages, returning dislocated workers to the economy, rebuilding aging cities, and rebuilding infrastructure to revitalize communities. The redistribution of income away from low- to high-income households reduces consumption spending, which reduces demand.

The bill will be disastrous to the work of charitable nonprofits, reducing charitable giving by $13 billion or more, annually, destroying more than 220,000 nonprofit jobs and impairing the ability of nonprofits to address community needs.

Repatriating overseas corporate profit will stimulate the economy; that is what we were told. U.S. multinationals currently have $752 billion in taxes on the $2.6 trillion in profits that they are holding offshore. They have already found creative ways to use those dollars here at home without paying taxes. Worse yet, the repatriation provision helps conceal the permanent and growing costs of tax provisions that would lose revenue over the next decade.

What is needed is linking tax breaks to specific targeted investment here at home, such as the new market credit, which, as of the end of fiscal year 2016, had generated $8 of private investment for every $1 of Federal funding; created 178 million square feet of manufacturing, office, and retail space; and financed over 5,400 businesses.

We were told that we were going to be able to reduce health costs and health insurance for everybody—failure again. The elimination of the penalty for people who go without health insurance will result in some 13 million Americans losing their health insurance. That includes more than 500,000 Illinois residents.

Healthcare premiums will rise by about 10 percent in most years, and for the lowest income working families, with 10 million children under 17, there will either be no improvement in their child tax credit or a token increase of $1 to $75. Low- and modest-income working families, with another 14 million children, will receive a child tax credit increase of more than $75 but less than the full $1,000 per child increase that families at higher income levels would receive.

We were told that we were going to be able to file our taxes on a postcard, simplify and reduce the size of the Tax Code. That is not going to happen.

Final grade, corporations and the 1 percent—the wealthiest people in the country—will win, and the rest of society will lose.

For me, Mr. Speaker, that is not an acceptable result. I could never vote for this bill, so count me out. I vote ''no.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed hearing my friend from Illinois first talking about the great State of Illinois. It truly is. We appreciate all the doctors who have been sent down to Texas after we did tort reform and Illinois continues to have significant problems.

We had had problems keeping doctors in Texas until the great State of Illinois ran into greater and greater malpractice lawsuit problems. Texas did tort reform, and we started having doctors coming from places like Illinois to Texas, and we are doing much better.

The problem is, with health insurance, I heard my friend talk about 13 million who won't have insurance, and I think, to be fair there, are so many millions right now who are forced to do the unthinkable.

□ 2045

It is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court simply chose to become political in their decisionmaking rather than constitutional. You could pick nine people off the street at random and probably six or seven out of the nine, after they heard the dispute and read the Constitution, would find contrary to the Supreme Court.

We put so much magic, supposedly, in those black robes. Somehow, they are given more credibility than they ought to be. Thomas Jefferson thought that the judicial system would be the weakest of the three branches, but now it pretty much controls everything.

Under ObamaCare, people are forced to buy a product. For the first time in American history, you can be forced to buy a product. If you didn't, you would be fined, punished, taxed. The Court said, on one hand, it wasn't a tax. Therefore, the Court had jurisdiction. Forty-some pages later, it said it is a tax, so it is constitutional.

In any event, people have been forced to buy a product and they have paid for as cheap a policy as they could get away with, but the deductibles were so high. I have heard this over and over hundreds of times in my own district. They were buying insurance they will never be able to use. The deductibles are so high, they don't have that kind of money.

So what the repeal of the individual mandate is going to mean is that people can still buy the insurance if they want to. They are not going to be penalized if they don't buy it.

But in order for ObamaCare to work, it is stealing from Peter to pay Paul. In other words, young people, for example, were having to buy insurance they would never use because they would have the deductible. But they did the calculation: Do I pay more if I pay for the insurance or do I pay more if I pay the extra income tax? Then they make that decision.

What the repeal of the individual mandate means is that we will help the Supreme Court in their ridiculous ruling and the mental gymnastics that went into not calling it a tax at page 13 or so, and then 40 pages later calling it a tax.

It is really pretty absurd, but it was a political decision. John Roberts was intimidated into believing that, if they struck down this unconstitutional bill, he would be deemed to be Chief Justice over the most political Court. As a result of what he did, he goes down in history as having the most political Court since Dred Scott. It wasn't quite as bad as the Dred Scott decision. That has got to be the worst.

We know from history that sometimes they just get it wrong. We will do the right thing by the American people, and we will repeal the individual mandate. Unfortunately, it is not going to start for a year.

I also heard my friend mention—and I have heard others say—that this bill will end up putting most of the income in the hands of the top 1 percent.

One of the great things about being in Congress is you get to learn so much if you are paying attention.

My friends can go back and look at YouTube and find President Obama, after being in office for a number of years, admitting that, for the first time in American history, 95 percent of the Nation's income went to the top 1 percent income earners. It never happened before.

But under the policies that do as President Obama said he was going to do before he got elected—and that is spread the wealth around—every time somebody tries to spread the wealth around—it is a socialist idea, a communist. But when you try to spread the wealth around, it never seems to fail that the richest, most powerful get richer and more powerful.

You can go to the Soviet Union. There were a handful of people making a lot of money, even over there now, under Putin. Of course, Putin gets richer. But there were a handful of people who get rich and most of the people don't. Most of the people bring in about the same amount of income, but they don't have access to the same benefits.

Anyway, we are going to move in a direction away from what President Obama's policies established, and that was, as a fact, 95 percent of the Nation's income is going to the top 1 percent. We want to get away from that.

Reforming the Tax Code and getting away from the punishing days of President Obama's policies will allow the working class to do better for the first time in years. They have been flatlined or less when adjusted for inflation. It is time they did better.

The tax bill we should take up tomorrow will end up doing that. It will get money into the hands of the working poor, the middle class. We saw the middle class shrink under President Obama; the poor got poorer, the ultrarich got ultraricher, and the middle class shrunk.

More people—over 50 million, as I recall—signed up for food stamps. That has already dropped significantly under the policies of the current President. We are hoping that the policies that we will push through together with the President will continue to have that effect. People will do better. There will be more jobs.

With all of the ridicule of lowering the corporate tax, if people will just be realistic and honest about it, corporations don't pay corporate taxes. They have to pass that on as a cost of doing business to their customers, their clients, those who purchase their goods or services. They pass that 35 percent tax on.

I know that before the President got elected, the current President, he had talked about maybe putting a tariff on Chinese goods. The fact is we have been putting on a 35 percent tariff, the highest tariff anybody puts on its own goods and services of all the industrialized nations. It is the biggest.

If we knock that 35 percent down, then it means our goods will be more competitive around the world. It means more jobs. It is going to be a great thing for America. It really is. As much as some people despise the President, like it or not, it is going to help make America great again.

Lower the corporate tax. I wish we could have kept it at 15 percent. Apparently, the powers of the leaders of the House and Senate, by a margin of two-to-one against the President wanting it at 15 percent, but at least we are getting it lowered. That is going to mean more goods can be competitive abroad. It means more jobs here. It means more manufacturing back here.

For those who have got their nose in the air and think we shouldn't have manufacturing in America, you go around the world and see manufacturing in other places and you see it here. It is about as clean a manufacturing company as you can have. This is the best place for those jobs because we do have to breathe the air that China and India pollutes, which we are cleaning up, but not near fast enough because they are polluting it so much.

Fortunately, the President withdrew from the so-called climate accord. The reason all these other countries wanted the United States in is because we were the ones that were going to send checks to all the other countries. We were going to pay guilt money. We have no guilt to pay for.

In fact, this is the country that is helping clean up the air and water, unlike other large nations in the world. They owe us a check, if somebody is going to be owing checks for the amount of pollution. It should mean a better economy.

There is one other thing that severely hurt our country under the past administration.

I am not normally a big fan of Politico's articles, but this is a fascinating one that calls itself: ''The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook.''

Hezbollah is recognized as a terrorist organization. This is entitled: ''The Secret Backstory of How Obama Let Hezbollah Off the Hook.''

Part one starts with a ''Global Threat Emerges. How Hezbollah turned to trafficking cocaine and laundering money through used cars to finance its expansion.

''In its determination to secure a nuclear deal with Iran, the Obama administration derailed an ambitious law enforcement campaign targeting drug trafficking by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah, even as it was funneling cocaine into the United States, according to a Politico investigation.

''The campaign, dubbed Project Cassandra, was launched in 2008 after the Drug Enforcement Administration amassed evidence that Hezbollah had transformed itself from a Middle East-focused military and political organization into an international crime syndicate that some investigators believed was collecting $1 billion a year from drug and weapons trafficking, money laundering, and other criminal activities.''

So, that was 2008, during the Bush administration, with Robert Mueller as head of the FBI.

This points out: ''Over the next 8 years''—that would be as we went into the Obama administration, 2009—agents working out of a top-secret DEA facility in Chantilly, Virginia, used wiretaps, undercover operations, and informants to map Hezbollah's illicit networks, with the help of 30 U.S. and foreign security agencies.

''They followed cocaine shipments, some from Latin America to West Africa and on to Europe and the Middle East, and others through Venezuela and Mexico to the United States. They tracked the river of dirty cash as it was laundered by, among other tactics, buying American used cars and shipping them to Africa. And with the help of some key cooperating witnesses, the agents traced the conspiracy, they believed, to the innermost circle of Hezbollah and its state sponsors in Iran.''

It is rather ironic. I got in the car a moment ago and heard my good friend, Mark Levin. Apparently, he had read part of this story on the air and had a call from a person they didn't fully identify who was one of these agents who was helping track what Hezbollah was doing.

The article says: ''But as Project Cassandra reached higher into the hierarchy of conspiracy, Obama administration officials threw an increasingly insurmountable series of roadblocks in its way.''

Parenthetically here, so the Obama administration had found that Hezbollah was massively producing and getting into the United States drugs that were addicting American young people—well, of all ages, but especially our young, our future—making a billion dollars or so, and they were dying as they got hooked on worse and worse drugs. The answer of the Obama administration, according to this article, was throwing an increasingly unsurmountable series of roadblocks in the way of those investigating Hezbollah and the evil infliction of harm they were doing to America.

□ 2100

The article goes on:

'' . . . according to interviews with dozens of participants, who, in many cases, spoke for the first time about events shrouded in secrecy, and a review of government documents and court records. When Project Cassandra leaders sought approval for some significant investigations, prosecutions, arrests, and financial sanctions, officials at the Justice and Treasury Departments delayed, hindered, or rejected their requests.''

That would be Bob Mueller at the FBI. He had already purged the FBI training materials so that FBI agents, as they came in, would not know what questions to ask. So when they went out to interview Tsarnaev, after we got a heads up that he was a terrorist—he had been radicalized—those FBI agents didn't know what to ask.

Why?

Because Bob Mueller purged the training material. So they didn't know what to ask. They didn't know what to look for in a radical Islamist. They went and asked his mother, and she said: No, he is a good boy. He is not a terrorist.

There were people who died because of Bob Mueller purging the FBI training materials; so they didn't even know what they were looking for.

And when I was cross-examining him before our committee, I said: ''You didn't even go out to the mosque where they attended to investigate them.'' He indicated that they did go out to the mosque in their outreach program, where they sit down and play ''Pat-a-Cake,'' share a meal, and the last thing they do would be to inquire about one of the mosque attendees being radicalized. They didn't bother to do that. They were too busy making merry in their outreach program.

He also testified on one occasion that the Islamic community is like every other religious community in America; and they had this wonderful outreach program with them, and it is working so well.

So I asked a question: ''Well, you said the Islamic community is like every other community in America, and you have this wonderful outreach program with them, so let me ask you: How is your outreach program going with the Buddhists, and the Jewish, and the Baptists, and all of these other communities?''

Well, they don't have an outreach program to any except the Islamic community. So that told me then: this isn't just like every other community. They don't have outreach communities through every other religious community in America because they are not worried about them blowing up innocent people, to the extent they apparently were before Mueller came along.

In any event, back to this article:

''The Justice Department declined requests by Project Cassandra and other authorities to file criminal charges against major players such as Hezbollah's high-profile envoy to Iran, a Lebanese bank that allegedly laundered billions in alleged drug profits, and a central player in a U.S.-based cell of the Iranian paramilitary Quds Force. And the State Department rejected requests to lure high-value targets to countries where they could be arrested.''

So the Justice Department—during that period, of course—would have been Eric Holder. I believe I saw him in the news recently. He had forgotten how he was in contempt of Congress, how he covered up—obfuscated—crimes that appeared to be occurring under his watch. And now we find out, just days after his high-profile blasting of what was going on here, trying to get to the truth, it turns out he was obfuscating, just like we found he was doing, hindering and obstructing justice.

We really needed a special counsel to investigate him. But, of course, he was not going to have a special counsel investigate himself, nor was Loretta Lynch going to allow a special counsel to investigate Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch. We still need one to investigate both of them. And the more we find out, the more it points to this desperate need.

It has this in the article from December 15, 2011:

''Hezbollah is linked to a $483,142,568 laundering scheme. The money, allegedly laundered through the Lebanese Canadian Bank and two exchange houses, involved approximately 30 U.S. car buyers.''

Then it goes on and shows in the article, from the Southern District of New York, U.S. Attorney's Office:

''Manhattan U.S. Attorney Files Civil Money Laundering and Forfeiture Suit Seeking More Than $480 Million From Entities Including Lebanese Financial Institutions That Facilitated a Hezbollah-Related Money Laundering Scheme''

'' 'This was a policy decision, it was a systematic decision,' said David Asher, who helped establish and oversee Project Cassandra as a Defense Department illicit finance analyst. 'They serially ripped apart this entire effort that was very well supported and resourced, and it was done from the top down.' ''

That would be from President Obama, it would be from Eric Holder, and it would be from Bob Mueller.

Bob Mueller should have been honest and sincere enough when he was asked to be special counsel, and should have said: I am probably going to be investigated myself. I am not in a position to be the investigator.

Because he certainly should be investigated. And this is one more story.

''The untold story of Project Cassandra illustrates the immense difficulty in mapping and countering illicit networks in an age where global terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime have merged, but also the extent to which competing agendas among government agencies—and shifting priorities at the highest levels—can set back years of progress.''

And that is exactly what happened under Bob Mueller and President Obama's administration.

And this 56-page article appears very well documented, and it actually appears well done. It has John Brennan in here creating problems for the investigation into the drugging and laundering of money to help finance terrorist operations.

And one part of this is they killed this investigation. They were afraid it would prevent the Iran agreement from going forward. Well, it didn't go forward. It was never constitutionally ratified. The Corker bill was just that: it was a bill. It could not turn the Constitution upside down, as it attempted to do.

The Constitution makes clear that it takes two-thirds of the Senate to ratify a treaty. It doesn't matter what the bill says; it will only take one-third to ratify a treaty. It doesn't work that way. If you want that to be the law, it takes a constitutional amendment to do that. We didn't have one. Therefore, it took two-thirds to ratify, and the Iranian agreement is still not ratified.

But, nonetheless, though it wasn't ratified, it didn't keep the President from sending $100 billion or so in dollars over to Iran. We know Iran is the largest producer of IEDs in Iraq.

As I sat at the funeral of this precious, young 20-year-old gentleman, who went to my daughter's high school, Alex Missildine, killed by an IED, I just sat there going: I wonder if the money President Obama sent paid for the production of the IED that killed our precious Alex?

It has been paid. It is paying for something. We know that Iran is using it—Certainly part of their military operations are continuing to kill Americans in other places.

Yet you had Project Cassandra that was closing in on Hezbollah, closing in on the drug production, drug sales, the laundering of money through the used car, shipping used cars around. And then, lo and behold, a reminder of what has happened right here on Capitol Hill that Luke Rosiak has been pursuing.

Here is an article from February 20, 2017, from the Daily Caller, entitled: ''House Dem IT Guys In Security Probe Secretly Took $100,000 in Iraqi Money,'' from a Hezbollah tie.

The article says:

''Rogue congressional staffers took $100,000 from an Iraqi politician while they had administrator-level access to the House of Representatives' computer network, according to court documents examined by The Daily Caller News Foundation's Investigative Group.

''The money was a loan from Dr. Ali al-Attar, an Iraqi political figure, and was funneled through a company with 'impossible'-to-decipher financial transactions that the congressional information technology, IT, staffers controlled.

''Imran Awan, ringleader of the group that includes his brothers Abid and Jamal, has provided IT services since 2005 for Florida Democrat Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, the former Democratic National Committee, DNC, chairwoman. The brothers are from Pakistan.

''The trio also worked for dozens of other House Democrats, including members of the Intelligence, Foreign Affairs, and Homeland Security Committees. Those positions likely gave them access to congressional emails and other sensitive documents.

''The brothers, whose access to House IT networks has been terminated, are under criminal investigation by the U.S. Capitol Police.''

''Investigators found that congressional information was being copied to an off-site server and they suspect the brothers of improperly accessing information and stealing congressional property. Chiefs of staff for the employing Democrats were notified February 2.

''Soon after Imran began working for Members of Congress, Imran's and Abid's wives—Hina Alvi and Natalia Sova—also began receiving congressional paychecks, the DCNF found. Imran's employers included two members of the Intelligence Committee. . . .

''By 2009, the family was simultaneously managing a full-time car dealership in Virginia, with Abid running day-to-day operations after contributing $250,000 in startup cash. It was called Cars International A, LLC, referred to as ''CIA'' in court documents.''

Cars International A, referred to as CIA. Isn't it clever.

''Imran boasted unusual clout among House Democrats, and was even pictured conversing with former President Bill Clinton. After Rao Abbas, who was owed money by the dealership, threatened to sue amid allegations of deception and theft, Abbas appeared on the congressional payroll and received $250,000 in taxpayer payments.''

Incredible. You owe somebody for an illicit car dealership, and you can't pay. Just put them on the House employee system; and they will be on the congressional payroll, and you can pay off $250,000. That must have been a heck of a percentage, though. They borrowed $100,000 from this guy with Hezbollah contact, and they have to pay him back $250,000. Of course, in their case, they were very fortunate, because they did it with the House payroll. There is no evidence that Mr. Abbas ever lifted a finger to do any work, and for good reason. We wouldn't want him involved in all of the inner workings of our computer systems on the Hill. Who knows. Maybe he did. Maybe that was part of the payoff as well.

''Abid had '100 percent' of the dealership, a one-time business partner said in court documents, in addition to his $165,000-a-year job working full-time for multiple representatives. . . .''

Mr. Speaker, this story Politico has run seems to have a lot of parallels to what was going on right here in the House that needs further investigation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2304

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 11 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3312, SYSTEMIC RISK DESIGNATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–474) on the resolution (H. Res. 667) providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. MCCOLLUM (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in district.

JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on December 8, 2017, she

presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following joint resolution:

H.J. Res. 123. Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 9 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3420. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Dassault Aviation Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-1023; Product Identifier 2017-NM-144-AD; Amendment 39-19104; AD 2017-23-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3421. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce plc Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0816; Product Identifier 2017- NE-29-AD; Amendment 39-19093; AD 2017-22-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3422. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-1000; Product Identifier 2017-NE-36-AD; Amendment 39-19100; AD 2017-23-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3423. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; 328 Support Services GmbH (Type Certificate Previously Held by AvCraft Aerospace GmbH; Fairchild Dornier GmbH; Dornier Luftfahrt GmbH) Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2016-9568; Product Identifier 2016-NM-150-AD; Amendment 39-19077; AD 2017-21-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3424. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Engine Alliance Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0988; Product Identifier 2017-NE-37-AD; Amendment 39-19097; AD 2017-23-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3425. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc., Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2017-0712; Product Identifier 2017-NM-014-AD; Amendment 39-19095; AD 2017-23-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3426. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31162; Amdt. No.: 3772] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3427. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31163; Amdt. No.: 3773] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3428. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31161; Amdt. No.: 3771] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

3429. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 31164; Amdt. No.: 3774] received December 14, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 3813. A bill to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–467). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 3814. A bill to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking (Rept. 115–468). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 2465. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the removal of the rental cap for durable medical equipment under the Medicare program with respect to speech generating devices (Rept. 115–469, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1350. A bill to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–470). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 4375. A bill to provide for a study on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–471). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 4254. A bill to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–472). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 4323. A bill to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–473). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 667. A resolution providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; and for other purposes (Rept. 115–474). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Ways and Means discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2465 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4666. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for a Patient and State Stability Fund; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.R. 4667. A bill making further supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, for disaster assistance for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and calendar year 2017 wildfires, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CHABOT (for himself and Ms. VELÁZQUEZ):

H.R. 4668. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to provide for the establishment of a enhanced cybersecurity assistance and protections for small businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself and Mr. JONES):

H.R. 4669. A bill to ensure independent investigations by allowing judicial review of the removal of a special counsel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 4670. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide authority for certain members of the Armed Forces to transfer entitlement to Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to their dependents; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DUFFY (for himself and Mr. WELCH):

H.R. 4671. A bill to assist and incentivize organic agriculture by expanding its access to, and eligibility for, Federal rural development and agricultural loan programs; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. ESHOO (for herself, Mr. PALLONE, and Mrs. TORRES):

H.R. 4672. A bill to further deployment of Next Generation 9-1-1 services to enhance and upgrade the Nation's 9-1-1 systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. ESTY of Connecticut (for herself, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, and Mrs. BUSTOS):

H.R. 4673. A bill to create opportunities for women in the aviation industry; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. LOVE:

H.R. 4674. A bill to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to require Members of Congress to reimburse the Treasury for payments of awards and settlements under such Act which are made in connection with claims of sexual harassment committed by the Members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. MARSHALL (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. WEBER of Texas):

H.R. 4675. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to provide for a low-dose radiation basic research program; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. MCCAUL:

H.R. 4676. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to prescribe regulations to expand sanctions against persons owned or controlled by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. MOULTON (for himself and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi):

H.R. 4677. A bill to improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4678. A bill to permit the District of Columbia to make payments pursuant to contingency fee arrangements entered into by the Attorney General of the District of Columbia for the provision of legal services in claims and other legal mattes affecting the interests of the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 4679. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for improvements to coverage and payment under the Medicare program for new drugs, devices, and technology; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POLIS:

H. Con. Res. 97. Concurrent resolution Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make corrections in the enrollment of H.R. 1; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4666.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.R. 4667.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law. . . .'' In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States. . . .'' Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Mr. CHABOT:

H.R. 4668.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 4669.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clauses 9 and 18

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 4670.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18: To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 4671.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. ESHOO:

H.R. 4672.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. ESTY of Connecticut:

H.R. 4673.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the authority to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section VIII of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mrs. LOVE:

H.R. 4674.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution.

By Mr. MARSHALL:

H.R. 4675.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. MCCAUL:

H.R. 4676.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 1; and Article I, section 8, clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. MOULTON:

H.R. 4677.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4678.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 4679.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 173: Mrs. LAWRENCE.

H.R. 233: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 389: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 502: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. DENT.

H.R. 620: Mr. GAETZ, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. BIGGS, Mr. BUDD, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 681: Mr. BIGGS and Mr. HOLDING.

H.R. 719: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 809: Mr. POE of Texas.

H.R. 858: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 881: Mr. RUIZ and Mr. CICILLINE.

H.R. 909: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 1159: Mr. FASO and Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 1225: Ms. SHEA-PORTER and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 1243: Ms. HANABUSA.
H.R. 1251: Mr. CRIST.
H.R. 1299: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 1528: Mr. ELLISON and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.
H.R. 1606: Mr. ESTES of Kansas.
H.R. 1783: Ms. DELAURO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. JONES, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 1815: Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 1861: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.
H.R. 1874: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 1905: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 2016: Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 2045: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 2079: Mr. CRIST.
H.R. 2152: Mrs. ROBY and Mr. COLLINS of Georgia.
H.R. 2219: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 2234: Mr. BOST and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2475: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 2526: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 2641: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 2740: Mr. MEEKS, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 2790: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2832: Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DESANTIS, and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 3010: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 3127: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H.R. 3128: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H.R. 3222: Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 3282: Ms. TENNEY and Mr. ESTES of Kansas.
H.R. 3330: Mr. DESJARLAIS.
H.R. 3415: Mr. DONOVAN.
H.R. 3605: Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 3635: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 3730: Mr. RENACCI.
H.R. 3759: Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. YODER, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Miss RICE of New York.
H.R. 3767: Ms. PINGREE and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3773: Ms. PINGREE and Ms. DELAURO.
H.R. 3866: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 3976: Mr. BERA, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. BLUM, and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 3990: Mr. STEWART and Mr. CURTIS.
H.R. 3994: Mr. O'HALLERAN.
H.R. 4007: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. COHEN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. GABBARD, Ms. LEE, Mr. RUIZ, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.
H.R. 4044: Mrs. COMSTOCK and Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 4082: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 4143: Mr. SOTO, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 4147: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 4179: Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, and Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 4190: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER and Mr. POLIQUIN.
H.R. 4207: Ms. DEGETTE.
H.R. 4229: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. STEWART, Mr. EMMER, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
H.R. 4238: Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida.
H.R. 4240: Mr. DOGGETT.
H.R. 4242: Mr. EMMER.
H.R. 4253: Mr. RASKIN and Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 4265: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
H.R. 4319: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 4323: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
H.R. 4327: Mr. ROSS.
H.R. 4426: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 4427: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.
H.R. 4429: Mr. MITCHELL.
H.R. 4444: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 4459: Mr. FASO.
H.R. 4473: Mr. PETERS and Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 4474: Ms. BARRAGÁN and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 4541: Ms. DELBENE, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 4545: Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 4546: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 4547: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.R. 4548: Mr. SHERMAN.
H.R. 4565: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 4585: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. NEAL.
H.R. 4608: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 4613: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 4636: Mr. GOMEZ.
H.R. 4661: Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. DUNN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. KINZINGER, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana.
H. J. Res. 120: Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.
H. Res. 15: Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H. Res. 220: Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. GROTHMAN.
H. Res. 256: Mr. STIVERS.
H. Res. 495: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H. Res. 632: Mr. KILDEE.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2017 *No. 206*

Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Father, strong to save, we love You because You are our shield and deliverer. You have been our God from the moment of our birth, loving and sustaining us with Your mercies.

Lord, You loved us before we loved You, and You empowered us to live productive lives. Cast out of our Senators any fear and anxiety, as their love for You increases. Teach them to treat others as they would want to be treated themselves, fulfilling Your admonition to practice the Golden Rule. May they seek You early, realizing that not an hour goes by when we do not need You. Supply all their needs from the bounty of Your riches in glory.

We pray in Your sovereign 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.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRAIN DERAILMENT IN WASHINGTON STATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, to begin with, all of our thoughts this afternoon are with the victims of this morning's tragic train derailment in Washington State and with their families as well. Our gratitude is with the first responders who answered the call and rushed to the scene.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on a different matter entirely, the Senate has a number of important tasks to complete this week for the American people. On Friday we took another significant step toward delivering major tax relief for middle-class families and small businesses when the House and Senate conference committee released the final text of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. We are closer than ever to seizing this once-in-a-generation opportunity to update our Tax Code, to make America stronger, and to help middle-class families keep more of their hard-earned money.

The last decade has not been easy for middle-class Americans. Families, like many I represent in Kentucky, were hit hard by the great recession. Many continue to feel its effects. But too often, instead of helping people get back on their feet, Washington has been an obstacle. Our broken and outdated Tax Code lets the government take too much money out of Americans' paychecks. The Obama administration's runaway regulations slowed job growth and destroyed opportunities just when people needed them most.

Help is on the way. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is a major step toward a stronger, more prosperous America with higher wages, higher take-home pay, more jobs, and better opportunities for middle-class Americans. First and foremost, the bill provides immediate relief by letting Americans keep more of their paychecks. A typical family of four earning the median family income will get a tax cut of more than $2,000. We are taking that money out of Washington's pocket and putting it right back into theirs. By modernizing the way we tax businesses, we will make America a better place to invest, start small businesses, and create middle-class jobs.

Our tax bill will make it less attractive for American businesses to send jobs and investments overseas and more attractive to expand and invest here at home. That is why American manufacturers say they are excited about this bill and plan to hire new workers, while Chinese officials say it has them worried.

The conference report will also repeal the punitive individual mandate tax at the heart of ObamaCare. Under ObamaCare, Americans must either buy the kind of health insurance that Washington thinks they should buy or pay a heavy tax penalty. By repealing this unfair penalty, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will give low- and middle-class families even more tax relief, along with the flexibility to make their own healthcare decisions. The bill will also strengthen America's future by enhancing our energy independence.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provides for further responsible development of Alaska's oil and gas potential. Unleashing more of our own natural resources will create good jobs and improve America's energy security. The historic accomplishments in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will bring immediate relief to struggling families and set America on a trajectory toward greater strength and prosperity.

I commend the conferees—especially Chairman HATCH, Chairman MURKOWSKI, and Chairman ENZI—for their work to help finalize the conference report. I look forward to voting for its passage, and I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting to give the American families the relief they need and richly deserve.

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

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FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, before the end of this week, Congress must agree on a continuing resolution to sustain the critical operations of the Federal Government. In this process, it is vital that we ensure that our men and women in uniform have the resources they need to protect Americans and face the challenges of a dangerous world.

During the Obama administration, the readiness of our all-volunteer Armed Forces was hurt by irresponsible cuts to the Department of Defense, which have damaged combat readiness. The military suffered a disproportionate burden under the Budget Control Act. The arbitrary demand that increases in defense spending must be equally matched by increases in nondefense spending should not stand in the way of delivering the resources needed to restore near-term and long-term readiness. Earlier this year, we rightly set aside that misguided standard and took steps to fully meet the needs of our warfighters. This week, we need to do so one more time.

If Congress fails to reach agreement on government funding, our military will suffer intolerable budget cuts that would jeopardize the tools and the training our servicemembers need to fulfill their missions. Our responsibilities run deeper than keeping the government open and ensuring our warfighters have the resources they need.

Before the year ends, we must also deliver results in several additional areas of vital importance to the American people. We must renew funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program so the parents of 9 million children who are covered by CHIP can know that their children's healthcare is secure. We must reauthorize a critical foreign intelligence program that the men and women of American law enforcement need to keep our Nation safe from those who wish to harm us. We must renew the popular Veterans Choice Program, which aims to cut wait times for VA healthcare and to give our veterans flexibility to access care outside of the system. We must approve supplemental disaster funding for States and Territories that are still struggling to rebuild after a year of devastating disasters. We must pass a routine waiver to avoid unacceptable cuts of Medicare funding and other vital programs.

Since the enactment of the pay-go law in 2010, Congress has never allowed a sequester to take effect, especially for tax bills, and we must act again this week to ensure that vulnerable Americans are not harmed.

Of particular importance, faced with the continued failure of ObamaCare to keep health insurance affordable for working Americans, we must take this opportunity to pass bipartisan solutions that will help stabilize collapsing health insurance markets and lower premiums for individuals and families across the country.

Across all these critical areas, Congress must do what is right for the American people and take action this week. I urge each Member of this body to come together and help pass a funding agreement that fulfills our responsibilities to the Nation. I look forward to working with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure that happens.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRAIN CRASH IN WASHINGTON STATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, our hearts go out to everyone who has been affected by that horrible train crash near Seattle, WA. I know that authorities are still investigating what caused the crash. We have to find out what went wrong and then work to fix it. We in New York know what this is like. We have had a few of these derailments and crashes—Spuyten Duyvil on the Metro-North, where four people died about a year and a half ago or a year or two ago. It was very bad. We have to work on train safety, and there are lots of things to do. I am not going to talk about that now, but we do have to. For now, we are wishing the very best for everyone on that train, and we remain deeply grateful to the first responders who reported to the scene.

REMEMBERING BOB WILMERS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another sad note and before I move to the substance of the day, I want to spend a moment in recognizing a dear friend of mine who passed away this weekend, Bob Wilmers, one of the most respected and prominent benefactors in Buffalo, NY—one of the great cities in my State and in our country.

Very few men had done as much for Buffalo since its founding hundreds of years ago as Bob Wilmers had done for the last several decades. He was the chairman of M&T Bank. He helped the bank grow from a small bank into one of the largest employers in the region—6,500 employees. As he built the business and created thousands of good-paying, middle-class jobs, he helped Upstate New York dramatically.

M&T Bank was a large bank, but it was not one of these banks that engaged in swaps overseas or other risky types of investments. It lent money to small businesses, and it had a deep caring for the communities which it served. It was a model bank, in my opinion. It did an amazing job in helping to revitalize our upstate economy, which has had trouble over the last several decades due to so many different things, including bad trade policies.

Bob was also not just committed to the bank, which he loved, as he loved the employees, cared about them, and was such an honorable employee; he was also committed to Buffalo and philanthropy. He directed almost $5 million to local nonprofit organizations in New York—the bank did under his leadership. That is because Bob himself was a philanthropist. He was a man with a big heart, and he always gave in every way. He spent many years supporting one of the great art museums in America, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, just to name a couple. He was a booster to everything Buffalo. He was never in the camp that thought Buffalo's best days were behind her. He always believed in Buffalo's potential and its future and helped to make that happen. The city of Buffalo is turning around. We are so proud in so many different ways. It is, in good part, because of Bob Wilmers.

On a personal level, my wife and I will miss him. He visited my wife for lunch a few months ago. He was 83 years old, and he was on his rickety, old bike and rode through the streets of New York City to meet her so that they could have lunch.

Bob's wife Elisabeth and Iris and I spent many happy hours together. He was a brilliant man, a brilliant banker, decent, caring, and civic-minded. The loss is the Wilmers family's, and our condolences go to Elisabeth. It is a loss for Buffalo and the United States. Bob will be truly missed. His untimely death has sent shock waves throughout New York State, and we will miss him so.

SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a different subject, I again warn about the danger of the smear campaign against Special Counsel Mueller.

Over the weekend, allies of the President in the media escalated their phony attacks on Special Counselor Mueller to an outrageous degree. One of the assertions that arose this weekend was that Special Counsel Mueller improperly obtained emails from the Trump transition team. This is a bald-faced lie. There is no proof behind the allegations. There is no substance behind the allegations. They can't point to any indication that Mueller's team did anything that was improper, let alone illegal. The Mueller team is allowed to request whatever it wants. They are special counsel, special prosecutors. They either have to get the accountholder's permission or go

through appropriate criminal processes. In this case, there is no indication that they didn't follow the guidelines.

So to those complaining here in the Congress and in the media, point to something specific that Mueller did wrong here.

They can't. These attackers are creating impropriety when there is none. Their attacks are not based on fact or logic. This is a hatchet job, plain and simple. If they have a legal complaint, they can pursue it in court, but of course they don't. That is why these attacks are only speculation on TV by partisan pundits.

Robert Mueller is one of the most respected and trusted civil servants in our country. His integrity is unimpeachable. The concerted campaign to discredit him and his investigation in the rightwing media is nothing more than propaganda and disinformation to try to turn the public's attention away from the real investigation—Donald Trump's potential collusion with Russia and the collusion of his campaign and the attempt, if it is found, to obstruct justice and prevent an investigation from going forward.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will defend the special counsel from these spurious attacks. Everyone—Democrat and Republican alike—must reject the strident voices that falsely impugn Special Counsel Mueller.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have a lot to accomplish before the end of the year. Government funding runs out on Friday. We still haven't reached a bipartisan agreement on lifting the budget caps to ensure that our investments in economic growth and job creation rise in tandem with our investments in our national defense or in a disaster supplemental that treats equitably California, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as Texas and Florida. We need a bipartisan agreement to fully fund the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers, end the sabotage of our healthcare markets, protect the Dreamers, and shore up pension plans for hundreds of thousands of hard-working Americans.

We should be doing all these things together instead of in a piecemeal fashion. It will lead to a better bipartisan result, which is a necessity. To try to do it in a partisan way, as the House of Representatives seems to be doing, will lead to nowhere and to a government shutdown. Instead of jamming through a partisan tax scam in the House and Senate, we should be working on middle-class priorities.

To make matters worse, House Republicans continue to waste time on a partisan CRomnibus that is dead on arrival in the Senate. There is another path. Republicans and Democrats should continue to negotiate a genuine bipartisan agreement that paves the way for the major unresolved issues to get to the President's desk. With so little time left before the end of the year, those negotiations must proceed in earnest. They haven't been.

Today, in the House, the Republican Members of the team called off the negotiations and said: Let's do it tomorrow—as the clock ticks.

A few items have become sticking points and should be addressed. We still don't have a deal on pensions. Over 1 million Americans are waiting for our Republican friends to do what is right and work with us on a solution to the pension crisis in America. These working people every month put money into a pension hoping that when they retire, they are not going to become rich, but they can live a life of dignity. A lot of that has been robbed from them. We have an obligation to help them. That is a high priority for Democrats in the Senate and the House.

We still don't have a resolution on Democratic funding requests for opioid treatment. We know the scourge of opioids, the number of deaths throughout America—rural, suburban, urban, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, everybody. In the flower of their youth, so many are being taken by opioids. We don't do enough, and there is a clamor from the Nation to do more.

What about veterans' care? Cuts have hurt our veterans who have served us. They are not getting the help they need.

Our infrastructure is crumbling. We need help in rural areas, urban areas, suburban areas. What about that?

There is no resolution on adequate funding for Puerto Rico and its resiliency or the Virgin Islands, no resolution on fixing our wildfire funding problem which we proposed.

We still don't have an understanding on the Republicans' plan to extend the 702 FISA Court program. The majority leader has told us: Oh, we have to act on FISA. He could put it on the floor today. He could have put it on the floor last week, instead of putting three judges—some of whom had dubious credentials—on the floor. So to tell us we are running out of time for FISA, when the majority leader controls the floor and hasn't done anything for months, rings a little hollow.

We still don't have a good deal on the healthcare package. Now that Republicans are pushing through a partisan repeal of the individual mandate in their tax bill, which causes premiums to rise 10 percent—when America gets those premium increases this spring and summer, they will know who to blame. The number of Americans without insurance will rise by 13 million. The bipartisan stabilization bills will not have the same impact. We will need new legislation to account for the Republicans' latest attempt to undermine our healthcare system.

We still don't have a disaster package that adequately takes care of Puerto Rico, California, the Virgin Islands. I hear that my friends from Texas—both Houses—are demanding we rush through a partisan disaster package through the end of the year. Texas needs the money, but the Governor of Texas has refused to tap the State's $10 billion rainy day fund—the largest in the country—to help Houston and other parts of the State recover from Hurricane Harvey. Yet, at the same time, he is demanding immediate Federal assistance. On its face, it is absurd. It is an absurd position for a routine critic of Federal Government spending to demand money immediately, while he has a $10 billion fund sitting there. Imagine if those moneys were in New York or Maryland what our Republican colleagues would be saying. Constantly, we have this what is good for the goose is not good for the gander on our Republican side. I could have used stronger words, but I stopped myself.

I say to the Governor of Texas: If a rainy day fund is not for a rainy day, which Texas had, then what the heck is it for? I, for one, don't want to vote for a nickel for Texas unless they tap that rainy day fund.

Of course, last, but certainly not least, we have to ensure protection for the Dreamers. Bipartisan negotiations are ongoing in the House and Senate. That is good news. Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and the House are trying to come to an agreement on helping the Dreamers, who just want to become Americans, and coming up with border security which we all believe we need. One thousand Dreamers are losing their status every week. While our Republican friends twiddle their thumbs, we need action on the Dreamers, and we need our Republican colleagues to cooperate.

On these issues and more, there is a lot of work left to do. Instead of rushing through their partisan tax bill, I would urge my Republican colleagues to focus on the year-end negotiations.

Speaking of the tax bill, it appears it will be before us on a final vote early this week. Although there were significant changes in the conference report, Senators will not have much time to grapple with them. The conference report was released late last Friday. We are taking a final vote on a bill that will change the entire Tax Code only a few days later. It will be a culmination of the sloppiest legislative process I have witnessed in my time as a Senator. Fittingly, unfortunately, the results will be a mess as well.

My Republican friends are squandering their so-called once-in-a-generation opportunity for tax reform on a massive corporate bailout paid for by middle-class tax increases. What a shame.

At a time when our economy is increasingly stacked against the middle class and in favor of the wealthy, the Republican tax bill will skew the playing field even further out of whack. It will explode inequality in the country,

where the top 1 percent of earners already capture over 20 percent of the national income, while the bottom 50 percent take in only 13 percent. It will explode the deficit, starving our country of the resources it needs to invest in education, infrastructure, and scientific research—all the things that help the middle class.

After all of that, it will endanger Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. Then, 1 or 2 or 3 years down the line, Republicans will come back to slash those programs to pay for the deficit they have created.

Finally, our Republican friends say: Well, it will create a whole lot of jobs. Give money to the wealthiest corporations. As has been shown over and over again, the wealthiest corporations have a ton of money right now. They are not creating jobs. Give them more money? They will not create any more jobs. The only claim our Republican colleagues have for the middle class is trickle-down. Well, my friends, no one believes in trickle-down except for a handful of wealthy, greedy people who seem to be controlling what you are saying and doing in this tax bill.

This bill, in short, is a cynical one-two gut punch to the middle class. It raises middle-class taxes to pay for corporate tax cuts and decimates their earned benefits as a kicker. Surely we can do better than this.

Tomorrow Republicans will have a chance to vote down this tax bill, which is one of the least popular pieces of legislation in the last 30 years. My Republican colleagues have accomplished an amazing trick. A tax cut, usually popular, is 2-to-1 unpopular in America. Good work.

They know what is in it. The public knows. They know they are getting crumbs, if anything, and many are getting increases, while the highest income people do great. Well, let me just say, if by some miracle, our Republican colleagues get the good sense to vote this package down and really help the middle class instead of just helping the wealthy, we Democrats will be there. They will find a Democratic leader and a Democratic Party willing to work with them on real bipartisan tax reform.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The legislative clerk read the nominations of J. Paul Compton, Jr., of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Owen West, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Texas.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, listening to my friend, the Democratic leader, leads me to conclude that he and his party have given up on the American dream. They want to settle for the status quo, which is stagnant growth of our economy and jobs where people haven't seen an increase in their wages for years. They even seem to be rooting for failure. That seems to be the attitude of our missing-in-action congressional Democrats on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

We, on the other hand, think American families need more take-home pay, higher wages, more jobs, and a competitive economy, and we believe they shouldn't have to settle for less. I will come back to that in a moment.

I do want to talk about tax reform and make the perhaps obvious statement that tax reform is hard. That is the reason it hasn't been done since 1986. It is even harder when we have a political party that is determined to fight against every single proposal we have made in our tax cut and tax reform bill, including ones they themselves have championed in the past.

I have heard the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, talk about corporate giveaways, and the Democratic leader just alluded to the same thing. Yet we are embracing the same sort of approach they took in previous proposals and that President Obama advocated for in his State of the Union Address in 2011, when he asked Republicans and Democrats alike to work together to lower the highest corporate tax rate in the industrialized world because he knew it was chasing jobs overseas, and he knew it was important to bring that investment and those jobs back to the United States. That is exactly what our bill does.

My friend KEVIN BRADY, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, called tax reform a Rubik's Cube. He is right, but now, thankfully, we have figured out how to solve that Rubik's Cube.

We confess that this legislation is not perfect, but it is good, and it is much better than the status quo, which our Democratic colleagues seem to have settled for. Last week, the conference committee met between the House and the Senate, and members, including myself, had many difficult conversations about how to reconcile the differences between the two bills. Those discussions were necessary, they were prudent, and they were productive. We now have a consensus about how to get this bill across the finish line and to the President's desk before Christmas.

We will vote on this final bill after the House does tomorrow—hopefully by tomorrow night. Perhaps it will carry over into Wednesday morning, but we will get it on the President's desk for him to sign into law before Christmas, as we pledged.

I want to talk for just a few moments about why I am so excited at the prospect—and so are so many other people across the country—because oftentimes their words get lost in the chatter, some of which is designed to mislead and presents an inaccurate picture of just how consequential this tax reform will be. Their voices—those who believe this good bill will help them—deserve to be heard.

Let me first talk about manufacturing. There was a survey released last week that showed historically high optimism among 14,000 small and large employers in the manufacturing sector. How long have we heard that we need to bring manufacturing back to the United States rather than outsourcing it to Mexico or China or other places around the world? Well, we tried to address that, and I think we met with some success because more than 94 percent of manufacturers are now positive about their company's outlook. Nearly 64 percent said that tax reform would encourage their company to increase capital spending. Capital spending is what goes into infrastructure, equipment, and things that allow them to become more productive and to create more jobs. A majority of these manufacturers said that they would indeed expand their businesses and they would hire more workers after this bill is signed into law by the President. In fact, manufacturers predict that the number of jobs could surge to 2 million by the year 2025. Now there are roughly 350,000 American manufacturing jobs, so a leap to 2 million is almost fantastic—hard to contemplate—but very exciting if true.

The second group I want to mention that is very excited about the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is small businesses. We know small businesses are the economic engine of the country. Indeed, 70 percent of new jobs are created not by Fortune 500 company businesses but by small businesses. As one piece in the Houston Chronicle recently pointed out, the 2.6 million small businesses that call Texas home are enthusiastic because tax reform will provide them much needed relief.

Small businesses, of course, all have to pay taxes, which is burdensome enough, but they also have to spend hours and money to comply with our unnecessarily complex tax laws. According to a 2017 survey by the National Small Business Association, 58 percent of small businesses reported that the administrative burden of Federal taxes posed a greater challenge than the cost of the taxes themselves. The burden of compliance was worse than the check they had to write to the

Federal Government. The Houston oped put the matter succinctly. It said:

For large corporations that can afford a small army of lawyers and accountants, the tax laws are a nuisance. For small businesses, they are a nightmare.

Now that situation will change. Our bill will simplify the Tax Code by eliminating many special deductions and credits while broadening the base and bringing down rates.

To those cynics here inside the beltway who roll their eyes, who think that changes to the business provisions of the code don't matter, I would point out two more important pieces of news. First, the Federal Reserve, an independent government institution, recently said that this tax package is one of the factors that led them to increase their projections for growth next year. That is welcome, to say the least. Tax reform, said Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, last appointed by President Obama, will boost spending and could do the same for productivity. So the Federal Reserve has raised its growth projections for next year, particularly in response to what we are doing.

For those who worry about deficits—that we are cutting taxes too much—and who don't believe the economy will grow to compensate for those cuts in taxes, all they need to do is look at the projection of the Federal Reserve. They currently project the economy to grow at 2.1 percent, but she said that next year it could go to 2.5 percent. So even if you believe that very conservative estimate, that is enough growth to compensate for the cut in taxes and the loss of revenue next year, but we expect that will continue and will grow over the next 10 years.

It is another thing to note how the rest of the world is reacting to what we are doing here. To name but one example, China is worried, which should tell us something. According to a Wall Street Journal story printed last week, China sees these tax plans as making the United States a much more attractive place to invest, which means less investment will occur in China. One official in Beijing has called our tax plan a huge and imminent danger that can't be ignored. China is worried that job creators will relocate here in America, which is a well-founded concern and one of the goals of this tax bill. That is exactly what they will do when we lower the corporate rate and go to a territorial system. Rather than taxing these businesses twice and encouraging them to keep the money they earn and the jobs they create overseas, we encourage them to bring them back to America by making our businesses more internationally competitive.

So to summarize what we are seeing already, and we haven't even passed the bill yet—the conference report, at least—we have passed the Senate bill, the House bill, and now the conference report, which is the reconciled version between the House and the Senate versions, was released Friday.

To summarize what we have seen already, nationally, manufacturers are raving about the tax plan. In places like Texas, small businesses desperately need the relief this bill offers. The Federal Reserve, an independent financial body of the Federal Government, has increased their growth estimates, in part, based upon the tax relief provided in this bill. And our chief competitor in the global economy is startled by what we are doing and afraid of what it might mean in terms of America's competitiveness globally.

Put all this together and what do you have? A brief snapshot of the huge economic impact of the tax overhaul that will be signed by the President in the next few days. Signs of that impact are all around us, almost everywhere I look.

I know of at least one major airline—Southwest Airlines—that has already announced big plans as to what they plan to do with their tax savings. With the benefits afforded by this tax reform, they said that they will purchase new aircraft. Well, this means more jobs for the people who build those aircraft. It means more jobs for the pilots and the flight attendants who travel on them. It means better customer experiences, and it may even mean lower fares for consumers.

Let's talk about what this bill does for Americans who get up and go to work every day and just try to eke out a living, providing for their families. Well, I will tell you, for those worried about how tax reform will affect real people's actual lives, let me give you a couple of concrete examples. Let's take a single teacher making $50,000 a year. She will see a significant reduction in her tax burden—between 17 and 20 percent—less taxes that she will have to pay. This comes from a lower marginal rate and a higher standard deduction. How about a married couple with three children and with median earnings of $75,000 a year? Well, their tax bill will decrease, as well, by as much as $2,000 from a lower rate and a higher child tax credit.

As I have said before, maybe some of our Democratic friends don't believe this is a big deal; maybe they don't care about those American families living paycheck to paycheck, who would welcome an additional $2,000 each year. Their actions make me think they are OK with the status quo because they have refused to even participate in the process, and they have been rooting for failure every step along the way.

Well, we saw the latest example of this over the weekend when a leftwing website, masquerading as a legitimate news outlet, led by a former staffer of the junior Senator from Vermont, published what it advertised as a breaking news story about the final bill. This story breathlessly claimed, without a shred of evidence, that a provision had been airdropped into the final draft in secret in order to secure the vote of a Member who would supposedly personally benefit from it. This is a salacious tale from beginning to end. It was also completely false and invented.

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I have joined with my colleagues over the last year to investigate the efforts of Russian intelligence operatives to undermine public confidence in our last elections. Well, the way this phony news story broke and was picked up on social media and in the mainstream media would make a Russian intelligence officer proud. The whole purpose of this exercise—this false and invented story—was to undermine public confidence in this tax reform package that we will pass, perhaps as early as tomorrow, to be signed by the President, perhaps before Christmas.

Some of our friends on the other side of the aisle and their allies in the so-called mainstream media ran with it in a dishonest attempt to derail us from passing the bill and undermine the reputation or integrity of one of our fellow Senators—all from a made-up story. Again, the Russian intelligence officials—it is well-documented by now—through a combination of cyber theft, propaganda, creative use of social media, and a gullible mainstream media, undermined American confidence in our most basic obligation, an institution of our government, which is our election system. But what we saw happen this weekend, as I said, would have made a Russian intelligence officer proud.

As a letter from Chairman HATCH, who is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, makes clear today, this website, which, by the way, also posted a false report about an amendment I had introduced several weeks ago and later had to correct it, spread a false story irresponsibly and dishonestly. In his letter, Chairman HATCH writes:

It takes a great deal of imagination—and likely no small amount of partisanship—to argue that a provision that has been public for over a month, debated on the floor of the House of Representatives, included in a House-passed bill, and identified by [the Joint Committee on Taxation] as an issue requiring compromise between conferees is somehow a covert and last-minute addition to the conference report.

It reminds me of another quote sometimes attributed to Mark Twain, perhaps apocryphally, who supposedly said: A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes. Well, a lie can travel even faster than that today because of social media.

Shame on those who would perpetuate lies in an effort to deny the American people a much needed tax cut and tax relief. Thank goodness that attitude isn't shared by most Americans and by the Texans I represent who want and deserve much better than the same old same old. They don't believe we have to settle for the status quo. We are going to give them something better. We are going to keep our promise, and I can't wait until this bill gets on the President's desk.

Let me just close by saying that I am a proud son of a World War II veteran.

My dad was in the Army Air Corps, flew B–17s out of Molesworth Air Force Base in England over Nazi Germany during the end of World War II. He was a member of the 8th Air Force, 303rd Bomb Group. On his 26th mission, he was shot down and captured as a prisoner of war. Thank goodness he survived, came home, met my mom, married, raised a family, and became a productive member of civilian society after his military service. But I remember, as if it were yesterday, what my parents said they wanted for me, my brother, and my sister. It is what parents of that entire generation wanted for their children and grandchildren. They wanted to know that their sacrifice, their willingness to fight and win America's wars against terrible tyrants, such as Adolph Hitler—that the consequence of their sacrifice and their service would be a better standard of living, a safer world, and a better quality of life. In short, what they wanted for us and what I want for my children and what I believe every American parent wants for their child or their children is exactly what my parents wanted for me and my sister and my brother. We sometimes call that the American dream.

Some of us believe that the American dream is still alive, that we don't have to settle for second place. We don't have to settle for the status quo. We don't have to settle for flat wages and fewer jobs. We can do better. We believe we have done better in this piece of legislation, which will help reawaken the slumbering giant of the American economy. It will put Americans back to work. It will mean more take-home pay. It will mean a better standard of living, but, surprisingly—and disappointingly—our colleagues across the aisle want no part of it. I hope they haven't given up on that American dream. I haven't given up, and I don't believe Americans have given up on that dream.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter from Chairman HATCH be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2017.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CORKER: Thank you for your letter dated yesterday.

I am disgusted by press reports that have distorted one particular aspect of the conference agreement on H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The reports have focused on the final version of the 20 percent pass-through deduction, the proposed new Section 199A. As the author of this provision and the vice chairman of the conference committee, I can speak with authority about the process by which the conference committee reached its final position.

There are two false assertions contained in these reports, and I would like to correct the record on both.

First, some have asserted that a new provision was crafted for real estate developers and was ''airdropped'' into the conference agreement. Second, reports have implied that you had some role in advocating for or negotiating the inclusion of this provision.

Both assertions are categorically false. With respect to the second, I am unaware of any attempt by you or your staff to contact anyone on the conference committee regarding this provision or any related policy matter. To the contrary, virtually all the concerns you had raised in the past about the treatment of pass-through businesses in tax reform were to voice skepticism about the generosity of various proposals under consideration.

The first claim—that a new pass-through proposal was created out of whole cloth and inserted into the conference report—is an irresponsible and partisan assertion that is belied by the facts. For more than a year, tax-writers in the House and Senate have worked to craft legislation that not only provided relief for ''C'' corporations, but also delivered equitable treatment for pass-through businesses. Though the two chambers came at this issue from different angles, our goal was the same: To provide tax relief to pass-through businesses at a level similar to that provided to regular ''C'' corporations. This policy goal was confirmed in the Unified Framework for Fixing Our Broken Tax Code, which provided in part:

''TAX RATE STRUCTURE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES The framework limits the maximum tax rate applied to the business income of small and family owned businesses conducted as sole proprietorships, partnerships and S corporations to 25%. The framework contemplates that the committees will adopt measures to prevent the re-characterization of personal income into business income to prevent wealthy individuals from avoiding the top personal tax rate.''

The House Ways Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee achieved this mutual goal by different means. Section 1004 of the House bill provided a special tax rate for pass-through income and included a ''prove-out'' option for capital-intensive businesses. Chairman Brady unveiled this approach on November 2nd, more than six weeks ago.

The Senate took a different approach, achieving the intended rate relief through a deduction patterned after current law Section 199. We also included measures to ensure that compensation could not be easily gamed into business income in order to qualify for the deduction. Similar to Section 199, the deduction in the Senate bill excluded compensation and guarantee payments to owners and was limited to 50 percent of compensation paid to employees, with an exception for small pass-through businesses, including service providers. The Senate bill did not include a prove-out option for capital-intensive businesses like the one contained in the House bill.

The Joint Committee on Taxation (''JCT''), the non-partisan congressional scorekeeper for tax legislation, released a side-by-side summary of the two bills for conferees. That summary, dated December 7, 2017 and available on JCT's website (JCX 64–17), described the House position in part:

''In the case of a capital-intensive business, a taxpayer may ''prove out'' a capital percentage by electing the application of an increased percentage for the taxable year it is made and each of the next four taxable years. The applicable percentage is determined by dividing (1) the specified return on capital for the activity for the taxable year, by (2) the taxpayer's net business income derived from that activity for that taxable year.''

It takes a great deal of imagination—and likely no small amount of partisanship—to argue that a provision that has been public for over a month, debated on the floor of the House of Representatives, included in a House-passed bill, and identified by JCT as an issue requiring a compromise between conferees is somehow a covert and last-minute addition to the conference report.

I have sat on a number conference committees, too numerous to remember. In each case, conferees have come into the conference expecting to achieve their chamber's position or negotiate a reasonable compromise. This conference committee was no exception. The House entered the conference with an interest in preserving, in some form, the prove-out alternative as an option for capital-intensive taxpayers. Through several rounds of negotiations, the House secured a version of their proposal that was consistent with the overall structure of the compromise.

The prove-out alternative included in the conference report was derived from the House provision and is the product of a negotiation between the House and Senate tax-writing committees. It is that simple.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Very Truly Yours,

ORRIN G. HATCH,
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEADLINES

Mr. KING. Madam President, I rise today to talk not about legislation or about the tax bill—well, I may talk about the tax bill a little—but I do wish to talk about deadlines and how we all do our work, whether it is in the Senate, in our businesses, or in our personal lives. I wish to talk about deadlines missed and deadlines that don't exist.

One of the realities of this place that I think is very unfortunate is that we rarely make our deadlines. These are self-imposed deadlines. These are deadlines that we create. We pass a law that says something has to happen by September 30. We set the deadline, and then we don't make it.

Most notoriously, it happens with budgets. I don't know the last time we had a budget on time. I think it is about 17 years ago. I suspect there are probably less than a dozen Senators in this Chamber who were here when we last passed a budget on time. There is

no excuse for that. The problem is that when we put it off, we don't know anything more than we did at the time of the deadline. We could have done it, and yet, because we are able to, we put it off. That is human nature, unfortunately. Who among us would not have put off the deadline for a book report if we could have said to the teacher: Gee, I don't think I can make that Monday morning deadline. I will just do my book report on Tuesday.

Life doesn't work that way. In the real world, there are deadlines. There are consequences if you don't get your work done on time. Things happen, and if you don't get your work done on time, usually, those things that happen are bad. I don't know where else, other than in this body, where deadlines, which have enormous implications and enormous importance, are simply ignored.

I just sat down in the last day or so and put together real deadlines that we have in the law right now. What are they? Well, the Children's Health Insurance Program's deadline is September 30, 2017. That is gone. That has passed. I can give you 23,000 reasons that we should have met that deadline. That is the number of young people in Maine who are covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program, and there are 9 million nationwide. But we missed the deadline. Why? I can't find any reason. We don't know anything now that we didn't know in the middle of September or in August when we could have passed this program, but we just blew right by it. Maybe it is because none of our kids are in this program. I venture to say that if the children of the Members of the Senate were in the CHIP program, we would have met that deadline, but we didn't.

What is another one? Community health centers had another deadline of September 30, which was missed. I will give you 200,000 reasons that we should have met that deadline. That is the number of people in my State of Maine who are served by federally qualified health centers. I was at one just on Friday. They serve people who otherwise wouldn't get care. They fill an enormous gap, particularly in a rural State, to provide healthcare to people who need it, but we didn't make the deadline. There was no particular reason not to make this deadline. We just blew right by it. It was not all that important. I venture to say that if our families were covered under this program, we would have gotten it done. No Senators' families are covered by federally qualified health centers. If they had been, we would have gotten it done.

Of course, the granddaddy of all of deadlines mentioned is the budget: October 1, 2017. We missed it—no deadline. We just went right by it. Nothing happened. Well, what we did was to pass a continuing resolution. A continuing resolution really should be called a ''cop-out resolution.'' It is basically saying that we are not going to make the hard decisions in a budget. We are just going to push them forward for a month or two. But the problem is that the month or two comes. In fact, it is coming this Friday, and now we are talking about another continuing resolution to go into January or February. No business would do this. Families can't even do this.

Some time ago, I was the Governor of Maine. I remember vividly. I can practically tell you where I was standing in my office. We have a deadline in Maine of July 1 for our budget. We always make it. Members of the legislature of one of the parties came to me. They were having a hard time getting a budget. It was very contentious, as it is every year. He said: Governor, let's just do a continuing resolution like they do in Washington, and we can solve this problem in the next 2 weeks. I said: Not on your life, because if we do, once we open the Pandora's box of continuing resolutions in Maine or in Iowa or in Mississippi or Florida, then we are stuck. We will never get a budget on time again because it is too easy to put off the hard decisions. What do we know now about the budget that we didn't know in August? What will we know in January that we don't know now?

By the way, a continuing resolution for the entire budget is bad for the government and disastrous for national security. I serve on the Armed Services Committee. We have hearings both from our civilian leadership and our military leadership, and they have told us repeatedly: Please get us a budget. The continuing resolution doesn't allow us to plan. It locks us into last year's priorities. It doesn't allow us to look forward and make commitments that will save the taxpayers money if we have the authority. It is a disaster for national security, but a deadline was missed on September 30. It looks like we are going to miss another deadline on December 22, and we will be here talking about funding the government, doing the budget, sometime in January or maybe in February. There is no reason for it. There is no reason for it except that we are simply avoiding making difficult decisions.

The next one is DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The real deadline started on October 6. That is when people started to lose the ability to re-up their qualifications for DACA. Over 100 people a day are losing their DACA status. In the last week it has been, I think, something like 1,700—in the last week or 10 days. These are people who are going to go into the holidays unsure about whether they are going to be able to continue to live in this country. These are young people, as we all know. This is the only country they know. They were brought here as little kids. They weren't illegal immigrants. They were brought here as children, and they are contributing to our society, and they are working and paying taxes. But we missed the deadline starting in October.

Now, even the President said we should fix this program, and he gave us 6 months. He said: I am going to disallow the program, but not until March 5, 2018. I don't know whether it is legal to bet in the District of Columbia, but I would be willing to bet that we are still struggling with this question on March 4, 2018. I deeply hope not because lives are being toyed with here unnecessarily. We could make the decisions now. We could decide to reach a compromise agreement on this program, which Members of both sides of the aisle think needs to be done, including the President. Let's get it done. But it is one more missed deadline.

Next is the National Flood Insurance Program, with a deadline of December 22, which is 4 days from now. I don't think we are going to make it. If ever there was a time of importance for the National Flood Insurance Program, it is now. We have had enormous flooding issues with the hurricanes in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Yet the flood insurance program expires on December 22. Why don't we get it done? Because it is not our houses. It is not our houses that are at risk to get the flood insurance. I suspect if we had the houses that were part of this problem, it would be solved.

Medicare extenders expire on December 31 of this year. Are we going to get those done? I deeply hope so, but I am not so sure.

FISA section 702, one of the most important national intelligence provisions that we have, also expires at the end of the year. Are we going to get that done? I deeply hope so, but I am not optimistic.

Next, we have the wildfires and FEMA disaster aid for Harvey, Irma, Maria, and the wildfires. These are huge disasters. We have partially funded them, but certainly not to the point that is going to be required. Those deadlines were all this fall.

At the bottom of my chart of priorities is tax reform. Boy, are we going to make that deadline. The only problem is that it doesn't exist. There is no deadline for that. There was no deadline. It is not December 22. It is not Christmas. It is not New Year's. It is a self-imposed deadline that is not in law anywhere.

I agree that we need to do tax reform, but we have been doing it on an unprecedented scale and speed that is unnecessary. We have missed and ignored all these real deadlines in exchange for focusing all of our attention on a fake deadline. Sure, it would be nice to get it done, and we could have gotten it done. It could have been done on a bipartisan basis. We could have started last summer, and we would have had a bill just like the bill that emerged from the HELP Committee with regard to healthcare, on a bipartisan basis. But instead it was a closed process, done with unprecedented speed, with virtually no hearings—well,

no hearings, no real hearings on the bill, no serious outside experts, no analysis of what is in it. We have been given a 500-page bill that we are going to vote on in probably a day or so. Yet we are racing to meet a deadline that didn't exist.

It is boring to talk about process, but that is what I am really talking about today. I just don't understand an institution that doesn't make its real deadlines and yet races and throws everything aside to try to make a deadline that just came out of the air. It is not in any law, any rule, any expectation—let's do it by Christmas or by the end of the year. It is no way to run a business, and it is certainly no way to run the government on behalf of the American people.

I have never been in an institution or in a group of people who are as capable as the people who are here, and I find it genuinely puzzling as to why we perform so poorly and why the public opinion of us is so low. These are good people on both sides of the aisle. Yet something about the way this institution works keeps us from meeting the rules and expectations that the rest of society takes for granted, such as making deadlines, doing your job, doing what you are paid to do.

One of the most fundamental responsibilities is to pass a budget. We have members of our Appropriations Committee who have been working for a year to put the budget together. It is done, and we could do this, but instead we are putting it off and putting it off and putting it off. I wouldn't be surprised if, come January or February—assuming we don't make it by this Friday—there are going to be people who say: Let's just do a continuing resolution for the rest of the year—a cop-out resolution, a nonresolution, a nondecision on behalf of the people of this country.

I think we can do better. I think we can begin to regain the trust of the American people by going back and doing things the way we are supposed to according to the old norms, with hearings and considerations and making deadlines and meeting our obligations to our citizens and to our country.

I deeply hope that as the year turns, we also make a turn and that we make a turn to do this place better, to do our work that the American people hired us to do, to do it on a timely basis, and to meet our responsibilities. I believe we can do it. I believe we can do it better, and I deeply hope that we do so.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise to express my support for the conference agreement on the Tax Cuts and Job Act, the first major overhaul of our Tax Code since 1986. This legislation will provide tax relief to working families, encourage the creation of jobs right here in America, and spur economic growth that will benefit all Americans.

Let me start by discussing the effects of this bill on individuals and families. Throughout this debate, I have emphasized that reforms to our outdated Tax Code must help working families. I, therefore, authored three key amendments that were retained in the final package.

My amendments allow families to deduct up to $10,000 in State and local taxes, increase the deduction for medical expenses, and protect tax-free contributions for retirement savings.

The original Senate bill would have eliminated the deduction known as SALT that allows taxpayers to avoid paying a Federal tax on State and local taxes that they have already paid. This provision has been in the Tax Code since 1913, when the income tax was first established. It is intended to prevent double taxation. My amendment, which was adopted by the Senate, restored the deduction for property taxes up to $10,000. I am pleased that the final bill goes a step further by allowing the deduction of property and income or sales taxes up to this level, which will assist even more Americans.

My work to restore this deduction is especially important to families living in high-tax States like Maine, which has one of our Nation's highest tax burdens; yet Maine's per capita income ranks only 31st, which is nearly $5,200 below the U.S. average. Maintaining this deduction therefore provides important tax relief for those Mainers who itemize.

My second amendment included in the conference agreement is a very important one. It is aimed at helping Americans struggling with high, unreimbursed healthcare costs, including seniors paying for long-term care for a loved one and those with expensive chronic healthcare conditions. My amendment lowers the threshold for claiming this deduction for these unreimbursed expenses from 10 percent to 7.5 percent of income for 2017 and 2018.

The House bill would have eliminated this longstanding deduction used by approximately 8.8 million Americans annually, nearly half of whom make less than $50,000 per year. Retaining this important deduction and lowering the threshold will provide relief for those experiencing particularly high healthcare costs. That is why AARP and 44 other consumer groups strongly endorsed my amendments, stating: ''It provides important tax relief which helps offset the costs of acute and chronic medical conditions for older Americans, children, pregnant women, disabled individuals and other adults, as well as the costs associated with long-term care and assisted living.''

At a time when we need to be encouraging Americans to save more for their retirement, I am encouraged that the final agreement preserves the pretax contribution limits for retirement savings plans. We are in the midst of a silent but looming retirement security crisis in this country. According to the nonpartisan Center for Retirement Research, there is a $7.7 trillion gap between the savings that American households need to maintain their standard of living in retirement and what they actually have saved.

We should be doing everything we can to encourage more saving, not less. For this reason, I am pleased that the final bill will include my third amendment, which struck the original Senate language eliminating the ability of public employees, such as firefighters, schoolteachers, and police officers, as well as clergy and those employed by charities and nonprofit organizations, to make what are called catch-up contributions to their retirement accounts. These employees are generally paid less than their counterparts employed by for-profit companies and thus are less able to save for their retirement. My provision would allow them to continue making these important extra investments toward a secure retirement.

The conference agreement benefits lower and middle-income taxpayers significantly, while simplifying the tasks that no one relishes of completing their tax returns.

Significantly, this bill nearly doubles the standard deduction to $12,000 for single filers and $24,000 for those filing jointly. The child tax credit will be doubled from $1,000 to $2,000. Thanks to Senator RUBIO's efforts, which I strongly supported, up to $1,400 of that tax credit will be refundable in order to benefit low-income families.

Let's be more concrete. What do these reforms mean to families across our country? The 72 percent of Mainers who already use the standard deduction will have their taxes reduced. A family with $24,000 in income will pay no Federal income tax. A single mom earning $35,000 a year with one child will see her taxes drop by nearly 4,000 percent. Instead of paying money back to Washington, she will be getting back nearly $1,100 to help her make ends meet. A couple with no children earning $60,000 will see their taxes fall by more than $900. A couple with two children earning $60,000 will get a tax cut of about $1,700. That is a reduction of more than 100 percent. The bottom line is that most Maine households will see their taxes go down.

I was very concerned about a number of important deductions for individuals that would have been eliminated under the House bill.

Having worked at Husson University in Bangor before my election to the Senate, I am well aware of how critical education deductions and credits are to our students and their families; therefore, I had several fruitful discussions with a key conferee, Senator ROB PORTMAN, about preserving those deductions that help students afford higher education. I appreciate his strong advocacy for these provisions that I care so much about as a result of

my direct experience working with college students. In fact, one of the very first bills that I introduced in the Senate as a new Senator in 1997 was to provide a deduction for interest paid on student loans. The conference agreement maintains that deductibility of interest on student loans, as well as the tax exemption for employer-provided tuition assistance and for graduate student tuition waivers. All of those important deductions are maintained in this bill and will help Americans improve their earnings because of the increased education they will have.

The bill also maintains a $250 deduction—a provision I authored some 15 years ago—that allows teachers to deduct the costs of classroom supplies they purchase with their own money. Having visited more than 200 schools in the State of Maine, I know firsthand how dedicated teachers dig deep into their own pockets to buy supplies to enhance the education of their students.

In addition, this bill would modernize the ABLE accounts, which are tax-preferred savings accounts essential for providing long-term support for individuals with disabilities and their families.

The bill also continues the tax credit to encourage adoptions.

The final agreement also preserves a number of deductions and credits that are so important to our communities. I worked hard to preserve the historic tax credit so businesses rehabilitating older buildings in communities like Lewiston, ME, will continue to do so.

I am also pleased that private activity bonds, which are vital to many hospitals and institutions of higher education, are continued, as are the affordable housing and new markets tax credits. We have found proven ways to encourage public-private partnerships, and we ought to continue to incentivize these important partnerships.

How this legislation treats employers has also been the subject of much debate, but the reality is the United States cannot continue to have the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world at 35 percent. We are losing jobs as businesses make the calculation to invest overseas.

I have talked to the executives of General Dynamics, which owns Bath Iron Works in Maine and employs more than 5,000 Mainers; to United Technology, which employs more than 1,900 people in North Berwick at its Pratt & Whitney plant; to General Electric, which has a major plant in Bangor; to Proctor & Gamble, which employs 400 workers in Auburn; and to Idexx, which is such an important high-tech employer in Westbrook, about the positive difference this legislation will make in their ability to create jobs in America.

New Balance, which has about 900 workers in Maine manufacturing footwear, describes the tax reforms as follows: ''New Balance will be more competitive and manufacture more footwear in Maine that we can export across the globe.''

This significant Maine employer went on to say: ''Companies like New Balance, which already has a strong domestic manufacturing presence, will be able to increase investments in their facilities and be more globally competitive while remaining a U.S. company hiring U.S. workers.''

These words are echoed by the manager of the Pratt & Whitney plant who wrote to me: ''The reforms . . . will allow companies like ours to bring home earnings from abroad to invest in research and development, advanced manufacturing, energy efficiency, and workforce initiatives. . . . Pratt & Whitney plans to hire thousands of people over the next several years across our U.S. operations, and this tax reform will further support our efforts.''

Isn't that what we seek? Isn't that what tax reform should bring about—more jobs, right here in America?

The bill also includes changes important for our small businesses which employ nearly half of all workers and generate two out of three net new jobs in our country. They are the true engine of our economy, especially in the great State of Maine. The bill would provide tax relief that enables them to create more jobs, increase paychecks, and grow our economy.

As the president of the Retail Association of Maine recently commented about this tax reform bill, ''For Maine and its nearly 9,000 retail establishments and the more than 80,000 retail jobs, this is welcome relief for small businesses.''

According to the National Federation of Independent Business, Maine ranks fifth in the Nation for the share of workers employed by passthrough businesses, as most small employers are structured. The NFIB, our Nation's small business advocacy group, has strongly endorsed this final bill.

Small businesses make an outsized contribution to our Nation's economy; yet they face a tax burden that can reach nearly 40 percent at the Federal level and can be significantly higher than the corporate tax rates paid by larger firms. Small businesses are forced to devote more resources to tax payments and fewer resources to creating good jobs and investing in their communities. This bill provides important tax relief to small businesses that are the backbone of our economy.

Let's listen to the words of some of the small businesses from Maine that have written or talked to me. The owner of Windham Millwork, an architectural woodworking company, described the relief for small businesses and how it will help manufacturing workers and families this way: ''Most importantly, it means Windham Millwork will have more money to spend on what matters—our workers and community. With the money we'll save, we can create new jobs or offer better pay to our workforce . . . which helps everyone in our community and contributes to a growing Maine economy.''

The innkeeper of the Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport noted: ''This tax reform bill helps level the playing field for small businesses not only in the hotel industry, but across the economy. With a lower tax burden, small businesses in all industries can continue to grow, creating more jobs.''

Moreover, a family-owned business in southern Maine described for me how the bill would benefit Maine companies and the people who work for them: ''When [companies] become more profitable, they reinvest faster, grow faster, and increase profit-sharing. Employees benefit when companies grow. There are more jobs, more opportunities, more security, more mobility, more innovation.''

Tax reform should spur this kind of economic growth. The weak growth and stagnant wages we have seen in recent years cannot be accepted as the new normal for our country. It is clear where the current path would lead if we do not act. CBO projects the current slow growth of just 1.9 percent per year will continue throughout the next decade—far below the historic average of 3 percent. This would result in our public debt exceeding 90 percent of GDP by 2027, just as our obligations to the baby boom generation begin to crest.

Surely, we can do better. Tax relief and reform will lift our economy, leading to higher wages for workers and more revenue for government. Extrapolating from a CBO estimate, an increase of just four-tenths of 1 percent in economic growth could produce revenues that are in excess of $1 trillion over the next 10 years.

If we remain on our present trajectory, however, growth will remain stagnant. Continued slow growth will crowd out many funding priorities, harm our national security, place significant strain on Federal programs, and impose a burden on our children and our grandchildren. We must act now to reignite the engine of growth, to provide for the next generation the same promise of a brighter future we received from those who came before us.

Finally, let me discuss the critical issue of healthcare. It has been deeply disturbing to see seniors frightened about the possibility that this tax bill could trigger an automatic 4-percent cut in the vital Medicare Program. Although I knew that the law that could cause this reduction has been waived 16 times, I felt it was essential that our leaders publicly commit that Medicare reductions would not be triggered by this legislation. I don't know of any Senator on either side of the aisle who is seeking to have an automatic 4-percent cut in Medicare go into effect.

I ask unanimous consent that my exchange of correspondence with the Senate majority leader be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my statement.

This pledge is ironclad and, I hope, reassuring to our seniors.

I am also concerned about the inclusion of the repeal of the individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act as part of this tax bill. I don't think the two issues should have been combined, but let me be very clear: I have never supported the individual mandate. There is a big difference between fining people who choose to go without health insurance versus the bills considered last summer and fall that would have taken away insurance coverage from people who have it and want it. Those bills also would have made sweeping cuts in the Medicaid Program.

The financial penalty under the individual mandate for failing to comply with it falls disproportionately on lower-income Americans. Eighty percent of those who pay the fine make under $50,000 a year. For many of these individuals, the cost of insurance under the ACA is simply unaffordable. Individuals making 250 percent of the Federal poverty level—that is just over $30,000—are not eligible for the subsidies to reduce deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs that are known as the cost-sharing reductions. So, essentially, the insurance they are being fined for, if they don't buy, is virtually useless to them because the deductibles and the copays are so high, and if they make over 250 percent of the poverty level—over $30,000 a year—they cannot afford it.

I want to make an important point that has been overlooked in this debate. Any Senator, Democratic or Republican, could have offered an amendment on the Senate floor to strike the repeal of the individual mandate. None—not one—chose to do so. That is telling, indeed, and reflects both how unpopular the mandate is and how burdensome its impact is.

Nevertheless, repealing the individual mandate without other healthcare reforms will almost certainly lead to further increases in the costs of health insurance premiums that are already too expensive under the ACA.

For these reasons, I have made it a priority to secure passage of two bipartisan bills that will help make health insurance more affordable. Shouldn't that be a goal that all of us can embrace? Both of these bills have the support of the President, the Vice President, and the Senate Republican leaders. In fact, Majority Leader MCCONNELL and I engaged in a colloquy affirming that commitment.

The first bill, the Bipartisan Healthcare Stabilization Act, sponsored by Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY, will provide vital funding to help low-income families pay their out-of-pocket costs, including deductibles and copays associated with certain ACA health insurance. I am proud to be one of the 22 cosponsors of the bipartisan Alexander-Murray bill.

The second is a bipartisan bill that I introduced with my friend and colleague Senator BILL NELSON. It would protect people with preexisting conditions while lowering the cost of health insurance through the use of high-risk pools. This plan will provide $5 billion annually for 2 years in seed money for States to establish invisible high-risk pools or traditional reinsurance programs.

We don't have to guess about the impact. I am going to quote some actuarial studies shortly. The fact is that we know from experience in States like Maine and Alaska that high-risk pools can help to lower premiums substantially, by an average of 20 percent.

Analyses show that enactment of these two bills together will reduce the cost of health insurance, thus making it more affordable. According to analysis by experts at Oliver Wyman, the passage of these bills will more than offset the premium increases caused by the repeal of the individual mandate. In fact, Oliver Wyman suggests in its estimate that the $5 billion in funding would be sufficient to allow States to leverage more than $15 billion in reinsurance coverage, and it would result in premiums that were more than 20 percent lower than if the individual mandate were repealed and the package of provisions were not implemented.

Furthermore, analysis by experts at Avalere project that ''in combination, CSR funding and $5B in annual reinsurance could lower 2019 premiums by 18% and increase enrollment by 1.3M people.''

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners wrote that these two bills would significantly reduce health insurance premiums and help promote more stability in insurance markets. The NAIC said: ''Providing reliable federal funding to reimburse health insurance carriers for the Cost-Sharing Reduction (CSR) program assistance they give to low-income consumers and grants for states to establish invisible high risk pools or reinsurance programs would reduce premium increases as much as 20 percent and could encourage some carriers to stay in the market.''

In evaluating this bill, the question we should ask is not, Does this tax cut make Washington better off? The right question to ask is, Does this tax cut make the American people better off? The answer to that question is yes.

The bill puts money back into the pockets of American taxpayers with tax cuts beginning January 1. As soon as the IRS updates withholding tables this winter, taxpayers will see the benefit of this bill in their paychecks. Over time, Americans will also see more benefit from this legislation in the form of higher wages. Businesses, small and large, will make the investments that will create more jobs.

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

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I will cast my vote in support of the conference agreement on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. While it is by no means perfect, on balance, this reform bill will provide much needed tax relief. It will benefit lower and middle-income families, while spurring the creation of good jobs and greater economic growth.

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

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, November 28, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL: I write to express my deep concerns with the Congressional Budget Office's determination that an automatic four percent cut to Medicare, estimated to be roughly $25 billion for fiscal year 2018, could be triggered by the passage of tax reform legislation as a result of the Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO) even though there is no intention for such a reduction to occur.

Since I do not believe it is anyone's intention to allow automatic cuts to Medicare to occur, I urge swift action to waive the PAYGO requirements. Medicare provides essential benefits to our nation's seniors, and we must remove immediately the threat that an automatic reduction in the program's funding could occur.

Since PAYGO was enacted, sixteen laws that would have otherwise triggered PAYGO's automatic spending cuts have included provisions to exclude all or part of the law's budgetary impact, including the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 that was enacted under the previous Administration.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that no Medicare cuts are triggered under PAYGO, a goal I believe is supported by members on both sides of the aisle. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

SUSAN M. COLLINS,
United States Senator.

U.S. SENATE, MAJORITY LEADER,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2017.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: Thank you for your letter expressing concern about the across-the-board spending cuts. You will be pleased to know that Speaker Paul Ryan and I issued the following joint statement earlier today:

''Critics of tax reform are claiming the legislation would lead to massive, across-the-board spending cuts in vital programs—including a 4-percent reduction in Medicare—due to the Pay-Go law enacted in 2010. This will not happen. Congress has readily available methods to waive this law, which has never been enforced since its enactment. There is no reason to believe that Congress would not act again to prevent a sequester, and we will work to ensure these spending cuts are prevented.''

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, does the Senator from Maine need some more time?

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I thank Senator NELSON. I say, through the Chair, that is very gracious of the Senator. I have completed my statement. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, while the Senator from Maine is still here, let me just say what a great Senator she is and what a pleasure it is to do business in a bipartisan way, as the two of us have now done for several years here in the Senate, including the legislation the Senator from Maine just talked about.

I just want to say to the Senator from Maine that it is my hope, regarding the statements that have been made to the Senator, that these two pieces of legislation she referenced will be passed. I do believe the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, will honor that with regard to the Senate. It is this Senator's concern that at the other end of the hall, in the House of Representatives, they may not honor that. I certainly hope the Senator feels like she has the statements of commitment by the leadership in the House of Representatives that they will do as Senator MCCONNELL has indicated.

Madam President, I wish to talk about the tax bill. Needless to say, you are going to hear a different version from me than my good friend and the very distinguished Senator from Maine, because last Friday night we got the conference agreement on the tax bill. You can wonder why it was held until late Friday night, when nobody was paying attention to the details of the bill.

What is becoming increasingly clear is that this tax bill is not for ordinary folks. It is going to give a few nuggets to the middle class, but that is to mask the true intent. The real purpose of the bill is to give huge tax cuts to multinational corporations and to make it easier for them to shift jobs overseas. That is the bottom line.

Right now, under current law, corporations that send jobs overseas have to pay taxes on the money they bring back into the United States, but now, what this new GOP tax bill says is that corporations that send jobs overseas can bring that money back to United States tax-free. Once this bill passes, companies will come under increasing pressure to take advantage of the tax savings in the bill by sending their jobs overseas to low-wage countries—particularly those jobs that can't already be automated.

This is the exact opposite of what we should be doing. Instead of passing this version of the tax bill that will inevitably send American jobs overseas, we should be working on a bill that cuts taxes permanently for hard-working middle-class families.

Supporters of the bill will argue that a lower corporate rate will encourage companies to keep jobs here. They will argue that, rather than going to a country with a higher corporate rate, America's corporate rate will be lower. But that is ignoring the attraction that companies have to send jobs overseas, because of cheaper wages and lower environmental standards.

Take China. China has a corporate rate of 25 percent, except that they make exceptions for certain companies at 15 percent. So the 21 percent in this tax bill for corporations on income earned in the United States may still be higher than in China, and the pressure on corporations is to take it to a country that has lower environmental standards and lower wages.

I think our friends on the other side of the aisle know this is a head fake. We are not fooled by this. We know what you are trying to do with this bill. The more people learn about it, the worse it looks. That is why they waited until Friday night to let the spotlight shine on it—so that over the weekend people weren't paying a lot of attention.

There is a reason why my friends on the other side of the aisle are in such a rush to get this passed. It is because they want to get it enacted before all of the new loopholes and sweetheart deals for the special interests and the bottom line of encouraging jobs to go overseas are discovered. And, starting right now, it is going to be discovered.

It would be nice if our colleagues showed as much urgency for some of the other things we should be doing in the Senate, such as providing millions of kids with health insurance through the CHIP program or helping folks recover from the massive hurricanes this year, including the millions of people in Puerto Rico who are still without reliable electricity or drinking water. What about the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers in the United States who are here in a deportable status? That is what we ought to be worrying about.

It has been over 3 months, going on 4 months, since Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated the Puerto Rican island. It has been months since Harvey and Irma devastated farmers in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. While the Congress has passed two disaster supplemental funding packages, neither of them has included any relief for Florida's agricultural community. They are hanging on by a thread. They can hardly make payroll. They are having to lay off people. They desperately need our help, which I hope we are going to address in this next disaster aid funding package.

Instead of spending all of our energy on cutting corporate taxes and making it easier to send American jobs overseas, we should be focused on reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, so that 9 million children across the country, including nearly 400,000 in Florida, can continue to have access to the health coverage they desperately need. Or we should be negotiating permanent protections for the Dreamers before they are kicked out of the only country they have ever known. Unfortunately, the only thing this Republican-led Senate seems to care about is helping out large multinational corporations.

The truth is, these multinational corporations are doing just fine. We shouldn't be moving Heaven and Earth—adding $1.5 trillion to the national debt or upending our Nation's healthcare system—just to make it easier for them to send American jobs overseas. That is not right. That is not fair. The American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first, I want to thank my friend Senator NELSON for his comments from the floor in regard to the tax bill that we will be voting on later this week. The experience I had this morning underscores the issues that Senator NELSON has brought to the floor. I had a meeting with the Greater Baltimore Committee. We had business leaders, labor leaders; we had advocates from different segments of our community; and we had graduate students there. They all expressed concern about our voting this week on a tax bill that we first saw on Friday evening—the latest version.

It is still fundamentally flawed, as Senator NELSON has pointed out. I say that it is fundamentally flawed because it gives significant, big tax cuts to corporations and high-income taxpayers and leaves middle-income taxpayers footing the bill.

The conference report makes it worse because they lower the highest tax rate from 39.6 percent to 37 percent—another advantage for high-income taxpayers. In addition, the estate tax is doubled, which affects 0.2 percent of the wealthiest people in this country. Corporations not only get the lower tax rates cut from 35 percent to 21 percent, but they also get relief from the alternative minimum tax. To make matters even worse, the tax relief for middle-income families is temporary, whereas the tax relief for businesses is made permanent.

It is definitely a tax bill that is going to hurt middle-income taxpayers. In my own State, independent analysis shows that 800,000 Marylanders will end up paying more in taxes. Guess who is going to foot the bill, who is going to pay for the big deficit.

If you look at the corporate tax cut alone, that is somewhere close to the $1.15 trillion we have been talking about, which is baked into the bill to increase the national debt by $1.5 trillion. I think that is unconscionable; I think it is unconscionable to say that we can afford tax cuts when we already have these large deficits that are going to make us borrow more money and make our economy more dependent.

The truth is, even the Republicans are telling us, even with dynamic scoring, we are going to have a $1 trillion tax gap in the deficit. In reality, the $1.5 trillion is conservative. When you look at the individual tax relief, it is temporary; it expires. Some expire in 2 years.

Most of my Republican friends have said: Just extend it. If you extend it,

there will be even a deeper hole in the deficit—closer to $2 trillion. Who is going to pay for that? Middle-income families are going to pay for it. They are not just being left out as far as tax relief is concerned; they are being asked to foot the bill for the tax cuts for corporations and high-income taxpayers.

In addition, it will affect other elements that middle-income taxpayers depend upon. This is a direct attack on Medicaid and Medicare. We see that. We saw that in the budget instructions, where we had to cut Medicare and Medicaid. We see that in the pay-go rules. We see that the next chapter of this tax reform bill will be, well, now we have these deficits, and we have to pay for it. Who is going to be held responsible for paying for it?

We know that it is going to affect our own budgets. I am now hearing that we are going to take it out on our own Federal workforce, deny them a pay raise for next year or have fewer Federal workers to carry out their mission or make them pay more for benefits. We know that is going to come. The argument is going to be that we have these large deficits now, and we have to do this.

How are we going to respond to the issues Senator NELSON talked about on disaster relief when we have these large deficits? We know that we are going to be asking middle-income families not only to make a sacrifice on the tax cut, not only to pay for the deficit created directly by this but, also, in the future, to pay with cuts in government spending.

In addition to that, we have 13 million Americans who will lose their health coverage under this bill because of the elimination of the individual mandate—13 million. That is going to affect 13 million families. It is going to affect more than that. Guess what these families do. They use emergency rooms rather than going to their family doctors. They enter the healthcare system in a more expensive way. They don't have the money to pay for the visits, and it becomes part of uncompensated care. All of us pay higher premiums, and our healthcare system becomes more expensive.

That has been one of the bright spots of the Affordable Care Act—reducing the number of uninsured. Now we are going to be moving in the opposite direction. The Affordable Care Act has worked. The Republicans tried to dismantle it, and they couldn't succeed. The worst part is, you are counting the loss of insurance of 13 million as a revenue gain for the Treasury and then spending that money. That is unconscionable.

In Maryland, we have particular problems with this bill. Not only will we see a problem for the Federal workforce—a large number who live in Maryland—but also the State and local tax deductions. Maryland has the largest number of taxpayers who take advantage of State and local tax deductions on their Federal tax returns. In other words, you don't have to pay a tax on a tax. That makes sense. It has been in our Tax Code since its beginning because we recognize federalism, and it is morally wrong to pay tax on tax.

Maryland has the most taxpayers who take advantage of State and local tax deductions, close to 50 percent. The average for Maryland—this is the average—is $12,900 that they deduct for State and local taxes. Under the conference report, that is going to be limited to $10,000. That means the average Maryland taxpayer will have to pay taxes on $2,900 more, but think about all those who have a lot more in State and local taxes who are going to be denied that help.

I was talking to some of our local government officials over the weekend. They are going to be disadvantaged by it. It was an interesting analysis. We don't think about what this bill is going to do and all the consequences, but if you are in a State that has its own itemized deductions, like Maryland—we have itemized deductions on our State income tax return, and our standard deduction will be significantly lower than the standard deduction under this conference report.

You are going to have Marylanders who are not going to be able to take their State deductions because you can't take State deductions unless you use the Federal itemized deductions. It is estimated that nationwide only 5 percent of the taxpayers will be using itemized deductions. Guess what. If you don't use the itemized deduction at the Federal level, you can't take the State itemized deductions. This is going to have a direct impact on our State and local governments. Yet that hasn't been considered.

Quite frankly, the consequences of this bill haven't been debated. We haven't gone through public hearings because of the process that was used—the partisan process, called reconciliation. We haven't seen daylight. We haven't had a chance to know what the impact will be. What impact will it have on property values? We now limit property tax deductions, and we have a further limit on interest deductions on mortgages. What impact does it have on property values? What impact does the reduction of property values have on our economy, have on the individual values for people who have loans on their homes? Are we going to be creating a problem? We don't know because we haven't had any hearings on it.

On Friday, I was with a group of nonprofits that do very valuable work. They are worried about what impact this tax bill will have on charitable giving. When only 5 percent of the taxpayers in this country use itemized deductions, it means a great number of people who were able to take advantage of charitable deductions on their tax returns no longer will have that ability. Does that change their charitable giving? If it changes their charitable giving pattern, what does it do for nonprofits? If our nonprofits can't do that, there is additional pressure on governmental services. Have we thought that out? I doubt we know the consequences. Yet we are not prepared to have hearings on this.

One of the major issues that has had very little discussion is the passthrough. You have heard a lot about it. The reason for this is that 95 percent of American businesses don't use corporate tax returns. They use passthroughs, S corporations, individual proprietorships, partnerships, et cetera. This bill provides a lower tax rate for their passthrough business income at 20 percent. Here is the problem. In an effort to make sure that this isn't a way of getting around paying taxes on salaries, there are certain guardrails that have been put into this bill based upon a person's income, based upon the type of business they are in, based upon the assets of the business, based upon the amount of salaries that are paid in the business. And you are trying to tell me that can't be manipulated in order to shelter income? We are creating a whole new industry in sheltering income under this bill.

I have heard so many of my colleagues talk about the fact that we don't want to outsource jobs. None of us want to outsource jobs. Having competitive rates helps us in that regard, but moving toward a territorial tax structure rewards companies for doing their business offshore. Even if tax rates might be the same, they can use labor costs, or some other costs, to outsource jobs.

Have we thought about that under a territorial tax? No. Do we know what impact it will have? No. There are a lot of issues we don't fully understand. We do know there are individual provisions put in here—for example, drilling in the Arctic. That, to me, should not be part of this bill. I worry about that being expanded to the Atlantic coast and other areas. I think we all should be concerned about it.

The bottom line is this. When you do tax reform, you would hope you would simplify the Tax Code and make it predictable. That is what I hear the most: Let's simplify the Tax Code, and let's make it predictable. Neither will be accomplished with this conference report. With all these temporary tax provisions, you know that we are going to have to deal with extenders. You are not going to be able to plan as to whether this Tax Code will stand the test of time. If you think this is simplification, try to figure out whether you are eligible for the passthrough 20 percent on your business taxes. It is anything but simple.

This bill fails in its principle test of helping middle-income families, which it does not do. It is for corporations, big corporations, and high-income people. It is fiscally irresponsible to add to the debt. It makes our Tax Code more

complicated and doesn't give us the predictability we need in the Tax Code, and it should be rejected.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

COMPTON NOMINATION

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the nomination of Paul Compton, which came out of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. I might add that he is President Trump's nominee to serve as general counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. Compton is a longtime affordable housing and financial services attorney in the State of Alabama. Mr. Compton, if confirmed, would bring a deep familiarity with affordable housing to the Office of General Counsel. That part I like. With 11 million families paying over half their income for rent and with homelessness on the rise for the first time in years, a nominee who appreciates the importance of affordable housing could be a positive addition at HUD. Think about that. There are 11 million families who pay more than half their income on rent.

In a book written by Matthew Desmond called ''Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City,'' the author said of the people at that income level: When your paycheck comes, the rent eats first. Everything depends on being able to stay in your home and not being foreclosed on. When 11 million people pay over half their income on rent, homelessness is going to be on the rise.

I appreciate Mr. Compton's commitment to me during our Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee hearing that he would look out for the interests of renters and homeowners if confirmed, but I am voting against him because I am concerned about the administration's approach to fair housing protections and the role that he will likely play in helping to carry that out.

I was troubled to learn that Secretary Carson had said that he plans to ''reinterpret'' HUD's affirmatively furthering fair housing—or AFFH—rule. Since 1968, the Fair Housing Act has required HUD and its grantees to affirmatively further fair housing. Unfortunately, in the 50 years since our country passed the Fair Housing Act, HUD has not provided enough direction to help communities meet this goal.

A 2010 General Accountability Office report recommended that HUD improve its processes for meeting its obligations to affirmatively further fair housing. In response, HUD developed a revised rule to finally help local governments across the country support and foster fair housing policies throughout their communities.

The rule gives clearer guidance to communities to help them think in new ways about how to create housing opportunities for all of their residents regardless of race or religion or disability or the size of their family. The rule helps them to assess their own fair housing needs, and it provides them publicly available data with which to inform their decisions while they set their own goals and timelines.

Since its adoption 2-plus years ago, HUD has been working with communities to implement the new guidelines. That is the good news. The bad news is that the Secretary has said that he wants to reinterpret, but he is not elaborating on what he meant by his plan to reinterpret the rule. If the Secretary intends to reinterpret the rule in a way that undermines HUD's efforts to help communities fulfill their longstanding obligations under this 50-year-old law, Mr. Compton will be called upon to carry out this vision.

I voted against his nomination in committee because of my concern that he could help guide administration efforts to reverse progress on this fair housing rule. More recent activities by administration officials have only heightened the concerns that many of us have about their approaches to fair housing.

In 2013, HUD issued its discriminatory effects rule. This rule formalized HUD's longstanding prohibition against practices with discriminatory effects under the Fair Housing Act and provided uniform guidance for applying standards across the country.

Because homeowners' insurance is central to the ability to obtain housing, HUD and the courts have held for decades that the Fair Housing Act applies to discriminatory practices in insurance—a very easy-to-understand, logical step. Nevertheless, insurance industry representatives sued to block HUD's application of the discriminatory effects rule—also known as disparate impact—to their industry. HUD and the Department of Justice have been fighting this suit ever since. As general counsel, Mr. Compton would guide HUD's enforcement and litigation strategy.

In response to a written question, Mr. Compton declined to provide his views on the discriminatory effects rule and whether it should apply to the insurance industry. He noted that ''it would be inappropriate'' for him to comment on the matter given the pending litigation.

The administration, it seems, does not share his reluctance to comment on pending litigation. A month and a half ago, the Treasury Department issued a report entitled ''A Financial System that Creates Economic Opportunities—Asset Management and Insurance.'' In this report, Treasury recommends that HUD reconsider the use of the disparate impact rule.

It is not that this administration decides to support the side of big insurance companies every time—maybe it doesn't every time—but it seems like it almost always does. It did it in this case. Yet Mr. Compton thinks that he shouldn't comment when other already confirmed Trump appointees have. The Treasury's report sides with arguments that have been made by the insurance industry despite the fact that litigation is pending, and HUD and the Department of Justice, at least until now, have been defending the rule. The next court date for the suit is scheduled for later this week.

If the administration continues its drive to reconsider fair housing protections that are opposed to by industry, Mr. Compton will likely be called upon to help the administration in its efforts. Because he declined to answer my question, we don't know what his thinking will be.

While I might be inclined to give Mr. Compton the benefit of the doubt, we have seen too many officials in this administration who are working against the missions of the agencies to which they have been appointed. Financial regulators so often come from Wall Street. Environmental regulators so often come from the chemical industry and the oil industry. We have seen it time and again.

This is happening at a time when we see the administration taking steps to remove protections for average Americans and consumers in order to carry out the bidding of its supporters on Wall Street. These include sending in Mick Mulvaney, who once called the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau a ''sick, sad joke.'' He is now serving as its Director. It is his moonlighting job, as he is also the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. His first act as Director of the CFPB was to block the payments of funds that were owed to consumers—consumers who were cheated or wronged by Wells Fargo and other big banks or big financial institutions. The consumers, in many cases, were servicemembers who had been cheated by these financial institutions. On Mulvaney's first day on the job, he said: No, we are not going to move forward in collecting those penalties and in paying those consumers and those servicemembers and those seniors and those families.

I am concerned about this emerging effort to roll back protections for consumers. I hope that Mr. Compton proves me wrong. I hope that he is a strong advocate within the agency and the administration for fair housing, for consumer protection, and for affordable housing. When given the chance to demonstrate his commitment to fair housing, he took a pass. These matters are too important to far too many Americans for us to leave their futures to chance. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing Mr. Compton's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on behalf of Mr. Compton and to conclude my remarks before the vote.

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

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of Paul Compton to serve as HUD's next general counsel.

Mr. Compton has dedicated his entire legal career to affordable housing and community development and for many years has headed the affordable housing practice of a prominent Alabama law firm. Over his distinguished career, Mr. Compton has played a direct role in over 70 transactions that have led to the creation of more than 5,000 units of affordable housing throughout the Southeastern United States. Among peers, he has come to be recognized as an industry-leading expert on the low-income housing tax credit, the new markets tax credit, public-private partnerships, and the regulatory environment surrounding housing production.

Mr. Compton's extensive track record, his experience, and his intimate familiarity with HUD programs make him an ideal fit to join the leadership team at HUD. As general counsel, Mr. Compton will not only serve as the principal legal adviser to Secretary Carson, but he will have a hand in nearly every departmental initiative. Once confirmed, I look forward to working with Mr. Compton to find solutions to our Nation's housing challenges, to eliminate barriers to safe and affordable housing, and to reform our housing finance system.

This confirmation vote is long overdue and is sorely needed. Following the storms that ravaged through Houston, Florida, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and elsewhere, HUD has been deployed on the frontlines, alongside FEMA and other agencies, and has worked to provide emergency and transitional housing to the thousands of families who have been displaced. This work is far from over, and I urge this body to confirm Mr. Compton today, as well as to confirm the various other HUD nominees who are awaiting votes so that they can get to work for the American people.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Compton nomination?

Mr. WICKER. 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 assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 318 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Carper	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Cochran	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott
Coons	Johnson	Shaheen
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Tester
Cruz	Manchin	Thune
Daines	McCaskill	Tillis
Donnelly	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Murphy	

NAYS—34

Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	Klobuchar	Udall
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Peters	
Harris	Reed	

NOT VOTING—4

Baldwin	Duckworth
Capito	McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON WEST NOMINATION

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 74, nays 23, as follows:

The result was announced—- yeas 74, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 319 Ex.]

YEAS—74

Alexander	Corker	Hassan
Barrasso	Cornyn	Hatch
Bennet	Cotton	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Crapo	Heitkamp
Blunt	Cruz	Heller
Boozman	Daines	Hoeven
Burr	Donnelly	Inhofe
Cantwell	Enzi	Isakson
Capito	Ernst	Johnson
Cardin	Feinstein	Kaine
Carper	Fischer	Kennedy
Cassidy	Flake	King
Cochran	Gardner	Lankford
Collins	Graham	Lee
Coons	Grassley	Manchin
McCaskill	Risch	Tester
McConnell	Roberts	Thune
Moran	Rounds	Tillis
Murkowski	Rubio	Toomey
Murphy	Sasse	Udall
Nelson	Scott	Warner
Paul	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Perdue	Shelby	Wicker
Portman	Strange	Young
Reed	Sullivan	

NAYS—23

Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Klobuchar	Schatz
Casey	Leahy	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Menendez	Van Hollen
Franken	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Baldwin	Duckworth	McCain

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 action.

The Senator from West Virginia.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each and for debate only.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight, once again, to talk about this tax bill being rushed through the House and the Senate. This is the first time in 31 years that a tax bill of this magnitude has been considered. I don't refer to this as tax reform because it is barely reforming anything.

It seems a shame that we didn't follow in the footsteps of what then-President Reagan chose to do when he had the opportunity to reform the Tax Code. The bill he worked on, which was every bit as consequential as the one in front of us, commanded the vast majority of votes in this Chamber—Democrats and Republicans voting together—after years of process, years of committee hearings, years of hearings even out in the country, listening to business owners, economists, and citizens talk about what they thought our

Tax Code needed to be competitive and to be fair to the American people.

I would say through the Chair to the pages that I was in college when the last bill was passed. Now, 31 years later, we are on the verge of passing a bill in the Senate without one Democratic vote—not a single one—and without a single hearing in the Senate Finance Committee, on which I serve—not a single hearing about the text of this bill, not a single hearing to tell the American people that, on the individual side of this bill, we are borrowing $34 billion from our kids to give a tax cut to the 572,000 taxpayers who are fortunate enough to make more than $1 million a year. That is 572,000 taxpayers who are fortunate enough to make $1 million a year. We think it is so essential that each one of them get a $59,000 tax cut that we are willing to borrow that money from our children to do it. We can't think of a better use than that.

A better use is not to give a tax cut to the middle class, because we know what those numbers look like in this bill. There are not a half million people who make $50,000 and less in this economy. There are 90 million people. Those people are not getting $34 billion. Those people are getting $13 billion. If we do the math, it adds up to about $160, on average, per taxpayer making $50,000 or less, in the first year. That is the best year. So 2019 is the best year. That $160 per taxpayer works out to about $7.50 a paycheck.

So we are justifying $34 billion going to 572,000 families because we say at the essence of this is a tax cut for the middle class that is worth $7.50. I think it is disgraceful to call this a middle-class tax cut. What is as disgraceful is the fact that we are blowing a $1.4 trillion hole in our deficit.

There are people on the other side—and I grant them this—who say we will grow out of this and that the tax cut will pay for itself. This is exactly what President Bush said in 2001, when he cut taxes. It is exactly what he said in 2003, when he cut taxes. Remember that when George Bush became President of this country, he inherited a projected surplus of $5.6 trillion. Then, he cut taxes and said it would pay for itself, in 2001. He cut taxes and said it would pay for itself, in 2003. We invaded Afghanistan. We invaded Iraq. Not only did he not ask the American people to pay for those wars, but the 2003 tax cut actually came after the invasion of Iraq.

Today we have massive readiness problems with our military. Today we confront the potential for conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Today we confront uncertainties in the Middle East and behavior by Russia that we need to worry about. Are we going to go in debt to give the wealthiest people in America a tax cut they are not asking for?

I am more sympathetic on the corporate side. I believe our corporate rate is too high. If we had worked in a bipartisan way, I think we could have gotten to a deal that 75 or 80 people would have voted for. That would have been beneficial for two reasons. It would have represented more widely the American people's view of what we ought to do here. I have heard the majority leader on the floor talking about partisan efforts like this, and how they are doomed to fail because most of the American people will not support it. We can see that in the polling numbers on this bill. But we could have cut a deal that said: Let's bring our corporate rate down to 25 percent. By the way, let's get rid of some of those loopholes. As for all of the stuff we said over the years about lowering the rate and broadening the base, let's actually do that.

That is not what this bill does. This bill cuts the corporate rate to 20 percent and leaves all of the loopholes in place. There is no broadening of the base. So if the effective rate today is actually in the low twenties, even though the published rate is 35 percent, the effective rate is going to be far below 20 percent if we don't actually reform the Tax Code.

I think there would have been bipartisan agreement about doing something with the earned income tax credit or the child tax credit, as my colleague from Florida has tried to do to a degree. I think there would have been bipartisan support for the idea that we ought to do something to repatriate the money stuck overseas and invest it here in the United States in infrastructure. But there was no effort to make a bipartisan effort here—none.

There have certainly been cases where Democrats have been guilty of that. This is a profound case of the Republicans being guilty of that, and the result is that they have a lousy bill that speaks to the extreme wing of their party rather than to the middle of America, because only in that way could you end up with a piece of legislation that the President is describing as a middle-class tax cut that is not one. Nothing about the math in this tax bill suggests it is.

By the way, the $34 billion I talked about does not include the estate tax. When we include the increase of the estates not subject to the estate tax in this bill, it adds, on average, another $10,000. Now we are talking about borrowing $69,000. So we are now borrowing an additional $10,000 from the sons and daughters of police officers, firefighters, and teachers in order to finance an estate tax cut that we will not pay for.

Pay for it. Don't borrow the money.

I got here 9 years ago at the depth of the worst recession since the Great Depression. Our economy had locked up. Because of the two tax cuts under President Bush, because of the two wars we didn't have the decency to pay for, and because President Bush passed so-called Medicare Part D—which is a prescription drug program for seniors that he didn't pay for—and then with the supply-side economics, they drove our economy into the worst ditch since the Great Depression.

When President Obama showed up, the surplus was not a surplus. It was a $1.5 trillion deficit. I was here when we tried to work in a bipartisan way to figure out how to respond to a terrifying circumstance—not for the Senate but for our country.

A woman who came to a townhall told me that her plan was to die sooner because overnight she had lost half of her net worth, and she didn't know how to make it through because the stock market had cratered and her pension was cut in half.

We had more than a 10-percent unemployment rate in the United States of America, and we couldn't get a single person to lift their finger on the other side of the aisle because they said that the deficit was too big. They said that President Obama was pursuing what the pollsters told them was ''job-killing government spending.'' Those were the words. It wasn't his $1.5 trillion deficit; that is what he inherited. He left with about a $550 billion deficit. It was cut by two-thirds.

Today, we stand here talking about this absolutely irresponsible tax bill. It is already at $666 billion. We have a government where we are collecting 18 percent of the GDP in revenue. It is actually about 17.9 percent before this tax cut goes through. We are spending more than 21 percent, and our answer is: Let's cut some more taxes, so we will be spending 17 and change. That is a big delta—17 to 21. That is a conversation we should be having together, not in pieces.

All of these people who say: Don't worry about it; it will pay for itself—remember what they said in 2001 and 2003. They said the same thing. They are going to show up here after this Christmas season has passed, and they are going to say: That is why we need to cut Medicaid and Medicare.

There is no doubt we have to have a conversation about the sustainability of these programs, and there is no doubt we have to have a discussion about how we are going to get out of the fiscal issues we confront. I have no doubt that the moment we face the next crisis, whether it is a national security crisis or an economic crisis, we are going to wish we hadn't passed this tax bill. We are going to wish that when this economy was at full employment, when interest rates are what they are, that we had thought about how to come together in a bipartisan way and actually do something responsible for once.

There is a mayor in Indiana who sent an op-ed piece to the Washington Post last week. He said: Let me break this down for you in terms of my local community. The equivalent of what the Republican tax bill is for my community would be that we would go out and borrow $400 million, which is a staggering sum, not billions and billions of dollars but, on the basis of the size of their government, $400 million—four or five times what our indebtedness is today.

Then, what I would do is say: We didn't borrow this money to build infrastructure. We didn't borrow this money to make sure we end poverty in my community or to make sure the water is clean. We gave it to the people in the biggest houses, the richest neighborhoods in our community, hoping that somehow the benefits would trickle down to everybody else.

He said that they would be run out on the rail—and they should be.

There are some politicians who say that it will pay for itself. There is no economist who has said that this is not going to create a deficit. There is probably a consensus, around $1.4 trillion—I have seen some math that says $1 trillion, and others that say $2.5 trillion. Let's take the $1.4 trillion and consider, as an order of magnitude, if we didn't care about our deficit—which apparently we don't anymore—what else we could spend the money on besides giving this tax cut to the very wealthiest Americans in our country.

In the 9 years I have been here, we have gone from no opioid crisis to an opioid crisis that is killing 50,000 Americans. There are communities all over our States, especially in rural parts of the States, where we have no answer. We have provided no additional treatment, even though we have an emergency today that we didn't have before. That is not the America I grew up in. That is not the America our parents and grandparents set up for us. Look at what you can do to create treatment in every United States county for 10 years. That is this $60 billion. That is this little orange part of a $1.4 trillion hole in our deficit. That is one thing you could do.

Another thing you could do would be to provide universal pre-K for low-income children for a decade. That might be worth borrowing from the next generation for because they would actually be getting a benefit. They are not getting any benefit from this $59,000 that we are giving to people who make more than $1 million a year.

You could double Federal funding for research and development on clean energy for over a decade. You could maintain our technological advantage over China in emerging industries for a decade. That is a huge concern. That would be $50 billion, just this little slice—a foregone priority if we pass this bill, just like the response to opioids. You could fund a 20-man mission to Mars. Because of our fecklessness, we can't even put an astronaut into space without putting them on a Russian rocket. That has nothing to do with our lacking the engineering talent. That has nothing to do with our lacking imagination or, for some of us, a sense of mission. It has to do with the fecklessness of this Congress and the inability of it to walk and chew gum at the same time.

We could repair all of America's aging dams, which our parents and grandparents were thoughtful enough to build for us but which we feel we don't need to maintain for the next generation of Americans. We would rather give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America.

You could end the backlog of infrastructure repairs in America's airports—end it. Five years of funding, that is only $100 billion. I say ''only.'' That is a huge number, but not compared to $1.4 trillion.

You could end the U.S. Air Force pilot shortage. Why do we have a shortage of Air Force pilots? Because this place, for 9 years, has run itself on continuing resolutions. The military can't plan, so we have airplanes that are being scavenged for parts and cannot fly. If they can't fly, the pilots can't get the training hours. If they can't get the training hours, they can't move ahead in their careers, and they can't be ready when the battle comes. You could easily pay for that here.

You could fund the first 5 years of the Navy's plan to build a 355-ship fleet. Everyone around here walks around saying: We don't have any money; we are broke. It is matter of choices and priorities. I cannot think of a set of priorities less out of whack with what Republicans think of in Colorado, much less our Democrats and Independents.

Here is one we really do care about in Colorado and all across the country. You could pay for all deferred maintenance at our national parks and other land management agencies. That is right here, this tiny purple square—$19 billion. If you look at the bottom right, that includes over a dozen priorities for rural communities that have been kicked around by this Congress and our CRs year after year.

Here are a few things that fit in there. Extend high-speed internet to every rural community in America. That might be a good use of money or a good reason to borrow money—to extend high-speed internet to people who don't have it. This is a world where telling a kid in a rural school that they don't have access to high-speed internet is no different than telling them: Sorry, you are not getting textbooks, but these other kids do.

We could reimburse rural areas with significant public lands for lost tax revenue, the PILT payment.

I promise my colleague from Pennsylvania I am coming to the end. I know he doesn't believe it.

These PILT payments are a pain point for my rural counties. Every year we go through the same nonsense at the end of the year. Every single year they say: Is it going to be funded in the CR? They are using it to pay for something else. Yet it would cost a tiny fraction of just the rural priorities part of it. That is $111 billion for all the rural priorities. Eliminating the national backlog for the USDA rural water program—can you imagine what that would mean for rural America and economic development in rural America? They wouldn't have to wait for someone in New York to trickle down to them because they would have an investment in their community. It would create jobs. It would allow them to do economic development and keep their children in their communities and their schools open and their banks open. That is not a priority for the people writing and voting for this bill.

President Trump cut Essential Air Service in his budget—zeroed it out. We could fund Essential Air Service for 10 years, providing a critical economic lifeline to small towns across America and in my State.

We could fund the U.S. Forest Service fires suppression for a decade, so they wouldn't have to keep cannibalizing other parts of the budget. This year, for the first year, they spent more than half of their budget fighting fires because we don't have the sense to budget them so that they can do fire mitigation. Talk about penny wise and pound foolish.

In Colorado, we could clean up the Gold King Mine spill, fund the Arkansas Valley Conduit to provide drinking water to some of the poorest areas in Southeastern Colorado, which we have been promised since John F. Kennedy was President of the United States.

We could do everything I just mentioned, all of these investments—infrastructure, research, public health, housing, national security, and rural communities—for the cost of this tax plan. This is yet another illustration of how profoundly Washington's priorities have decoupled from the priorities of the American people. Beyond that, this bill confirms every other suspicion about how Washington operates.

President Trump ran for office saying that he would drain the swamp. This tax plan is a creature of the swamp. It was jammed through with last-minute changes, scribbled by hand in the dark of the night, with 2 a.m. votes—shameful, 2 a.m. votes on legislation that no one had a chance to fully understand. There was input from lobbyists on K Street but not a single hearing where the American people could express their view.

Given the process, it should surprise no one that the bill substituted the priorities of the American people with a litany of carve-outs and loopholes that powerful special interests have gotten into this bill.

I am going to skip this part because I want to yield to my friend from Pennsylvania, but let me just finish by saying that today, incredibly in America, the top 10 percent of earners take home more than half of America's income. We have not seen that since 1928, the year before the Great Depression. I know the President knows these folks as well as I do. Everybody on this chart is working hard, whether it is the top 10 percent or the bottom 90 percent, but this is not the way our economy ought to work. For almost all of our history, this is not the way it did work.

I was a businessperson before I came to Congress, before I was a school superintendent. I have nothing against

anyone who has done well, but it is preposterous to suggest that the real problem in our economy, when we have a record stock market and record income inequality, is that wealthy individuals and businesses don't have enough.

My final chart is this chart, which shows median household income. Since 1980 until now, the cost of housing, cost of higher education, and cost of healthcare—we have done nothing to address or help this. We have turned our back on this.

I think we could have written a bill, as I said at the outset, that had a real middle-class tax cut in it, but we chose not to do it.

Last year, I met a mom in Rifle, CO, at an early childhood center. In the course of our conversation, she said to me: ''I've got a job so I can have health insurance, and every single dollar I earn goes to pay for this early childhood center, so I can work.''

That is the story of too many people in my State. My State has one of the most dynamic economies in the United States of America, and still too many people whom I represent are middle-class families whose incomes haven't really gone up, not over 10 years but since 1980, for whom the cost of housing, cost of healthcare, cost of higher education, and the cost of early childhood education have conspired to create for them impossible choices that their parents and grandparents never had to make.

Tax reform should have been the opportunity to have addressed that. It should have been a chance to remind that mom in Rifle that our government or at least someone in our government understands the struggles she faces and has the capacity and the will to help to do something about it. This bill squanders that opportunity. This tax bill squanders it. Worse than that, it reminds Americans of the vast space between their lives and the priorities in Washington. It reminds them of the yawning gap between their voices and the voices of powerful special interests.

We should reject this bill. It fails on the merits. We should reject it because the bill makes a mockery of how our government should work. There is still time to set aside this legislation and do bipartisan tax reform. I know the other side may believe that it has to forge ahead for a political win, but I would ask, at what cost?

As with so many actions around here, we have put it on the next generation of Americans. We have kicked all the hard choices to them ever since I have been here. We have told them that we are going to continue to live in the house of our democratic Republic but that they are going to pay the mortgage. We are so fortunate that our parents and grandparents didn't behave the way we have—they had the decency to look ahead and think of those to come. We have enjoyed years of peace and prosperity in this incredible country. I think, tonight and this week, it is worth all of our asking, will our children be able to say the same of us?

I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for his indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Colorado. I heard most of his remarks, some of them on television before my moving to come over here to speak. I am grateful for his commitment to the arguments that he has made on tax reform and his commitment not only to the people of his State but to the people of our country. I will be speaking about tax reform later this week.

DACA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about this so-called DACA Program for the Dreamers, the young people whom we have heard so much about, especially in the last couple of months.

As many people across the country know, in September, President Trump ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. This decision and, so far, congressional refusal to pass the Dream Act have created both fear and uncertainty for nearly 800,000 young people across our country, so-called DACA recipients.

I know that a lot of Americans have met these young people over the course of not just the last couple of months but maybe over the course of many years. I had that chance most recently, at least on two occasions, when we set up time to sit with young people who were Pennsylvanians. Once was in the city of Philadelphia, where I sat with young people from both Philadelphia and Lancaster, which is not too far of a drive from Philadelphia—about an hour or so. They came to Philadelphia to sit with us. Then a couple of months later, it was in the Lehigh Valley, which is about an hour just north of Philadelphia. The first group was a larger group of maybe 15 young people, and the second group was a group of 3 individuals.

In both of those meetings, I was struck by not just how concerned and worried these young people were about what would happen to them and happen to their friends and, in a larger sense, happen to their families, but I was impressed by their stories—what they had achieved in their young lives. I was also moved by the commitment that they have had to hard work, to being part of the fabric of America, and the real concern that they have had about and the love they have for their own parents. They worried about how this might affect their parents but also had love for the commitment that their parents had made and their family members had made to allow them to succeed in coming here, in some cases as babies or as very young children, and to live in America for all of these years, not technically as citizens but to live full lives.

They were made a promise by the President of the United States that if they were to come forward and make certain disclosures, this program would protect them. I think that promise is inviolate and should not be broken by any administration. Congress certainly has work to do to enforce the promise and to give the promise an even stronger foundation.

You don't have to be on one side of the aisle or the other to be moved by these stories, and I will get to some of the details later. One of the young women was in the first group that I mentioned when we were sitting around a big conference table. Of course, these individuals don't have to sit with me, and they don't have to travel to tell their stories, but they are worried. They are concerned about the policy and how it might affect their lives.

One young woman said to me: The only country I have ever known doesn't seem to want us—or at least that was her impression. She has lived nowhere else.

If you go person after person after person, these are young people who have lived here virtually their whole lives even though they technically were not born here. They have achieved so much and have gone through our schools. Our Nation has invested in them, and they have succeeded in holding down jobs and getting educations and getting higher educations. All they ask is that we set up a process so that they will not be deported.

It doesn't make a lot of sense, the direction in which we seem to be heading. Rescinding the DACA Program will cost the United States of America jobs. I think it will hurt our security over time.

As I said before, it is a broken promise—a promise that was made to young people by our government. It was not just a casual promise but, I would argue, a commitment, a bond, an agreement that should be honored. As I have said so many times before—and I will keep saying it—why would other countries believe us when we make a commitment if we cannot keep our commitment to these young people? Something on the order of 800,000 young people who live in the United States of America were promised that if they came forward, they would be protected. Why would any country believe us after that if we were to break that promise? Why would they believe Republicans or Democrats? Why would they believe the administration—this administration or future administrations—or this Congress or future Congresses down the road, the House and Senate? If we were to break that promise, would our word be good around the world?

These Dreamers are young people who have lived in this country since

they were children. They have been law-abiding residents. They have learned English. They pay taxes. They have secured jobs that have supported themselves and their families. They were made a promise.

What are some of the numbers? Here is the economic impact in the context of one State in our country. In Pennsylvania alone, estimates say that ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program would cost the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania nearly $357 million per year in GDP losses. This is according to the Center for American Progress. So, for one State, it is $357 million. How about for the Nation? The comparable number for the Nation is about $460 billion. The first number was with an ''m''—millions—in the context of the State. The second number is $460 billion, with a ''b''—almost half a trillion dollars—from the GDP over the next decade. Roughly, in the context of a yearly number, it is $46 billion a year.

Even if you don't think that we have to honor the promise, even if you don't believe in the program, why would we want to take a step that would hurt our economy in our losing about $46 billion every year for 10 years, adding up to $460 billion over 10 years?

According to FWD.us, 91 percent of DACA recipients are employed, and repealing DACA could result in an average of 8,500 DACA recipients—young people—losing their jobs each week as a result of that. There are 91 percent of them who are employed—working—in the United States of America. It is the country that promised them that if they came forward, we would give them protection. They are working every day, following the law, loving this country.

We have told them, at best, that their status or their fate is uncertain. That is the best that we can say about what has happened between the administration's making the announcement a number of months ago and Congress's doing nothing to address this problem.

DACA recipients have jobs in sectors that are critical to our economy, such as healthcare, science and technology, and engineering and math—so-called STEM jobs. Additionally, more than one out of every seven DACA-eligible immigrants has language skills that are currently in short supply in the U.S. military, according to the New American Economy. The U.S. military benefits when we have individuals residing in our country who have that skill in languages. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that the 1.3 million young people who are enrolled in or who are eligible for DACA pay $2 billion each year in State and local taxes. So they are working, and they are paying taxes.

Dreamers across Pennsylvania and the Nation represent the America that we should all be proud of. I think everyone could agree to that in the work that they are doing and their commitment to our country. We should be proud of that. This is a country in which hard-working young people who are working to better themselves and their communities are given a chance to do just that. That is the kind of country we all profess to believe in. That is the kind of Nation that we want to be.

Another estimate is that between September 5, 2017, when the program was terminated, and March 5, 2018, which is the deadline that is coming up, 122 DACA recipients will lose their protection every day. That means that by March 5 of 2018, 22,000 Dreamers will have lost their DACA protection.

Congress should move immediately—the U.S. Senate should move immediately—to make sure that we protect these Dreamers and pass the so-called bipartisan Dream Act. Here is what the bill would do in short form. It would allow the Dreamers to become permanent residents if they meet the very stringent qualifications outlined in the bill. We aren't talking about any kind of a free pass. These are young people who have worked so hard to become the very sort of Americans we want: employed, law-abiding, and paying taxes. The numbers of Dreamers in Pennsylvania are about 5,900 individuals who have been given DACA status. Passing the Dream Act would give these young people some security and a future they can count on.

I was proud to support a version of the Dream Act back in 2007 and 2010. We should have an up-or-down vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate that is a clean version of the Dream Act—not embedded in some other legislation—but an up-or-down vote on the Dream Act. Let's see where people stand. I would hope it would be an overwhelming vote. I think it probably would be. Let's have an up-or-down vote for these young people.

Let's keep the promise to these Dreamers so our promise is good here at home, and our promise and our word and our credibility will be good the world over because if we break that promise, it is going to be pretty difficult for people around the world to believe us on a whole host of fronts. I know that may offend somebody, but that is the way I see it.

Keeping a promise is the principal reason to pass the Dream Act, but we should also try to help our economy, not allow our economy to lose hundreds of billions of dollars over 10 years, tens of billions each and every year because we are deporting people who have offered so much to the country, who have worked so hard, who have become part of the fabric of American life, part of the fabric of the American family. These are folks who live in every community, who are part of the fabric of a neighborhood, part of the fabric of a community, part of the fabric of a school, part of the fabric of a State, and the fabric of a nation.

The third reason we should pass the Dream Act is to unite our country. This is one area where we can all come together. We might have a lot of disagreements, and they will be played out this week on the tax bill, on this issue or that issue, but we can bring the country together. Most people in both parties understand what this is all about. They understand the promise, they understand the impact on our economy, and they also understand that a great country can make the right decision on this issue.

By uniting our country on the Dream Act, we can make a downpayment on a bright future for these young people who love the United States of America and who have demonstrated that by their commitment to the country, by their work ethic, and by the commitment they have made to their communities. Let's pass the Dream Act.

I yield the floor.

CONFIRMATION OF DON R. WILLETT

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I opposed the nomination of Don Willet to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit. Senate Republicans, lacking a robust legislative agenda, despite unilateral control of the government, decided to confirm another highly controversial nominee.

Last week, Republicans confirmed three circuit court judges. In early November, Senate Republicans confirmed four judges in 1 week. This accelerated confirmation pace is unconventional and alarming. Republicans on the Judiciary Committee are willing to set aside decades of standing tradition and policies in order to confirm highly ideological judges who, in many cases, seem to have more of a political agenda than the impartial temperament necessary for the fair administration of justice.

This seat has been open for years because Senate Republicans refused to work with the Obama administration and agree upon a consensus mainstream nominee that reflects the views and opinions of the majority of Americans. Now that Republicans are in the majority and no longer need to obstruct the White House, they have decided to advance Judge Willet, a judge described as the ''most conservative justice in Texas.''

Judge Willet was on Trump's Supreme Court short list which indicates that he met the Federalist Society's and the Heritage Foundation's ideological litmus test. This should concern all Americans, regardless of party affiliation. Our judicial system should not be outsourced to outside groups who want to stack the courts with judges who share their extreme political agenda.

Judge Willet has expressed insensitive views towards the LGBTQ community and skepticism that women face unique challenges in the work place, such as unequal pay and sexual harassment and discrimination. In light of the #MeToo movement and the countless women who have shared their stories of workplace sexual harassment,

Judge Willet's opinion is at best misinformed. I hope that Judge Willet's views have evolved since he wrote that opinion for then-Governor George W. Bush.

I also hope my colleagues will start to recognize that they are setting a dangerous precedent by turning the Senate into an assembly line for highly ideological judges who appear to be more aligned with a political agenda that the impartial administration of justice.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JONATHON MICHAEL HUNTER

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary service and sacrifice of U.S. Army SGT Jonathon Michael Hunter of Columbus, IN. Dedication to his country, loyalty to his fellow servicemembers, and a deep love for his family were the qualities that defined Jonathon's life.

Jonathon graduated from Columbus East High School in 2011. While in high school, Jonathon played football for 4 years and was described by his coach as an unselfish player who put the team first. After high school, Jonathon pursued his dream of becoming a music producer in Nashville, TN, before enrolling at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, where he studied criminology and business. A selfless young man, Jonathon left college to join the Army.

In the Army, he was a member of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg, NC. There he distinguished himself among his fellow soldiers as cheerful and a man of faith, who loved his country and fellow servicemembers. Jonathon enlisted in the Army because of his intense love for his country and wanted to make a difference in the lives of his fellow countrymen.

On Wednesday, August 2, 2017, Jonathon and one other American soldier were tragically killed in a suicide bombing attack on a NATO convoy in southern Afghanistan, a mere 32 days into his first deployment. Among some of the awards he earned for his service were a Purple Heart, Bronze Star, NATO Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, and Combat Infantry Badge. Jonathon was also a proud paratrooper who earned the German Parachutist Badge and was also an expert marksman.

Jonathon put his life on the line in order to protect his country, and we are forever grateful for his service.

Jonathon was a devoted patriot, son, and husband. He is survived and will be deeply missed by his wife, Whitney; his parents Mark Hunter of Columbus and Kimberly and Brian Thompson of Nashville, IN; his brother, Marcus Hunter; his sisters Lindsey—and her husband, Andy—England and Kelsey Thompson; his grandparents Jack and Linda Gilbert, Keith and Beulah Thompson, and Theola Hunter; as well as many relatives, friends, his U.S. Army family, and Hoosiers from across our great State.

Jonathon set an example for others and will be remembered for his strong, selfless character and his drive to fight for justice and to make the world a better, more peaceful place. Let us remember and emulate the shining example this brave man set for us and honor his commitment to serving his fellow citizens. May God welcome Jonathon home and give comfort to his family.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR MATTHEW W. TAYLOR

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Maj. Matthew W. Taylor, USAF, for his dedication to duty and service as an Air Force legislative fellow. Matt, a special operations pilot, was recently selected to be the assistant to the Vice Commander of the Special Operations Command, SOCOM, a post he will assume in January.

A native of Ohio, Matt received a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Miami University and was commissioned as an officer following graduation. He earned his wings and qualified as an Air Force pilot following completion of undergraduate pilot training. Matt also has secured a master's degree in diplomacy from Norwich University.

Matt has served in a broad range of assignments during his career with the U.S. Air Force. He has served as the deputy commander of the 353rd Expeditionary Special Operations Group and as an MC–130P instructor pilot and flight commander of the 17th Special Operations Squadron. In addition to serving overseas in Europe, Asia, and Africa, Major Taylor has also been deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Matt's leadership has brought great credit to the Air Force. I appreciate and commend his commitment to continue to serve our Nation in an era when pilot shortages are a growing concern for U.S. military leaders.

This year, Matt was selected to be an Air Force congressional fellow assigned to my office. In this role, Matt has served the State of Mississippi and the Nation admirably. I have enjoyed the benefit of Matt's counsel over the past year, and my office has been privileged to host him.

It is a pleasure to recognize and to thank Maj. Matthew W. Taylor for his exceptional service to our country. My staff and I wish him, his wife, Kotona, and their son Bruce, all the best as they continue their journey in the U.S. Air Force.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO PAT ROURKE

● Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize Pat Rourke for her 44 years of Federal service at the Boston Passport Agency. After serving in nearly every department within the agency, Pat will retire at the close of this year from her post as customer service manager.

Pat's expertise combined with her eagerness to assist the people of Massachusetts has been an invaluable resource to me and my staff. Throughout her esteemed career, she issued countless passports. Pat made the difference to families eager to explore the world and to those with an emergency need to travel. Working in customer service is not always an easy task, but Pat is widely known for her compassion, patience, and good humor. She has fostered an environment at the Boston Passport Agency where customers and employees feel welcome and supported. Pat has always provided my office with sound advice to ensure that we best meet the needs of our traveling constituents. While she will be sorely missed, she will leave a lasting legacy at the Boston Passport Agency, and she will be fondly remembered by all those she has helped and mentored throughout her career.

My staff and I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Pat for her years of dedicated service and wish her well as she embarks on this next chapter in her life. Congratulations, Pat, and thank you for the enormous contributions you have made to the community, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States of America.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—PM 22

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an a accompanying report, which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended (50 U.S.C. 3043), I have enclosed the National Security Strategy of the United States.

This National Security Strategy sets forth my guidance and direction for an America First foreign policy and charts a path to achieving the goals and objectives that will make America great again.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *December 18, 2017.*

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2396. An act to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions.

H.R. 2815. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the ''Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone Post Office'' .

H.R. 4042. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, as the ''Borinqueneers Post Office Building'' .

H.R. 4324. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2396. An act to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 2815. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the ''Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4042. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, as the ''Borinqueneers Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4324. An act to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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–3716. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Operation of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative and the Tropical Forest Conservation Act 2016 Annual Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3717. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–198, ''Public Employee Relations Board Term Limit Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3718. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–199, ''Medical Respite Services Exemption Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3719. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–200, ''Government Employer-Assisted Housing Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3720. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–201, ''Business Improvement Districts Tax Exemption Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3721. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–203, ''Southwest Waterfront Park Bus Prohibition Temporary Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3722. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017, including the Office of Inspector General's Auditor's Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3723. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2017 annual report regarding the financial status of the Federal Housing Administration's Mutual Mortgage Insurance Fund; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3724. A communication from the General Counsel, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Procedures Further Implementing the Annual Limitation on Suspension of Deportation and Cancellation of Removal'' (RIN1125–AA25) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO, from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, with amendments:

S. 2155. A bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 2242. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to clarify the authority of the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with respect to post-storm assessments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2243. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize funding for the voluntary public access and habitat incentive program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 2244. A bill to create opportunities for women in the aviation industry; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. LEE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2245. A bill to include New Zealand in the list of foreign states whose nationals are eligible for admission into the United States as E–1 and E–2 nonimmigrants if United States nationals are treated similarly by the Government of New Zealand; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 358

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to establish a designation for jurisdictions permissive to terrorism financing, to build the capacity of partner nations to investigate, prosecute, and hold accountable terrorist financiers, to impose restrictions on foreign financial institutions that provide financial services for terrorist organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 974

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 974, a bill to promote competition in the market for drugs and biological products by facilitating the timely entry of lower-cost generic and biosimilar versions of those drugs and biological products.

S. 1689

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1689, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide for a new rule regarding the application of the Act to marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 1706

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1706, a bill to prevent human health

threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1838

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1838, a bill to repeal the authority under the National Labor Relations Act for States to enact laws prohibiting agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment, and for other purposes.

S. 2089

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2089, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide equal treatment of LGBT older individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 2109

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2109, a bill to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on Federal revenues that certain proprietary institutions of higher education are allowed to receive for purposes of section 487 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 2211

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2211, a bill to establish a national endangered missing advisory communications network, and for other purposes.

S. 2219

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2219, a bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underride crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes.

S. 2236

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2236, a bill to require covered discrimination and covered harassment awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered discrimination and covered harassment complaints, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 355

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 355, a resolution improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2243. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize funding for the voluntary public access and habitat incentive program; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth generation Montanan and avid outdoorsman, I know how important public use of our public lands is to Montanans. Many Montanans, including myself, have also had great experiences hunting, fishing, or hiking on approved private lands as well. Expanding access for sportsmen, improving habitat, and upholding property rights are all priorities of mine, which is why I am introducing the Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act. This bill would reauthorize the Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program, a voluntary state-led program that expands public access by incentivizing private landowners to allow the public on their property for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational activities while protecting their private property rights. In Montana alone, over 70,000 acres of private lands have been voluntarily opened up for hunting and increased public access, and the Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act would help build on that success.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2243

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 ''Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS AND HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM.

Section 1240R(f)(1) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–5(f)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''practicable, $50,000,000'' and inserting the following: ''practicable—

''(A) $50,000,000'';

(2) in subparagraph (A) (as so designated), by striking ''2012 and $40,000,000'' and inserting the following: ''2012;

''(B) $40,000,000''; and

(3) in subparagraph (B) (as so designated), by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: ''; and

''(C) $150,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.''.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 2244. A bill to create opportunities for women in the aviation industry; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague from Illinois, Senator DUCKWORTH, in introducing the Promoting Women in the Aviation Workforce Act of 2017. Our bill seeks to encourage and support women pursuing careers in the field of aviation.

As Chairman of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe it is important to help women achieve their professional aspirations across all transportation sectors. Although women make up over 50 percent of our Nation's workforce, they are significantly underrepresented in the aviation industry, representing only two percent of airline mechanics, four percent of flight engineers, five percent of repairmen, six percent of pilots, 18 percent of flight dispatchers, and 26 percent of air traffic controllers.

Our bill expresses the sense of Congress that the aviation industry should explore the possibility of offering opportunities, such as pilot training, STEM education, and mentorship programs, which would help to encourage women to pursue aviation careers from a young age.

In addition, our bill would direct the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to create and manage a Women in Aviation Advisory Board to hold the industry accountable for providing education, training, mentorship, outreach, and recruitment programs that are aimed at women.

Finally, in another effort to improve the availability and quality of educational opportunities for women pursuing careers in aviation, this legislation would require that the FAA submit a report to Congress on current trends concerning women in aviation and the potential for expanding related programming.

Mr. President, I believe this bill will have a positive impact on the workforce supporting one of our country's leading industries. I want to thank Senator DUCKWORTH for partnering with me on this effort, and urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, December 19; further, 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; further, 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 until 12 noon; and that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the Newstead nomination, under the previous order; finally, that following the disposition of the Newstead nomination, the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:33 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, December 19, 2017, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 18, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

OWEN WEST, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

J. PAUL COMPTON, JR., OF ALABAMA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF THE CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE FOR THE 21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today we congratulate Peter Chacko from San Antonio who won this year's Congressional App Challenge for the 21st District of Texas.

Every year, the Congressional App Challenge encourages students to create an original app by writing computer code. As Chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, I take part in this competition, which inspires students across the country to explore computer science and search for innovations.

Peter won this year's competition by designing an app called PR Trackr. It helps runners calculate their pace and logs their runs. He developed the app because he and his cross country teammates needed a quick and effective way to assess and store their pace and monitor their progress.

Congratulations to Peter on his achievement. I know he will do well in his academics and future cross country races.

IN HONOR OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE CONGRESS–BUNDESTAG YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM'S MERIT BASED SCHOLARSHIP

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Taelor Nielsen and Zavier McClain on being selected to receive the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program's (CBYX) merit based scholarship.

As part of this selective program, they will be traveling to Germany for a year to immerse themselves in the culture, develop their foreign language skills, and strengthen their leadership and academic interests. Many alumni of this program have gone on to serve our great nation in both national security and civilian roles.

Taelor and Zavier's selection to the CBYX program and scholarship is a sign of their hard work, leadership, and academic curiosity. I commend their fortitude and dedication to academics and the future of our great nation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to the 2017 Wyoming recipients of the CBYX scholarship. Taelor and Zavier deserve to be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIVIL ENFORCEMENT EQUALITY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the District of Columbia Civil Enforcement Equality Act. This bill is necessary to allow the District to enter into contracts with private attorneys to sue on the District's behalf for violations of D.C. law that may otherwise go unpunished due to a lack of resources. This bill would give D.C. the same authority enjoyed by states, other local governments and most federal agencies.

The federal Anti-Deficiency Act, which applies to both the federal and District governments, prohibits contracting in advance of appropriations, such as contingency fee contracts. However, Congress has provided the authority for most federal agencies to enter into such contracts, notwithstanding the Anti-Deficiency Act, but has not done so for the District. This precludes the District from entering into contracts with attorneys on a contingency fee basis. In a contingency fee contract, lawyers pay for the initial costs of the litigation, and then the lawyers are reimbursed only for out-of-pocket expenses and receive a percentage of any amount awarded to the plaintiff.

There is no federal law that precludes states and other local governments from entering into such contracts. At least 36 states, both red and blue states, have already used contingency fee contracts to enforce state laws, in addition to numerous city and county governments across the country. Contingency fee contracts are especially useful in cases with a large, costly discovery component. Examples of cases that are commonly tried on a contingency fee basis by state and local governments include nuisance, deceptive lending, securities fraud and debt and tax collection.

This is an important step to increase D.C. home rule and generate revenue for the District, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARJORIE DICKINSON

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of my good friend Marjorie Dickinson as she retires from a distinguished thirty years of service to the University of California, Davis. Marj is currently the Assistant Chancellor, Government and Community Relations for U.C. Davis, and she has played a significant role in improving and strengthening the institution's commitment to its students and its surrounding community.

Throughout her tenure, Marj has established credible and effective relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials and with opinion-leaders throughout the greater Sacramento region. Now more than ever, thanks in large part to Marj's leadership and vision for U.C. Davis, the institution is respected and revered as a world-class research university and as a reliable local partner. I have had the pleasure of working personally with Marj through the years in my role representing Sacramento in Congress, and I consistently found her to be one of the most effective, sophisticated, and professional government relations experts I encountered.

U.C. Davis—and the Sacramento region writ large—are beyond fortunate to have had Marj working on their behalf for the past three decades. Marj's dedication and commitment to U.C. Davis have made our region a better educated, more vibrant, more attractive place to live and work. Her contributions cannot be understated.

Mr. Speaker, as her family, friends and colleagues celebrate her distinguished career, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the remarkable Marjorie Dickinson.

IN HONOR OF GWEN BECK'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Gwen Beck on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

I join her friends and family in extending my best to her on this occasion and in celebrating her life and contributions to our great state. I hope she uses this momentous day to do the same.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Gwen on her birthday. May her year be filled with happiness and blessings.

HONORING TRUDY HAYNES

HON. DWIGHT EVANS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an influential and dedicated woman in Philadelphia, Trudy Haynes (née Gertrude Daniels), our nation's first female African American weather reporter and a true media pioneer.

Trudy Haynes was born in New York City at Harlem Hospital in 1926 and raised in New York City. She began her broadcasting career in a Detroit suburb at WCHB–AM, which was the first black owned radio station above the Mason Dixon line.

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

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

Trudy Haynes made history in 1965 when she became the nation's first female African American reporter for KYW–TV (now CBS–3) in Philadelphia. Trudy Haynes was also the Nation's 1st African-American TV weather reporter, acquiring that position in 1963 when she worked for WXYZ–TV in Detroit, MI. Additionally, Trudy Haynes is also a very proud graduate of Howard University, class of 1947.

Prestigiously, she has a long esteemed history, has conducted many high profile interviews, and holds many awards including two Lifetime Achievement Awards, as well as an Emmy. Trudy Haynes formally retired in 1999, but has stayed active throughout the years. At 91 years old she is officially coming out of retirement for her ''Drop The Mic Tour''.

The 2nd Congressional District of Pennsylvania extends gratitude to Trudy Haynes who is a true inspiration for future generations and thanks her for her continued dedicated support and service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

IN HONOR OF KEVIN AND ESTHER BYRNE'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Kevin and Esther Byrne on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This significant benchmark is a symbol of their commitment to each other and to their family. I am happy to join their friends and family in extending my best to them on this special occasion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Kevin and Esther on the celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I wish them the best today and for many more blessed years to come.

HONORING JUDGE BASCOM BENTLEY, III

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a dear friend, Judge Bascom Bentley, III, who passed away peacefully on December 11, 2017.

Bascom was a life-long resident of Palestine, Texas and served almost 3 decades with distinction as the Judge for Texas' 369th District Court until his recent retirement. Prior to that he served as County Court at Law Judge, County Attorney for Anderson County and also the City Attorney for Palestine. Along with his time on the bench, Bascom taught as a professor at Trinity Valley Community College for 37 years. The totality of his awards and honors are too numerous to list here today, but he has been honored by civic groups, charitable organizations, educational institutions and veteran groups. And he was honored multiple times for his good work as a judge including one from the Texas Gang Investigators Association that seems to sum everything up—the ''Damn Good Judge'' award.

Bascom touched countless lives, including mine. His wit and humor were unmatched and his knowledge endless—likely fueled by his unquenchable thirst and love for history. For those who knew Bascom, they saw compassion and love for others that was unbounding.

As the Representative for the 5th District of Texas, I am honored to have known such a wonderful and unique person, and I will forever treasure our many conversations through the years. I send my deepest and sincerest condolences to his mother, Kelly, wife, Carol, to his children Bonnie, Matthew, William and Hunter, as well as the rest of his family and innumerable friends. May we all remember a life well lived.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD AND CAROL CRESWELL'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Richard and Carol Creswell on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This significant benchmark is a symbol of their commitment to each other and to their family. I am happy to join their friends and family in extending my best to them on this special occasion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Richard and Carol on the celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I wish them the best today and for many more blessed years to come.

CARROLL DANIEL CONSTRUCTION BREAKING GROUND IN DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on this Friday, I rise to help usher in new developments that will be added to the Gainesville community.

As a proud, lifelong resident of this town, I have watched it grow over the years, and welcomed the new businesses and neighbors that have come with that growth.

Earlier this year, the city of Gainesville moved forward with an ambitious plan to improve our historic square. The investments made to this project will add to the square and surrounding area, which represent a centerpiece of our vibrant downtown.

As part of this project, I am pleased that Caroll Daniel Construction will break the ground for a wonderful new facility that will begin construction early next year.

Residents of Gainesville will enjoy this building, which will be located along Jesse Jewel Parkway. The street's namesake, Mr. Jewel himself, was a leader in the poultry industry, and he brought jobs and increased investment in the area during the Great Depression.

In line with his vision, this addition to the square will serve our community for years to come. I believe that my good friend, Brian Daniel, runs his company according to the values of our Hall County community.

My family and I look forward to seeing the company's new facility next year as we drive by on Jesse Jewel Parkway.

IN HONOR OF COL. THOMAS ''TUCKER'' FAGAN'S RECOGNITION IN THE AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY'S ''VETERANS IN BLUE'' VOLUME III

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Colonel Thomas ''Tucker'' Fagan on his recognition in the Air Force Public Affairs Agency's ''Veterans in Blue'' Volume VIII.

Throughout his impressive career in the Air Force, Col. Fagan proved himself indispensable, being chosen as one of eight military personnel chosen to build the U.S. nuclear war plan, and serving as the wing commander at F.E. Warren AFB, and the 20th Air Force vice commander. After his retirement, Col. Fagan stayed active in the Wyoming and Air Force communities, including serving former Wyoming U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis as her Chief of Staff.

The Air Force Public Affairs Agency launched the ''Veterans in Blue'' portrait collection to highlight the men and women that have contributed to the Air Force's great legacy. Col. Fagan's dedication and contributions to the Air Force, nation, and state warrants his inclusion in this prestigious collection.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Col. Fagan on being recognized in the ''Veterans in Blue'' Volume VIII portrait collection, and I thank him for his continued service.

HONORING JOSEPH TRAN-MALAN

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Joseph Tran-Malan for his participation in the Congressional App Challenge (CAC).

The CAC began in 2013, and has since grown to include nearly 4,000 students across 33 states and territories. Specifically, the CAC encourages students to learn how to code through an annual district-wide competition.

For his CAC submission, Joseph chose the video game Overwatch. In particular, he created a video that described why he chose Overwatch, and what he would do to make the video game better as part of his app.

Currently, Joseph is in the third grade and attends Harmony DC Public Charter School, which has a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program. In addition, the school organizes two major STEM events every year: the Harmony Science and Engineering Fair, which serves as a way for students to learn more about the scientific process; and the Stem Festival, where students

participate in various STEM demonstrations and explain the science behind them.

Joseph is a proud big brother and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jose and Kim Tran-Malan. In his free time, Joseph likes to travel and see new things, but is content with spending quality time at home with his family. He also loves to dance and use his imagination by building with LEGOs or by creating new worlds in the video game Minecraft. I am very proud of Joseph.

Therefore, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring achievement at a very young age by recognizing Joseph Tran-Malan for his participation in the Congressional App Challenge.

RECOGNIZING LAURA WEIS

HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLIOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend Laura Weis, who was honored with the Distinguished Illinois Chamber of Commerce Executive Award last month.

As CEO of the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, Laura is a tireless advocate for the citizens, businesses and organizations throughout a community with nationally-recognized educational institutions, technological and innovative start-ups, manufacturing companies, and agricultural industries.

Under Laura's leadership, the Chamber has increased its membership and influence throughout the region. The Chamber and its staff continually engage with elected officials at every level of government to ensure commonsense, business-friendly policies are in place for the community. Through the Chamber's efforts, delegations of community and business leaders from the county have become more engaged in public affairs through regular trips to Springfield and Washington, D.C.

Outside of political advocacy, the Chamber has adopted numerous policies that support the local community, including the creation of an energy coop that has saved local businesses thousands of dollars, the development of a procurement center to assist businesses with government contracts, the institution of local disaster recovery plans, and oversight of countless online tools to help area businesses.

Laura is a tremendous leader within my congressional district, and it is not hard to see her impact throughout Champaign County. I Congratulate Laura on this award, and I look forward to continuing to work with her throughout the future.

IN HONOR OF FRANK HANCOCK'S RETIREMENT FROM THE WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Frank Hancock on his retirement.

This is a momentous occasion and I hope that he will take the time to reflect upon all his hard work over the past 22 years working for the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). I thank him for his contributions to WYDOT and to our community.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Frank Hancock on his retirement. I wish him the best in future endeavors.

SUPPORT FOR H.R. 4391

HON. RO KHANNA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. KHANNA. Mr. Speaker, as a cosponsor of H.R. 4391, the Promoting Human Rights by Ending Israeli Military Detention of Palestinian Children Act, I am concerned with the United Nations (UN) reports highlighting the detention and mistreatment of Palestinian children. We should stand up for human rights in all cases, even when abuses are committed by our most trusted allies.

Israel faces unique security threats and, unfortunately, some underage Palestinians do resort to violence as a means of change. This is unacceptable, and the Palestinian leadership needs to take more steps to prevent children from being manipulated into becoming terrorists.

The threat of child terrorism should not be an excuse, however, to torture those accused of such actions or deprive them of rights. Every minor should have a right to a lawyer, to due process, and to having their parents notified.

I am encouraged by a 2015 UNICEF report indicating that Israeli authorities are taking steps to address alleged abuses. Although evidence of the ill-treatment of Palestinian children detained still exists, I am hopeful that Israeli forces will ultimately fully comply with international human rights laws.

Through continued discussions with the Israeli government, Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful changes will continue to occur. Doing so is in the best interest of Israel's security and consistent with their values.

HONORING LIAM McLAUGHLIN

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of knowing many wonderful public servants over the course of my career, individuals who dedicated themselves fully to their communities and neighbors every single day. In Yonkers, there has not been a more dedicated and selfless public servant than my dear friend Liam McLaughlin, who this year is closing out his final term as Yonkers City Council President.

I have known Liam for many years. His parents, Bernadette and Pat, are close family friends, and both have a very strong sense of community Liam clearly adopted that spirit, and thus began a lifetime of working to strengthen Yonkers.

Liam was raised in Yonkers and has lived there for more than 42 years. His wife, Debbie, is also from Yonkers. Now, the McLaughlin family lives only a few blocks from the house in which he grew up. Liam attended St. John the Baptist School, the same school that his son Ryan now goes to, and coaches his son on the same youth baseball fields that his father coached him on when he was a kid.

A small business owner, Liam is a practicing trusts and estates attorney at McLaughlin & Zerafa LLP. Previously, he worked for several small law firms in the New York area, including his own general practice law firm and the Corporation Counsel's Office in the City of Yonkers. Liam was also an adjunct professor at Manhattan College.

From 2000 to 2010, Liam served on the Yonkers City Council. He served in leadership roles including Majority Leader and Minority Leader. He also served on every major committee and was Chairman of the Budget & Finance Committee, as well as the Environmental Policy & Protection Committee. In 2013, he was elected as Council President by the voters of Yonkers, where he served with great distinction and honor.

Outside of his duties as an elected official, Liam has also coached youth basketball and soccer with Dunwoodie Youth Association, and currently serves as President of the Lincoln Park Taxpayers Association. Liam is also a member of the Holy Name Society of St. John the Baptist Church, the Kerrymen's P&B Association and the Ancient Order of Hibernians of Westchester County.

On December 18, 2017 the Yonkers community is coming together to celebrate Liam for all the remarkable work he has done and continues to do on behalf of his fellow Yonkers residents. He is most deserving of the recognition. I want to congratulate Liam on the occasion and offer my personal thanks for all of that tremendous work. He has certainly made Yonkers proud.

IN HONOR OF DANNY AND BECKY DELOREY'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Danny and Becky Delorey on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This significant benchmark is a symbol of their commitment to each other and to their family. I am happy to join their friends and family in extending my best to them on this special occasion.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Danny and Becky on the celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. I wish them the best today and for many more blessed years to come.

H.R. 3731, SECRET SERVICE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT OF 2017

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of passing H.R. 3731, the Secret Service Recruitment and Retention Act of 2017, into law.

Over the years, the United States Secret Service has been plagued with morale and attrition issues. In 2016, the Secret Service was ranked last among 305 agency subcomponents in the Partnership for Public Service's annual Best Places to Work Survey. The morale issues stem from a number of factors, but one of the leading factors is agent burnout due to inflexible schedules, long shifts, and agents having to work and not use their annual leave or potentially not receive overtime compensation due to agents reaching their annual allowance pay amount.

Many of the aforementioned issues cannot be solved by a simple act of Congress; however, compensating agents for overtime is one that Congress can and should address. H.R. 3731 would provide for agents who have hit their overtime pay limits to receive compensation for the uncompensated hours they have logged in service to the country.

While I believe the Secret Service can do more to recruit and retain top talent, it is also important for Congress to do its part to not leave the current agents uncompensated. Passing this legislation is crucial and would be an obvious morale boost for the current agents. I urge our colleagues in the Senate to move quickly to pass this legislation.

IN HONOR OF JOHN KECK'S RETIREMENT FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to John Keck on his retirement from the National Park Service.

For the past 14 years, John has served as the Wyoming/Montana state coordinator and Eastern MT–WY Group Superintendent for the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service. In this role, he has worked closely with various non-profit and local groups, communities, and state and federal agencies and offices, including mine. Having lived in Wyoming throughout his life and worked for the state for 22 years before joining the National Park Service, John has been able to apply his knowledge and experiences to excel in his role and for the people and state of Wyoming. I want to extend my appreciation to him for his many contributions to our great state.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to John Keck on his retirement. He has been integral to the National Park Service and our state, and will be missed.

IN RECOGNITION OF ESTELLE SALTZMAN

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Estelle Saltzman on the occasion of her retirement as CEO and President of Runyon Saltzman, Inc., one of Sacramento's most innovative communications firms. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Saltzman for her leadership and commitment to Runyon Saltzman, as well as for her dedication to the cultural vitality of the greater Sacramento region.

Since founding the agency alongside Jean Runyon in 1976, Ms. Saltzman has been instrumental in making Runyon Saltzman one of the top communications firms in the area. Her background in reporting and political science helped her form the agency into an industry leader in public affairs and social marketing. Her leadership at Runyon Saltzman has been acknowledged over the years by those who understand the value she provides to the local business community. She was awarded the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber's 1988 ''Sacramento Business Woman of the Year'' award, lifetime achievement awards from the Sacramento Public Relations Association and the International Association of Business Communicators, and the ''Women Who Mean Business'' award from the Sacramento Business Journal.

In addition to her work at Runyon Saltzman, Estelle has been an active member of the Sacramento community. She serves on the boards of the Crocker Art Museum, the Sacramento History Foundation, Restoration House, Opening Doors, Inc., and the Family Justice Center. Thanks in no small part to her leadership, these organizations now stand as important cultural and community landmarks for the Sacramento region.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to Estelle Saltzman, outgoing CEO and president of Runyon Saltzman, as her friends and colleagues celebrate her well-earned retirement. I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring her tenacity and dedication on behalf of Runyon Saltzman, as well as her dedication to the Sacramento region.

IN HONOR OF LAURA McKINNEY'S RETIREMENT FROM THE MAGIC CITY ENTERPRISES

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Laura McKinney on her retirement.

This is a momentous occasion and I hope that she will take the time to reflect upon all her hard work over the past 34 years working for Magic City Enterprises. I thank her for her contributions to Magic City Enterprises and to our community.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Laura McKinney on her retirement. I wish her the best in future endeavors.

HONORING CHRISTOPER GRESHAM

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Christopher Gresham for his participation in the Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship, the flagship program of the U.S. government's Young African Leadership Initiative, helps to develop the next generation of African leaders across government, business and civil society. The fellows build strategic partnerships and lasting connections through training and networking opportunities at leading institutions of higher education.

The Reciprocal Exchange Component, for which Christopher has been competitively selected, provides U.S. experts and leaders a chance to expand their work in partnership with Mandela Washington Fellowship alumni in Africa. Past participants have included a wide range of experts, from entrepreneurs to disability rights advocates, who have contributed meaningfully to efforts such as promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in the region. The program provides important contributions to U.S. diplomacy efforts.

A native Washingtonian, Christopher has dedicated his career to breaking down barriers and promoting diversity in entrepreneurship. He graduated from The George Washington University and went on to obtain a Master's from Thunderbird School for Global Management. He then became the Vice President of Communities at SEED SPOT, where he works to increase startup activity and economic growth with a focus on entrepreneurs developing sustainable solutions to address some of the world's most pressing problems. In addition, Christopher founded Swillings Coffee, an impact-driven venture that works directly with small family-owned farms in rural Colombia to apply sustainable growing techniques and employ women in the local community. As part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange, Christopher empowered hundreds of Beninese entrepreneurs with entrepreneurship training, educated its largest university on sustainable economic development programs and promoted cooperative trade with the U.S. and multiple institutional stakeholders.

Therefore, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Christopher Gresham for his accomplishments and for his participation in the Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchange.

IN HONOR OF SALLY NICHOLS' INDUCTION INTO THE CLARA KLINDT ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

HON. LIZ CHENEY

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. CHENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Sally ''Powder'' Nichols on her induction into the Clara Klindt

Rocky Mountain College Athletic Hall of Fame. Her continued dedication to athletic excellence warrants this recognition.

Throughout her time at Lusk High School, University of Idaho, and Rocky Mountain College, she was integral to her teams' successes, setting various school records and being selected All-Conference and All-Region in 2000. As an athlete, and now as a coach, she has set an excellent example for students and athletes across the state. I commend her commitment to her teammates, to her students, and to athletics.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Sally for being inducted into the Rocky Mountain College Athletic Hall of Fame. She and her family deserve to be extremely proud of this accomplishment.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF KOPPER KETTLE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize the 40th anniversary of the Kopper Kettle explosion in downtown Auburn, Alabama.

Below is the 1978 sermon by Rev. Rod Sinclair at the Episcopal College Center after the explosion occurred:

The explosion at the Kopper Kettle has consumed the time and attention of many of us this week, especially Sunday when it occurred Monday and Tuesday when we were fixing ourselves up and getting heat back into the building and into the Steven's House. There have been many expressions of gratefulness that no one in town was injured or killed and we have all told each other where we were when we hear of or felt the blast. We have even told each other about other explosions, other calamities and what our reaction was to them. And some of us have gone off into the world of metaphor and analogy and compared the explosion at the Kopper Kettle to what happens to a human being who gets poison in his or her system, poison from unacknowledged anger or poison from unexpressed resentment, and how the pressure can build up an explosion.

The another type of explosion occurred to me, as it should, being the preacher, which I like to look at this morning. It is the explosion of the spirit and it can be more devastating than what happened last Sunday at Magnolia and Gay.

The explosion of the spirit is what happens when all the things we thought we believed in collapses, when the world of meaning collapses, when the truths that we always thought were true seem untrue, when doubt attacks every item of faith and prevails, and faith seems counterfeit, and trust wanders aimlessly hunting for a place to rest, and when other people's piety bring charges of hypocrisy to our lips. The explosion of the spirit can hit with the force of last Sunday's blast or it can strike in a slow-motion version. Decay is an explosion developing slowly. We can rebuild stores and replace smashed windows, but persons who are smashed by an earthquake under their house of faith have no certainty that they can pick up the pieces, nor may they want to, for their structure no longer has meaning. All that was dear and cherished is splintered and smoking. Their faith is gone, their dreams are smashed, and they have no basis for hope.

What do you do if the explosion of the spirit strikes you? First, I believe you must go to your most trusted friend, not to talk, but to sit in silence—in the presence of the other—in the presence of another human being. And the truth of the presence may be the only truth that is verifiable.

Next, you must allow your friend to care for you. This is more difficult than silence. Nor can it come too quickly. This requires that you give permission to the other to enter your shattered world. And with the entry may come judgment (but surely not!) and may come abject embarrassment (Yes, possibly that) or the painful admission that you are lost in the woods and do not know the way home. (Yes, that too!) Your trusted friend is there to listen, is not therapist, counselor or father confessor (at least not then) and listens to you talk, listens to the starkness of your confession that your religious house of cards proved to be just that, listens to the pain of your isolation—for you are in an empty, flat land by yourself with not so much as four pegs to pitch a tent for shelter. He listens to the description of your futureless future. And the echo of the question ''What is there now?'' continues to sound in your empty room.

But your friend does not answer your questions; eventually you do. Yet no one can tell you when the eventuality will happen. First, there may be nothing more than the establishing of a routine; but even routine requires a degree of faith. Later, there may be divine word, certainly not acknowledged then as such. From deep within, from the center of your center, may come the word: ''Life shall go on.'' And you know the words are true and your house of meaning receives another plank.

If and when the house is completed, that is, if and when there is a day when you can say: ''I believe that the following truths gives me meaning, and makes sense out of existence, and are the grounds on which I will stake my life,'' if there is a day when this can be said again, after an explosion of the spirit my hope is that your statement of what you believe would include the following:

First, a trust in God, trust in God as personal and loving, God who loves you, who understands and who cares for you. Believing that God understands and loves us is the life force that prevents us from dying.

Secondly, a realization that Jesus of Nazareth reveals God to us. We are not blocked or stumped in our search for the knowledge of God. Jesus' love and forgiveness is the indicator of God's love and forgiveness. Believing that Jesus reveals God to us is the life force that guards our spirits from collapsing.

Thirdly, a trust that God is present with and in us, and that his spirit, his power, and his love are with us and in us, his people. We are not left derelict or abandoned, wondering if we shall ever be called for. Believing that God's presence is with us and in us is the life force that builds us up as a community of people seeking to be faithful and prevents us from despairing.

To be able to base your life on those three assertions and know they are true is to return from the land of shadow and mist into the sunlight of a new day.

The person who experiences the bankruptcy of spirit that we have spoken of and who later reclaims and rebuilds, who begins again and whose faith grows from infancy to maturity, has a lot to tell us. My guess is that such a person would share with us such thoughts as:

No one else can say what's true for you. All truth is self-validating.

Much truth, that is not yet perceived as truth, can remain on the shelf: it may be claimed later on.

Having swallowed too much once before and exploded, it's best not to bite off more than you can chew.

Courage to rebuild is an act of faith.

The process of discovering meaning is an element of meaning itself.

My further guess is that as we met such a person, who had believed again after being crushed by doubt, we could say such words to him or her as:

When you speak, your words are genuine and true. We feel accepted and respected by you.

Your faith is clearly shown in your behavior.

You will be a threat to those whose houses of faith are held together by tape and wire and string and who pretend to believe and who make a great show, but who on the inside are full of emptiness and staleness, brittle-ness and dust.

You will cause a light to shine on sham religion and there will be some who will be vindictive.

The explosion at the corner last Sunday can cause us to look at the explosion that can come at tour centers, the collapsing of our spirit, if we have carelessly claimed to believe, or mimicked the belief of others, and have no faith that is our own. The admission of our doubt, painful though it is, can be the first step to regaining a life of faith and can return us to authentic living in God's presence. God's love is real and his commandments are sure and the community of persons seeking to know what it is to be fruitful is a rich place to set yourself. May He shed his grace on each one of us as we seek truth and walk in faith. Amen.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Kopper Kettle explosion in Auburn.

HONORING MAYOR WILLIAM BELL

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of a devoted public servant, community leader, and friend, William V. ''Bill'' Bell, whose tenure as Mayor of Durham, North Carolina ended this month after 16 years in office.

A native of Washington, D.C. who earned engineering degrees from Howard University and New York University, Bill began his career in the private sector, eventually retiring as a senior engineer at IBM in Research Triangle Park. He was first elected to the Durham County Board of Commissioners in 1972 and served until 1994 and again from 1996 to 2000, including three terms as chairman from 1982 to 1994. He was elected Mayor of Durham in 2001 and re-elected six times, making him the longest-serving mayor in Durham's history.

During his more than four decades in politics, Bill was a visionary force behind Durham's transformation from a declining tobacco town into a vibrant, modern paragon of the ''new South,'' bustling with commerce, cultural events and attractions, world-class hotels and restaurants, and a thriving entrepreneurial community. He played an instrumental role in the merger of the Durham County and Durham City school systems, the financing of major downtown amenities such as the Durham Bulls Athletic Park and Durham Performing Arts Center, and, more recently, the

planning for the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit project.

Even as he has worked to attract new ideas and new investment to Durham, Bill has worked tirelessly to ensure that all Durhamites would benefit from their community's growth. He continues to serve as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the UDI Community Development Corporation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the education and economic welfare of low-income and underprivileged Durham residents.

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with Bill during his more than 40 years in North Carolina politics, and especially since Durham became part of the Fourth Congressional District in 1997. We worked together especially on appropriations projects, to improve the corridors to downtown, to remedy a ''food desert,'' and to develop affordable housing and livable neighborhoods. I and many others found Bill to be an ideal collaborator, able and willing to work cooperatively with all sorts of people, ready to embrace new ideas and approaches, loyal to Durham and determined to realize its potential.

Even as he retires from public office, Bill will continue to serve the people of Durham through UDI Community Development Corporation and through his active involvement in other civic and charitable organizations. And his legacy will live on through the countless lives he has touched and the indelible impact he has made on the Bull City, which is today more prosperous, dynamic, and inclusive than ever before.

Lisa and I, along with constituents in the Fourth District and colleagues in the North Carolina congressional delegation, want to thank Mayor Bell for his dedicated service and exceptional leadership and wish him and his family the very best as he begins the next chapter of his life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 18, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call votes held on December 18, 2017, I was inescapably detained handling important matters related to my District and the State of Alabama. Had I been present, I would have voted No on Roll Call No. 685, the Motion to Fix the Convening Times and YEA on Roll Call Nos. 686 and 687, which are as follows: H.R. 4375, and STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act, and H.R. 3979, Keep America's Refuges Operation Act.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

DECEMBER 20

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure

To hold hearings to examine freight movement.

SD–406

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S8051–S8072

Measures Introduced: Four bills were introduced, as follows: S. 2242–2245. **Page S8070**

Measures Reported:

S. 2155, to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, with amendments. **Page S8070**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the National Security Strategy of the United States of America; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services. (PM–22) **Page S8069**

Newstead Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 12:00 noon, on Tuesday, December 19, 2017, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Gillian Newstead, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State, under the order of Thursday, December 14, 2017. **Pages S8071–72**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 62 yeas to 34 nays (Vote No. EX. 318), J. Paul Compton, Jr., of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. **Pages S8054–64, S8072**

By 74 yeas to 23 nays (Vote No. EX. 319), Owen West, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. **Pages S8054–64, S8072**

Messages from the House: **Page S8070**

Measures Referred: **Page S8070**

Executive Communications: **Page S8070**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S8070–71**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Page S8071**

Additional Statements: **Page S8069**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—319) **Page S8064**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 7:33 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 19, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on pages S8071–72.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 14 public bills, H.R. 4666–4679 and 1 resolution, H. Con. Res. 97 were introduced. **Pages H10179–80**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H10180–81**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 3813, to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–467);

H.R. 3814, to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking (H. Rept. 115–468);

H.R. 2465, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the removal of the rental cap for durable medical equipment under the

Medicare program with respect to speech generating devices (H. Rept. 115–469, Part 1);

H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–470);

H.R. 4375, to provide for a study on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–471);

H.R. 4254, to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–472);

H.R. 4323, to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–473); and

H. Res. 667, providing for consideration of the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3312) to amend the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act to specify when bank holding companies may be subject to certain enhanced supervision, and for other purposes; and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–474).

Page H10179

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Duncan (TN) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H10147**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:05 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H10148**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Dan C. Cummins, Peoples Church, Jacksonville, Texas. **Page H10148**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:03 p.m. and reconvened at 4:30 p.m. **Page H10148**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage Family Caregivers Act of 2017: H.R. 3759, amended, to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a Family Caregiving Strategy; **Pages H10148–52**

Expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms: H. Con. Res. 95, amended, expressing support for the use of public-private partnerships to bring computer science education to more K–12 classrooms; **Pages H10152–54**

Keep America's Refuges Operational Act: H.R. 3979, amended, to amend the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to reauthorize the volunteer services, community partnership, and refuge education programs of the National Wildlife Refuge System, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 371 yeas to 14 nays, Roll No. 687; **Pages H10154–55, H10166**

United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017: H.R. 4661, to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program; and **Pages H10155–58**

STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act: H.R. 4375, amended, to provide for a study on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, and to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 376 yeas to 9 nays, Roll No. 686; **Pages H10158–60, H10165–66**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "Provide for a report on broadening participation in certain National Science Foundation research and education programs, to collect data on Federal research grants to science agencies, and for other purposes.". **Page H10166**

Recess: The House recessed at 6:16 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H10164**

Motion to Fix Next Convening Time: Agreed to the Holding motion that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 9 a.m. for morning-hour debate, by a yea-and-nay vote of 216 yeas to 169 nays, Roll No. 685. **Pages H10164–65**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Women in Aerospace Education Act: H.R. 4254, amended, to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women; **Pages H10160–61**

United States and Israel Space Cooperation Act: H.R. 1159, amended, to provide for continuing cooperation between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Israel Space Agency; and **Pages H10161–62**

Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act: H.R. 4323, amended, to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research. **Pages H10162–64**

Recess: The House recessed at 9:15 p.m. and reconvened at 11:04 p.m. **Page H10178**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he transmitted to Congress the National Security Strategy of the United States—referred to the Committee on Armed Services. **Page H10164**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Three yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H10164–65, H10165–66, H10166. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Committee Meetings

SYSTEMIC RISK DESIGNATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 3312, the "Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017". The Committee granted, by record vote of 9–4, a rule providing for the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 1. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. The rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read. The rule provides that the previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervention of any motion except one hour of debate and one motion to recommit if applicable. The rule provides that clause 5(b) of rule XXI shall not apply to the conference report. The rule provides that debate on the conference report is divided pursuant to clause 8(d) of rule XXII. In section 2, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 3312 under a closed rule. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–49, modified by the amendment printed in the Rules Committee report, shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 3, the rule waives clause 6(a) of rule XIII (requiring a two-thirds vote to consider a rule on the same day it is reported from the Rules Committee) against any resolution reported for the remainder of the first session of the 115th Congress. In section 4, the rule provides that it shall be in order at any time through remainder of the first session of the 115th Congress, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules and that the Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or her designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this section. Testimony was heard from Chairman Hensarling, Chairman Brady of Texas, and Representatives Roskam and Neal.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: business meeting to consider the nominations of Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Peter Hendrick Vrooman, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda, and Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, both of the Department of State, 2 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Rules and Administration: to hold hearings to examine S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate; to be immediately followed by a business meeting to consider S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate, 2:30 p.m., SR–301.

House

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, markup on H. Res. 630, requiring each Member, officer, and employee of the House of Representatives to complete a program of training in workplace rights and responsibilities each session of each Congress, 12:15 p.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on Senate Amendment to H.R. 1370, the "Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017 [Further Continuing Resolution]", 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 4242, the "VA Care in the Community Act", 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of December 19 through December 22, 2017

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Gillian Newstead, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 12:10 p.m.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: December 19, business meeting to consider the nominations of Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: December 20, Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to hold hearings to examine freight movement, 10:30 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: December 19, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Peter Hendrick Vrooman, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda, and Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, both of the Department of State, 2 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Rules and Administration: December 19, to hold hearings to examine S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate; to be immediately followed by a business meeting to consider S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate, 2:30 p.m., SR–301.

House Committees

Committee on Education and the Workforce, December 20, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education'', 2 p.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

10 a.m., Tuesday, December 19

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 12 noon), Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Jennifer Gillian Newstead, of New York, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 12:10 p.m.

(Following disposition of the nomination of Jennifer Gillian Newstead, Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Tuesday, December 19

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1—GOP Tax Bill (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of H.R. 3312—Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Cheney, Liz, Wyo., E1717, E1717, E1718, E1718, E1718, E1719, E1719, E1720, E1720, E1720
Collins, Doug, Ga., E1718
Davis, Rodney, Ill., E1719
Engel, Eliot L., N.Y., E1719
Evans, Dwigt, Pa., E1717
Hensarling, Jeb, Tex., E1718
Khanna, Ro, Calif., E1719
Matsui, Doris O., Calif., E1717, E1720
Norton, Eleanor Holmes, The District of Columbia, E1717, E1718, E1720
Price, David E., N.C., E1721
Rogers, Mike, Ala., E1721
Sewell, Terri A., Ala., E1722
Smith, Lamar, Tex., E1717
Thompson, Bennie G., Miss., E1720

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