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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God of us all, who is above all yet in us all, make us ever sensitive to all of the expressions of Your Grace. Lord, thank You for the glory of a sunrise and sunset, for the refreshment of the breezes that invigorate, and for the technicolor in trees, shrubs, sky, and sea. May the challenges of these times never blind us to life's wonders.

Prepare our lawmakers for today's journey. May they strive to stay within the circle of Your will as You guide their steps. Lord, help them to be ready to solve problems, receiving inspiration from the creative power of Your love. Let business be done on Capitol Hill that will address itself to the real issues and not to games. May the work of our Senators become an expression of Your truth, righteousness, and justice.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 19, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Vernon D. Oliver, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are days away from another MAGA government shutdown. Avoiding one will require the House majority to quickly accept a bipartisan solution. Yet, this week, House Republicans are trying everything but bipartisanship.

Everyone knows that the GOP's proposed CR is a nonstarter here in the Senate. Let me say that again. Everyone knows that the House GOP's proposed CR will not pass the Senate because, instead of even pretending to aim for bipartisanship, this bill had zero—zero—Democratic input. It calls for a crushing 8-percent cut to virtually all nondefense spending—8 percent. The House Republican proposal, drafted and put together by the MAGA hard-right wing is slapdash, reckless, and cruel.

It includes cutting investments to the Social Security Administration, to law enforcement, to nutrition assistance, to K–12 education, to small business, to rural communities, to protections for drinking water, to lifesaving medical research—cancer and other research—and much more.

The American people need to know just how bad this MAGA Republican CR truly is. This slapdash CR would decimate investments in lifesaving research, hollowing out the National Institutes of Health.

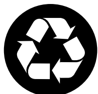
This reckless CR would lower public safety, cutting back on drug and food inspection; weakening wildfire prevention; and eliminating law enforcement officers in the Federal Government, weakening our battle against violent crime and the scourge of fentanyl.

And this cruel CR would gut investments in K–12 education, slash resources for suicide support services, upend Tribal investments, and cut loans to small businesses and rural communities.

Slapdash, reckless, cruel—that is the hallmark of this MAGA Republican proposal in the House.

Then there is Ukraine, which the House GOP bill completely abandons. At the very same time that President Zelenskyy comes to the United States to make the case for standing firm

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



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against Putin, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives is essentially telling him: You are on your own.

Nothing would make Putin happier right now than to see the United States waver in our support for the Ukrainian people. Nothing would make Putin happier. Providing aid is not just a matter of Ukrainian security but of American security, too, because a victorious Putin would be an emboldened Putin. That would make the world less safe for democracy and for America. For MAGA House Republicans to oppose Ukrainian aid is a terrible, dangerous mistake that could come back to haunt U.S. security.

Ukrainian aid could have been an opportunity for bipartisanship, but the hard right—against what, I imagine, is the majority of Republicans in the House—has prevented that from happening, too.

So let me say it again: The House package is slapdash, reckless, and cruel, and everyone knows it has no chance of passing the Senate.

The more time House Republicans waste trying to pass this MAGA wish list, while ignoring chances for real bipartisanship, the greater the odds they will push us into a costly government shutdown.

The last government shutdown lasted 35 days and began when then-President Trump said to me and Speaker PELOSI in the Oval Office: ''I am proud to shut down the government.'' That is what he said.

In the 2 years that Democrats held the House, the Senate, and the White House, we didn't have a government shutdown. We didn't have a debt limit crisis. We didn't have the kind of chaos that we see when MAGA Republicans seem to control so much of the Republican agenda. And, this year, we have already seen both: a debt limit crisis and a looming shutdown crisis, just months apart.

Only one thing has changed since last year, when there was none of this chaos: a House controlled by MAGA Republicans. They are back to their old ways.

And, of course, former President Trump is trying to add to the crisis—it is typical of what he always does—practically commanding his MAGA House sycophants to ''shut down the government if they can't make an appropriate deal—absolutely.''

This is the problem with MAGA extremism: It is not capable of governing. It is only capable of chaos, and this year, sadly, chaos has reigned in the House.

It doesn't have to be that way. It doesn't have to be a MAGA Republican-only bill. It doesn't have to be the MAGA way or a shutdown. House Republicans have a choice in the matter, between pursuing real chances for bipartisanship and catering to the hard right. Each time, they have chosen to empower the hard right. They have chosen dysfunction and chaos. They have chosen to ignore bipartisanship.

But what was true months ago remains true today: There is no scenario where we avoid a shutdown without bipartisanship. If Democrats tried to do it only our way, there would be no bill. But now Republicans are trying to do it their way; Democrats are not. And there are plenty of Members on both sides of the aisle who, despite our disagreements, would like to give bipartisanship a chance, and that is what the American people would want us to do as well.

We only have a few days left for House Republicans to come to their senses and choose the more fruitful way. I urge them to reject chaos and choose to work with Democrats.

There are real people with real lives at stake here. Hundreds of thousands of Federal workers all across the country could be furloughed. Services that millions of Americans count on could be disrupted. Our communities will be less safe and our fellow Americans suffering from disasters less provided for. Those are a few of the tragic and unnecessary outcomes if the Republicans in the House let the MAGA extreme control their agenda.

The matter is simple. If both sides embrace bipartisanship, a shutdown will be avoided. If House Republicans reject bipartisanship, if the hard right is given license to run the show, a MAGA shutdown will be almost inevitable.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, now on the minibus, while chaos seems to define everything the Republican-controlled House does, here in the Senate we have shown that bipartisanship is key to getting things done, and, tomorrow, Democrats and Republicans will get a chance to make sure that that bipartisanship continues.

Unfortunately, last Thursday, a lone Senator, representing a very small group in this Chamber, tried to undermine the bipartisan appropriations process with procedural hurdles.

Yesterday, my colleague Senator MURRAY, the chair of the Appropriations Committee, moved to get things back on track with a motion to suspend rule XVI and filed cloture on that motion. We will vote on that motion tomorrow. I believe that a clear majority of Senators want to see us continue on the appropriations process. I hope they vote to keep the appropriations process going tomorrow.

Our colleagues on the other side have asked for regular order, and we have worked with them to make sure that that happens, just as it did on the NDAA bill. Our colleagues on the other side have asked for amendments, and we have worked with them to consider amendments. In fact, Senators COLLINS and MURRAY had a list of amendments that was going to go forward with the OK, I believe, of both the minority and majority leaders, until Senator JOHNSON threw the log in the tracks.

Our Republican and Democratic leaders of the Appropriations Committee have asked to consider appropriations bills on the floor, and it is with their cooperation that these three bills—MILCON-VA, Agriculture, and Transportation-HUD—have been brought to the floor for consideration.

Democrats want to work with our Republican colleagues whenever possible. No one pretends that we don't have disagreements—we do—but the important part is that, so far, disagreements have not stymied the process. Tomorrow's vote will be a chance to ensure that we keep that bipartisanship going.

I thank my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, especially Chair MURRAY and Vice Chair COLLINS, for their excellent work and hope we can see strong support tomorrow to continue the appropriations process here on the floor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

CHINA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in the past 2 months, the Chinese Government has reminded the world just how an authoritarian communist state operates.

In July, President Xi announced he had replaced the PRC's Foreign Minister after the official hadn't been seen in public in a month. Then, the senior official responsible for the PLA strategic missile force, who hadn't been seen for even longer, was replaced. And then the Chinese Defense Minister went missing for weeks before Beijing announced he had been fired and detained for investigation. The purge of senior leaders, growing economic volatility, bellicose foreign policy—these are concerning developments in a country with a reputation for repression at home and belligerence abroad.

China's neighbors and global powers alike are increasingly skeptical of official economic and budget numbers from a dictatorship that suppresses free speech, mocks the rule of law, and simply disappears its senior leaders—and rightly so.

One thing has long been certain: The PRC is arming itself at an alarming rate. Recent estimates suggest China spends close to $700 billion per year on defense. That is concerning for a number of reasons. First, a much larger percentage of China's defense budget than ours goes to modernization and capabilities. Further, since Chinese geostrategic ambitions—for now at least—are focused primarily on challenging the status quo in its immediate region, the PRC doesn't face the resource constraints that the United

States does due to our global interests and power projection requirements.

Beijing's decades-long modernization campaign has paid dividends for the PRC. Just last week, the Wall Street Journal detailed the significant progress China has made in testing and fielding hypersonic weapons and how such efforts have outpaced those of our own country. America also lags in shipbuilding. The infrastructure constraints that keep us from building more ships, testing more hypersonic vehicles, and training more pilots are well known. But the cold truth is that China, which has a shipbuilding capacity more than 200 times that of the United States, is set to reach 400 ships in 2 years, while the U.S. Navy is aiming for 350 ships—listen to this—by 2045.

This is precisely why Senate Republicans, led by Senator Shelby and Senator WICKER, pushed for an amendment to the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework to create a Defense Infrastructure Fund and expand our capacity for testing, training, and production. Unfortunately, the Democratic leader did not allow this amendment to receive a vote.

For what it is worth, I appreciate the Pentagon's recent efforts to catch up. For example, the Deputy Secretary of Defense recently announced an initiative to dramatically accelerate production of autonomous systems to help level the playing field with the PLA. Her remarks were titled ''The Urgency to Innovate.'' But closing the gap with China and outcompeting our biggest strategic adversary will require more than innovation theater or speeches about revolutions in military affairs. Real progress will require real investments in long-range strike capabilities, real expansion of our defense production capacity, and real defense technology cooperation with our closest allies that increasingly share our concerns about the PLA.

The conflict in Ukraine has finally motivated efforts in America, Europe, and Asia to invest in our defense industrial bases, but if we truly take competition with the PRC seriously, there is a lot more that needs to be done. AUKUS, our technology-sharing partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom, is a step in the right direction. In fact, it will hopefully serve as a model for expanding defense cooperation with other allies. But these efforts cannot come at the expense of properly funding America's own requirements for crucial systems like attack submarines.

The Department's interest in autonomous systems, hypersonic weapons, and long-range fire is welcome, but the Pentagon needs to move at the speed of relevance to field these capabilities as soon as possible, and the Biden administration needs to stop sending Congress defense budget requests that cut funding after inflation and start prioritizing serious investments in the weapons that we actually need.

BIDENOMICS

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, in a speech last month, President Biden claimed that American wages were growing faster than inflation, saying, ''That's Bidenomics.'' Unfortunately, for working families, the truth of Bidenomics is quite the opposite.

Even as nominal wages continue to rise, inflation is actually rising faster. For the third straight year, real median household income is declining. According to the Census Bureau, inflation-adjusted income declined last year alone—listen to this—by $1,750. In other words, Washington Democrats' historic inflation has swallowed the gains of a tight labor market and stuck workers across the country with a massive pay cut.

Worst of all, this Bidenomics tax is hitting low-income workers the hardest. The wealthiest 5 percent of households are earning 4.1 percent less than they were 4 years ago, but—listen to this—the poorest 10 percent are earning 6.3 percent less, and wage gains for manufacturing workers are lagging even further behind those of other industries.

One contract worker in Michigan said of his job at a hardware store: ''Every time my wage goes up, the price of everything else goes up, and it does me no good'' and that the price for some construction materials are only beginning to come down by ''cents when they went up dollars.''

So that is Bidenomics, and working Americans have every reason to be sick of it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there is nothing like summertime in South Dakota.

While I am in Sioux Falls almost every weekend, August gives me the opportunity to spend more time at home. It gives me a chance to travel South Dakota's wide-open spaces to meet with constituents and have important conversations that shape a lot of what I work on here in the Senate. It is a busy month. We covered a lot of ground this August, both figuratively and literally.

To begin with, August is fair season in South Dakota. So this year, I made it to the Turner County Fair, the Brown County Fair, where I got my usual Tubby burger, and the Sioux Empire Fair. Fairs showcase a lot of the best of South Dakota, but they are an especially big deal for our agricultural community. Whether I am serving lunch to producers at the Sioux Empire Fair's Agriculture Appreciation Day or giving an update on the farm bill at Dakotafest, which happens every year in Mitchell, SD, I appreciate opportunities to hear directly from farmers and ranchers. I do this every year, but it is especially important in a farm bill year like this one.

Many of my farm bill priorities come directly from these discussions. In fact, these discussions can often get into the weeds on policy. But the bottom line from farmers and ranchers this year was really quite simple: We need to get the farm bill done. Farmers and ranchers need certainty that the programs they depend on will be there when they need them. And finishing the farm bill is one of the most important things on the agenda for the end of this year.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of South Dakota, but there is a lot more that keeps South Dakota moving. This August, I had the chance to meet with electric cooperatives that provide power in South Dakota communities. I joined Midco Communications as they announced a new broadband expansion in the Black Hills to bring faster internet to more homes. I was on hand for the new I–29 exit 130 interchange ribbon-cutting in Brookings, SD.

Throughout the month, I also visited a lot of local businesses and talked with business owners from across the State. I visited Showplace Cabinetry in Harrisburg, SD, Load King Manufacturing in Elk Point, Dimock Cheese in Dimock, Dady Drug in Mobridge, and I met with startup leaders in Sioux Falls. We had some important conversations. It was clear that business owners are facing some headwinds at the moment.

Business leaders in Yankton, for example, discussed challenges arising from the workforce shortages in South Dakota. With unemployment at 1.9 percent in South Dakota, there are workforce challenges in just about every sector. At the Midwest Agricultural Export Summit, we talked about the importance of trade and how the Biden administration has put expanding market access on the back burner, unfortunately. Business owners across the State expressed frustration with high interest rates and higher costs. Of course, we learned last week that inflation has ticked back up. Gas prices are on the rise as well.

And a majority of Americans say the Biden administration has made the economy worse. Bidenomics is making life harder for families and businesses around the country. If the President really wanted to help working families, he would abandon the tax-and-spending agenda that has been the hallmark of his administration for the last 2½ years.

As I travel around South Dakota, I know I can depend on South Dakotans to keep me informed and South Dakota restaurants to keep me fueled. Often, August becomes a bit of a tour or a bit of, I should say, ''taste of South Dakota'' tour. Sometimes I describe it as eating my way across South Dakota—Chislic from Waddy's in Hudson, SD; a milkshake from Mr. Bob's Drive-In in Selby; coffee from Black Hills Bagels in Rapid City. There is nothing like South Dakota hospitality and a good meal to keep you going during long days.

As much as I love summer in South Dakota, I always get particularly excited when summer turns to fall because there are few things I enjoy more than cheering on South Dakota's athletes. Kids go back to school; and high schools, college teams start competing. My grandkids' sports seasons have begun in earnest. I made it to football games in Brookings for South Dakota State University and Vermillion for the University of South Dakota to support the Jackrabbits and Coyotes in a couple of big wins as their seasons get underway.

And, of course, it is not long until pheasant season comes around next month.

Winter, spring, summer, or fall, there is always something to look forward to in South Dakota. I am lucky to be a son of our State.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FARM BILL

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, this is my third year serving on the Senate Ag Committee. This is my first time getting to work on a farm bill. The farm bill comes around every 5 years. It sets national policy on agriculture, nutrition, conservation, and forestry.

In less than 2 weeks, at the end of this fiscal year, the current farm bill will expire.

In 2018, this bill had a pricetag of $867 billion, right—$867 billion 5 years ago, in 2018. Now, we used to think that was a lot of money, but the upcoming farm bill is almost double that amount at roughly $1.5 trillion. This is the first trillion-dollar farm bill in our Nation's history.

The enormous pricetag of the bill is driven by an 84-percent increase in SNAP, or Federal nutrition assistance, and a 58-percent increase in conservation programs—in other words, a huge increase in welfare and climate spending. Most of this new spending does not offer support for farmers.

The $559 billion increase in SNAP funding was done directly by the Department of Agriculture through updates to the Thrifty Food Plan. In other words, nobody in Congress voted for this. The $35 billion in conservation funding was done through the Inflation Reduction Act of last year. Democrats are pushing through priorities that cater to climate activists and lead Americans to become dependent on welfare benefits. Approximately 82 percent of the upcoming farm bill goes to SNAP, commonly known as food stamps. Four percent goes to conservation.

Just yesterday, we hit $33 trillion in debt for this country—yes, I said that—$33 trillion. That will be picked up—this tab—by our grandkids and their kids.

This graph here, developed by the Farm Bureau Federation, showcases the enormous increase in nutrition spending and the steady decline of farm spending over the last 50 years. As you can see, SNAP spending has almost doubled what it was 5 years ago. How is this even possible? Has poverty doubled in our country in the last 5 years? Of course, it hasn't.

The poverty rate has been between 10 and 20 percent during my lifetime—10 to 20 percent. We spent $20 trillion in the war on poverty, and we have not even moved the needle. What does that mean? That means we are not doing our job. All we are doing is we are paying for somebody else to do it. So it doesn't work.

Yet I never hear my Democratic colleagues consider how we fight poverty. We just give out money. If my colleagues on the left cared about poverty, then they would want better results. But nobody wants better results here. They want votes. Welfare spending—if we would ever get it in our heads—welfare spending does not lift people out of poverty. Are we ever going to realize that? It simply makes people more comfortable remaining in poverty, and that makes it wrong. It makes it wrong for this body that we continue down this path of poverty and not helping poverty.

Food stamps are supposed to help people stay afloat while they work to become self-sufficient, help them get through tough times—not a free walk in society. It should not be an incentive to stay home other than to train and want to get a job, but that is exactly what it has done. Making someone dependent on government is not helping them; it is hurting them.

The whole purpose of the farm bill is supposed to be to help farmers. What an idea. Yet $7 out of $8—$7 out of $8 in the farm bill is for something else. Our farmers depend on crop insurance; commodity programs such as the Agricultural Risk program—ARC, as we call it—and price-loss coverage, which is the PLC program; and disaster programs to help them deal with difficult crop yields, markets, and rising input costs.

Farmers can't control the weather or the price, and that is the reason they need help. We have to remember farmers put food on the table. But there is a lot of people who don't understand that.

These are some of the hardest working people in America, and they have too little to show for it. Back home in my State of Alabama, I have heard the struggles facing our row croppers and our specialty crop producers. They need help to deal with inflation and rising input costs. Farm production costs have increased—have increased 28 percent since Joe Biden took office less than 3 years ago. That is embarrassing. How in the world can we increase prices 28 percent in this country in 2½ years and expect the people in this country to survive, the hard-working people? Farmers included.

Fuel and fertilizer are 60 percent to 130 percent higher than they were in 2021. Folks, we can't survive with that; but my colleagues on the left are not even concerned about it—not one bit. We are just going to cut back on digging oil and gas and buy it from other countries and charge the heck out of taxpayers in the United States of America for oil and gas that we can produce here.

Other farm expenses like land, cash rents, labor, and equipment are all adding up. As a result, net farm income is projected to decrease by roughly 23 percent this year. Costs are up, incomes are down, and farmers are struggling to survive.

We are on a direct collision in this country of closing our farmers out and having to completely depend on other countries for our food and other things that we eat. Think about that—completely depend on other countries.

We just found out going through this COVID crisis that we were completely dependent on other countries for our drugs. We said: We have got to overcome that. We have got to redo that. Now, we are doing the same thing to our farmers. We do away with our food, it is over, because if you think prices are high now, they will be completely a lot higher than they are now.

The only thing that is keeping our farmers afloat is called the Farm Safety Net, but the current support levels for title I commodity programs, like cotton, peanuts, and soybeans, are not high enough to sustain our farmers over the next 5 years.

In other words, this safety net is a level of pricing. If the price goes under a certain amount, we help our farmers overcome that cutback where they can survive. The problem is, that safety net price has not risen since 2012. And we don't think the prices haven't gone up? We have lost our minds.

If we don't raise those reference prices—and right now, my colleagues on the left don't want to raise our reference prices for farmers—we are going to be buying all of our food and everything we eat from other countries. It is coming. We have got to raise our reference prices.

We have got to help out our farmers. These programs and these reference prices allow farmers to continue clothing, feeding, and fueling every citizen in this country and a lot of other countries.

Now, we don't need to idly sit by while our hard-working producers work tirelessly and barely survive under this Joe Biden economy. I ask my colleagues—I beg my colleagues—on the left to wake up, open your eyes, and support our farmers and fight for this farm bill. Raise the reference prices. Help them out. Because if we don't,

there won't be a need for another farm bill. Our Nation's food security is going to depend on it, and the lives of all American citizens are going to depend on it.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF VERNON D. OLIVER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Vernon Oliver to the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut. Judge Oliver's long career on the bench and in public service make him an outstanding nominee to the Federal bench.

Born and raised in Connecticut, Judge Oliver received his B.A. and J.D. from the University of Connecticut. After spending approximately 3 years in private practice, Judge Oliver devoted the rest of his legal career to public service, serving as an Assistant State's Attorney in the division of criminal justice and as an Assistant Attorney General in the child protection unit of the Connecticut Office of the Attorney General.

In 2009, Judge Oliver was appointed to be a judge on the Connecticut Superior Court, presiding over criminal, civil, habeas corpus, and housing matters. On the bench, he has presided over more than 320 trials that have gone to verdict or judgment. He has also sat by designation on the Connecticut Appellate Court in three matters.

Judge Oliver has strong support from his home State Senators, Mr. BLUMENTHAL and Mr. MURPHY. In addition, he was unanimously rated ''well qualified'' by the American Bar Association. Judge Oliver's deep ties to Connecticut and significant courtroom experience, as a longtime litigator and on the bench, make him well-positioned to serve the District of Connecticut with distinction.

I urge my colleagues to support Judge Oliver's nomination.

NOMINATION OF RITA F. LIN

Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Rita Lin to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Judge Lin attended Harvard College and Harvard Law School before clerking for Judge Sandra Lynch on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. During her 10 years in private practice, she focused on complex civil litigation and worked on a variety of matters, including copyright, trade secret misappropriation, unfair competition, breach of contract, and real estate.

She then joined the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California and served as a Federal prosecutor for 4 years. In this role, Judge Lin investigated and prosecuted Federal criminal cases involving public corruption, organized crime, illegal firearms, child pornography, and violent crime. She also led teams of agents in dismantling drug trafficking networks and developed the Northern District of California's program for investigating doctors who had illegally prescribed opioids. In 2018, she was appointed to serve as a judge on the Superior Court of California, County of San Francisco. In her time on the bench, Judge Lin has presided over hundreds of felony criminal cases and several jury trials.

Judge Lin has strong support from Senators FEINSTEIN and PADILLA and was unanimously rated ''well qualified'' by the American Bar Association. Her evenhanded approach to judicial decisionmaking and significant experience litigating both civil and criminal matters in Federal court will serve the Northern District of California well.

I look forward to supporting Judge Lin's nomination and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

VOTE ON OLIVER NOMINATION

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Oliver nomination?

Mr. REED. I ask for the yeas and nays, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 230 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Tillis
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Daines	Marshall
Blackburn	Ernst	McConnell
Boozman	Fischer	Moran
Braun	Grassley	Mullin
Britt	Hagerty	Paul
Budd	Hawley	Ricketts
Capito	Hoeven	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Cornyn	Johnson	Rounds
Cotton	Kennedy	Rubio
Cramer	Lankford	Schmitt
Crapo	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lummis	
Sullivan	Tuberville	Wicker
Thune	Vance	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Kelly	Scott (SC)

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 37, Rita F. Lin, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Christopher Murphy, Mazie K. Hirono, Tammy Baldwin, Margaret Wood Hassan, John W. Hickenlooper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Catherine Cortez Masto, Brian Schatz, Gary C. Peters, Alex Padilla, Michael F. Bennet.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Rita F. Lin, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 231 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Luján	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warnock
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Welch
Fetterman	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wyden
Graham	Peters	
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Kelly	Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The yeas are 52, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:16 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LUJÁN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rita F. Lin, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

VOTE ON LIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lin nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 232 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murphy
Bennet	Graham	Murray
Blumenthal	Hassan	Ossoff
Booker	Heinrich	Padilla
Brown	Hickenlooper	Peters
Cantwell	Hirono	Reed
Cardin	Kaine	Rosen
Carper	King	Sanders
Casey	Klobuchar	Schatz
Collins	Luján	Schumer
Coons	Manchin	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Sinema
Duckworth	Menendez	Smith
Durbin	Merkley	Stabenow
Fetterman	Murkowski	Tester
Van Hollen	Warren	Wyden
Warner	Welch	
Warnock	Whitehouse	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Vance
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein	Kelly	Scott (SC)

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2024—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and the consideration of H.R. 4366, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4366) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Murray-Collins) amendment No. 1092, in the nature of a substitute.

Murray amendment No. 1205 (to amendment No. 1092), to change the effective date.

Murray motion to suspend rule XVI for the consideration of Schumer (for Murray-Collins) amendment No. 1092 (listed above) to the bill.

Schumer motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 1230, to change the effective date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 336

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the Senate still mandates a COVID booster vaccine for pages. The Senate COVID vaccine mandate for pages continues despite the fact that the Senate voted 83 to 11 to repeal the military COVID vaccine mandate. So why in the world would we continue a mandate on pages that we have repealed for our soldiers? Is there any science to support continuing this mandate? The answer is an emphatic no.

The science has been clear since the early spring of 2020. Healthy children are not seriously affected by COVID. In fact, several large studies show that healthy children are rarely hospitalized and that deaths from COVID in healthy children are virtually nonexistent.

Dr. Martin Makary of Johns Hopkins describes a large, nationwide study in Israel that found that the risk of COVID death in people under 30 with two vaccines was essentially zero. A nationwide study from Germany showed zero COVID deaths among children over 5 who had no comorbidities. Even the head of the WHO, Soumya Swaminathan, concluded that there is no evidence right now that suggests healthy children and adolescents need boosters. Yet here we are, with Democrats desperately clinging to COVID vaccine mandates for young people who have essentially zero risk of dying from COVID.

Common sense should prevail, and the Senate should repeal this mandate, just as we did for our young soldiers. We shouldn't allow politics to infect and cloud commonsense judgment.

The vaccine committees that make recommendations for vaccines actually don't recommend COVID boosters for young, healthy individuals. The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee voted to limit COVID vaccines to adults over 65. They wanted, because of the risk profile of the COVID vaccine, to limit it to people who were at risk for dying from COVID. A CDC vaccine panel also voted against recommending boosters for young, healthy individuals. But these committees that have lifelong scientists on them who voted not to advise the booster vaccine for adolescents were overruled by a political appointee, Biden appointee Rochelle Walensky.

Dr. Paul Offit, who is the director of the Vaccine Education Center and professor of pediatrics and infectious disease at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, wrote that ''a healthy young person with [two COVID vaccines] is extremely unlikely to be hospitalized with covid, so the case for risking any side effects—such as myocarditis—diminishes substantially.'' Dr. Offit, a lifelong proponent of vaccines, even advised his own son not to get the COVID booster.

The argument against mandating COVID boosters on young, healthy people is not just that they are unnecessary but that the COVID boosters may actually harm young individuals. Reports of heart inflammation or myocarditis after COVID vaccines have been consistent and worldwide.

A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association Cardiology examined 23 million people across Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden and found that the risk of myocarditis increased with COVID vaccination, particularly after the second dose. This is exactly why several European countries, including Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, restrict the use of COVID vaccines among young, healthy people. Some countries, such as South Africa and England, recommend only one COVID vaccine to avoid the risk of myocarditis.

A study in the Journal of Medical Ethics similarly found about 1.5 cases of myocarditis per 10,000 COVID vaccines but with 80 percent of the kids who suffer from a heart inflammation still having symptoms 3 months later.

Drs. Prasad and Knudsen looked at 29 studies across 3 continents and also found an increase in myocarditis after COVID vaccines. The studies reviewed by Prasad and Knudsen showed a little more than 2 cases of myocarditis per 15,000 vaccines.

Even the CDC admits that myocarditis occurs about once per 15,000 vaccines.

Dr. Tracey Beth Hoeg looked at the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System and found 1.62 adverse cardiac events per 10,000 vaccines. Now, that doesn't sound like a high number, but we are talking about a perfectly healthy kid. How would you feel if your perfectly healthy young football player or band member is given the vaccine and comes home with a heart inflammation? It is actually diagnosed with rising heart enzymes the same way that a heart attack is diagnosed. Hoeg found that the risk of myocarditis was five times greater than the risk of hospitalization from COVID.

So you are asking yourself, well, could my kid go to the hospital or could he get a heart inflammation? Both are rare, but the chance of your kid getting a heart inflammation from the vaccine is five times greater than your kid being hospitalized from COVID.

The Vaccine Safety Datalink similarly found a little over 2 cases of myocarditis per 15,000 vaccines.

This is across the scientific literature, across all the continents, across the world, and is a consistent finding that even our government admits to. But the Democrats want submission. They don't want you to have the choice to keep your kid safe and make a decision whether or not your kid, who may well have already had COVID, needs yet another vaccine.

Why are we forcing these kids to do something that I would say is against medical advice to be a page in our program here? The Senate continues to look away from all the evidence of myocarditis. In each of these studies, the risk of myocarditis increases with each vaccine. About 90 percent of the myocarditis or heart inflammation occurs after the second vaccine. Yet, inexplicably, the Senate pages are being mandated to take three vaccines. There are all kinds of compromises. You could say one; you could say two; but three—you are increasing the risk with each successive vaccine. Not only are three COVID vaccines unwarranted for young, healthy individuals, this mandate actually risks their health.

It is the height of malpractice to subject young, healthy kids to three COVID vaccines. In fact, nowhere in the examination or discussion of whether they should have the vaccine is there any discussion of whether they have had COVID.

So what is a vaccine? It is meant to simulate having had the infection. Shouldn't they tell us the data on children or adults? If you have had the infection, what is your chance of getting it again? What is your chance of going to the hospital? What is your chance of dying from COVID if you have already had it? They won't tell us for adolescents because the answer is zero.

Originally, the logic of advocates for the COVID vaccine mandates argue that the vaccines were not necessarily for the children but to protect their parents and grandparents. This argument now holds no water, as even the zealous advocates of mandates, such as Biden's CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, admit that COVID vaccines do not anymore prevent transmission. So the side of the people promoting these mandates admits they don't stop transmission. Now, they may well still reduce hospitalization and death if you are in the target category—the elderly or those with health disease—but for young, healthy kids, there is no effect other than to increase their risk of a heart inflammation.

A Danish study confirms that by December 2021, the COVID vaccine's effectiveness was less than 10 percent. The virus had mutated on, and the vaccine had not been changed.

A study from January 2022 of over 1.2 million children in New York shows that the vaccine effectiveness was 10 percent. It wasn't stopping transmission, it wasn't stopping them from getting the disease, and it wasn't protecting their health.

No serious scientist now argues that COVID vaccines stop transmission—no one. Yet here we are, with Democrats saying: You are not smart enough to make your own decisions. We will make these medical choices for you.

When we look at the effectiveness of the COVID booster, we ask, what is the science toward whether or not a booster is effective? Isn't this booster now formulated against the newer variants? Yes, the booster is directed against newer variants, but about every 3 months or so, the virus changes enough that the latest vaccine is no longer effective.

In fact, the CDC has largely given up testing the boosters and the new vaccines for effectiveness. Instead, in pushing for all children to get COVID booster vaccines, the CDC doesn't argue that the booster stops transmission; it doesn't argue that it prevents hospitalization or death. So what argument does the CDC have for continuing to promote boosters on our children? The CDC readily admits the vaccines don't stop transmission in any group.

As to hospitalization and death, the CDC can't show any evidence that the booster lessens hospitalization or death among young people. Why? Because the rate is already virtually zero. It is hard to prove that the booster is helping anything when no healthy kids are dying from COVID.

The CDC can't prove that the booster helps because it is impossible to improve upon the already low incidence of severe disease among young people. In fact, when the CDC approved the COVID booster for children, they didn't even argue that it was effective or that it prevented anything; what they argued is that the kids will make antibodies if you give them a vaccine, which means absolutely nothing.

I have challenged Anthony Fauci on this, on the lack of effectiveness. An antibody response simply means that the vaccine generates an immune response but tells you nothing about disease prevention. It tells you nothing about preventing hospitalization. It tells you nothing about infectiousness. It tells you nothing about death rate. In fact, you could give every kid in the country 100 different COVID boosters, and they will make antibodies each time. That doesn't mean they need 100 boosters.

What they have done is they have given up on trying to prove that the booster has any effect on their health, and they just want you to shut your eyes, be quiet, and do as you are told. This is the Democrat policy. This is the Democrat medical policy for you: Shut up and do as you are told. Take the injection. We don't care if your kid might get sick. We don't care if you might have a choice. We don't care if you have any say in your kid's medical care.

In a free society, no one should be forced to undergo a medical procedure against their will. In a free society, no one should be forced to receive an injection into their body that they do not wish to have.

The Democratic Party's support for medical choice seems selective and inconsistent. What ever happened to my body, my choice?

Vaccine mandates for children, who are at virtually no risk for COVID death, create vaccine hesitancy among the public. The public is well aware that healthy children do not die from COVID, and they rightly have resisted COVID vaccines on their children. But the vast overreach of vaccine mandates actually creates among the public a tendency to doubt and disbelieve the government's overall vaccine message. Because of the dishonest, over-the-top mandates on children, the public wonders if the government messengers are downplaying other risks.

It is, however, true that the vast majority of people at risk for serious COVID have indeed already been vaccinated. Over 97 percent of people over 65 watched the news, learned of their friends, watched their neighbors, found out who is dying, and they took the vaccine voluntarily.

If vaccine advocates want the public to continue to listen to public health pronouncements, then they need to end the nonsensical vaccine mandates on our kids. A good start would be ending the ill-advised COVID booster mandate for our Senate pages.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 336; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I heard a very similar speech last week when Senator PAUL came to the floor to offer this exact same resolution, and I came to the floor to offer the exact same objection. I guess we are going to be here next week and the week after having this same back-and-forth on the Senate floor.

I don't know that this is the most important problem facing the country today, the question of whether a small number of Senate pages has a vaccine or not. I think Senator PAUL's obsession with the page vaccine policy is a little weird and not squared with the actual priorities of the American public. But I will continue to come down here and object because it is important to know that there is no legal mandate that pages be vaccinated. It is a policy, not a mandate. Senator PAUL is proposing a mandate—a mandate—through this resolution that under no circumstances can pages be required to have a vaccination as a condition of their employment here.

I find Senator PAUL's recitation of his body of evidence interesting. I don't dispute the fact that the vaccine today is much more efficacious on preventing serious illness and is not, like prior vaccines, effective at preventing transmission. But here are two things to say about that. Senator PAUL says over and over again that if you are a healthy kid, you have nothing to worry about, that no healthy kids are dying. OK, that is broadly true. It is true that healthy children have very little risk of dying of COVID. But the assumption, then, is that every single page that is part of this program has no preexisting conditions, that every single page comes here with a clean bill of health. That is not true.

There are pages here—just like our employees—who have preexisting conditions, and we have a responsibility for the young people who work for us. We have a long history in this country of requiring vaccinations for young people. Senator PAUL objects to that policy, but it is long accepted that young people, during their school-age years, should have a set of vaccinations to keep them healthy. And if you have a preexisting condition, even as a child, you have a potential of dying from COVID.

Guess what. COVID is the eighth leading cause of death for young people today. That is not insignificant. And so it is perfectly consistent with the general policy we have in this country of requiring students to get vaccines to require the same of the page population—who, by the way, are students.

The second thing to say about this resolution is this: Even if Senator PAUL is correct—and I broadly would submit that he is—that this vaccine is really about preventing serious illness, not about preventing transmission, this resolution is permanent. This says that under no circumstances should a Senate page be required to have a vaccination.

But what if a follow-on vaccine is more effective at preventing transmission? What if the next COVID variant is a more significant threat to children?

This is a mandate. This says: No matter what the scientific recommendations are, under no circumstances—under no circumstances, no matter what the scientific recommendation is—can you mandate, can you require that a Senate page, as a condition of working in the Senate, have a vaccination.

That is bad policy. I would rather have this question be up to the Attending Physician, to the adults who run the Page Program, than have mandates from the U.S. Senate about the healthcare policy of our pages.

I think this is really bad policy, but I also think it is super dangerous because, really, the question of whether a handful of pages in the Senate have a vaccine is not worthy of a half an hour of back and forth between two U.S. Senators. What this ends up being is yet another wedge to try to drive apart the American public from a belief in science and vaccines.

This is a longstanding effort by Senator PAUL and others to question the efficacy of vaccines. It feeds into a broader narrative about the efficacy of science writ large, and that has devastating consequences for this country because, as people lose faith in medical recommendations, as fewer people get vaccines because they come under the belief that the vaccine will do more harm than good, people die.

And so, by itself, this is bad policy, because this is part of a broad consensus in this country that students should get vaccinated for significant conditions, and this policy stands no matter what the future recommendations of medical professionals are.

But I object to it just as strongly because of how it fits into this broader, incredibly dangerous narrative to try to undermine people's faith in science and vaccines. And for that reason, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the accusation has been made that my purpose is somehow to undermine vaccines and have people question vaccines. But, obviously, the arguments were not listened to because in no part of my arguments or any of my public statements have I ever said anything in general that vaccines are bad. In fact, as a physician, I am most fascinated by the development of vaccines. The stories of the development of the smallpox vaccine and the polio vaccine were all tremendous scientific successes, and there continue to be. My argument is simply for medical freedom.

Now, there has been a disingenuous argument made by the other side. They say that I am proposing a mandate, that this will be a legal mandate and that there is no mandate.

If you want to be a page, there is a mandate. Now, they say you can just choose not to be a page, but this affects the rest of our society.

So if your kid gets into Yale or Princeton or Harvard or the University of Chicago, many of those schools follow the lead of the Senate, follow the lead of the Senate doctors, and say your kid has to have three vaccines. But if you look at the evidence carefully that I have laid out, you will find that the scientific studies across all continents, across the world, across the United States—studies of millions of people—show that the vaccines have some downside and danger, particularly for children.

Not once have I said that the elderly shouldn't be vaccinated. In fact, for my 92-year-old and 86-year-old in-laws, we suggested and tried to get them the vaccine as soon as we could. My wife was vaccinated. Now, I chose not to be vaccinated because I had the disease in the first couple weeks of COVID and had immunity.

And the studies turned out—and these are studies of over a million people in California and New York. The studies turned out to show that actually having had the disease does give you immunity, and it is actually twice as potent as the vaccine.

When I say that, the left gets apoplectic, and they say: Oh, my goodness, you are saying people should just get sick to get immunity.

I am not saying that at all. But I am saying that, if you have gotten sick, you have immunity. And we should be honest with people because some people have had two vaccines and they want to know: Do I need a third one?

Well, let's release the data on people who have had two vaccines plus COVID, and tell us how many people are subsequently getting it again, going to the hospital, or dying. Wouldn't you want to know that before you take your third, fourth, fifth, six, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth vaccine? Release the data. But, in a free country, we make these decisions.

The other side argued that, well, what if one of the pages has health conditions. No part of our resolution says anything about them not getting a vaccine. Anybody in this country can freely get a vaccine. If their parents and they decide to get a vaccine, by all means, do it. Nothing in my resolution would prevent pages or anyone else from getting a vaccine. What I am arguing for is freedom.

As far as the idea that this will be permanent and unwavering and won't be able to recognize what new diseases come upon us, every new disease requires reevaluation—every new disease. It doesn't mean the concept of freedom changes. What would happen is everyone will still evaluate this.

The evaluation of this vaccine when it first came out at the end of 2020, early 2021, was different than it is now, frankly. It is also different if you have had it. People should just be honest with you.

I am not saying don't take a booster or that you can't take a booster. Go take all you want. I am saying the government's job should be to give you information, and I am saying the opposite of what he actually made a point of.

Vaccine hesitancy or people undermining the belief that vaccines work comes from people who tell you things that are dishonest and untrue. There is no science—and I am adamant about what I am saying here. There is no science that the booster for your children reduces the transmission of the disease. There is no reduction in your child's ability to get COVID if they take a COVID booster—zero. The other side accepts this. Rochelle Walensky, Biden's nominee, accepts this—no change in transmission with the vaccine.

How about hospitalization and death? There is still some data that people at risk for this can have reduced hospitalization, not transmission. They can still catch it, but maybe reduced hospitalization and death.

Most of this data came in the previous iterations, when we had the wild variety in 2020. Then we got Delta. Then we got Omicron. But we have now advanced two or three iterations out. And the one thing we are lucky about that the government should be honest with you is that with each successive iteration, with each successive mutation and variant, the good news is this: It has become less deadly. It has become less deadly because the virus is now less deadly but also because the community has more immunity. So immunity has developed; the virus has evolved to become less deadly, and we are in a much better situation.

But government medicine and government health policy shouldn't be about telling Americans what to do. It should be about giving information. The government should never be in the business of mandating, whether it is masks or vaccines or any of this other stuff. You wear it. You do it if you want—your body, your choice.

But there is a lot of conflicting data here, and you really need to be informed to make an informed choice. There is some data the government is still preventing from being released so you can't tell.

With regard to the masks, we now know that there was a meta-analysis of 78 different randomized controlled studies called the Cochrane analysis, and they found that masks did not prevent the transmission in public. In fact, what they found was there was no evidence that more significant mandates or more significant use changed the transmission at all.

This had been the accepted conclusion by all of the medical world before 2020. We had never advised masks in public for influenza because with influenza, the size of the virus—the same as the size of COVID—is much smaller than the pores of the mask. We found people really cannot wear the masks without touching them. We found that air goes around the mask. But, ultimately, we looked at public, large populations, and we found that they just didn't prevent the disease.

Does that mean you can't wear a mask? No. Wear a mask if you think it makes you more healthy. In the hospital, they said: Well, doctors wear them.

Of course we do. If you go into a COVID patient's room—and I volunteered in the hospital after I got COVID. I got it very early, and I felt comfortable going in there because I had already had the disease. But wearing a mask made sense to go into the room of someone with COVID. We wore the N95 mask because it actually, if worn properly, will protect from the particles. We also washed our hands, wore gloves, and wore gowns. And as we came out, we took off the gloves, the gowns, and the masks and threw them away immediately. And we did it again into the next patient's room.

Done properly, there can be some—it still doesn't work completely because, still, a lot of doctors and nurses got COVID, but it is probably worth a try.

In the public setting, it just doesn't work, frankly. Nobody can do that. A lot of people don't know this, but the N95 mask—in which, actually, the pores are small enough—works with something called an electrostatic charge. And after you breathe into it for about 4 hours, the moisture from your exhaled breath actually changes the electrostatic charge, and it is not as effective in preventing the ingress or egress of the COVID virus.

But, really, what we are arguing here—there can be two sides to every argument. What we are arguing about, what we are discussing is who should make the choice. The Democratic majority believes that they should make the choices for your healthcare and that kids belong to them.

This is the same argument we had in education in Virginia, when you had the parents in Northern Virginia saying, ''We want to be involved in our children's education,'' and you had the Democratic nominee for Governor in Virginia come out in a debate and say that kids don't belong to their parents; the school will make these decisions; it is none of your business; stay out of it.

That is what they are telling the pages and their parents—that it is none of their business, their healthcare.

And it could be different for any of them. If a page had a kidney transplant or has leukemia and their parents want them to have the vaccine, it is probably a reasonable thing to do. But if they are young and healthy and have no medical problems, it turns out, if you look objectively at the data, that they have five times greater risk of getting a heart inflammation than they do of being hospitalized for COVID. These are the statistics. People should just be aware of that.

And good, honest people could still disagree on this. But what happens in a free country is you make your decision. You make your decision of which doctor you take them to. If you don't appreciate the opinion of that doctor and you don't trust that doctor, you go to another. And sometimes, it is complicated. Sometimes, mothers and fathers don't agree.

But who wants to give a political party the power to make these decisions for your children? How would you feel if your young, healthy football player or band member or choir member got the COVID vaccine and then has a heart problem that permanently impairs them for the rest of their life, when they had zero chance of dying from COVID and virtually no chance of being hospitalized?

Wouldn't you want your government to release the data on what it means if your kid has already had COVID? Let's say your kid has already had one or two vaccines and they have already had COVID. What does that mean? Don't you think having COVID might replace the need for more vaccines?

Your immunity is also broader. The vaccine gives immunity to one protein on the surface, the S protein on the surface of the cell. When you actually get infected, your body destroys the cells that have the virus in, and, as the virus empties out its inner contents, nucleic capsids and nuclear proteins, you actually get a broader immunity.

Now, the left misinterprets this. The left says: You want everybody to get sick, and people are going to die.

I don't want anybody to get sick. All I am telling you is people should be given the information. Most of us have had COVID. What does it mean? What does it mean if you have had two vaccines and COVID? What does that mean toward your future? What does it mean toward your need for more vaccines?

But, ultimately, what we are talking about here is freedom. What we are talking about is who should make the medical choices: the government, the Democratic Party, or whether or not we should leave this to parents and their kids. And I, for one, say that we ought to have medical freedom. In a free country, every individual should be free to make those decisions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

UNITED AUTO WORKERS STRIKE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, right after workers for Stellantis—the old name of Stellantis was Chrysler, DaimlerChrysler. Their plant is in Toledo. They make the Jeep Cherokee. It

is made by union workers in Toledo, OH, my State. My wife and I each drive Jeep Cherokees. One of those cars once saved my life when a young high school kid, at 40 miles an hour in the middle of the day, ran a stop sign and hit the side of the car where I was sitting. There were essentially no injuries because these are well-made American cars by union labor.

I was over to the picket line Friday morning. I talked with a lot of workers. I know many of them. There are 6,000 at this plant. And 1,000—actually, 1,100 of these workers are at this Chrysler plant, this Stellantis plant in Toledo. Those 1,100 workers at the Jeep plant are on what is called a tiered wage system where they make fewer than $19-and-something an hour. They have been at this Jeep plant, some of them for 1 year, some of them 3 years, some of them 5 or 6 years, yet they make less than $40,000 a year as union workers.

The reason for that is some years ago, when Chrysler—then Chrysler—and GM were in real serious economic trouble, the union—the government helped, but the union, in order to save these plants, in order to save, essentially, the American automobile industry—they did major givebacks of their wages and their benefits.

They set up—management insisted and the workers went along because they wanted to save these companies—they took major pay cuts and set up a tiered wage system. So new workers, hundreds and hundreds—over 1,000 from this plant of 6,000 union workers—were making substandard wages.

That is troubling enough that those workers, years later, are still making those substandard wages. In some cases, you can't support a family on these wages. Yet that is when Chrysler and GM were in such economic trouble.

Since then, we know how well Chrysler—Stellantis now—and GM are doing. We know how well they are doing by a number of measurements. No. 1, Chrysler—sorry, Stellantis; I always think of them as Chrysler and Jeep in my State. Stellantis made $12 billion just in this calendar alone. This company made $12 billion. When they were in trouble, the workers, by giving up a lot and making sacrifices, saved them. Now these companies are so profitable—$12 billion just this year alone, Stellantis—they have essentially given nothing back to the workers, and they are unwilling to provide the workers a decent benefit—benefits, wages, all of those things.

At the same time, I met an entry-level worker there. She just started. The CEO of Stellantis makes 850 times what this worker makes—850 times what this worker makes. The CEO of Stellantis makes 365 times what the average worker in Chrysler—the average worker in Stellantis makes in that plant and other plants around the country.

The fact is, these workers—clearly, we come down on the side of these workers. The industry has done very well because of America's economic system. The industry has done very well because they have had the opportunity to do well in this country because the workers sacrifice so much. That is why I will go back to the picket line.

There may be picket lines and shutdowns and strikes in other parts of the auto industry. The public clearly sides with these workers. The public understands that these CEOs are making between $22- and $29 million a year. The three CEOs have gotten 30-percent, 40-percent increases since the industry did so well.

Again, a decade ago, workers were willing to give up a lot to keep these companies going. Now, they are immensely profitable—$12 billion in profits this year alone with the CEO making $22–23 million. The auto industry is simply not willing to come to the table and negotiate in good faith so these workers can share in the prosperity they created.

We know it not only hurts those workers when they are making $16 an hour; it hurts the community. It hurts Toledo, Lucas County, Wood County—those communities that don't have the taxes they would if these workers were making decent wages. And they don't have the economic prosperity they would if workers were making decent wages and buying—spending a little more at the grocery store, on movies, on clothes, and on all the things that help create a prosperous economy.

No question, I will continue to stand with workers. I think most of the Senate stands with workers. I know most of the American people stand with these workers.

I implore GM and Stellantis and Ford to come to the table and make a good faith, decent offer and get these workers back to work. They don't want to strike. Their backs are to the wall. They had to strike.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Nebraska.

BIDENOMICS

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, when it comes to the economy, we hear a lot of statistics. Since President Biden took office and put his Bidenomics plan into action, prices have risen by 17.37 percent. Rent is up by 17 percent, grocery prices by 25 percent, and energy costs by 43 percent. Gas prices have risen by an unbelievable 65 percent.

As alarming as those percentages are, I am most concerned about the individuals who are hurting because of these increases. That is why I was struck by new numbers I saw last week from the Census Bureau. Bidenomics is making life harder for children in Nebraska.

The number of children living in poverty in my home State increased by almost 5,000 from 2021 to 2022—5,000 more kids living in poverty. That is thousands more families who are living below the poverty line, thousands of families who are struggling to pay bills, to buy food, to afford a place to sleep. Some of these 5,000 children are from families who cannot afford any of these things. They are going hungry. They are couch surfing—or worse. That is Bidenomics in Nebraska.

Bidenomics is making life harder for the more rural parts of Nebraska. Soaring prices caused by inflation are especially affecting those areas in my State. They are especially affecting kids in more rural areas. According to an analysis by an Omaha nonprofit, from 2021 to 2022, there was a 25-percent increase in the number of kids below the poverty line who are located in nonmetro areas of Nebraska. A quarter more kids living outside urban areas come from families that are barely getting by.

Some of these children live in sparsely populated areas where it can really take hours to get to the grocery store, the pharmacy, or to a hospital. When gas is 65 percent more expensive and groceries will break the bank, families are going to struggle with those long trips. They are in dire need of resources. But inflation is ripping away their ability to access those resources. That is Bidenomics in Nebraska.

Bidenomics is making life harder for anyone who pays rent, mortgage, or utilities in Nebraska. The most basic of necessities—affording a place to live—is now a huge financial strain. Close to half of the renters in Nebraska are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Almost 20,000 more renting households are considered ''financially burdened.'' That is 20,000 more in just 1 year. That is Bidenomics in Nebraska.

Bidenomics is making life harder for businesses and their employees. As rent encroaches on a larger percentage of people's incomes, the incomes themselves are getting smaller. Nebraska's median income declined by 3.6 percent in 2022. Businesses can't pay their employees as much when all of their money is being spent on rising utility and rent prices. Rising inflation means higher costs, lower salaries, and a harder time earning a living. That is Bidenomics in Nebraska.

Mr. President, I am thankful that my home State of Nebraska has many nonprofits that are ready to help those who are struggling from inflation. These organizations make a real difference in people's lives, and they are part of a rich tradition of charity in my State. Charities can do good work to minimize damage, but they cannot do surgery on an injured economy. The only way to stitch our economy back up is to get rid of this administration's suffocating regulations once and for all. The Biden administration must hear. It is time for a new approach to the economy.

So how do we heal the economy? We roll back the regulations that are still poisoning it, including those from the ironically named Inflation Reduction Act. We unleash American energy, which will lower the gas prices that

have climbed by 65 percent. We can heal our economy by turning the page on Bidenomics and adopting a new economic strategy, one focused on getting rid of wasteful policies and bringing down costs for everyday Americans.

Nebraskans are experiencing Bidenomics. The American people are experiencing Bidenomics. Bidenomics is an economic plan that inflates prices, hurts real families, real children, real businesses, and real employees. The American people don't want to experience Bidenomics anymore.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I remember when title 42 went away—the COVID public health order that the Border Patrol used to expel people from the border region in the interest of public health. There were many people who expected a surge of migration recognizing what a moneymaking opportunity that human smuggling and drug smuggling is for the cartels that control much of the U.S.-Mexican border.

And for a while it looked like maybe—just maybe—that surge would not happen. But despite the administration's best efforts to downplay or distract from the situation at the southern border, we now see the Biden border crisis in full flower.

Preliminary data secured by the Washington Post shows that last month—last month—a record number of migrant families illegally crossed the southern border.

In August, the Border Patrol arrested more than 91,000 migrants—in August—people who entered the United States as part of a family unit, the highest number we have seen in a single month. But it is not just the families; apprehension numbers have increased dramatically over the past couple of months in all categories.

We have gone from just under 100,000 detentions in June to 132,000 in July, to more than 177,000 in August. I would point out that much of the migration we have seen into Texas has been seasonal because it has been very hot, and it is dangerous for migrants to make the dangerous trip from their home to our border. But that hasn't happened this year. It got worse and worse the hotter the summer months got.

So when you include migrants processed through the ports of entry, the Washington Post is estimating roughly 230,000 migrant encounters in August—230,000.

This would make it the busiest month for border crossings this calendar year. As I said, since title 42 ended in May, the Biden administration has tried to spike the ball and declare victory. They pointed to a temporary drop in border crossings and said this is the proof that their situation was under their control, but that is obviously not the case.

We have just experienced the busiest month in family crossings on record and likely the busiest month for overall crossings this calendar year. As the New York Times reported, in August alone, nearly 82,000 migrants passed through the Darien Gap, the sole land route to the United States from South America, describing it as ''by far the largest single-month total on record.''

And the border crisis isn't getting any better. If anything, it is getting worse, and communities in Texas and those across the Nation are beginning to feel the strain. El Paso, for example, right across the border from Juarez, in West Texas, is in the midst of a surge in border crossings. It is seeing an average of 1,200 encounters per day.

The leader of Rescue Mission El Paso, which provides migrants with food, clothing, and shelter, said:

We've lost track of what capacity means. We are beyond full.

Further down the Texas-Mexico border is Eagle Pass, which experienced a mass crossing earlier this week. Between midnight on Sunday and Monday morning, more than 2,200 migrants crossed illegally. That is 2,200 in 1 night. The migration surge is happening along the entire U.S.-Mexico border, but two areas in particular are under tremendous strain. One is the Tucson Sector, which covers most of the Arizona-Mexico border. Border crossings in this sector have been on the rise, with agents apprehending as many as 2,000 migrants a day. This includes migrants from all over the world, even those from Senegal.

It reminds me of, when I was in Yuma, AZ, with four Democratic Senators and four Republican Senators, we were welcomed by the Acting Border Patrol Chief, who said: Welcome to the Yuma Sector. Last year, we encountered people from 174 countries, speaking more than 200 languages.

Senator KELLY, the Senator from Arizona, was there and noted that Mexicali is a city in Northern Mexico with an airport. And so it was explained to us that what likely was happening is that human smugglers were facilitating the travel of migrants to Mexicali, where they could simply Uber over to the Border Patrol and claim asylum, and the Biden administration would make sure they were successfully deposited in the United States of America, perhaps to await an asylum hearing that may never occur.

Well, given the spike in border crossings, the Border Patrol—it is no surprise—is struggling. The Agency doesn't have the facilities, the resources, or the personnel to manage an influx this large, and, actually, that is part of the plan.

If you are a transnational criminal organization that profits from smuggling migrants and drugs across the border, what a tremendous idea: Let's flood the zone with migrants, and then when the Border Patrol is distracted or diverted elsewhere, then here come the drugs. And we saw last year alone 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses, 71,000 from synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

We know where it is coming from. The precursors come from China. It goes to Mexico. It is manufactured there, largely, to look like traditional pharmaceuticals, but they are contaminated with fentanyl. I was in Houston just last week, meeting with some parents who lost their children to fentanyl poisoning. I wear on my wrist—I typically don't wear things like this, but I have for the last 9 months. A father in Carrollton-Farmers Branch asked me to wear this band around my wrist in memory of his daughter who lost her life to fentanyl poisoning. It says, among other things, ''One pill can kill.''

Now, the children who die of fentanyl poisoning, they don't know they are taking fentanyl. They think it is maybe something more innocuous, and that is part of the insidiousness of what the cartels are doing. They are using industrial-sized pill presses to make it look like things that certainly wouldn't kill you. Maybe it is not optimal, things like Xanax or Percocet or some other pharmaceutical drug, but, in fact, it is counterfeit and contaminated with fentanyl. And as I said, 71,000 Americans died last year alone as a result of synthetic opioid poisoning.

So the Border Patrol can't keep up with the flooding of the zone, and here come the drugs, only to be distributed across the country in each of our communities by various criminal gangs. Well, because the Border Patrol can't keep up with the influx of people, they simply are now releasing them. That is right. Instead of returning them across the border, they are releasing them onto U.S. streets every day.

And it is unclear, really, who these individuals are or how they are being released. How many of these migrants are asylum seekers who have completed a credible fear screening? How many are simply being paroled into the country with flimsy instructions and told to appear at an ICE office, Immigrations and Customs office, in the interior at their destination.

How many are given a date to appear before an immigration judge, and how far away is that court date? I read recently in New York, an immigration court date could be as far as 10 years off. We don't have answers to these questions because the Biden administration has not been candid about exactly what is happening.

They basically have hoped nobody is noticing what is going on, but we are noticing. And, oh, by the way, people like the Governor in Massachusetts, the mayors of New York City, of Chicago, and Washington, DC, they are noticing because these migrants, once they pass the border region, they go somewhere, and what we are seeing is the impact on cities very far away from the southern border.

Well, the Biden administration keeps sweeping the problem under the rug and expecting us not to ask questions and conduct appropriate oversight. Last week alone, agents released 100 to

200 migrants a day near Nogales, AZ. The Tucson Sector is not alone. San Diego is also seeing a spike in border crossings. Last week, Customs and Border Protection closed one of two pedestrian crossings at the San Ysidro Port of Entry so personnel could help with the migration surge.

Again, the Border Patrol doesn't have the space or the personnel to accommodate the flood of humanity coming across. Videos show hundreds of migrants are being released into the streets and sidewalks of San Diego, including migrants from as far away as Pakistan and China.

Now, one of the things that amazes me, when President Biden appointed Vice President Kamala Harris as the border czar, she claimed that all of the flow of illegal immigration was as a result of local circumstances in Mexico or South America and as if we couldn't fix our border problems without basically nation building in one of those states. But either she does not understand or is unwilling to acknowledge that this is a global phenomenon. And who can blame some of these people coming across? If you think, Well, for a few thousand bucks, maybe I can make my way into the United States and stay there—well, maybe it is a good bet.

But it is a disaster when our immigration system is basically handed over to transnational criminal organizations that care nothing about the people and that care nothing about the drugs that are coming across; all they care about is the money. And they are getting richer by the day as a result of Biden border policies.

Well, if there was any question about whether the Biden administration understands what is going on, recently, a migrant asked an agent if he could travel to Chicago, and the agent replied:

> You can do whatever you want. You're free.

That is the Biden administration's border enforcement policies.

> You can do whatever you want. You're free.

If there was any confusion about the Biden administration's catch-and-release policies, well, that statement cleared it up.

> You can do whatever you want. You're free.

This interaction happened to be captured on video, and it has made the rounds on social media and national news. And it has been viewed by people around the world. And, you know, when other people see that, do you think they are discouraged or deterred from coming to the United States through this illegal route? No. They are encouraged. It is like a magnet, which is why we are seeing the huge numbers that we continue to see.

Again, it makes me think the Biden administration simply does not understand the dynamics at the border or, which is more likely the case, they simply don't care. You have to imagine there are people out there who are debating whether or not to make this dangerous journey.

If they had any doubts about whether or not their journey would be successful, well, this video statement pretty much cleared that up. The secret is out.

You know, it is ironic when I hear Secretary Mayorkas of the Department of Homeland Security or the President or the Vice President say: ''Don't come. Don't come,'' when almost every other message that people around the world are receiving is ''Come. You can make it. Just pay the money; take the dangerous journey; take the risk; pay these criminal organizations the cash they demand; and you can make it into the United States.''

And, boy, have they come. People around the world see that America's borders are open. They see videos of migrants from all over the world being released in the United States and told ''you're free.''

The Biden administration continues to create new incentives for migrants to make the dangerous journey to the border. President Biden has proven he is not only incapable of addressing this crisis, he is completely uninterested. He doesn't care. He apparently has no desire to enforce the law and secure the border. And the reason I conclude that is because if he did care, if he were willing to work with us to solve that problem, we are here ready to meet him halfway, but all we hear are crickets.

He would rather appease the open borders base in his political party than take the steps needed to protect the American people.

Border communities have endured the Biden border crisis for more than 2½ years now, and they are bracing for yet another migration surge.

Given the administration's complete and utter failure to address the crisis, it is time for Congress to step up. I am proud to cosponsor the Secure the Border Act, which was introduced by my friend and fellow Texan, Senator CRUZ. This legislation would give the Border Patrol the tools they need in order to secure the border and safeguard the American people. It includes more agents to enforce the law to stop anyone or anything that doesn't legally enter the United States.

It restricts the Biden administration's ability to release thousands of migrants into the United States under the weak guise of parole. This is not parole in the criminal law sense where somebody is released from jail. This is a mechanism under our immigration laws where people are simply released and told: You have 2 years in the United States, and come back and check with us later on about staying longer. There is no such thing as a temporary program. All of this becomes permanent.

But this legislation tightens asylum standards that prevent migrants with frivolous asylum claims from gaming the system. This legislation implements a range of reforms that address the humanitarian and security crisis at the border. It passed the House in May and has been cosponsored by more than half of the Republican conference in the Senate.

My hope was that this would serve as a starting point for the Senate to begin discussing ways to secure the border and protect the American people. It would also be nice—and I have had this conversation with the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which I serve, the Senator from Illinois, who so far has declined to consider a markup of any immigration bills or border security bills. In the Senate, that is the committee of jurisdiction on which I sit, and I happen to be the ranking member of the Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee.

Well, it is clear that President Biden's approach to the border is not sustainable. His administration has rolled out one incentive after another to encourage—not discourage, not deter, but to encourage—people from around the world to come to our borders and enter our country.

That is the reason we are experiencing a humanitarian and security crisis. The record migration levels of the last year have tested law enforcement, tested our cities and nonprofits in ways that I have never seen before—a record number of migrants, soaring demands for resources, dwindling budgets, overworked personnel—and we haven't even talked about the impact of this uncontrolled migration on our local hospitals and our education systems and the like. All of them have been operating under incredible strain for more than 2 years. So it is past time to adopt policies that impose consequences. That is what the Border Patrol said we need, is we need consequences to illegal immigration.

Look, I think that legal immigration—orderly, humane legal immigration—has been one of the greatest things that America has ever embraced. It has made us the country we are today, the most prosperous in the world, the most diverse. But surrendering our legal immigration system to drug cartels and human smuggling organizations is a recipe for disaster—what we are seeing right now.

Well, any time the Biden administration would like to engage on this topic, I am standing ready, willing, and able to do that, but so far, even when we have bipartisan legislation like the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act that Senator SINEMA and I and Congressman CUELLAR and Congressman TONY GONZALES introduced a couple of years ago, there has been zero interest by the Biden administration and no markups in the Judiciary Committee simply to consider that and come up with some consensus on how to deal with this disaster.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The Senator from Vermont.

FEMA

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, I want to thank my colleagues, and I want to thank the administration for the response to the devastating floods that we experienced in Vermont this August.

I am here to make a report and also to make a plea that we replenish the Disaster Relief Fund in the FEMA budget so that the work that needs to be done in Vermont to help our farms, our families, our communities recover will continue to be done.

Today, I had a telephone conversation that was set up by Senator SANDERS. Our Governor was on the phone, and my colleague Congresswoman BALINT was on the phone with the FEMA Administrator. And she has been doing a tremendous job. She has been extremely responsive. We are all grateful to her for that work. But what she did make very clear is that it is absolutely essential to the well-being of FEMA's capacity to continue to provide a response that this budget be supplemented and the FEMA supplemental be passed.

So I urge my colleagues—and, again, I want to thank them—from both sides of the aisle who have approached me and said: Peter, your folks have been hammered by the natural disaster, and we will be here to help you. But there is a long way from where we are with the precarious activities going on in the House.

First of all, we are pretty proud of the response. President Coolidge, who was our President in 1927 and was a Vermonter from Plymouth, VT, toured the flood damage when we had a catastrophic flood in 1927. And he nicknamed the State ''a brave little State.'' And that is who we are in Vermont. And his appellation of that term was his recognition of the indomitable spirit that our people in Vermont have to pick themselves up, to pull together, and to rebuild.

Nearly a century later, of course, this August we experienced another devastating flood. What we experienced in July and August was nothing short of catastrophic. Towns across the State were devastated, with homes and businesses and farms completely destroyed.

You can see here, this is our capital, Montpelier. And that was right after the rains that were parked over Montpelier and just would never leave. It is dry now, but these businesses along Main Street have not reopened. Some have; many haven't. To some extent, their decision is, will the FEMA aid be there so that they have a chance to open those doors and make up for the lost income and, hopefully, revive that downtown.

Damage estimates are still coming in; but, currently, it is totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars for our very, very small State.

The impact on Vermont's farmland is stunning. This is Paul Mazza's farm. That farm, with vegetables, row crops, that was under tremendous amounts of water. When the water receded—the crops, the berries, the pick-your-own crops are not only important to families and nutrition, but it was a revered activity by families in Vermont to come to Paul's farm and pick their berries with their kids. He is not going to be able to harvest any berries this year.

By the way, in terms of the damage that was done, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service estimates anywhere between 145,000 and 686,000 acres of agricultural land in the State was impacted by flooding.

The Conant's Riverside Farm, which I visited along with the Governor and Senator SANDERS, half their hay and corn was impacted by the flooding—silk from the flood-covered corn that was used to feed their cows. There is real question about how they are going to make it through the winter because what they do is grow the crop and store it to feed to their animals over the winter.

The Foote Brook Farm, which is owned by Joie and Tony Lehouillier in Johnson, VT, is one of the main services of food for that community in Johnson. The grocery store in that town was totally flooded out but will be reopening. Their farm was flooded, too. They had over $100,000 in losses. And what was really bad this time, they also lost a lot of their equipment.

I do thank the administration, President Biden, and FEMA. I acknowledge the tremendous work that Governor Scott and his team have been doing staying on top of this. And there has been a tremendous effort on the part of Senator SANDERS, who has been the leader of our delegation of three here in the U.S. Congress, but we have got to get that FEMA supplemental passed.

While $16 billion in FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund is critical, the Vermont delegation, as I mentioned, is pushing for more because, with what has happened, regrettably, to our colleagues in Hawaii and the hurricane in Florida has added to the challenge and of the need. We need to increase FEMA's cap for hazard mitigation. We need to make small business loans forgivable.

If you are a small business and you have just implemented a plan to expand and you borrowed money from the bank in order to do it, you can't afford to take out more loans. So it is really essential that we make it possible for folks to get grants—these businesses that are so critical to our communities—rather than saddle our small businesses with more debt.

We also need to expand the USDA's Emergency Grant Relief Program for our farmers.

(Mr. MARKEY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, even if the world has moved on for other parts of the country, Vermont still needs help.

One of the heartbreaking situations that you see, we visit when there is a farm, there is a family whose home has been destroyed, a business that can't open, and do all we can to make certain the relief gets there. But if it is your home that you can't get back into, if it is your business that you are not certain at all you can reopen, if it is your farm where the crops have been destroyed, there is a lot of suffering that continues. And it takes an immense amount of courage. What we have to do is make certain that folks who are willing to rebuild and come up from the floodwaters to do their work again, that we make certain we do our work here. That means getting the FEMA supplemental passed and enacted into law with the signature of President Biden.

Our farmers, like the seventh generation Conant family farm, they need the support of Congress to get through the flooding. Our businesses on Main Street that hope to reopen need the support of Congress and the FEMA resources. And, of course, our homeowners, including folks who have mobile homes that were washed away, they absolutely need the assistance in order to get back into a safe and secure home.

So my request to my colleagues is to do what all of us have done for each other when the people we represent have been on the receiving end of a catastrophic natural disaster, and that is to make certain that we come to the aid of our fellow citizens. And the way we can do that is by the passage of the FEMA supplemental request.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I will call this my ''let's say'' speech. Lawyers know what a hypothetical is. We will talk about some hypotheticals related to the scheme to capture the Court.

Let's say, Mr. President, that you are a creepy billionaire and it is your plan to capture and control the Supreme Court, to take it over just like 19th-century robber barons would have taken over and captured the railroad commission that set the rates for their own railroad.

Let's say you sent millions of dollars—secret dollars—to the Federalist Society for it to funnel money to its employee and your operative, Leonard Leo.

Let's say that Leonard Leo got his cred with you and your rightwing billionaire pals when he helped you kill the nomination to the Supreme Court of President George W. Bush's friend and White House Counsel Harriet

Miers— a political hit job from the far right against a Republican President's nominee, which produced none other than Sam Alito.

Let's say you also sent millions of dollars to Leonard Leo's Judicial Crisis Network, a fictitious-named front group for another front group operating out of the same hallway, on the same floor, in the same building as the Federalist Society.

Let's say you sent the Judicial Crisis Network secret millions of dollars—checks as big as $15 million, checks as big as $17 million—to run ads against Merrick Garland to help MITCH MCCONNELL block his confirmation by the Senate.

Let's say you also sent millions of dollars, secret dollars, identity-laundered through front groups, like 501(c)(4)s and Donors Trust, which exist for the purpose of scrubbing off your identity from your money, and through the 501(c)(4)s and through Donors Trust to Republican political groups, like super PACs controlled by MITCH MCCONNELL.

Let's say, with those secret millions funneled into those super PACs, you acquired loyalty and obedience from Republican political figures.

Let's say that worked. Let's say that for your millions of dollars to the Federalist Society, the Federalist Society allowed you to use its name on a list of Supreme Court nominees that you and your rightwing billionaire pals and Leonard Leo cooked up—a list that the Federalist Society never considered or approved, never an agenda item, never a vote, but a list from some back room of the Federalist Society, pulled together by Leo and the billionaires that Candidate Trump promised to follow.

Let's say that for that Trump promise to let you pick Supreme Court Justices, you agreed to hold your nose and not object to Trump's candidacy.

Let's say that Trump kept that promise and nominated your chosen ones to the Supreme Court, and let's say that when Trump kept that promise and nominated your chosen ones, you sent millions more to the Judicial Crisis Network and to MITCH MCCONNELL's political operation, not just to stop Merrick Garland but to push the confirmation of your chosen ones: Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.

Let's say that you funded dozens of front groups to bring cases and to file briefs at the Supreme Court at your orchestrated direction—10, 11, 12, and in one case, it is 50 at a time—like piano keys on the piano, and you sent that message through those front groups in those briefs to remind your chosen ones what it is exactly that you wanted them to do in those cases.

Let's say that the chosen ones produced an amazing, statistically stunning record of doing, in the opinions they produced, just what your front groups asked.

Let's say you and your fellow billionaires played your front groups like piano keys and your chosen Justices harmonized perfectly with their direction.

Let's say that to keep your chosen ones loyal and happy and entertained, you secretly paid for their personal lives. You paid for family tuitions. You bought family houses and let family members live rent-free. You paid for ''Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous''-level vacations, including free travel to resorts on private jets, travel on private yachts. You gave them expensive gifts, and you directed money to their spouses, and, of course, you hung out with them.

Let's say that last part—keeping them loyal and happy and entertained with all those gifts—was illegal. Illegal.

Let's say that your loyalty gifts program required the chosen ones to file false Federal disclosure forms and perhaps even false tax returns.

Let's say that your loyalty gifts program might put you in trouble with the tax man for claiming false business expenses. How could that be?

Let's say that the chosen ones were calling this bonanza of freebies ''personal hospitality.'' ''Personal hospitality''—a term of art allowing nondisclosure under the disclosure laws.

Let's say that they were all calling it ''personal hospitality,'' but you were calling the bonanza ''deductible business expenses of corporate yachts and jets.'' Then it wouldn't all add up.

That is a lot of ''let's say,'' I know, but that is about what we are looking at with the Supreme Court right now. We know it is not one rightwing billionaire but a little bunch of them. We don't know all the freebies yet. Maybe we only know 10 percent of the freebies. We know that there has been no meaningful investigation of this, so there is lots left to learn. That is our job in Congress, to investigate malfeasance in government and expose abuse so the citizens can see what has been going on and laws can be changed to better protect against that kind of abuse.

So let's say Congress starts doing its job and starts asking nosy questions. What is a creepy billionaire to do? That is easy. You lawyer up. You refuse to cooperate. You are a billionaire, remember, so you can pay lawyers a thousand dollars an hour until the cows come home and not even notice it. A thousand hours of thousand-dollar lawyering wouldn't cost you a thousandth of your wealth. You live above the law, sheltered by your billions. You actually direct the law through your chosen ones on the Supreme Court.

The impertinence of being investigated is insufferable, so this is what you send.

Here are two actual lawyer letters. One was sent by the lawyer for the billionaire Harlan Crow. The other was sent by the lawyer for the billionaire's operative and his painting mate, Leonard Leo.

When I say ''painting mate,'' I mean this painting that Harlan Crow, the billionaire, has of his time with Clarence Thomas, one of the chosen ones, and Leonard Leo, the operative. Couldn't be more cozy.

So you send these letters.

Leo, by the way, has himself joined your billionaire boys' club. He did so when one of your billionaires, Barre Seid, set him up with his own $1.6 billion slush fund, held through a Utah 501(c)(4) front group confected for that transaction.

Let's walk through what these letters say because the arguments are so preposterous, it is hard to imagine they could be made in good faith.

As you can imagine, when letters come from lawyers for billionaires in the billionaire Court-packing boys' club, the letters are pretty alike.

The first one for Crow says:

Congress does not have the constitutional power to impose ethics rules and standards on the Supreme Court.

The second one for Mr. Leo says:

Your inquiry exceeds the limits placed by the Constitution on the Committee's investigative authority.

Then there is a third one for another billionaire where they just did one paragraph. Basically, it just says: Yeah, what Leonard Leo's lawyer says.

This inquiry exceeds the limits placed on the legislature by the Constitution.

We refer you to the relevant portions of the letter . . . directed to you on behalf of Mr. Leo.

I feel kind of bad for these lawyers because I don't think you can bill very much for one paragraph, whereas these guys can bill quite a lot. Anyway, poor fellas.

So let's look at these other letters

I ask unanimous consent that the first page of the letter of lawyer Bopp for billionaire Crow and the first page of the letter of lawyer Rivkin for billionaire operative Leo—as exhibits at the end of my remarks—with the short, one-paragraph letter, the tagalong letter from attorney Clark, be printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Lawyers Bopp and Rivkin both tell me that investigating their clients' activities is unconstitutional under the separation of powers. We can't legislate about Supreme Court ethics, so we can't investigate Supreme Court ethics.

First, remember that alongside separation of powers is its twin, checks and balances, which requires branches, like the legislative branch, to check and balance the behavior of other branches, like, in this case, the judicial branch.

That is what we are doing here—checks and balances. Let's dive down into the specifics a little bit more.

There are primarily three topics. One, did the billionaire or the operative take improper advantage of the Tax Code in their dealings with the Justices? That is what we are looking into. The Finance Committee has its own investigation, along with the Judiciary Committee, to focus on the tax side of this.

Well, I have to say it is hard to see how abuse of the Tax Code by a private citizen in his tax filings could raise any separation of powers concern. That is between the tax filer, the government, and the law. The Justices are simply not a party to that. Even if we were looking at the Justices' own tax filings, were it to come to that, they would be investigated in their roles not as Justices but as taxpayers. Being a Justice doesn't allow you to violate the tax laws or immunize you from tax investigation or permit you to make actionable false statements in your tax returns any more than being a Justice would allow you to commit any other offense. So there is tax abuse, issue 1—no visible separation-of-powers angle to it.

Issue 2, did the Justices receiving gifts and emoluments from the billionaire or the operative properly report them, or did the judicial gifts reporting system fail here? The billionaires' lawyers say that is not our business. Well, that is Congress's business for two pretty obvious reasons. First, the reporting requirements are a law passed by Congress whose implementation we can absolutely oversee like any other law passed by Congress, and this law includes Justices. Second, the implementing body of that law is the Judicial Conference, a body created by Congress whose activities we can absolutely oversee—we created it. The notion that Congress cannot investigate to see if an Agency it created is properly implementing laws Congress passed is ludicrous on its face.

Peripherally, it is worth noting that the Supreme Court has never objected on constitutional grounds to that body or to those laws. The Chief Justice actually chairs the Judicial Conference without objection to its congressional nature.

When questions about Justice Thomas's first round of free yacht and jet travel from Harlan Crow were raised a decade ago, those concerns went, under the law, to the Financial Disclosure Committee of the Judicial Conference for review, without objection to the power of review by Justice Thomas.

And when Thomas's recent round of billionaire-funded free yacht and jet travel—Crow-Thomas 2.0, you might call it—raised questions anew, again, those questions went to the Financial Disclosure Committee of the Judicial Conference for review, where those questions pend now, again, without objection. Nobody said: The Judicial Conference is unconstitutional. The reporting laws are unconstitutional. You can't look at this. Congress could never pass those laws. Congress could not create judicial conflict.

Nobody said that.

Additionally, when Justice Scalia's trick came to light of obtaining dozens of free hunting vacations and not disclosing them because it was supposedly a ''personal invitation,'' which supposedly made it ''personal hospitality'' that didn't have to be disclosed, the question of that trip's propriety went to the Financial Disclosure Committee of the Judicial Conference for review. The conference shut that trick down firmly, and Justice Thomas conceded he would abide by the Judicial Conference's determination—again, with no assertion that there was anything unconstitutional about it. So the separation-of-powers argument, in addition to making no sense, founders on the decades-long acceptance in real life by Supreme Court Justices of our congressional role through these laws and through the Judicial Conference.

Here is another argument they make. This is an interesting one. We have been too mean. We have been too mean looking into these facts. They tart that argument up in constitutional terminology, but that is it in a nutshell. I have used the analogy, describing Leonard Leo's role, in the billionaires' Court-capture scheme, of a spider in a web. They think that is too mean.

The problem with that ''too mean'' argument is that it assumes the result. If, in fact, there is a secret operation to capture and control the Supreme Court for the benefit of special interests, and if, in fact, Leo is its key operative, it is not actually all that mean to make an analogy to a spider and a web. It is actually pretty mild and quite descriptive.

The accusation that we are doing this just to be mean and it is unfair to ask questions presumes that there is nothing secret and sordid and wrong that would be revealed by our investigation. It is a little like saying the police can't investigate me because it would be unconstitutionally unfair because I am so innocent. Well, that is what the police investigation would reveal, just as this congressional investigation, unless successfully obstructed by the billionaires, might very well reveal a dark episode of secret corruption of our highest Court—perhaps, even the most covert, most persistent effort at judicial corruption in our country's history.

To be continued. I will be back with more of this story.

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

GIBSON DUNN,
Confidential, May 22, 2023.

Re Response to May 8, 2023, Letters to Harlan R. Crow, CH Asset Company, Carey Commercial Ltd., and Topridge Holdings, LLC.

Hon. DICK DURBIN,
Chairman, U.S. Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN: We represent Harlan Crow in relation to your letters of May 8, 2023 (the ''Letters''). Today, we also are responding on behalf of CH Asset Company, Carey Commercial Ltd., and Topridge Holdings, LLC. We recognize the important role the Senate Judiciary Committee has in considering legislation related to our federal court system, and we appreciate the opportunity to engage with the Committee.

After careful consideration, we do not believe the Committee has the authority to investigate Mr. Crow's personal friendship with Justice Clarence Thomas. Most importantly, Congress does not have the constitutional power to impose ethics rules and standards on the Supreme Court. Doing so would exceed Congress's Article I authority and violate basic separation of powers principles. That precludes the Committee from pursuing an investigation in support of such legislation.

Separately, the Committee has not identified a valid legislative purpose for its investigation and is not authorized to conduct an ethics investigation of a Supreme Court Justice. The Committee's stated purpose of crafting new ethics guidelines for the Supreme Court is inconsistent with its actions and the circumstances in which this investigation was launched, all of which suggest that the Committee is targeting Justice Thomas for special and unwarranted opprobrium. Moreover, any information the Committee might legitimately need to draft legislation on this subject is readily available from other sources, the use of which would not trigger the same separation of powers concerns created by the Committee's requests to Mr. Crow.

We address each of these points in greater detail below.

BAKERHOSTETLER,
July 25, 2023.

Re Response to July 11, 2023 Letter to Leonard Leo.

Hon. RICHARD DURBIN,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action, and Federal Rights, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: We write on behalf of Leonard Leo in response to your letter of July 11, 2023, which requested information concerning Mr. Leo's interactions with Supreme Court Justices. We understand this inquiry is part of an investigation certain members of the Senate Judiciary Committee have undertaken regarding ethics standards and the Supreme Court. While we respect the Committee's oversight role, after reviewing your July 11 Letter, the nature of this investigation, and the circumstances surrounding your interest in Mr. Leo, we believe that your inquiry exceeds the limits placed by the Constitution on the Committee's investigative authority.

Your investigation of Mr. Leo infringes two provisions of the Bill of Rights. By selectively targeting Mr. Leo for investigation on a politically charged basis, while ignoring other potential sources of information on the asserted topic of interest who are similarly situated to Mr. Leo but have different political views that are more consistent with those of the Committee majority, your inquiry appears to be political retaliation against a private citizen in violation of the First Amendment. For similar reasons, your inquiry cannot be reconciled with the Equal Protection component of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment. And regardless of its other constitutional infirmities, it appears that your investigation lacks a valid legislative purpose, because the legislation the Committee is considering would be unconstitutional if enacted.

ERICKSONSEDERSTROM,
ATTORNEYS AT LAW,
July 25, 2023.

Re Response to Letter Dated July 11, 2023, to Robin P. Arkley, II, Our File No.: 00018.010802.

Hon. RICHARD DURBIN,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Courts Oversights, Agency Action and Federal Rights, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DURBIN AND SENATOR WHITEHOUSE: We write this letter on behalf of Robin P. Arkley, II in response to your letter dated July 11, 2023, which requested information concerning Mr. Arkley's interactions with Supreme Court Justices. While we respect the Senate Committee's oversight role, we believe that this inquiry exceeds the limits placed on the legislature by the Constitution. For our stated reasons, we refer you to the relevant portions of the letter dated July 25, 2023, from Baker & Hostetler directed to you on behalf of Mr. Leo.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL E. CLARK.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

HONORING LAVERNE PARRISH

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today I would like to honor the life and service of a distinguished Montanan and one of Montana's five World War II Medal of Honor recipients: Technician Fourth Grade Laverne Parrish.

Laverne and his family moved to the Mission Valley of Montana in 1934, and he graduated from Ronan High School in 1937. Never one to shy away from service or sacrifice, Laverne joined the Washington Army National Guard in the March of 1941, just months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served as a medical aidman in Company C of the 161st Infantry Regiment where he achieved the rank of technician fourth grade, the noncommissioned officer equivalent of sergeant.

In August of 1942, his Army National Guard unit was activated and deployed to Hawaii for training. Soon after, his unit was mobilized and deployed to the Pacific Theater with the 25th Infantry Division. Known as ''Tropic Lightning'' for specializing in jungle warfare, his division saw combat in five different military campaigns, moving from Guadalcanal, to the Northern Solomon Islands, and eventually joining General MacArthur's campaign to recapture the Philippines.

In January of 1945, his division landed on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. During heavy fighting in Binalonan, Laverne risked his life rushing onto the battlefield to bring in his wounded brother in arms to safety. While treating casualties, he noticed two wounded soldiers from his company still in the field. Without hesitation, he crawled back onto the battlefield amidst intense enemy fire to successfully rescue both men.

Six days later, under withering enemy fire, Laverne's unit was ordered to withdraw to the cover of a ditch. Seeing two wounded soldiers unable to move, Laverne quickly left his position and pulled them to safety. In that same field, he also delivered aid to 12 casualties, crossing and recrossing an open area raked by enemy fire in the process and finally bringing an additional three men who were critically wounded back to the unit.

Shortly after treating nearly all 37 of the casualties suffered by his company, Laverne was mortally wounded by mortar fire and died on the battlefield, just 6 months before the war ended. He was 26 years old, and his body was returned to Montana, where he was laid to eternal rest at the Mountain View Cemetery in Ronan. While Laverne passed, the story of the heroic ''Montana Medic'' quickly spread through the 25th Infantry Division as they bravely carried on facing more continuous combat than any other Infantry Division in the 6th Army.

Laverne pitted heroism and bravery against great odds, saving the lives of many of his fellow soldiers at the cost of his own. In honor of his incredible bravery and sacrifice, Laverne was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry S. Truman, our Nation's highest military awarded to the men and women in uniform who have gone above and beyond protecting our freedoms. He was one of just six medical corpsman to receive this honor in World War II, and the six were credited with saving the lives of more than 150 military personnel.

In the fall of 1948, the town of Ronan came together to honor Laverne by naming the athletic field the Sergeant Laverne Parrish Memorial Field. Naming this field in Laverne's honor was a small token of our appreciation for his heroic service and sacrifice, but it ensured he will be remembered generation after generation in Ronan—and all across the Treasure State.

Seventy-five years later, Laverne's memory lives on in each of us—in the freedoms of our children, our children's children, and right here with us on this football field.

On behalf of myself and a grateful nation, I commend Mr. Laverne Parrish and extend our deepest appreciation to him. He is a true patriot who made Montana proud, and we will never forget him.

Today and every day, let us remember that we are standing here today, in a free country, because of Laverne, the sacrifices he made, and the sacrifices of our military men and women have made every generation since.

TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS DUANE B. PEARSON

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Navy Petty Officer First Class Duane B. Pearson. HM1 Duane Pearson originally hailed from the Bronx, NY, and as an Army family, he moved throughout the Nation; in Lawton, OK, he decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy and follow his family history of military service.

His initial oath was in November 2001 in Oklahoma City, OK; he completed Navy boot camp and Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, IL, and went on to Expeditionary Medical Facility Training, Cherry Point, NC, and Physical Therapy Technician School, San Antonio, TX, where he was also promoted to third class petty officer.

His enlisted assignments include Naval Hospital Cherry Point, NC; National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, MD, where he was deployed to Camp Lemonnier to Djibouti, Africa; Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan; and the Office of Attending Physician, Washington, DC.

While at the Office of Attending Physician, he continued providing expert physical therapy services, but also managed an emergency response medical call center, and provided advanced cardiac life support response to multiple Nation special security events, including three Presidential inaugurations, nine State of the Union Addresses, seven Peace Officers Memorials, and scores of gold medal ceremonies and summer concerts. Additionally, he was instrumental in administering over 30,000 Covid vaccines in direct support of both the Supreme Court of the United States, and U.S. Congress.

His military decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Navy Unit Commendation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Armed Forces Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and various other personal and unit awards.

His military career has been successful because of the support and confidence of Jasmine, his wife and best friend of 18 years. He also has two supportive children, who are both talented athletes—Micah and Imani.

In May 2019, he received his bachelor of arts Degree, with honors, from Southern Illinois University in healthcare management and will complete his master's in healthcare administration from the University of Baltimore this December.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORIC WESTSIDE SCHOOL

● Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the centennial celebration of the Historic Westside School in Las Vegas, NV. This

school holds a special place in the history of Las Vegas and is a symbol of resilience, education, and strength in this community.

The Historic Westside School's story began in 1923 when it opened its doors as the Las Vegas Grammar School No. 1, consisting of just two rooms. Over the years, this unassuming structure played a significant role in the history of Las Vegas, particularly in the city's Black community.

Initially established to serve local Paiute children, the school's purpose evolved as the Black American population in Las Vegas grew substantially. With the opening of the Gunnery Range, known today as Nellis Air Force Base, and the construction of the Hoover Dam, the population of Las Vegas expanded dramatically. During this period, the school primarily educated Black children, reflecting the changing demographics of the city.

It is important to acknowledge the discrimination and persecution the Black community suffered during this era. In a stark reminder of the racial prejudice that stained our Nation, the city of Las Vegas forced Black families to move to the Westside and refused to allow the renewal of Black-owned business licenses unless they relocated. Despite this, the Westside School became a symbol of hope and perseverance for the Black community as it provided education and opportunity.

As the city of Las Vegas eventually moved towards desegregation, the school was closed. However, in 1979, the significance of the Historic Westside School was formally recognized when it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This designation highlighted the school's historical importance and its role in shaping the local community and preserving the heritage of the Westside of Las Vegas.

In 2015, the city of Las Vegas, with the assistance of Federal funds, embarked on a commendable effort to restore this historic landmark. Today, the Historic Westside School has been transformed into a vibrant community center, home to KCEP-FM and the Economic Opportunity Board, and a hub for various charitable foundations. It is a testament to the resilience of our community and the commitment to preserving our history.

As we celebrate the centennial of the Historic Westside School, let us reflect on the enduring legacy of this institution and its importance in shaping the history of Las Vegas. It serves as a reminder of the progress we have made in the fight for equality and the importance of preserving our history, no matter how challenging the chapters may be.

I commend the city of Las Vegas and the Historic Westside School Alumni Association for their dedication to preserving the memory of this historic school and for organizing the centennial celebration. It truly is an opportunity for our community to come together, learn from our past, and work toward a brighter future where equality and opportunity are accessible to all.●

RECOGNIZING KPI CONCEPTS

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week it is my privilege to recognize KPI Concepts of West Burlington, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

KPI Concepts was founded by Craig Upton in 1984 out of his garage in Burlington, IA, building cabinetry for local businesses. Two years later, KPI Concepts moved to a 4,200-square-foot building with a workshop. The original building was expanded to 42,000 square feet between 1986 and 2006, and in 2007, they purchased an additional 65,000-square-foot location. The second location expanded a few years later. After starting as a commercial cabinetry business, they evolved to manufacture wind turbine blade components in 2008 with the KPI Composites division. In 2013, they added a west coast location in Hurricane, UT, while maintaining their West Burlington headquarters. Over the years, KPI Concepts has grown to include the KPI Metals division as well. Today, KPI Concepts is focused on providing innovative products to the wind energy industry. Throughout this history of business growth, the company's employees have been instrumental to its success.

As with many founders, Craig's journey to founding KPI Concepts had many chapters. After graduating from Burlington High School in 1973, he went on to attend Southeastern Community College, where he earned an associate's degree in mechanical technology. He later went on to work as a design draftsman, welder, and in the data processing department. When he lost his job, his father, who had a passion for woodworking, urged Craig to pursue his dream and start KPI Concepts. In addition to being the Founder of KPI Concepts, Craig Upton has given back to the community. In 2014, he was recognized by Southeastern Community College with the Distinguished Alumnus Award.

The KPI Concept's team has been awarded for their contributions to the industrial services industry. The KPI Metals team was awarded the Manufacturer of the Year Award by the Greater Burlington Partnership in 2017. Due to the hard work and dedication of the KPI Concepts employees, they celebrated their 39th business anniversary in 2023.

KPI Concept's commitment to providing high-quality wind turbine parts, commercial cabinetry, and metal manufacturing services to customers throughout the United States while maintaining their Iowa roots is clear. I want to congratulate the entire team at KPI Concepts for their continued dedication to providing industrial services to Iowans. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS OF MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

● Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Mott Community College located in Flint, MI. Over the past 100 years, MCC has become a steadfast partner for local industry, providing high-quality, accessible, and affordable education opportunities. It is a privilege and honor to recognize the centennial milestone of the college on September 23, 2023.

Founded in 1923 by the Flint Board of Education, the institution was originally known as Flint Junior College. Tuition for the first year was a mere $20, and students could choose to study general literacy, pre-engineering, predental, pre-medicine, pre-law, or business administration, as the college was initially designed to prepare students to transfer to the University of Michigan Ann Arbor.

In 1950, Charles Stewart Mott donated $1 million to develop Flint Junior College into a 4-year institution in collaboration with the University of Michigan, a move that created the college and cultural center. C.S. Mott endowed the college with 32 acres of land and additional money for the establishment of an entirely new campus. In 1951, William Ballenger, Sr., left a trust of several million dollars, allowing the college to hire well-qualified instructors and elevate Flint Junior College into a true community college. Ballenger also gifted the college $200,000 for the construction of an athletic field house. The Ballenger Field House would become the first new building on the new campus.

In 1969, the college was successful in securing a millage, transforming it into a countywide institution, becoming Genesee Community College. After the passing of C.S. Mott, the institution received its name known by the community today, the Charles Stewart Mott Community College.

The college has a rich athletic history as well. Coach Steven Schmidt has led the men's basketball team to 753 victories over 30 seasons, the most by any men's coach in Michigan college basketball history. The program finished fifth in the Nation in 2021 and has won three national titles since 2007. The college is also where Justus Thigpen, Sr., the first athlete from Flint to play in the NBA, got his start as the basketball team's starting guard in 1965. Mott currently hosts five varsity men's sports teams, four varsity women's teams, and a co-ed e-sports team.

Today, MCC serves over 8,000 students seeking to gain knowledge and skills in a wide variety of occupational programs. Mott Community College continues to be a key partner that delivers on the workforce development

needs of the region through continual innovation and investment in their students' success. By creating programs such as the Mobile Learning Lab, Workforce Promise, and the operation of Applewood Cafe, the college has seized every opportunity to support the economic development in Flint by providing workforce training and experience to students and workers.

The college is also a leader in expanding diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. From the hiring of Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea in 2014, its first African-American female president, to the building of the Lenore Croudy Family Life Center, which is focused on providing support to students and families experiencing housing and food insecurity, the college continually works to reduce barriers and challenges by investing in their students. MCC has also been chosen for the Aspen Institute Award six times as one of the top 150 community colleges in the Nation dedicated to excellence and equitable student success.

Mott Community College has greatly impacted the lives of generations of students and has positively shaped the city of Flint as we know it today. I ask you to join me in recognizing the college as they commemorate their centennial celebration.●

TRIBUTE TO GABRIELLE INDIA ASIIAG

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Gabrielle India Asiiag, a spring and summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Gabrielle is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in psychology. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Gabrielle for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS MATTHEW BATURA

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Thomas Matthew Batura, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Thomas is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where he is completing a master's degree in public administration. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Thomas for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO BENNETT AARON BERT

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Bennett Aaron Bert, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Bennett is currently studying at the Catholic University of America, where he is completing a bachelor's degree in politics with a minor in business. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Bennett for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO GABRIELA SOFIA BRAVO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Gabriela Sofia Bravo, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Gabriela is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in political science with an emphasis in intelligence and national security, as well as a minor in international and global studies. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Gabriela for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO VICMARIE PALOMARES-COLON

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Vicmarie Palomares-Colon, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Vicmarie is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in legal studies. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Vicmarie for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO FIONA FERRERO

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Fiona Ferrero, a spring and summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Fiona is currently studying at Ocoee High School. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Fiona for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ETHAN FOLKMAN

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Ethan Craig Folkman, a summer 2023 intern with my Gulf Coast regional office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Ethan is currently a student at Boston College, where he is majoring in political science. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Ethan for his work with my office during these challenging times, and I look forward to hearing of his continued good work in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO PABLO ELIAS FORTICH

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Pablo Elias Fortich, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Pablo is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where he is completing a bachelor's degree in political science with a concentration in national security and intelligence. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Pablo for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO RHYAN FURDA

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Rhyan Furda, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Rhyan is currently studying at Colorado State University, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in business administration. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Rhyan for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO XIMENA RAFAELA HAKIME

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Ximena Rafaela Hakime, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Ximena is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Ximena for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW WILLIAM HOCHFELDER

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Matthew William Hochfelder, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work he has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Matthew is currently studying at the University of Central Florida, where he is completing a bachelor's degree in comparative politics with a concentration in international relations. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Matthew for his work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of his successes in the years to come.•

TRIBUTE TO CAMRYN RIOS

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Camryn Elizabeth Rios, a summer 2023 intern with my Gulf Coast regional office.

Camryn is currently a student at The University of Mississippi, where she is majoring in public policy leadership with a minor in journalism.

I extend my gratitude to Camryn for her work with my office during this semester.•

TRIBUTE TO GIANNA SOFIA ROMAN

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Gianna Sofia Roman, a summer 2023 intern with my Orlando office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Gianna is currently studying at the University of Florida, where she is completing a bachelor's degree in political science and women's studies. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Gianna for her work with my office, and I look forward to hearing of her successes in the years to come.•

TRIBUTE TO MADISON SHEPPARD

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Madison Joelle Sheppard, a summer 2023 intern with my Gulf Coast regional office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Madison is currently a student at Florida State University, where she is majoring in international affairs and political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Madison for her work with my office during these challenging times, and I look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years to come.•

TRIBUTE TO MAEGAN SMARKUSKY

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I recognize Maegan Smarkusky, a summer 2023 intern with my Gulf Coast regional office, for the hard work she has done for my office and the people of Florida.

Maegan is a recent graduate of J.W. Mitchell High School and will attend Florida State University, where she will major in political science. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who was devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Maegan for her work with my office during these challenging times, and I look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years to come.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:22 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. McLaughlin, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 475. An act to designate the clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Gallup, New Mexico, as the Hiroshi ''Hershey'' Miyamura VA Clinic.

The message further announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 663. An act to amend the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act.

H.R. 3981. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the methods by which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs conducts oversight of certain educational institutions, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3981. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the methods by which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs conducts oversight of certain educational institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' 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–2140. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2141. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, as amended by Section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, a semiannual report relative to telecommunications-related payments made to Cuba during the period from January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2142. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Prohibited Exports, Imports, and Sales to or from Certain Countries - Cyprus'' (RIN1400–AF69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 13, 2023; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2143. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of intent to provide assistance to Ukraine, including for self-defense and border security operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2144. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting additional legislative proposals that the Department of Defense requests be enacted during the first session of the 118th Congress; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2145. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Direction Under Section 506(a)(3) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) to Provide Military Assistance to Taiwan''; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2146. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of intent to provide assistance to Taiwan to strengthen its self-defense capabilities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2147. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of intent to provide assistance to Ukraine, including for self-defense and border security operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2148. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2023–0062 - 2023–0065); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2149. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2023–0066 - 2023–0073); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–2150. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Dispensing of Narcotic Drugs To Relieve Acute Withdrawal Symptoms of Opioid Use Disaster'' ((RIN1117–AB73) (Docket No. DEA–702)) received in the Office of the President of the

Senate on September 8, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2151. A communication from the Section Chief of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Partial Filling of Prescriptions for Schedule II Controlled Substances'' ((RIN1117–AB45) (Docket No. DEA–469)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 8, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2152. A communication from the Regulatory Policy Analyst, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Nomenclature Change for Dockets Management; Technical Amendment'' (Docket No. FDA–2023–N–0963) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on August 23, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2153. A communication from the General Counsel, United States Access Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way'' (RIN3014–AA26) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 6, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2154. A communication from the Senior Policy Advisor, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Updating the Davis-Bacon Related Acts Regulations'' (RIN1235–AA40) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on September 6, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2155. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pre-enforcement Notice and Conciliation Procedures'' (RIN1250–AA14) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on August 23, 2023; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2156. A communication from the Ombudsman, Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''2022 Annual Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2157. A communication from the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's fiscal year 2022 Actuarial Evaluation of the Expected Operations and Status of the PBGC Funds; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2158. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the implementation of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 for fiscal year 2022; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2159. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Administration for Community Living Traumatic Brain Injury Act Programs for Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–2160. A communication from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Board's budget request for fiscal year 2025; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–55. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming reaffirming its commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and the State of Wyoming; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

Whereas, Taiwan and the United States are bonded by their shared commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law and a free market economy; and

Whereas, on March 5, 1984, the State of Wyoming adopted Taiwan as Wyoming's sister state; and

Whereas, Taiwan ranks as the United States' eighth largest trading partner, Taiwan ranks as the United States' sixth largest agricultural goods export destination and bilateral trade between the United States and Taiwan reached an estimated one hundred fourteen billion dollars ($114,000,000,000.00) in 2021; and

Whereas, the United States and Taiwan have welcomed the resumption of high-level trade engagement and have expressed a desire to work closely together; and

Whereas, Taiwan ranks as the State of Wyoming's eighth largest trading partner in Asia and both the State of Wyoming and Taiwan are committed to strengthening bilateral economic bonds; and

Whereas, the United States Congress passed the landmark Taiwan Relation Act in 1979 to sustain a close, bilateral relationship and to advance mutual security and commercial interests between the United States and Taiwan; and

Whereas, based on the principles of the United States' and Taiwan's Education Initiative in 2020, Taiwan's Ministry of Education and the State of Wyoming's Department of Education signed a memorandum of understanding on educational cooperation in 2022 to further promote teacher and student exchanges and cultural awareness; and

Whereas, the United States has previously assisted Taiwan in its participation with the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Criminal Police Organization and the United States will continue to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in these and other international organizations; and

Whereas, Taiwan, as a willing and contributing member of the world community, has made countless contributions of technical and financial assistance in the wake of natural disasters worldwide: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Members of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. That, Wyoming reaffirms its commitment to the strong and deepening relationship between Taiwan and the State of Wyoming.

Section 2. That Wyoming supports Taiwan's participation in internal organizations that impact the global trade, health, safety and well-being of twenty-three million (23,000,000) people in Taiwan.

Section 3. That Wyoming reiterates its support for a closer economic and trade partnership between the United States and Taiwan including signing the United States-Taiwan Bilateral Trade Agreement.

Section 4. That the Secretary of State of Wyoming transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, to Wyoming's Congressional Delegation, to Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen and to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Seattle, Washington.

POM–56. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging the United States government and Michiganders to strengthen ties with Taiwan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 59

Whereas, the United States and Taiwan have strong ties based on shared ideals and robust bilateral trade. Taiwan shares the values of freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, peace, and prosperity with the United States and the state of Michigan. In 2021, the United States ranked as Taiwan's second-largest trading partner, while Taiwan was the eighth-largest trading partner of the United States, counting the European Union as a single trading partner. The countries shared 113.9 billion dollars in two-way goods trade and 19.8 billion dollars in two-way services trade in that year; and

Whereas, Taiwan is a particularly important trade partner for our nation's agricultural industry. Taiwan imported 3.9 billion dollars' worth of agricultural products from the United States in 2021, making it the sixth-largest market for United States food and agricultural products overall. Examining individual agricultural products, Taiwan was the seventh-largest market for United States soybeans and corn in 2021. Due to our high-quality produce, the United States remains one of Taiwan's largest sources of agricultural products, supplying more than one-fifth of the country's total agricultural imports in 2020; and

Whereas, the state of Michigan and Taiwan have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship, with strong bilateral trade and a long history of educational and cultural exchanges. Taiwan was Michigan's tenth-largest export market in Asia in 2022, with over 313 million dollars' worth of Michigan goods exported to Taiwan that year. Since 2006, the Michigan Department of Education and the Taiwanese Ministry of Education have had an English and Chinese language teacher exchange program, helping our citizens to grow closer and learn about each other's cultures. The Taiwan Friendship Caucus in the Michigan Legislature exists to strengthen ties between our governments, our economies, and our people. To ensure this relationship remains strong, Michigan businesses should increase their economic engagement with Taiwan; and

Whereas, the United States could take additional steps to strengthen bilateral trade with Taiwan, which would also enhance Taiwan's trade with the state of Michigan. Trade between our nations could be improved if the United States entered into a bilateral trade agreement and an avoidance of double taxation agreement with Taiwan. Taiwan could also be included in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), a partnership between many Indo-Pacific nations and the United States that was created to strengthen economic cooperation. The United States invited other Indo-Pacific partners to join the IPEF in May 2022, and Taiwan should be invited to and included in this partnership; and

Whereas, Taiwan has adopted a policy of ''steadfast diplomacy'' in its foreign relations. This policy ''aims at mutual benefit and peace, creating sustainable partnerships with diplomatic allies, and strengthening

substantive ties in multiple fields with friendly and like-minded countries.'' Taiwan is clearly willing to collaborate with the world to deal with global challenges and seek a brighter future together; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the United States government and Michiganders to strengthen ties with Taiwan; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–57. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging and requesting the United States Congress and the National Security Council to conduct a formal review of the Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and Japan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

Whereas, in 1960, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan was signed and established mutuality between the two nations; and

Whereas, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security has had the effect of establishing a military alliance between the United States and Japan; and

Whereas, under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, the government of Japan agrees to take necessary action to ensure the adequate security and protection of the United States Armed Forces while stationed in Japan; and

Whereas, there are over one hundred thousand American service members and dependents stationed in Japan, which is more than any other place in the world other than the United States; and

Whereas, active-duty American service members are, and will continue to be, stationed abroad in Japan while serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

Whereas, status of forces agreements are designed to ensure adequate and fair legal treatment of American service members stationed abroad; and

Whereas, the Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and Japan does not appear to provide adequate legal protection for American service members due to reports that Japan regularly violates the Status of Forces Agreement by detaining American service members without adequate cause or necessity prior to charges; and

Whereas, there are reports that Japanese authorities consistently deny legal counsel to service members during police interrogations and fail to provide adequate translation assistance during interrogations and trials, which would violate the Department of Defense policy regarding the legal rights of service members overseas; and

Whereas, the United States Congress through the United States House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are responsible for conducting oversight of the United States military and ensuring that international agreements are in the best interest of the American people and abided by the parties entering such agreements. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the United States Congress and the National Security Council to conduct a formal review of the Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and Japan to ensure that the agreement is in the best interest of the United States and adequately protects American service members in accordance with constitutional rights and the United States Department of Defense policy. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM–58. A resolution adopted by the House of the Representatives of the State of Arkansas recognizing the importance of pregnancy help organizations in Arkansas; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1010

Whereas, the life-affirming impact of pregnancy help organizations on the women, men, children, and communities they serve is considerable and growing; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations serve women in Arkansas and across the United States with integrity and compassion; and

Whereas, more than two thousand seven hundred (2,700) pregnancy help organizations across the United States provide comprehensive care to women and men facing unplanned pregnancies, including resources to meet their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations offer women free, confidential, and compassionate services, including pregnancy tests, peer counseling, 24-hour telephone hotlines, childbirth and parenting classes, referrals to community health care, and other support services; and

Whereas, many pregnancy help organizations offer ultrasounds and other medical services; and

Whereas, many pregnancy help organizations provide information on adoption and adoption referrals to pregnant women; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations encourage women to make positive life choices by equipping them with complete and accurate information regarding their pregnancy options and the development of their unborn children; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations provide women with compassionate and confidential peer counseling in a nonjudgmental manner regardless of their pregnancy outcomes; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations provide important support and resources for women who choose childbirth over abortion; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations ensure that women are receiving prenatal information and services that lead to the birth of healthy infants; and

Whereas, many pregnancy help organizations provide grief assistance for women and men who regret the loss of their children from past choices they have made; and

Whereas, many pregnancy help organizations work to prevent unplanned pregnancies by teaching effective abstinence education in public schools; and

Whereas, both federal and state governments are increasingly recognizing the valuable services of pregnancy help organizations through the designation of public funds for such organizations; and

Whereas, pregnancy help organizations operate primarily through reliance on the voluntary donations and time of individuals who are committed to caring for the needs of women and promoting and protecting life, Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fourth General Assembly of the State of Arkansas:

That the House of Representatives:

(1) Strongly support pregnancy help organizations in their unique, positive contributions to the individual lives of women, men, and babies, both born and unborn;

(2) Commend the compassionate work of tens of thousands of volunteers and paid staff at pregnancy help organizations in Arkansas and across the United States;

(3) Strongly encourage the United States Congress and other federal and state government agencies to grant pregnancy help organizations assistance for medical equipment and abstinence education in a manner that does not compromise the mission or religious integrity of these organizations; and

(4) Disapprove of the actions of any national, state, or local groups attempting to prevent pregnancy help organizations from effectively serving women and men facing unplanned pregnancies; and be it further

Resolved, That upon its adoption a copy of this resolution be presented by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to each pregnancy help organization in Arkansas, to the Governor, to the President of the United States, and to the Vice President of the United States, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress.

POM–59. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging the United States Congress to enact legislation that would ensure abortion is affordable and available for anyone who needs it and to support the President of the United States' efforts to protect abortion access across the country; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 123

Whereas, Every person should have the freedom to make decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their futures with respect and dignity, including when and how to become parents, without barriers based on income or access. Abortion care, along with the full range of health care, should be affordable, available, and supported for everyone who needs it; and

Whereas, On June 24, 2022 the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and stripped away a right that had been held for nearly 50 years. Almost one third (29%) of the total U.S. population of women of reproductive age are now living in states where abortion is either unavailable or severely restricted, and a dozen other states are certain or likely to ban abortion in the future. All across the country, pregnant people now face delays when trying to access abortion care or are forced to travel hundreds of miles to states with less restrictive requirements and take on additional emotional and financial costs; and

Whereas, A 2022 report found that more than 66 clinics in 15 states have been forced to stop providing abortion care as a result of criminalization, impacting 22 million people of reproductive age who may be in need of abortion care. In these states, people are denied abortion care altogether and, without the means to travel to receive the care they need, are forced to carry a pregnancy against their will; and

Whereas, A person seeking an abortion that is denied is more likely to experience life-threatening maternal and infant health complications, more likely to have a household income below the poverty line and experience economic hardship, and more likely to stay in contact with violent partners, putting them and their children at greater risk than if they were able to receive the abortion; and

Whereas, Abortion is a safe and effective medical procedure. Leading public health organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Medical Association, and the American

Academy of Family Physicians strongly oppose efforts to impede access to abortion care or interfere in the relationship between a person and health care provider; and

Whereas, Medication abortion is a FDA-approved, safe, and effective option for ending an early pregnancy up to 10 weeks and accounts for more than half of all abortions, yet anti-abortion lawmakers have enacted medically unnecessary laws to restrict and stigmatize the procedure. Congressional passage of the Women's Health Protection Act of 2023 would protect the right to abortion and prohibit governmental restrictions on abortion; and

Whereas, Abortion care should be made available without hurdles or stigma for people of color, young people, LGBTQ+ and nonbinary people, immigrants, and others. Systemic racism, economic insecurity, and punitive policies such as the Hyde amendment and insurance coverage bans have especially impacted people of color and marginalized groups. Congressional passage of the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Act of 2023 would ensure equal, affordable access to abortion to all individuals no matter their race, how much money they make, how they are insured, who they are, or where they're from; and

Whereas, Immigrant families continue to struggle against low wages, unfair working conditions, a dehumanizing immigration system, and restrictions to access based on documentation status. Congressional passage of the Lifting Immigrant Families Through Benefits Access Restoration Act of 2021 and the Health Equity and Access under the Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Women and Families Act of 2021 would allow many immigrants to enroll in federal health programs like Medicaid without waiting periods and ensure that all immigrants can access affordable coverage for which they are otherwise eligible; and

Whereas, The Michigan House of Representatives stands committed to ensuring abortion is available for everyone who needs it by supporting and advancing policies that ensure abortion care is available without hurdles or stigma for all people in the communities in which they live, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. The Michigan Legislature has already taken bold steps towards abortion justice by repealing the harmful and archaic 1931 law that criminalized abortion providers and adding protections so that no worker will have to face discrimination based on their reproductive health outcomes, including having an abortion; and

Whereas, Local leaders and stakeholders in Michigan are working to advance comprehensive abortion justice policies that address the lived realities of abortion access. Abortion providers in the state of Michigan offer quality and compassionate care, making Michigan a state that will always be a place for those in need of abortion care; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the United States Congress to enact legislation that would ensure abortion is affordable and available for anyone who needs it and to support the President of the United States' efforts to protect abortion access across the country; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–60. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging and requesting the Louisiana Department of Health and the United States Food and Drug Administration to expand testing of imported shrimp products and increase public awareness of health risks associated with imported shrimp; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 105

Whereas, the harvesting of shrimp has been part of the cultural heritage of Louisiana since the nineteenth century; and

Whereas, according to a recent report by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the Louisiana seafood industry produces an economic impact of over $2.4 billion annually for the state; and

Whereas, the Louisiana shrimp fishery is the largest commercial fishery in the state by economic value and the second largest commercial fishery by volume of landings; and

Whereas, Louisiana's shrimp landings account for more than forty percent of all warmwater shrimp landed in the United States in 2022; and

Whereas, the Louisiana wild-caught shrimp fishery is losing domestic market share to an inferior, pond-raised, imported shrimp, which results in lower dockside prices for Louisiana fishers; and

Whereas, approximately ninety-four percent of seafood sold in the United States is imported and shrimp account for the highest percent of all seafood imports; and

Whereas, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), imported shrimp products have risen from less than two hundred fifty million pounds in 1980, to nearly two billion pounds in 2022; and

Whereas, according to statistics from the United States Census Bureau and the NOAA, the price per pound for imported shrimp, adjusted for inflation, has decreased from nearly ten dollars in 1980, to just over four dollars in 2022, while the Gulf dockside value has declined from nearly five dollars in 1980, to approximately two dollars and fifty cents in 2022; and

Whereas, current food safety regulations and inspections are failing to prevent risks to human safety and, according to a report published in Environmental Science and Technology, only two percent of all seafood imported into the United States is tested for contamination, whereas the European Union inspects fifty percent, Japan inspects eighteen percent, and Canada inspects fifteen percent. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health and the United States Food and DrugAdministration to expand the testing of imported shrimp products for banned drugs, bacteria, and disease and to increase public awareness to the possible health risks associated with imported shrimp. Be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge the United States Congress to support legislation requiring the labeling of all shrimp sold at restaurants to be labeled with their country of origin and to take such actions as are necessary to hold foreign fisheries to the same standards as domestic fisheries and reduce the volume of shrimp products imported into the United States. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM–61. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to compel the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to fulfill its duties regarding inspection and testing of imported seafood; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

Whereas, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in 2019 the United States imported six billion pounds of edible seafood products, including one and one half billion pounds of shrimp, an increase of nearly six and one half million pounds more than the shrimp imported in 2018; and

Whereas, the 2019 shrimp imports alone, valued at six billion dollars, accounted for twenty-seven percent of the total value of imported seafood that year, which reached twenty-two billion dollars; and

Whereas, it is estimated that over half of the imported seafood consumed in the United States is from aquaculture, or seafood farming, rather than wild-caught; and

Whereas, the FDA is responsible for the safety of all fish and fishery products entering the United States and sold in Louisiana; and

Whereas, the FDA's seafood safety program is governed by its Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point regulations, which address food safety management through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production and procurement and handling to manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of the finished product; and

Whereas, FDA regulations are supposed to measure the compliance of imported seafood with inspections of foreign processing facilities, sampling of seafood offered for import into the United States, domestic surveillance sampling of imported products, inspections of seafood importers, foreign country program assessments, and the use of information from foreign partners and FDA overseas offices; and

Whereas, in 2011 the FDA was only inspecting two percent of the seafood imported into the United States; and

Whereas, unfortunately 2011 is the last year for which data regarding the percentage of imports inspected is available due to a lack of transparency and inadequate assessment measures; and

Whereas, in 2011 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted that the FDA's assessment of foreign aquaculture operations was limited by the FDA's lack of procedures, criteria, and standards; and ten years later, a 2021 GAO report found that the agency was failing to monitor the effectiveness of its own enforcement policies and procedures; and

Whereas, in contrast, the European Union regularly conducts physical checks of approximately twenty percent of all imported fish products that are fresh, frozen, dry, salted, or hermetically sealed, and for certain fishery products, physical checks are conducted on approximately fifty percent of imports; and

Whereas, the Louisiana State University School of Renewable Natural Resources published a 2020 paper titled ''Determination of Sulfite and Antimicrobial Residue in Imported Shrimp to the USA'', which presented findings from a study of shrimp imported from India, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, and Ecuador and purchased from retail stores in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and

Whereas, a screening of these shrimp for sulfites and residues from antimicrobial drugs found the following: (1) five percent of the shrimp contained malachite green, (2) seven percent contained oxytetracycline, (3) seventeen percent contained

fluoroquinolone, and (4) seventy percent contained nitrofurantoin, all of which have been banned by the FDA in domestic aquaculture operations; and

Whereas, although the FDA requires that food products exposed to sulfites must include a label with a statement about the presence of sulfites, of the forty-three percent of these locally purchased shrimp found to contain sulfites, not one package complied with this labeling requirement; and

Whereas, the drug and sulfite residues included in this screening can be harmful to human health during both handling and consumption and have been known to cause all of the following: liver damage and tumors, reproductive abnormalities, cardiac arrhythmia, renal failure, hemolysis, asthma attacks, and allergic reactions; and

Whereas, the results of this study confirm that existing screening and enforcement measures for imported seafood are insufficient; whatever the percentage of imports inspected may be, seafood is currently being imported that contains unsafe substances that put American consumers at risk; and

Whereas, because imported seafood is not held to the same standards as domestic seafood, domestic fishing industries are put at a distinct and significant disadvantage commercially; and

Whereas, according to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the average value of Louisiana shrimp fell from three dollars and eighty cents per pound in 1980 to one dollar fifty cents per pound in 2017; and

Whereas, this unfair competition allows foreign competitors to flood the United States market with seafood harvested under intensive farming practices using antimicrobial drugs, while devastating local industries and the coastal communities built around them. Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to compel the United States Food and Drug Administration to fulfill its duties regarding inspection and testing of imported seafood. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM–62. A resolution adopted by the City Council of Toledo, Ohio, urging the federal government and our nation to embrace the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of our national security policy; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM–63. A resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of Washtenaw County, Michigan urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to normalize trade and diplomatic relations with the Republic of Cuba by dissolving the current U.S. trade embargo, removing Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and other barriers; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

POM–64. A resolution adopted by the City Council of Monterey Park, California, condemning the military junta of Myanmar (Burma) for the oppression of civilians with excessive violence and standing firmly with the people of Burma in their pursuit for a fair, just, and sustainable democratic sovereign government; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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. CASEY:

S. 2836. A bill to amend subpart 1 of part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to support the mental health and well-being of children and youth in, and formerly in, foster care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 2837. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to ensure health insurance coverage continuity for former foster youth; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 2838. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a Civilian Climate Corps to help communities respond to climate change and transition to a clean economy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 2839. A bill to clarify the maximum hiring target for new air traffic controllers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 2840. A bill to improve access to and the quality of primary health care, expand the health workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2841. A bill to improve voter access to the ballot box through automatic voter registration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. KING, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2842. A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to clarify that a State may not use an individual's failure to vote as the basis for initiating the procedures provided under such Act for the removal of the individual from the official list of registered voters in the State on the grounds that the individual has changed residence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. KING, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. PADILLA, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 2843. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to provide for same day voter registration; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2844. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an excise tax on plastics; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 2845. A bill to prohibit recipients of disaster recovery relief assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development from penalizing applicants that declined assistance from the Small Business Administration; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 2846. A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to the prevention of maternal mortality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2847. A bill to prohibit the importation of agricultural products, raw materials, and food from the Russian Federation if the Russian Federation prohibits the importation of such products, materials, and food from the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 2848. A bill to block the property of Russian state-owned entities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 2849. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide formula grants to States to improve higher education opportunities for foster youth and homeless youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 2850. A bill to extend protections to part-time workers in the areas of family and medical leave and to ensure equitable treatment in the workplace; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WELCH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. REED, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 2851. A bill to permit employees to request changes to their work schedules without fear of retaliation and to ensure that employers consider these requests, and to require employers to provide more predictable and stable schedules for employees in certain occupations with evidence of unpredictable and unstable scheduling practices that negatively affect employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 2852. A bill to establish a grace period for nonpayment of premiums for flood insurance coverage under the national flood insurance program until the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency implements the option for monthly payment of such premiums, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. BRAUN, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 2853. A bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a study and issue

a report on grant programs to support the nursing workforce; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 2854. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement with the city of Fargo, North Dakota, for the conveyance of certain land of the Department of Veterans Affairs at Fargo National Cemetery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 349. A resolution supporting the designation of September 19, 2023, as ''National Stillbirth Prevention Day'', recognizing tens of thousands of American families that have endured a stillbirth, and seizing the opportunity to keep other families from experiencing the same tragedy; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. SMITH, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. COONS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. KING, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 350. A resolution designating September 2023 as ''National Voting Rights Month''; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. Res. 351. A resolution designating September 25, 2023, as ''National Lobster Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. Res. 352. A resolution designating September 2023 as ''National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 135

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 135, a bill to provide for a period of continuing appropriations in the event of a lapse in appropriations under the normal appropriations process, and establish procedures and consequences in the event of a failure to enact appropriations.

S. 359

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 359, a bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to provide for a code of conduct for justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 474

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 474, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen reporting to the CyberTipline related to online sexual exploitation of children, to modernize liabilities for such reports, to preserve the contents of such reports for 1 year, and for other purposes.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 599, a bill to establish the Foundation for Digital Equity, and for other purposes.

S. 656

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) were added as cosponsors of S. 656, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise the rules for approval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of commercial driver education programs for purposes of veterans education assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 740

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 740, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 928, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual report on suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1170

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1170, a bill to reauthorize and update the Project Safe Childhood program, and for other purposes.

S. 1176

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1176, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard that requires covered employers within the health care and social service industries to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan, and for other purposes.

S. 1269

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1269, a bill to reduce the price of insulin and provide for patient protections with respect to the cost of insulin.

S. 1274

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1274, a bill to permanently exempt payments made from the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account from sequestration under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

S. 1351

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1351, a bill to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1400

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1400, a bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to modify the delivery of technical assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 1472

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1472, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to designate September 11 Day of Remembrance as a legal public holiday.

S. 1482

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1482, a bill to provide for the reliquidation of certain entries of golf cart tires.

S. 1505

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1505, a bill to reform and enhance the pay and benefits of Federal wildland firefighters, and for other purposes.

S. 1631

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1631, a bill to enhance the authority granted to the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice with respect to unmanned aircraft systems and unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes.

S. 1753

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1753, a bill to amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to allow individuals with drug offenses to receive benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 1809

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1809, a bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Small Farms, and for other purposes.

S. 1917

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1917, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to provide for the establishment of standards to limit the carbon intensity of the fuel used by certain vessels, and for other purposes.

S. 2039

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2039, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan (or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan) to provide for cost-sharing for oral anticancer drugs on terms no less favorable than the cost-sharing provided for anticancer medications administered by a health care provider.

S. 2085

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2085, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 2090

At the request of Mr. MULLIN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2090, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prevent the elimination of the sale of motor vehicles with internal combustion engines.

S. 2378

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2378, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase excise taxes on fuel used by private jets, and for other purposes.

S. 2413

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2413, a bill to expand and strengthen the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, and for other purposes.

S. 2444

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2444, a bill to establish an interactive online dashboard to improve public access to information about grant funding related to mental health and substance use disorder programs.

S. 2501

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2501, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to promulgate an occupational safety and health standard to protect workers from heat-related injuries and illnesses.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2551, a bill to impose export controls and sanctions to address the security threat posed by the genetic mapping efforts of the Government of the People's Republic of China and other countries, and for other purposes.

S. 2583

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2583, a bill to ban new corporate ownership of agricultural land, and for other purposes.

S. 2669

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2669, a bill to require the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to issue guidance on digital assets, and for other purposes.

S. 2736

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2736, a bill to clarify that section 8526(7) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 does not apply with respect to the use of funds for sports clubs, teams, training, or related activities provided for students.

S. 2738

At the request of Mr. VANCE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2738, a bill to prohibit through December 31, 2024, the imposition of a mask mandate on passengers of air carriers or public transit and in educational settings within the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2741

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2741, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to increase survivors benefits for disabled widows, widowers, and surviving divorced spouses, and for other purposes.

S. 2770

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2770, a bill to prohibit the distribution of materially deceptive AI-generated audio or visual media relating to candidates for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 2777

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2777, a bill to increase child care options for working families and support child care providers.

S. 2797

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2797, a bill to ensure religious freedom and rights of conscience for health care workers and other government employees, and to protect health care workers and other government employees from various forms of compelled speech.

S. 2825

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2825, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the United States Army Dustoff crews of the Vietnam War, collectively, in recognition of their extraordinary heroism and life-saving actions in Vietnam.

S. 2828

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2828, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to clarify that the prohibition on the use of Federal education funds for certain weapons does not apply to the use of such weapons in certain programs for activities such as archery, hunting, other shooting sports, or culinary arts.

S. 2835

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2835, a bill making continuing appropriations for military pay in the event of a Government shutdown.

S.J. RES. 43

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 43, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to ''Improving Income Driven Repayment for the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program and the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program''.

AMENDMENT NO. 1113

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1113 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1130

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1130 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a

bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1131

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1131 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1143

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1143 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1145

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1145 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1176

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1176 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1179

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1179 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1193

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1193 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1211

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1211 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1241

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1241 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4366, a bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 2846. A bill to improve Federal efforts with respect to the prevention of maternal mortality, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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. 2846

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 ''Community Access, Resources, and Empowerment for Moms Act'' or the ''CARE for Moms Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Every year, across the United States, nearly 4,000,000 women give birth, more than 1,000 women suffer fatal complications during pregnancy, while giving birth or during the postpartum period, and about 70,000 women suffer near-fatal, partum-related complications.

(2) The maternal mortality rate is often used as a proxy to measure the overall health of a population. While the infant mortality rate in the United States has reached its lowest point, the risk of death for women in the United States during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period is higher than such risk in many other high-income countries. The estimated maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births) for the 48 contiguous States and Washington, DC, increased from 14.5 percent in 2000 to 32.0 in 2021. The United States is the only industrialized nation with a rising maternal mortality rate.

(3) The National Vital Statistics System of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that in 2021, there were 32.9 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births in the United States. That ratio continues to exceed the rate in other high-income countries.

(4) It is estimated that more than 80 percent of maternal deaths in the United States are preventable.

(5) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the maternal mortality rate varies drastically for women by race and ethnicity. There are about 26.6 deaths per 100,000 live births for White women, 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births for non-Hispanic Black women, and 32.0 deaths per 100,000 live births for American Indian/Alaska Native women. While maternal mortality disparately impacts Black women, this urgent public health crisis traverses race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, educational background, and geography.

(6) In the United States, non-Hispanic Black women are about 3 times more likely to die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth compared to non-Hispanic White women, which is one of the most disconcerting racial disparities in public health. This disparity widens in certain cities and States across the country.

(7) According to the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the maternal mortality rate heightens with age, as women 40 and older die at a rate of 138.5 per 100,000 births compared to 20.4 per 100,000 for women under 25. This translates to women over 40 being 6.8 times more likely to die compared to their counterparts under 25 years of age.

(8) The COVID–19 pandemic has exacerbated the maternal health crisis. A study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggested that pregnant women are at a significantly higher risk for severe outcomes, including death, from COVID–19 as compared to non-pregnant women. The COVID–19 pandemic also decreased access to prenatal and postpartum care. A study by the Government Accountability Office found that COVID–19 contributed to 25 percent of maternal deaths in 2020 and 2021.

(9) The findings described in paragraphs (1) through (8) are of major concern to researchers, academics, members of the business community, and providers across the obstetric continuum represented by organizations such as—

(A) the American College of Nurse-Midwives;

(B) the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists;

(C) the American Medical Association;

(D) the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses;

(E) the Black Mamas Matter Alliance;

(F) the Black Women's Health Imperative;

(G) the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative;

(H) EverThrive Illinois;

(I) the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative;

(J) the March of Dimes;

(K) the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives;

(L) RH Impact: The Collaborative for Equity & Justice;

(M) the National Partnership for Women & Families;

(N) the National Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Association;

(O) the Preeclampsia Foundation;

(P) the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine;

(Q) the What To Expect Project;

(R) Tufts University School of Medicine Center for Black Maternal Health and Reproductive Justice;

(S) the Shades of Blue Project;

(T) the Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance;

(U) Tulane University Mary Amelia Center for Women's Health Equity Research;

(V) In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda; and

(W) Physicians for Reproductive Health.

(10) Hemorrhage, cardiovascular and coronary conditions, cardiomyopathy, infection or sepsis, embolism, mental health conditions (including substance use disorder), hypertensive disorders, stroke and cerebrovascular accidents, and anesthesia complications are the predominant medical causes of maternal-related deaths and complications.

Most of these conditions are largely preventable or manageable. Even when these conditions are not preventable, mortality and morbidity may be prevented when conditions are diagnosed and treated in a timely manner.

(11) According to a study published by the Journal of Perinatal Education, doula-assisted mothers are 4 times less likely to have a low-birthweight baby, 2 times less likely to experience a birth complication involving themselves or their baby, and significantly more likely to initiate breastfeeding and human lactation. Doula care has also been shown to produce cost savings resulting in part from reduced rates of cesarean and preterm births.

(12) Intimate partner violence is one of the leading causes of maternal death, and women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence during pregnancy than at any other time in their lives. It is also more dangerous than pregnancy. Intimate partner violence during pregnancy and postpartum crosses every demographic and has been exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic.

(13) Oral health is an important part of perinatal health. Reducing bacteria in a woman's mouth during pregnancy can significantly reduce her risk of developing oral diseases and spreading decay-causing bacteria to her baby. Moreover, some evidence suggests that women with periodontal disease during pregnancy could be at greater risk for poor birth outcomes, such as preeclampsia, pre-term birth, and low-birth weight. Furthermore, a woman's oral health during pregnancy is a good predictor of her newborn's oral health, and since mothers can unintentionally spread oral bacteria to their babies, putting their children at higher risk for tooth decay, prevention efforts should happen even before children are born, as a matter of pre-pregnancy health and prenatal care during pregnancy.

(14) In the United States, death reporting and analysis is a State function rather than a Federal process. States report all deaths—including maternal deaths—on a semi-voluntary basis, without standardization across States. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the capacity and system for collecting death-related data based on death certificates, these data are not sufficiently reported by States in an organized and standard format across States such that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is able to identify causes of maternal death and best practices for the prevention of such death.

(15) Vital statistics systems often underestimate maternal mortality and are insufficient data sources from which to derive a full scope of medical and social determinant factors contributing to maternal deaths, such as intimate partner violence. While the addition of pregnancy checkboxes on death certificates since 2003 have likely improved States' abilities to identify pregnancy-related deaths, they are not generally completed by obstetric providers or persons trained to recognize pregnancy-related mortality. Thus, these vital forms may be missing information or may capture inconsistent data. Due to varying maternal mortality-related analyses, lack of reliability, and granularity in data, current maternal mortality informatics do not fully encapsulate the myriad medical and socially determinant factors that contribute to such high maternal mortality rates within the United States compared to other developed nations. Lack of standardization of data and data sharing across States and between Federal entities, health networks, and research institutions keep the Nation in the dark about ways to prevent maternal deaths.

(16) Having reliable and valid State data aggregated at the Federal level are critical to the Nation's ability to quell surges in maternal death and imperative for researchers to identify long-lasting interventions.

(17) Leaders in maternal wellness highly recommend that maternal deaths and cases of maternal morbidity, including complications that result in chronic illness and future increased risk of death, be investigated at the State level first, and that standardized, streamlined, de-identified data regarding maternal deaths be sent annually to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Such data standardization and collection would be similar in operation and effect to the National Program of Cancer Registries of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and akin to the Confidential Enquiry in Maternal Deaths Programme in the United Kingdom. Such a maternal mortalities and morbidities registry and surveillance system would help providers, academicians, lawmakers, and the public to address questions concerning the types of, causes of, and best practices to thwart, maternal mortality and morbidity.

(18) The United Nations' Millennium Development Goal 5a aimed to reduce by 75 percent, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate, yet this metric has not been achieved. In fact, the maternal mortality rate in the United States has been estimated to have more than doubled between 2000 and 2014.

(19) The United States has no comparable, coordinated Federal process by which to review cases of maternal mortality, systems failures, or best practices. The majority of States have active Maternal Mortality Review Committees (referred to in this section as ''MMRC''), which help leverage work to impact maternal wellness. For example, the State of California has worked extensively with their State health departments, health and hospital systems, and research collaborative organizations, including the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative and the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health, to establish MMRCs, wherein such State has determined the most prevalent causes of maternal mortality and recorded and shared data with providers and researchers, who have developed and implemented safety bundles and care protocols related to preeclampsia, maternal hemorrhage, peripartum cardiomyopathy, and the like. In this way, the State of California has been able to leverage its maternal mortality review board system, generate data, and apply those data to effect changes in maternal care-related protocol.

(20) Hospitals and health systems across the United States lack standardization of emergency obstetric protocols before, during, and after delivery. Consequently, many providers are delayed in recognizing critical signs indicating maternal distress that quickly escalate into fatal or near-fatal incidences. Moreover, any attempt to address an obstetric emergency that does not consider both clinical and public health approaches falls woefully under the mark of excellent care delivery. State-based perinatal quality collaboratives, or entities participating in the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM), have formed obstetric protocols, tool kits, and other resources to improve system care and response as they relate to maternal complications and warning signs for such conditions as maternal hemorrhage, hypertension, and preeclampsia. These perinatal quality collaboratives serve an important role in providing infrastructure that supports quality improvement efforts addressing obstetric care and outcomes. State-based perinatal quality collaboratives partner with hospitals, physicians, nurses, midwives, patients, public health, and other stakeholders to provide opportunities for collaborative learning, rapid response data, and quality improvement science support to achieve systems-level change.

(21) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 22 percent of deaths occurred during pregnancy, 25 percent occurred on the day of delivery or within 7 days after the day of delivery, and 53 percent occurred between 7 days and 1 year after the day of delivery. Yet, for women eligible for the Medicaid program on the basis of pregnancy in States without Medicaid postpartum extension, such Medicaid coverage lapses at the end of the month on which the 60th postpartum day lands.

(22) The experience of serious traumatic events, such as being exposed to domestic violence, substance use disorder, or pervasive and systematic racism, can over-activate the body's stress-response system. Known as toxic stress, the repetition of high-doses of cortisol to the brain, can harm healthy neurological development and other body systems, which can have cascading physical and mental health consequences, as documented in the Adverse Childhood Experiences study of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(23) A growing body of evidence-based research has shown the correlation between the stress associated with systematic racism and one's birthing outcomes. The undue stress of sex and race discrimination paired with institutional racism has been demonstrated to contribute to a higher risk of maternal mortality, irrespective of one's gestational age, maternal age, socioeconomic status, educational level, geographic region, or individual-level health risk factors, including poverty, limited access to prenatal care, and poor physical and mental health (although these are not nominal factors). Black women remain the most at risk for pregnancy-associated or pregnancy-related causes of death. When it comes to preeclampsia, for example, for which obesity is a risk factor, Black women of normal weight remain at a higher at risk of dying during the perinatal period compared to non-Black obese women.

(24) The rising maternal mortality rate in the United States is driven predominantly by the disproportionately high rates of Black maternal mortality.

(25) Compared to women from other racial and ethnic demographics, Black women across the socioeconomic spectrum experience prolonged, unrelenting stress related to systematic racial and gender discrimination, contributing to higher rates of maternal mortality, giving birth to low-weight babies, and experiencing pre-term birth. Racism is a risk-factor for these aforementioned experiences. This cumulative stress, called weathering, often extends across the life course and is situated in everyday spaces where Black women establish livelihood. Systematic racism, structural barriers, lack of access to quality maternal health care, lack of access to nutritious food, and social determinants of health exacerbate Black women's likelihood to experience poor or fatal birthing outcomes, but do not fully account for the great disparity.

(26) Black women are twice as likely to experience postpartum depression, and disproportionately higher rates of preeclampsia compared to White women.

(27) Racism is deeply ingrained in United States systems, including in health care delivery systems between patients and providers, often resulting in disparate treatment for pain, irreverence for cultural norms with respect to health, and dismissiveness. However, the provider pool is not primed with many people of color, nor are providers

(whether maternity care clinicians or maternity care support personnel) consistently required to undergo implicit bias, cultural competency, respectful care practices, or empathy training on a consistent, on-going basis.

(28) Women are not the only people who can become pregnant or give birth. Nonbinary, transgender, and gender-expansive people can also become pregnant. The terms ''birthing people'' or ''birthing persons'' are also used to describe pregnant or postpartum people in a way that is inclusive of individuals who experience gender beyond the binary.

(29) Substance misuse among pregnant women, including the use of substances that are illegal or criminalized, misuse of prescribed medications, and binge drinking, has increased year after year for the past decade. Pregnant people with substance use disorder, particularly those with opioids, amphetamines, and cocaine use disorders, are at greater risk of severe maternal morbidity, including conditions such as eclampsia, heart attack or failure, and sepsis.

SEC. 3. IMPROVING FEDERAL EFFORTS WITH RESPECT TO PREVENTION OF MATERNAL MORTALITY.

(a) FUNDING FOR STATE-BASED PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVES DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this subsection as the ''Secretary''), acting through the Division of Reproductive Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall establish a grant program to be known as the State-Based Perinatal Quality Collaborative grant program under which the Secretary awards grants to eligible entities for the purpose of development and sustainability of perinatal quality collaboratives in every State, the District of Columbia, and eligible territories, in order to measurably improve perinatal care and perinatal health outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women and their infants.

(2) GRANT AMOUNTS.—Grants awarded under this subsection shall be in amounts not to exceed $250,000 per year, for the duration of the grant period.

(3) STATE-BASED PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVE DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''State-based perinatal quality collaborative'' means a network of teams that—

(A) is multidisciplinary in nature and includes the full range of perinatal and maternity care providers;

(B) works to improve measurable outcomes for maternal and infant health by advancing evidence-informed clinical practices using quality improvement principles;

(C) works with hospital-based or outpatient facility-based clinical teams, experts, and stakeholders, including patients and families, to spread best practices and optimize resources to improve perinatal care and outcomes;

(D) employs strategies that include the use of the collaborative learning model to provide opportunities for hospitals and clinical teams to collaborate on improvement strategies, rapid-response data to provide timely feedback to hospital and other clinical teams to track progress, and quality improvement science to provide support and coaching to hospital and clinical teams;

(E) has the goal of improving population-level outcomes in maternal and infant health; and

(F) has the goal of improving outcomes of all birthing people, through the coordination, integration, and collaboration across birth settings.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this subsection, there is authorized to be appropriated $35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.

(b) EXPANSION OF MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(1) REQUIRING COVERAGE OF ORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)(4)—

(I) by striking ''; and (D)'' and inserting ''; (D)'';

(II) by striking ''; and (E)'' and inserting ''; (E)'';

(III) by striking ''; and (F)'' and inserting ''; (F)''; and

(IV) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting ''; and (G) oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women (as defined in subsection (jj));''; and

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

''(jj) ORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this title, the term 'oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women' means dental services necessary to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to health and function, and treat emergency conditions that are furnished to a woman during pregnancy (or during the 1-year period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy).

''(2) COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS.—To satisfy the requirement to provide oral health services for pregnant and postpartum women, a State shall, at a minimum, provide coverage for preventive, diagnostic, periodontal, and restorative care consistent with recommendations for perinatal oral health care and dental care during pregnancy from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.''.

(B) CHIP.—Section 2103(c)(6) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397cc(c)(6)) is amended—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by inserting ''or a targeted low-income pregnant woman'' after ''targeted low-income child''; and

(II) by inserting '', and, in the case of a targeted low-income child who is pregnant or a targeted low-income pregnant woman, satisfy the coverage requirements specified in section 1905(jj)'' after ''emergency conditions''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by inserting ''(but only if, in the case of a targeted low-income child who is pregnant or a targeted low-income pregnant woman, the benchmark dental benefit package satisfies the coverage requirements specified in section 1905(jj))'' after ''subparagraph (C)''.

(2) REQUIRING 12-MONTH CONTINUOUS COVERAGE OF FULL BENEFITS FOR PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM INDIVIDUALS UNDER MEDICAID AND CHIP.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)—

(ii) in paragraph (86), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in paragraph (87), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iv) by inserting after paragraph (87) the following new paragraph:

''(88) provide that the State plan is in compliance with subsection (e)(16).''; and

(v) in subsection (e)(16)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''At the option of the State, the State plan (or waiver of such State plan) may provide'' and inserting ''A State plan (or waiver of such State plan) shall provide'';

(II) in subparagraph (B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''by a State making an election under this paragraph'' and inserting ''under a State plan (or a waiver of such State plan)''; and

(III) by striking subparagraph (C).

(B) CHIP.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Section 2107(e)(1)(J) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397gg(e)(1)(J)), as inserted by section 9822 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–2), is amended to read as follows:

''(J) Paragraphs (5) and (16) of section 1902(e) (relating to the requirement to provide medical assistance under the State plan or waiver consisting of full benefits during pregnancy and throughout the 12-month postpartum period under title XIX).''.

(ii) CONFORMING.—Section 2112(d)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ll(d)(2)(A)) is amended by striking ''the month in which the 60-day period'' and all that follows through ''pursuant to section 2107(e)(1),''.

(3) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1902(l) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a(l)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this paragraph and ends on the date that is 5 years after such date of enactment, as a condition for receiving any Federal payments under section 1903(a) for calendar quarters occurring during such period, a State shall not have in effect, with respect to women who are eligible for medical assistance under the State plan or under a waiver of such plan on the basis of being pregnant or having been pregnant, eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures under the State plan or waiver that are more restrictive than the eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures, respectively, under such plan or waiver that are in effect on the date of enactment of this paragraph.''.

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ee(d)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) IN ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR TARGETED LOW-INCOME PREGNANT WOMEN.—During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this paragraph and ends on the date that is 5 years after such date of enactment, as a condition of receiving payments under subsection (a) and section 1903(a), a State that elects to provide assistance to women on the basis of being pregnant (including pregnancy-related assistance provided to targeted low-income pregnant women (as defined in section 2112(d)), pregnancy-related assistance provided to women who are eligible for such assistance through application of section 1902(v)(4)(A)(i) under section 2107(e)(1), or any other assistance under the State child health plan (or a waiver of such plan) which is provided to women on the basis of being pregnant) shall not have in effect, with respect to such women, eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures under such plan (or waiver) that are more restrictive than the eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures, respectively, under such plan (or waiver) that are in effect on the date of enactment of this paragraph.''.

(4) INFORMATION ON BENEFITS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services, information regarding benefits available to pregnant and postpartum women and under the Medicaid program and

the Children's Health Insurance Program, including information on—

(A) benefits that States are required to provide to pregnant and postpartum women under such programs;

(B) optional benefits that States may provide to pregnant and postpartum women under such programs; and

(C) the availability of different kinds of benefits for pregnant and postpartum women, including oral health and mental health benefits and breastfeeding services and supplies, under such programs.

(5) FEDERAL FUNDING FOR COST OF EXTENDED MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE FOR POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—

(A) MEDICAID.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d), as amended by paragraph (1), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(kk) INCREASED FMAP FOR EXTENDED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR POSTPARTUM INDIVIDUALS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Federal medical assistance percentage for a State, with respect to amounts expended by such State for medical assistance for an individual who is eligible for such assistance on the basis of being pregnant or having been pregnant that is provided during the 305-day period that begins on the 60th day after the last day of the individual's pregnancy (including any such assistance provided during the month in which such period ends), shall be equal to—

''(A) during the first 20-quarter period for which this subsection is in effect with respect to a State, 100 percent; and

''(B) with respect to a State, during each quarter thereafter, 90 percent.

''(2) EXCLUSION FROM TERRITORIAL CAPS.—Any payment made to a territory for expenditures for medical assistance for an individual described in paragraph (1) that is subject to the Federal medical assistance percentage specified under paragraph (1) shall not be taken into account for purposes of applying payment limits under subsections (f) and (g) of section 1108.''.

(B) CHIP.—Section 2105(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ee(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(13) ENHANCED PAYMENT FOR EXTENDED ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO PREGNANT WOMEN.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the enhanced FMAP, with respect to payments under subsection (a) for expenditures under the State child health plan (or a waiver of such plan) for assistance provided under the plan (or waiver) to a woman who is eligible for such assistance on the basis of being pregnant (including pregnancy-related assistance provided to a targeted low-income pregnant woman (as defined in section 2112(d)), pregnancy-related assistance provided to a woman who is eligible for such assistance through application of section 1902(v)(4)(A)(i) under section 2107(e)(1), or any other assistance under the plan (or waiver) provided to a woman who is eligible for such assistance on the basis of being pregnant) during the 305-day period that begins on the 60th day after the last day of her pregnancy (including any such assistance provided during the month in which such period ends), shall be equal to—

''(A) during the first 20-quarter period for which this subsection is in effect with respect to a State, 100 percent; and

''(B) with respect to a State, during each quarter thereafter, 90 percent.''.

(6) GUIDANCE ON STATE OPTIONS FOR MEDICAID COVERAGE OF DOULA SERVICES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue guidance for the States concerning options for Medicaid coverage and payment for support services provided by doulas.

(7) ENHANCED FMAP FOR RURAL OBSTETRIC AND GYNECOLOGICAL SERVICES.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d), as amended by paragraphs (1) and (5), is further amended—

(A) in subsection (b), by striking ''and (ii)'' and inserting ''(ii), (jj), (kk), and (ll)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(ll) INCREASED FMAP FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR OBSTETRIC AND GYNECOLOGICAL SERVICES FURNISHED AT RURAL HOSPITALS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Federal medical assistance percentage for a State, with respect to amounts expended by such State for medical assistance for obstetric or gynecological services that are furnished in a hospital that is located in a rural area (as defined for purposes of section 1886) shall be equal to 90 percent for each calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter during which this subsection is in effect.

''(2) EXCLUSION FROM TERRITORIAL CAPS.—Any payment made to a territory for expenditures for medical assistance described in paragraph (1) that is subject to the Federal medical assistance percentage specified under paragraph (1) shall not be taken into account for purposes of applying payment limits under subsections (f) and (g) of section 1108.''.

(8) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C)—

(i) the amendments made by paragraphs (1), (2), and (5) shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar quarter that begins on or after the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act;

(ii) the amendments made by paragraph (3) shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(iii) the amendments made by paragraph (7) shall take effect on the first day of the first calendar quarter that begins on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(B) EXCEPTION FOR STATE LEGISLATION.—In the case of a State plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act or a State child health plan under title XXI of such Act that the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires State legislation in order for the respective plan to meet any requirement imposed by amendments made by this subsection, the respective plan shall not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirements of such title solely on the basis of its failure to meet such an additional requirement before the first day of the first calendar quarter beginning after the close of the first regular session of the State legislature that begins after the date of enactment of this Act. For purposes of the previous sentence, in the case of a State that has a 2-year legislative session, each year of the session shall be considered to be a separate regular session of the State legislature.

(C) STATE OPTION FOR EARLIER EFFECTIVE DATE.—A State may elect to have subsection (e)(16) of section 1902 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396a) and subparagraph (J) of section 2107(e)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397gg(e)(1)), as amended by paragraph (2), and subsection (kk) of section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d) and paragraph (13) of section 2105(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397ee(c)), as added by paragraph (5), take effect with respect to the State on the first day of any fiscal quarter that begins before the date described in subparagraph (A) and apply to amounts payable to the State for expenditures for medical assistance, child health assistance, or pregnancy-related assistance to pregnant or postpartum individuals furnished on or after such day.

(c) REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 399V–8. REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE ADDRESSING IMPLICIT BIAS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN PATIENT-PROVIDER INTERACTIONS EDUCATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary, in consultation with such other agency heads as the Secretary determines appropriate, shall award cooperative agreements for the establishment or support of regional centers of excellence addressing implicit bias, cultural competency, and respectful care practices in patient-provider interactions education for the purpose of enhancing and improving how health care professionals are educated in implicit bias and delivering culturally competent health care.

''(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under subsection (a), an entity shall—

''(1) be a public or other nonprofit entity specified by the Secretary that provides educational and training opportunities for students and health care professionals, which may be a health system, teaching hospital, community health center, medical school, school of public health, school of nursing, dental school, social work school, school of professional psychology, or any other health professional school or program at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965) focused on the prevention, treatment, or recovery of health conditions that contribute to maternal mortality and the prevention of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity;

''(2) demonstrate community engagement and participation, such as through partnerships with home visiting and case management programs and community-based organizations serving minority populations;

''(3) demonstrate engagement with groups engaged in the implementation of health care professional training in implicit bias and delivering culturally competent care, such as departments of public health, perinatal quality collaboratives, hospital systems, and health care professional groups, in order to obtain input on resources needed for effective implementation strategies; and

''(4) provide to the Secretary such information, at such time and in such manner, as the Secretary may require.

''(c) DIVERSITY.—In awarding a cooperative agreement under subsection (a), the Secretary shall take into account any regional differences among eligible entities and make an effort to ensure geographic diversity among award recipients.

''(d) DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—

''(1) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services information submitted to the Secretary under subsection (b)(3).

''(2) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall evaluate each regional center of excellence established or supported pursuant to subsection (a) and disseminate the findings resulting from each such evaluation to the appropriate public and private entities.

''(3) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall share evaluations and overall findings with State departments of health and other relevant State level offices to inform State and local best practices.

''(e) MATERNAL MORTALITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'maternal mortality' means death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within the one-year period following the end of such pregnancy.

''(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.''.

(d) SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN.—Section 17(d)(3)(A)(ii) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(d)(3)(A)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking the clause designation and heading and all that follows through ''A State'' and inserting the following:

''(ii) WOMEN.—

''(I) BREASTFEEDING WOMEN.—A State'';

(2) in subclause (I) (as so designated), by striking ''1 year'' and all that follows through ''earlier'' and inserting ''2 years postpartum''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(II) POSTPARTUM WOMEN.—A State may elect to certify a postpartum woman for a period of 2 years.''.

(e) DEFINITION OF MATERNAL MORTALITY.—In this section, the term ''maternal mortality'' means death of a woman that occurs during pregnancy or within the one-year period following the end of such pregnancy.

SEC. 4. FULL SPECTRUM DOULA WORKFORCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish and implement a program to award grants or contracts to health professions schools, schools of public health, academic health centers, State or local governments, territories, Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, Urban Indian organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations, or other appropriate public or private nonprofit entities or community-based organizations (or consortia of any such entities, including entities promoting multidisciplinary approaches), to establish or expand programs to grow and diversify the doula workforce, including through improving the capacity and supply of health care providers.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available by subsection (a) shall be used for the following activities:

(1) Establishing programs that provide education and training to individuals seeking appropriate training or certification as full spectrum doulas.

(2) Expanding the capacity of existing programs described in paragraph (1), for the purpose of increasing the number of students enrolled in such programs, including by awarding scholarships for students who agree to work in underserved communities after receiving such education and training.

(3) Developing and implementing strategies to recruit and retain students from underserved communities, particularly from demographic groups experiencing high rates of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity, including racial and ethnic minority groups, into programs described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(c) FUNDING.—In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated to the Secretary of Health and Human Services for fiscal year 2024, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $50,000,000, to remain available until expended, for carrying out this section.

SEC. 5. GRANTS FOR RURAL OBSTETRIC MOBILE HEALTH UNITS.

Part B of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 243 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 320C. GRANTS FOR RURAL OBSTETRIC MOBILE HEALTH UNITS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (referred to in this section as the 'Secretary'), shall establish a pilot program under which the Secretary shall make grants to States—

''(1) to purchase and equip rural mobile health units for the purpose of providing preconception, pregnancy, postpartum, and obstetric emergency services in rural and underserved communities;

''(2) to train providers including obstetrician-gynecologists, certified nurse-midwives, nurse practitioners, nurses, and midwives to operate and provide obstetric services, including training and planning for obstetric emergencies, in such mobile health units; and

''(3) to address access issues, including social determinants of health and wrap-around clinical and community services including nutrition, housing, lactation services, and transportation support and referrals.

''(b) NO SHARING OF DATA WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, a State shall submit to the Secretary an assurance that the State will not make available to Federal or State law enforcement any personally identifiable information regarding any pregnant or postpartum individual collected pursuant to such grant.

''(c) GRANT DURATION.—The period of a grant under this section shall not exceed 5 years.

''(d) IMPLEMENTING AND REPORTING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—States that receive pilot grants under this section shall—

''(A) implement the program funded by the pilot grants; and

''(B) not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this section, and not later than 6 years after such date of enactment, submit to the Secretary a report that describes the results of such program, including—

''(i) relevant information and relevant quantitative indicators of the programs' success in improving the standard of care and maternal health outcomes for individuals in rural and underserved communities seen for pre-conception, pregnancy, or postpartum visits in the rural mobile health units, stratified by the categories of data specified in paragraph (2);

''(ii) relevant qualitative evaluations from individuals receiving pre-conception, pregnant, or postpartum care from rural mobile health units, including measures of patient-reported experience of care and measures of patient-reported issues with access to care without the rural mobile health unit pilot; and

''(iii) strategies to sustain such programs beyond the duration of the grant and expand such programs to other rural and underserved communities.

''(2) CATEGORIES OF DATA.—The categories of data specified in this paragraph are the following:

''(A) Race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, primary language, age, geography, insurance status, disability status.

''(B) Number of visits provided for preconception, prenatal, or postpartum care.

''(C) Number of repeat visits provided for preconception, prenatal, or postpartum care.

''(D) Number of screenings or tests provided for smoking, substance use, hypertension, sexually-transmitted diseases, diabetes, HIV, depression, intimate partner violence, pap smears, and pregnancy.

''(3) DATA PRIVACY PROTECTION.—The reports referred to in paragraph (1)(B) shall not contain any personally identifiable information regarding any pregnant or postpartum individual.

''(e) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the pilot program under this section to determine the impact of the pilot program with respect to—

''(1) the effectiveness of the grants awarded under this section to improve maternal health outcomes in rural and underserved communities, with data stratified by race, ethnicity, primary language, socioeconomic status, geography, insurance type, and other factors as the Secretary determines appropriate;

''(2) spending on maternity care by States participating in the pilot program;

''(3) to the extent practicable, qualitative and quantitative measures of patient experience; and

''(4) any other areas of assessment that the Secretary determines relevant.

''(f) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the completion of the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress, and make publicly available, a report that describes—

''(1) the results of the evaluation conducted under subsection (e); and

''(2) a recommendation regarding whether the pilot program should be continued after fiscal year 2028 and expanded on a national basis.

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.''.

SEC. 6. REQUIRING NOTIFICATION OF IMPENDING HOSPITAL OBSTETRIC UNIT CLOSURE.

Section 1866(a)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395cc(a)(1)) is amended—

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

(2) in subparagraph (Y)(ii)(V), by striking the period and inserting '', and''; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (Y) the following new subparagraph:

''(Z) beginning 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, in the case of a hospital, not less than 90 days prior to the closure of any obstetric unit of the hospital, to submit to the Secretary a notification which shall include—

''(i) a report analyzing the impact the closure will have on the community;

''(ii) steps the hospital will take to identify other health care providers that can alleviate any service gaps as a result of the closure; and

''(iii) any additional information as may be required by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 7. EVALUATION AND REPORT ON MATERNAL HEALTH NEEDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall conduct, and submit to Congress a report that describes the results of, an evaluation of—

(1) where the maternal health needs are greatest in the United States; and

(2) the Federal expenditures made to address such needs.

(b) PERIOD COVERED.—The evaluation under subsection (a) shall cover the period of calendar years 2000 through 2022.

(c) ANALYSIS.—The evaluation under subsection (a) shall include analysis of the following:

(1) How Federal funds provided to States for maternal health were distributed across regions, States, and localities or counties.

(2) Barriers to applying for and receiving Federal funds for maternal health, including, with respect to initial applications—

(A) requirements for submission in partnership with other entities; and

(B) stringent network requirements.

(3) Why applicants did not receive funding, including limited availability of funds, the strength of the respective applications, and failure to adhere to requirements.

(d) DISAGGREGATION OF DATA.—The report under subsection (a) shall disaggregate data on mothers served by race, ethnicity, insurance status, and language spoken.

SEC. 8. INCREASING EXCISE TAXES ON CIGARETTES AND ESTABLISHING EXCISE TAX EQUITY AMONG ALL TOBACCO PRODUCT TAX RATES.

(a) TAX PARITY FOR ROLL-YOUR-OWN TOBACCO.—Section 5701(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$24.78'' and inserting ''$49.56''.

(b) TAX PARITY FOR PIPE TOBACCO.—Section 5701(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$2.8311 cents'' and inserting ''$49.56''.

(c) TAX PARITY FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO.—

(1) Section 5701(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$1.51'' and inserting ''$26.84'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''50.33 cents'' and inserting ''$10.74''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) SMOKELESS TOBACCO SOLD IN DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS.—On discrete single-use units, $100.66 per thousand.''.

(2) Section 5702(m) of such Code is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or chewing tobacco'' and inserting '', chewing tobacco, or discrete single-use unit'';

(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by inserting ''that is not a discrete single-use unit'' before the period in each such paragraph; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNIT.—The term 'discrete single-use unit' means any product containing, made from, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that—

''(A) is not intended to be smoked; and

''(B) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouch, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit.''.

(d) TAX PARITY FOR SMALL CIGARS.—Paragraph (1) of section 5701(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$50.33'' and inserting ''$100.66''.

(e) TAX PARITY FOR LARGE CIGARS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 5701(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''52.75 percent'' and all that follows through the period and inserting the following: ''$49.56 per pound and a proportionate tax at the like rate on all fractional parts of a pound but not less than 10.066 cents per cigar.''.

(2) GUIDANCE.—The Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary's delegate, may issue guidance regarding the appropriate method for determining the weight of large cigars for purposes of calculating the applicable tax under section 5701(a)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5702 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (l).

(f) TAX PARITY FOR ROLL-YOUR-OWN TOBACCO AND CERTAIN PROCESSED TOBACCO.—Subsection (o) of section 5702 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting '', and includes processed tobacco that is removed for delivery or delivered to a person other than a person with a permit provided under section 5713, but does not include removals of processed tobacco for exportation'' after ''wrappers thereof''.

(g) CLARIFYING TAX RATE FOR OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 5701 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(i) OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—Any product not otherwise described under this section that has been determined to be a tobacco product by the Food and Drug Administration through its authorities under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act shall be taxed at a level of tax equivalent to the tax rate for cigarettes on an estimated per use basis as determined by the Secretary.''.

(2) ESTABLISHING PER USE BASIS.—For purposes of section 5701(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, not later than 12 months after the later of the date of the enactment of this Act or the date that a product has been determined to be a tobacco product by the Food and Drug Administration, the Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary of the Treasury's delegate) shall issue final regulations establishing the level of tax for such product that is equivalent to the tax rate for cigarettes on an estimated per use basis.

(h) CLARIFYING DEFINITION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 5702 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(c) TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—The term 'tobacco products' means—

''(1) cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own tobacco, and

''(2) any other product subject to tax pursuant to section 5701(i).''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (d) of section 5702 of such Code is amended by striking ''cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, or roll-your-own tobacco'' each place it appears and inserting ''tobacco products''.

(i) INCREASING TAX ON CIGARETTES.—

(1) SMALL CIGARETTES.—Section 5701(b)(1) of such Code is amended by striking ''$50.33'' and inserting ''$100.66''.

(2) LARGE CIGARETTES.—Section 5701(b)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''$105.69'' and inserting ''$211.38''.

(j) TAX RATES ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION.—Section 5701 of such Code, as amended by subsection (g), is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(j) INFLATION ADJUSTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any calendar year beginning after 2023, the dollar amounts provided under this chapter shall each be increased by an amount equal to—

''(A) such dollar amount, multiplied by

''(B) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year, determined by substituting 'calendar year 2022' for 'calendar year 2016' in subparagraph (A)(ii) thereof.

''(2) ROUNDING.—If any amount as adjusted under paragraph (1) is not a multiple of $0.01, such amount shall be rounded to the next highest multiple of $0.01.''.

(k) FLOOR STOCKS TAXES.—

(1) IMPOSITION OF TAX.—On tobacco products manufactured in or imported into the United States which are removed before any tax increase date and held on such date for sale by any person, there is hereby imposed a tax in an amount equal to the excess of—

(A) the tax which would be imposed under section 5701 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 on the article if the article had been removed on such date, over

(B) the prior tax (if any) imposed under section 5701 of such Code on such article.

(2) CREDIT AGAINST TAX.—Each person shall be allowed as a credit against the taxes imposed by paragraph (1) an amount equal to the lesser of $1,000 or the amount of such taxes. For purposes of the preceding sentence, all persons treated as a single employer under subsection (b), (c), (m), or (o) of section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall be treated as 1 person for purposes of this paragraph.

(3) LIABILITY FOR TAX AND METHOD OF PAYMENT.—

(A) LIABILITY FOR TAX.—A person holding tobacco products on any tax increase date to which any tax imposed by paragraph (1) applies shall be liable for such tax.

(B) METHOD OF PAYMENT.—The tax imposed by paragraph (1) shall be paid in such manner as the Secretary shall prescribe by regulations.

(C) TIME FOR PAYMENT.—The tax imposed by paragraph (1) shall be paid on or before the date that is 120 days after the effective date of the tax rate increase.

(4) ARTICLES IN FOREIGN TRADE ZONES.—Notwithstanding the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the Foreign Trade Zone Act, 48 Stat. 998, 19 U.S.C. 81a et seq.), or any other provision of law, any article which is located in a foreign trade zone on any tax increase date shall be subject to the tax imposed by paragraph (1) if—

(A) internal revenue taxes have been determined, or customs duties liquidated, with respect to such article before such date pursuant to a request made under the first proviso of section 3(a) of such Act, or

(B) such article is held on such date under the supervision of an officer of the United States Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security pursuant to the second proviso of such section 3(a).

(5) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any term used in this subsection which is also used in section 5702 of such Code shall have the same meaning as such term has in such section.

(B) TAX INCREASE DATE.—The term ''tax increase date'' means the effective date of any increase in any tobacco product excise tax rate pursuant to the amendments made by this section (other than subsection (j) thereof).

(C) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary's delegate.

(6) CONTROLLED GROUPS.—Rules similar to the rules of section 5061(e)(3) of such Code shall apply for purposes of this subsection.

(7) OTHER LAWS APPLICABLE.—All provisions of law, including penalties, applicable with respect to the taxes imposed by section 5701 of such Code shall, insofar as applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions of this subsection, apply to the floor stocks taxes imposed by paragraph (1), to the same extent as if such taxes were imposed by such section 5701. The Secretary may treat any person who bore the ultimate burden of the tax imposed by paragraph (1) as the person to whom a credit or refund under such provisions may be allowed or made.

(l) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), the amendments made by this section shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the last day of the month which includes the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS, LARGE CIGARS, AND PROCESSED TOBACCO.—The amendments made by subsections (c)(1)(C), (c)(2), (e), and (f) shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—The amendments made by subsection (g)(1) shall apply to products removed after the last day of the month which includes the date that the Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary of the Treasury's delegate) issues final regulations establishing the level of tax for such product.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 349—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2023, AS ''NATIONAL STILLBIRTH PREVENTION DAY'', RECOGNIZING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES THAT HAVE ENDURED A STILLBIRTH, AND SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY TO KEEP OTHER FAMILIES FROM EXPERIENCING THE SAME TRAGEDY

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 349

Whereas approximately 21,000 pregnancies in the United States end in stillbirth each year;

Whereas racial disparities persist in birth outcomes, with Black, Hispanic, Native Pacific Islander, and Indigenous families at the greatest risk of losing a baby to stillbirth;

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the annual number of stillbirths far exceeds the number of deaths among children under 15 years of age due to sudden infant death syndrome, car accidents, drowning, guns, fire, poison, and flu combined;

Whereas stillbirths are devastating and have a profound and lifelong impact on the families who endure them;

Whereas stillbirth is linked to an increased risk of maternal mortality;

Whereas, with increased awareness and better data collection, the United States will be able to better understand why stillbirths in the United States are happening at an alarming rate and identify what can be done to combat this crisis;

Whereas proven stillbirth prevention efforts have the power to save thousands of babies every year, and innovations in stillbirth prevention could save thousands of additional families nationwide from the heartache of losing a baby every year;

Whereas recognizing ''National Stillbirth Prevention Day'' is an opportunity to increase awareness, support evidence-based prevention efforts, promote research, encourage improved data collection and greater understanding, and provide support to those who have experienced stillbirth; and

Whereas ''National Stillbirth Prevention Day'' calls on the President and all other Federal officials to use authority to take action to help reduce stillbirths and to ensure every expectant family is educated on how to reduce the risk of losing a baby to stillbirth: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of ''National Stillbirth Prevention Day'';

(2) understands the importance of advancing evidence-based prevention efforts; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe National Stillbirth Prevention Day with appropriate awareness programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 350—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2023 AS ''NATIONAL VOTING RIGHTS MONTH''

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. SMITH, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. COONS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. KING, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 350

Whereas voting is 1 of the single most important rights that can be exercised in a democracy;

Whereas, over the course of history, various voter suppression laws in the United States have hindered, and even prohibited, certain individuals and groups from exercising the right to vote;

Whereas, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Native Americans and people who were born to United States citizens abroad, people who spoke a language other than English, and people who were formerly subjected to slavery were denied full citizenship and prevented from voting by English literacy tests;

Whereas, since the 1870s, minority groups such as Black Americans in the South have suffered from the oppressive effects of Jim Crow laws that were designed to prevent political, economic, and social mobility;

Whereas Black Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other underrepresented voters were subject to violence, poll taxes, literacy tests, all-White primaries, property ownership tests, and grandfather clauses that were designed to suppress the right of those underrepresented individuals to vote;

Whereas 5,800,000 people in the United States are currently banned from voting because of a felony conviction, including 1 in 16 Black adults, due to the shameful entanglement of racial injustice in the criminal legal system and voting access in the United States;

Whereas members of the aforementioned groups and others are currently, in some cases, subject to intimidation, voter roll purges, and financial barriers that act effectively as modern-day poll taxes;

Whereas, in 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) to protect the right of Black Americans and other traditionally disenfranchised groups to vote, among other reasons;

Whereas, in 2013, in the landmark case of Shelby County v. Holder, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), the Supreme Court of the United States invalidated section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10303), dismantling the preclearance formula provision in that Act that protected voters in States and localities that historically have suppressed the right of minorities to vote;

Whereas, since the invalidation of the preclearance formula provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.), gerrymandered districts in many States have gone unchallenged and have become less likely to be invalidated by the courts;

Whereas gerrymandered districts in many States have been found to have a discriminatory impact on traditionally disenfranchised minorities through tactics that include ''cracking'', diluting the voting power of minorities across many districts, and ''packing'', concentrating the power of minority voters into 1 district to reduce their voting power in other districts;

Whereas the courts have found the congressional and, in some cases, State legislative district maps, in Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Alabama, and Louisiana to be gerrymandered districts that were created to favor some groups over others;

Whereas these restrictive voting laws encompass cutbacks in early voting, voter roll purges, placement of faulty equipment in minority communities, requirement of photo identification, and the elimination of same-day registration;

Whereas these policies could outright disenfranchise or make voting much more difficult for more than 80,000,000 minority, elderly, poor, and disabled voters, among other groups;

Whereas, in 2016, discriminatory laws in North Carolina, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and Texas were ruled to violate the rights of voters and were overturned by the courts;

Whereas the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in Shelby County v. Holder, 570 U.S. 529 (2013), calls on Congress to update the formula in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.);

Whereas addressing the challenges of administering future elections requires increasing the accessibility of vote-by-mail and other limited-contact options to ensure access to the ballot and the protection of the health and safety of voters, and access to the ballot amid a global pandemic like the Coronavirus Disease 2019 public health emergency;

Whereas Congress must work to combat any attempts to dismantle or underfund the United States Postal Service or obstruct the passage of the mail as blatant tactics of voter suppression and election interference;

Whereas following the 2020 elections there has been a relentless attack on the right to vote with more than 400 bills having been introduced to roll back the right to vote, including such bills being introduced in almost every State and at least 44 of such bills having been signed into law in 18 States;

Whereas there is much more work to be done to ensure all citizens of the United States have the right to vote through free, fair, and accessible elections, and Congress must exercise its constitutional authority to protect the right to vote;

Whereas National Voter Registration Day in 2023 is Tuesday, September 19; and

Whereas September 2023 would be an appropriate month—

(1) to designate as ''National Voting Rights Month''; and

(2) to ensure that, through the registration of voters and awareness of elections, the democracy of the United States includes all citizens of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2023 as ''National Voting Rights Month'';

(2) encourages all people in the United States to uphold the right of every citizen to exercise the sacred and fundamental right to vote;

(3) encourages Congress to pass—

(A) the Freedom to Vote Act (S. 1, 118th Congress), to set basic national standards to make sure all people in the United States can cast their ballots in the way that works best for them, regardless of what ZIP code they live in, improve access to the ballot for people in the United States, advance commonsense election integrity reforms, and protect the democracy of the United States from relentless attacks;

(B) the Democracy Restoration Act of 2023 (S. 1677, 118th Congress), to restore Federal voting rights to citizens after release from imprisonment, honoring the responsibilities of citizenship and civic engagement necessary for building healthy and safe communities, while welcoming the contributions of

people returning home after imprisonment; and

(C) other voting rights legislation that seeks to advance voting rights and protect elections in the United States;

(4) recommends that public schools and universities in the United States develop an academic curriculum that educates students about—

(A) the importance of voting, how to register to vote, where to vote, and the different forms of voting;

(B) the history of voter suppression in the United States before and after passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.); and

(C) current measures that have been taken to restrict the vote;

(5) expresses appreciation for the United States Postal Service having issued a special Representative John R. Lewis stamp—

(A) to honor the life and legacy of Representative John R. Lewis in supporting voting rights; and

(B) to remind people in the United States that ordinary citizens risked their lives, marched, and participated in the great democracy of the United States so that all citizens would have the fundamental right to vote; and

(6) invites Congress to allocate the requisite funds for public service announcements on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, billboards, buses, and other forms of media—

(A) to remind people in the United States when elections are being held;

(B) to share important registration deadlines; and

(C) to urge people to get out and vote.

SENATE RESOLUTION 351—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 25, 2023, AS ''NATIONAL LOBSTER DAY''

Mr. KING (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Whereas lobstering has served as an economic engine and family tradition in the United States for centuries;

Whereas thousands of families in the United States make their livelihoods from catching, processing, or serving lobsters;

Whereas the lobster industry employs people of all ages year-round, and many harvesters begin fishing as children and stay in the industry for their entire working lives;

Whereas the lobster industry has spearheaded sustainability measures for more than 150 years, ensuring the health of the lobster stock and the marine environment;

Whereas consumers are looking to add more sustainable seafood to their diets, and more people are enjoying lobster at home;

Whereas historical lore notes that lobster likely joined turkey on the table at the very first Thanksgiving feast in 1621, and lobster continues to be a mainstay during many other holiday traditions;

Whereas lobster harvesters are evolving and diversifying their businesses to help maintain the health of the ocean, including through kelp farming, which absorbs carbon dioxide from seawater;

Whereas throughout history, Presidents of the United States have served lobster at their inaugural celebrations and state dinners with international leaders;

Whereas lobster is a versatile source of lean protein that is low in saturated fat and high in vitamin B12;

Whereas lobster is continually incorporated into foods such as pho, gnocchi, doughnuts, cocktails, ice cream, and butter;

Whereas the peak of the lobstering season in the United States occurs in late summer;

Whereas the Unicode Consortium added a lobster to its emoji set in 2018 in recognition of the popularity of the lobster around the world;

Whereas lobsters have inspired artists in the United States and throughout the world for hundreds of years;

Whereas lobsters have been, and continue to be, used as mascots for sports teams;

Whereas lobsters inspire innovation of all kinds beyond the culinary realm, including skincare, fertilizer, robotics, and biodegradable golf balls;

Whereas countless people in the United States enjoy lobster rolls to celebrate summer, from beaches to backyards, and from fine-dining restaurants to lobster shacks; and

Whereas lobster is a staple on the menus of beloved restaurants across the United States, and in kitchens across the United States, bringing families and friends together: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 25, 2023, as ''National Lobster Day''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 352—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2023 AS ''NATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. HAWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 352

Whereas, each year, more than 15,500 children under the age of 19 in the United States are diagnosed with cancer;

Whereas, every year, more than 1,700 children in the United States lose their lives to cancer;

Whereas childhood cancer is the leading cause of death from disease and the second leading cause of death overall for children in the United States;

Whereas the 5-year survival rate for children with cancer in the United States has increased from 58 percent in the mid-1970s to 85 percent in 2023, representing a significant improvement from previous decades;

Whereas approximately ⅔ of children in the United States who survive cancer will develop at least one chronic health condition, and many survivors will face a late effect from treatment that can be severe or life-threatening; and

Whereas childhood cancer occurs regularly and randomly and spares no racial or ethnic group, socioeconomic class, or geographic region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2023 as ''National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month'';

(2) requests that the Federal Government, States, localities, and nonprofit organizations observe the month with appropriate programs and activities, with the goal of increasing public knowledge of the risks of cancer;

(3) encourages survivors of childhood cancer to continue to receive ongoing monitoring and physical and psychosocial care throughout their adult lives;

(4) recognizes the human toll of cancer and pledges to make the prevention of and cure for cancer a public health priority;

(5) reminds the people of the United States of the bravery of children who are diagnosed with cancer; and

(6) commends and honors the courage of such children.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1242. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1243. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1244. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1245. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1246. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1247. Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. BUDD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1248. Mr. KING submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1249. Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1250. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1251. Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. CARPER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1252. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1253. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1254. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1255. Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment

SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1256. Mr. LANKFORD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1257. Mr. JOHNSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1258. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1259. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1260. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1261. Mr. REED (for Mr. TESTER) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 238, expressing support for recognizing September 20 as National Service Dog Day.

SA 1262. Mr. ROMNEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1263. Mr. ROMNEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1264. Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1265. Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1266. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1267. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1268. Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1242. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 230, line 13, insert ''*Provided further*, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to Congress a report that provides, with respect to the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (Pub. L. 112-95), FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 (Pub. L. 114-190), and FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-254), a list of each rulemaking and report requirement in such Acts and the status of each rulemaking or report: *Provided further*, That the amounts made available under this heading shall be reduced by $100,000 for each day after the date that is 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act that such report has not been submitted to Congress:'' after ''Congress:''.

SA 1243. Mr. BUDD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

At the appropriate place in division C, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO IMPLEMENT EXECUTIVE ORDER 14019.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this division may be used to implement or enforce Executive Order 14019 (86 Fed. Reg. 13623; relating to promoting access to voting).

SA 1244. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to finalize, implement, administer, or enforce the proposed rule of the Department of Agriculture entitled ''Use of Electronic Identification Eartags as Official Identification in Cattle and Bison'' (88 Fed. Reg. 3320 (January 19, 2023)).

SA 1245. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall submit to Congress a report regarding the state of the conservatorship of the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (referred to in this section as the ''covered entities'').

(b) The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) policy options that could be taken to end the conservatorship of the covered entities;

(2) potential safeguards that would need to be established to ensure that, after the end of the conservatorship of the covered entities, the covered entities would not need to be placed in conservatorship at a future date;

(3) whether the conservatorship of the covered entities has accomplished the primary goals of the conservatorship; and

(4) if applicable, the projected timeline for ending the conservatorship of the covered entities.

SA 1246. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''SALARIES AND EXPENSES'' under the heading ''AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE'' under the heading ''AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS'' in title I of division B, insert '': *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, $8,100,000 shall be used to carry out cranberry research'' before the period at the end.

SA 1247. Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. BUDD) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the amendment, insert the following:

DIVISION D—LUMBEE FAIRNESS ACT

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This division may be cited as the ''Lumbee Fairness Act''.

SEC. 102. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

The Act of June 7, 1956 (70 Stat. 254, chapter 375), is amended—

(1) by striking section 2;

(2) in the first sentence of the first section, by striking ''That the Indians'' and inserting the following:

''SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF LUMBEE INDIANS.

''The Indians'';

(3) in the preamble—

(A) by inserting before the first undesignated clause the following:

''SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

''Congress finds that—'';

(B) by designating the undesignated clauses as paragraphs (1) through (4), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(C) by striking ''Whereas'' each place it appears;

(D) by striking ''and'' after the semicolon at the end of each of paragraphs (1) and (2) (as so designated); and

(E) in paragraph (4) (as so designated), by striking '': Now, therefore,'' and inserting a period;

(4) by moving the enacting clause so as to appear before section 1 (as so designated);

(5) by striking the last sentence of section 3 (as designated by paragraph (2));

(6) by inserting before section 3 (as designated by paragraph (2)) the following:

''SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

''In this Act:

''(1) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of the Interior.

''(2) TRIBE.—The term 'Tribe' means the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina or the Lumbee Indians of North Carolina.''; and

(7) by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 4. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to the Tribe (as designated as petitioner number 65 by the Office of Federal Acknowledgment).

''(b) APPLICABILITY OF LAWS.—All laws and regulations of the United States of general application to Indians and Indian tribes shall apply to the Tribe and its members.

''(c) PETITION FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Notwithstanding section 3, any group of Indians in Robeson and adjoining counties, North Carolina, whose members are not enrolled in the Tribe (as determined under section 5(d)) may petition under part 83 of title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations for acknowledgment of tribal existence.

''SEC. 5. ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL SERVICES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Tribe and its members shall be eligible for all services and benefits provided by the Federal Government to federally recognized Indian tribes.

''(b) SERVICE AREA.—For the purpose of the delivery of Federal services and benefits described in subsection (a), those members of the Tribe residing in Robeson, Cumberland, Hoke, and Scotland counties in North Carolina shall be deemed to be residing on or near an Indian reservation.

''(c) DETERMINATION OF NEEDS.—On verification by the Secretary of a tribal roll under subsection (d), the Secretary and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall—

''(1) develop, in consultation with the Tribe, a determination of needs to provide the services for which members of the Tribe are eligible; and

''(2) after the tribal roll is verified, each submit to Congress a written statement of those needs.

''(d) TRIBAL ROLL.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purpose of the delivery of Federal services and benefits described in subsection (a), the tribal roll in effect on the date of enactment of this section shall, subject to verification by the Secretary, define the service population of the Tribe.

''(2) VERIFICATION LIMITATION AND DEADLINE.—The verification by the Secretary under paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) be limited to confirming documentary proof of compliance with the membership criteria set out in the constitution of the Tribe adopted on November 16, 2001; and

''(B) be completed not later than 2 years after the submission of a digitized roll with supporting documentary proof by the Tribe to the Secretary.

''SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION TO TAKE LAND INTO TRUST.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary is hereby authorized to take land into trust for the benefit of the Tribe.

''(b) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN LAND.—An application to take into trust land located within Robeson County, North Carolina, under this section shall be treated by the Secretary as an 'on reservation' trust acquisition under part 151 of title 25, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

''SEC. 7. JURISDICTION OF STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—With respect to land located within the State of North Carolina that is owned by, or held in trust by the United States for the benefit of, the Tribe, or any dependent Indian community of the Tribe, the State of North Carolina shall exercise jurisdiction over—

''(1) all criminal offenses that are committed; and

''(2) all civil actions that arise.

''(b) TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary may accept on behalf of the United States, after consulting with the Attorney General of the United States, any transfer by the State of North Carolina to the United States of any portion of the jurisdiction of the State of North Carolina described in subsection (a) over Indian country occupied by the Tribe pursuant to an agreement between the Tribe and the State of North Carolina.

''(2) RESTRICTION.—A transfer of jurisdiction described in paragraph (1) may not take effect until 2 years after the effective date of the agreement described in that paragraph.

''(c) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section affects the application of section 109 of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1919).

''SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.''.

SA 1248. Mr. KING submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT'' under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING SERVICE'' under the heading ''RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS'' in title III of division C, strike ''$60,000,000 for section 515'' and insert ''$200,000,000 for section 515''.

In the matter under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT'' under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING SERVICE'' under the heading ''RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS'' in title III of division C, strike ''$35,000,000'' and insert ''75,000,000''.

SA 1249. Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. ADVANCING EFFORTS SEEKING COMPLIANCE BY MEXICO WITH TREATY ON UTILIZATION OF WATERS OF THE COLORADO AND TIJUANA RIVERS AND OF THE RIO GRANDE.

The Secretary of State shall use the voice, vote, diplomatic capital, and resources of the United States to ensure that United States diplomats and officials of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission are able to advance efforts seeking compliance by the United Mexican States with the Treaty on Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande, signed at Washington February 3, 1944, and to establish understandings to provide predictable and reliable future deliveries of water by the United Mexican States.

SA 1250. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS TO CHANGE RATE OF REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION VIA SPECIAL MODE OF TRANSPORTATION.

During the period beginning on October 1, 2023, and ending on September 30, 2024, no funds appropriated by this division may be obligated or expended to change rates for reimbursement for transportation of a veteran or other individual via a special mode of transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from the rates in place as of January 1, 2023.

SEC. ____. REDUCTION OF AMOUNTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The amounts otherwise made available by this division for the Departmental Administration—General Administration account of the Department of Veterans Affairs are hereby reduced by $43,500,000.

SA 1251. Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. CARPER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT'' under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING SERVICE''

under the heading ''RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS'' in title III of division C, strike ''$850,000,000'' and insert ''$793,520,000''.

In the matter under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT'' under the heading ''RURAL HOUSING SERVICE'' under the heading ''RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS'' in title III of division C, strike ''$62,637,000'' and insert ''$82,637,000''.

In title VII of division B, strike sections 771 and 774.

SA 1252. Mr. KENNEDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of division A, insert the following:

TITLE V—IMPROVING REVIEW OF CLAIMS FOR VETERANS BENEFITS

SEC. 501. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans Act of 2023'' or the ''PLUS for Veterans Act of 2023''.

SEC. 502. CLARIFICATION OF PREPARATION, PRESENTATION, OR PROSECUTION OF A CLAIM UNDER A LAW ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 5901 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''Except'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Except''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) EXCLUSION.—The administration of a medical examination, or the writing of a report based on such examination, described in section 5125 of this title, does not constitute the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim described in subsection (a).''.

SEC. 503. AGENTS AND ATTORNEYS IN CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS: RECOGNITION; SUSPENSION.

Section 5904 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by inserting ''(A)'' before ''Except''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

''(B)(i) The Secretary shall determine whether to recognize under subparagraph (A) an agent or attorney who applies for such recognition not later than 90 days after the Secretary receives such application.

''(ii) If the Secretary cannot verify whether the agent or attorney meets the qualifications and standards prescribed under paragraph (2) before the end of such 90 days, the Secretary shall recognize the agent or attorney under such subparagraph.

''(C) The Secretary may not refuse to recognize under subparagraph (A) an agent or attorney solely on the basis that such agent or attorney charges a claimant a fee for services rendered in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim.

''(D) The Secretary may suspend under subsection (b) an agent or attorney described in subparagraph (E) without regard to the notice and opportunity for a hearing under such subsection.

''(E) An agent or attorney described in this subparagraph is an agent or attorney—

''(i) recognized pursuant to subparagraph (B)(ii); and

''(ii) whom the Secretary determines, after the 90-day period described in such subparagraph, does not meet the qualifications and standards prescribed under paragraph (2).''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (9) as subparagraphs (A) through (I), respectively;

(B) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated, by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Secretary''; and

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

''(2) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of the Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans Act of 2023 and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report regarding the number of individuals suspended under this subsection or denied recognition under subsection (a), disaggregated by the reasons for such suspension or denial and whether the individual is—

''(A) a representative of an organization recognized under section 5902 of this title;

''(B) an agent; or

''(C) an attorney.''.

SEC. 504. FEES ALLOWABLE FOR REPRESENTATION OF VETERANS FOR CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) FEES.—Section 5904 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 503, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by striking ''preparation, presentation, and prosecution of a claim before the Department'' and inserting ''course of representation described in subsection (c)(2)'';

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in the subsection heading, by inserting ''FLAT FEE AGREEMENTS.—'' after ''(c)'';

(B) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1)(A) In a case other than a case described in paragraph (2), a fee agreement between a claimant and an agent or attorney, with respect to the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim under a law administered by the Secretary, shall be a fee agreement under—

''(i) this paragraph, using a standard agreement form prescribed by the Secretary;

''(ii) subsection (d); or

''(iii) subsection (e).

''(B) A fee agreement under this paragraph is one under which the total amount payable by the claimant to the agent or attorney with respect to the claim—

''(i) may not exceed $12,500 (as adjusted from time to time under subparagraph (C)); and

''(ii) is contingent on whether the claim is resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant.

''(C) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in the first fiscal year after the date of the enactment of the Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans Act of 2023), the Secretary shall increase the dollar amount in effect under clause (i) of subparagraph (B) by a percentage equal to the percentage by which the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (U.S. city average) increased during the 12-month period ending with the last month for which Consumer Price Index data is available. In the event that such Consumer Price Index does not increase during such period, the Secretary shall maintain the dollar amount in effect under such clause during the previous fiscal year.

''(D) The limitation under subparagraph (B)(i) does not apply to any fee charged, allowed, or paid for services provided with respect to proceedings before a court.

''(E) For purposes of subparagraph (B)(ii), a claim shall be considered to have been resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant if all or any part of the relief sought is granted.

''(F) The form prescribed by the Secretary under subparagraph (A)(i) shall include the following notifications to the claimant:

''(i) That organizations recognized under section 5902 of this title furnish services concerning claims under laws administered by the Secretary, at no cost to claimants.

''(ii) That the claimant may select a private physician for a medical examination described in section 5125 of this title regarding the claim.

''(iii) That such agent or attorney may not refer the claimant to a private physician described in clause (ii) with whom the agent or attorney has a business relationship regarding the claim.'';

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking ''referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection'' and inserting ''regarding a claim under a law administered by the Secretary'';

(D) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking ''to paragraph (2)'' and inserting ''to paragraph (1) or (2)''; and

(E) by striking paragraph (4); and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) PAYMENT OF FEES OUT OF AN AWARD OR INCREASED AWARD.—(1) When a claimant and an agent or attorney have entered into a fee agreement described in paragraph (2), the total fee payable to the agent or attorney (including all ancillary fees) may not exceed the amount that is equal to the product of five and the amount of the monthly increase of benefits awarded on the basis of the claim.

''(2) A fee agreement referred to in paragraph (1) is one under which the total amount of the fee payable to the agent or attorney—

''(A) is to be paid to the agent or attorney by the claimant, after commencement of the monthly period of payment of monetary benefits based on an award or increased award (as defined in section 5111(d) of this title); and

''(B) is contingent on whether the matter is resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant.

''(3) For the purposes of this subsection, a claim shall be considered to have been resolved in a manner favorable to the claimant if all or any part of the relief sought is granted.''.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out the amendments made by this section.

SEC. 505. REINSTATEMENT OF PENALTIES FOR CHARGING VETERANS UNAUTHORIZED FEES RELATING TO CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5905 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking ''**Penalty**'' and inserting ''**Penalties**'';

(2) by striking ''Whoever'' and inserting the following:

''(a) WITHHOLDING OF BENEFITS.—Whoever''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(b) CHARGING OF UNAUTHORIZED FEES.—Except as provided in sections 5904 or 1984 of this title, whoever directly or indirectly solicits, contracts for, charges, or receives, or attempts to solicit, contract for, charge, or receive, any fee or compensation with respect to the preparation, presentation, or

prosecution of any claim for benefits under a law administered by the Secretary shall be fined as provided in title 18, or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 59 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 5905 and inserting the following new item:

''5905. Penalties for certain acts.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 1253. Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. _______. (a) In addition to amounts otherwise made available, there is appropriated, out of amounts in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $1,000,000 to carry out section 4208 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (7 U.S.C. 2026a).

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the total amount appropriated under the heading ''OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY'' under the heading ''PROCESSING, RESEARCH, AND MARKETING'' under the heading ''AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS'' in title I is reduced by $1,000,000.

SA 1254. Mr. DURBIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title VII of division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) In addition to the annual amount of user fees authorized to be assessed and collected under section 919(c) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 387s(c)) and made available for purposes of carrying out the Food and Drug Administration's tobacco regulation activities under chapter IX of such Act (21 U.S.C. 387 et seq.), notwithstanding section 919(c)(2)(B) of such Act (21 U.S.C. 387s(c)(2)(B)), of the amounts made available to the Food and Drug Administration under this Act, not less than $8,000,000 shall be used by the Commissioner of Food and Drugs for such tobacco regulation activities, including to enhance regulatory reviews of, and enforcement actions with respect to, electronic nicotine delivery systems.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the amount rescinded pursuant to section 745 shall be $315,526,000.

SA 1255. Mr. OSSOFF (for himself, Mr. BRAUN, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 75, line 23, strike the period at the end and insert the following: '', of which $10,000,000 shall be made available for the Office of Women's Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs established under section 7310 of title 38, United States Code, to be used by the Secretary to expand access of women veterans to—

(1) mobile mammography initiatives;

(2) advanced mammography equipment; and

(3) outreach activities to publicize such initiatives and equipment.

SA 1256. Mr. LANKFORD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title VII of division B, insert the following:

SEC. 7____. (a) The modifications approved by the Food and Drug Administration on January 3, 2023, to the risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under section 505–1 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355–1) for mifepristone shall have no force or effect.

(b) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to—

(1) establish, implement, or enforce any provision of a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under section 505–1 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 355–1) for mifepristone that is substantially similar to any of the modifications nullified by subsection (a); or

(2) exercise discretion to not enforce any provision of a risk evaluation and mitigation strategy under such section 505–1 for mifepristone.

SA 1257. Mr. JOHNSON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

DIVISION D—PREVENT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT OF 2023

SECTION 4001. SHORT TITLE.

This division may be cited as the ''Prevent Government Shutdowns Act of 2023''.

SEC. 4002. AUTOMATIC CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle I of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 1311. Automatic continuing appropriations

''(a)(1)(A) On and after the first day of each fiscal year, if an appropriation Act for such fiscal year with respect to the account for a program, project, or activity has not been enacted and continuing appropriations are not in effect with respect to the program, project, or activity, there are appropriated such sums as may be necessary to continue, at the rate for operations specified in subparagraph (C), the program, project, or activity if funds were provided for the program, project, or activity during the preceding fiscal year.

''(B)(i) Appropriations and funds made available and authority granted under subparagraph (A) shall be available for a period of 14 days.

''(ii) If, at the end of the first 14-day period during which appropriations and funds are made available and authority is granted under subparagraph (A), and the end of every 14-day period thereafter, an appropriation Act for such fiscal year with respect to the account for a program, project, or activity has not been enacted and continuing appropriations are not in effect with respect to the program, project, or activity under a provision of law other than subparagraph (A), the appropriations and funds made available and authority granted under subparagraph (A) during the 14-day period shall be extended for an additional 14-day period.

''(C)(i) Except as provided in clause (ii), the rate for operations specified in this subparagraph with respect to a program, project, or activity is the rate for operations for the preceding fiscal year for the program, project, or activity—

''(I) provided in the corresponding appropriation Act for such preceding fiscal year;

''(II) if the corresponding appropriation bill for such preceding fiscal year was not enacted, provided in the law providing continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year; or

''(III) if the corresponding appropriation bill and a law providing continuing appropriations for such preceding fiscal year were not enacted, provided under this section for such preceding fiscal year.

''(ii) For entitlements and other mandatory payments whose budget authority was provided for the previous fiscal year in appropriations Acts, under a law other than this section providing continuing appropriations for such previous year, or under this section, and for activities under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, appropriations and funds made available during a fiscal year under this section shall be at the rate necessary to maintain program levels under current law, under the authority and conditions provided in the applicable appropriations Act.

''(2) Appropriations and funds made available, and authority granted, for any fiscal year pursuant to this section for a program, project, or activity shall be available, in accordance with paragraph (1)(B), for the period—

''(A) beginning on the first day of any lapse in appropriations during such fiscal year; and

''(B) ending on the date of enactment of an appropriation Act for such fiscal year with respect to the account for such program, project, or activity (whether or not such Act provides appropriations for such program, project, or activity) or a law making continuing appropriations for the program, project, or activity, as applicable.

''(3) Notwithstanding section 251(a)(1) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(a)(1)) and the timetable in section 254(a) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 904(a)), for any fiscal year for which appropriations and funds are made available under this section, the final sequestration report for such fiscal year pursuant to section 254(f)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 904(f)(1)) and any order for such fiscal year pursuant to section 254(f)(5) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 901(f)(5)) shall be issued—

''(A) for the Congressional Budget Office, 10 days after the date on which appropriation Acts providing funding for the entire Federal Government through the end of such fiscal year have been enacted; and

''(B) for the Office of Management and Budget, 15 days after the date on which appropriation Acts providing funding for the entire Federal Government through the end of such fiscal year have been enacted.

''(b) An appropriation or funds made available, or authority granted, for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be subject to the terms and conditions imposed with respect to the appropriation made or funds made available for the preceding fiscal year, or authority granted for such program, project, or activity under current law.

''(c) Expenditures made for a program, project, or activity for any fiscal year pursuant to this section shall be charged to the applicable appropriation, fund, or authorization whenever an appropriation Act for such fiscal year with respect to the account for a program, project, or activity or a law making continuing appropriations until the end of such fiscal year for such program, project, or activity is enacted.

''(d) This section shall not apply to a program, project, or activity during a fiscal year if any other provision of law (other than an authorization of appropriations)—

''(1) makes an appropriation, makes funds available, or grants authority for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period; or

''(2) specifically provides that no appropriation shall be made, no funds shall be made available, or no authority shall be granted for such program, project, or activity to continue for such period.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subtitle I of chapter 13 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''1311. Automatic continuing appropriations.''.

SEC. 4003. TIMELY ENACTMENT OF APPROPRIATION ACTS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''covered officer or employee'' means—

(A) an officer or employee of the Office of Management and Budget;

(B) a Member of Congress; or

(C) an employee of the personal office of a Member of Congress, a committee of either House of Congress, or a joint committee of Congress;

(2) the term ''covered period''—

(A) means any period of automatic continuing appropriations; and

(B) with respect to the legislative branch—

(i) does not include any period of automatic continuing appropriations that occurs during the period—

(I) beginning at the time at which general appropriations Acts providing funding for the entire Federal Government (including an appropriation Act providing continuing funding) have been enacted or passed in identical form by both Houses and transmitted to the Secretary of the Senate or Clerk of the House for enrollment and presentment to the President for his signature; and

(II) ending at the time at which 1 or more general appropriations Acts—

(aa) are vetoed by the President; or

(bb) do not become law without the President's signature under article I, section 7 of the Constitution of the United States based on an adjournment of the Congress; and

(ii) includes any period of automatic continuing appropriations that is not a period described in clause (i) and that follows a veto or a failure to become law (as described in item (bb) of clause (i)(II)) of 1 or more general appropriations Acts;

(3) the term ''Member of Congress'' has the meaning given that term in section 2106 of title 5, United States Code;

(4) the term ''National Capital Region'' has the meaning given that term in section 8702 of title 40, United States Code; and

(5) the term ''period of automatic continuing appropriations'' means a period during which automatic continuing appropriations under section 1311 of title 31, United States Code, as added by section 2 of this Act, are in effect with respect to 1 or more programs, projects, or activities.

(b) LIMITS ON TRAVEL EXPENDITURES.—

(1) LIMITS ON OFFICIAL TRAVEL.—

(A) LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no amounts may be obligated or expended for official travel by a covered officer or employee during a covered period.

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—

(i) RETURN TO DC.—If a covered officer or employee is away from the seat of Government on the date on which a covered period begins, funds may be obligated and expended for official travel for a single return trip to the seat of Government by the covered officer or employee.

(ii) TRAVEL IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.—During a covered period, amounts may be obligated and expended for official travel by a covered officer or employee from one location in the National Capital Region to another location in the National Capital Region.

(iii) NATIONAL SECURITY EVENTS.—During a covered period, if a national security event that triggers a continuity of operations or continuity of Government protocol occurs, amounts may be obligated and expended for official travel by a covered officer or employee for any official travel relating to responding to the national security event or implementing the continuity of operations or continuity of Government protocol.

(2) RESTRICTION ON USE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS.—Section 313 of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30114) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)(2), by striking ''for ordinary'' and inserting ''except as provided in subsection (d), for ordinary''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) RESTRICTION ON USE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS FOR OFFICIAL TRAVEL DURING AUTOMATIC CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), during a covered period (as defined in section 3 of the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act of 2023), a contribution or donation described in subsection (a) may not be obligated or expended for travel in connection with duties of the individual as a holder of Federal office.

''(2) RETURN TO DC.—If the individual is away from the seat of Government on the date on which a covered period (as so defined) begins, a contribution or donation described in subsection (a) may be obligated and expended for travel by the individual to return to the seat of Government.''.

(c) PROCEDURES IN THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During a covered period, in the Senate and the House of Representatives—

(A) it shall not be in order to move to proceed to any matter except for—

(i) a measure making appropriations for the fiscal year during which the covered period begins;

(ii) any motion required to determine the presence of or produce a quorum; or

(iii) on and after the 30th calendar day after the first day of a covered period—

(I) the nomination of an individual—

(aa) to a position at level I of the Executive Schedule under section 5312 of title 5, United States Code; or

(bb) to serve as Chief Justice of the United States or an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; or

(II) a measure extending the period during which a program, project, or activity is authorized to be carried out (without substantive change to the program, project, or activity or any other program, project, or activity) if—

(aa) an appropriation Act with respect to the program, project, or activity for the fiscal year during which the covered period occurs has not been enacted; and

(bb) the program, project, or activity has expired since the beginning of such fiscal year or will expire during the 30-day period beginning on the date of the motion;

(B) it shall not be in order to move to recess or adjourn for a period of more than 23 hours; and

(C) at noon each day, or immediately following any constructive convening of the Senate under rule IV, paragraph 2 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Presiding Officer shall direct the clerk to determine whether a quorum is present.

(2) WAIVER.—

(A) LIMITATION ON PERIOD.—It shall not be in order in the Senate or the House of Representatives to move to waive any provision of paragraph (1) for a period that is longer than 7 days.

(B) SUPERMAJORITY VOTE.—A provision of paragraph (1) may only be waived or suspended upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members of the applicable House of Congress, duly chosen and sworn.

(d) MOTION TO PROCEED TO APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the 30th calendar day after the first day of each fiscal year, if an appropriation Act for such fiscal year with respect to a program, project, or activity has not been enacted, it shall be in order in the Senate, notwithstanding rule XXII or any pending executive measure or matter, to move to proceed to any appropriations bill or joint resolution for the program, project, or activity that has been sponsored and cosponsored by not less than 3 Senators who are members of or caucus with the party in the majority in the Senate and not less than 3 Senators who are members of or caucus with the party in the minority in the Senate.

(2) CONSIDERATION.—For a bill or joint resolution described in paragraph (1)—

(A) the bill or joint resolution may be considered the same day as it is introduced and shall not have to lie over 1 day; and

(B) the motion to proceed to the bill or joint resolution shall be debatable for not to exceed 6 hours, equally divided between the proponents and opponents of the motion, and upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate shall vote on the motion to proceed.

SEC. 4004. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) CLASSIFICATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—The budgetary effects of this division and the amendments made by this division shall be estimated as if this division and the amendments made by this division are discretionary appropriations Acts for purposes of section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900 et seq.).

(b) BASELINE.—For purposes of calculating the baseline under section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 907), the provision of budgetary resources under section 1311 of title 31, United States Code, as added by this division, for an account shall be considered to be a continuing appropriation in effect for

such account for less than the entire current year.

(c) ENFORCEMENT OF DISCRETIONARY SPENDING LIMITS.—For purposes of enforcing the discretionary spending limits under section 251(a) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(a)), the budgetary resources made available under section 1311 of title 31, United States Code, as added by this division, shall be considered part-year appropriations for purposes of section 251(a)(4) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(a)(4)).

SA 1258. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SENSE OF CONGRESS AND REPORT ON NATIONAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INSTITUTE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that Congress supports the National Artificial Intelligence Institute of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the endeavors of the Institute to research, develop, incorporate, and implement artificial intelligence where needed in the Department.

(b) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the mission of the Institute, the current programs of the Institute, the implementation by the Institute of artificial intelligence within the Department, and the strategy of the Institute to incorporate artificial intelligence across the Department going forward.

SA 1259. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division B, insert the following:

SEC. ____. In determining awardees of grants under the distance learning and telemedicine program under chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XXIII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa et seq.), the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide attention to the need for distance learning and telemedicine access in moderately rugged and highly rugged areas, as defined by the Road Ruggedness Scale of the Economic Research Service.

SA 1260. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONSULTATION WITH PHYSICIANS ON NATIONAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on how the Department of Veterans Affairs consults with physicians to ensure that safe, high-quality national standards of practice are developed and implemented across medical centers of the Department.

SA 1261. Mr. REED (for Mr. TESTER) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 238, expressing support for recognizing September 20 as National Service Dog Day; as follows:

In the first whereas clause of the preamble, strike ‘‘including—’’ and all that follows through ‘‘disabilities’’.

In the second whereas clause of the preamble, strike ‘‘, hear’’ and all that follows through ‘‘seizure’’.

Strike the fourth whereas clause of the preamble.

In the fifth whereas clause of the preamble, strike ‘‘, including’’ and all that follows through ‘‘ideation’’.

In the sixth whereas clause of the preamble, strike ‘‘, located in all 50 States, Puerto Riceo, and Guam’’.

SA 1262. Mr. ROMNEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title I of division C, insert the following:

SEC. ______. Not later than September 30, 2024, the Secretary of Transportation shall submit to Congress a report that compares the labor costs of transportation projects funded by the Department of Transportation (including through any grant, loan, loan guarantee, insurance, or other method) that are subject to the final rule of the Department of Labor entitled ‘‘Updating the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts Regulations’’ (88 Fed. Reg. 57526 (August 23, 2023)) with the labor costs of transportation projects funded by the Department of Transportation (including through any grant, loan, loan guarantee, insurance, or other method) in the 1-year period ending on the effective date of that rule.

SA 1263. Mr. ROMNEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _______. PROTECTING DOMESTIC SOURCES OF URANIUM.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds shall be used to designate a new, or expand an existing, national monument on land that includes a uranium mill or mine that may provide a domestic source of uranium.

SA 1264. Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REVIEW OF VETERANS WHO ENGAGED IN TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES WHILE SERVING IN KOSOVO AND THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF SUCH TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.

(a) REVIEW REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the following:

(1) Data regarding the mortality of covered veterans.

(2) Any data on toxic exposure experienced by covered veterans that is both relevant and available, including toxicology studies.

(3) The type of toxic exposure risk activities covered veterans engaged in while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo.

(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of subsection (a), a covered veteran is a veteran who—

(1) served in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo; and

(2) as part of such service, engaged in a toxic exposure risk activity.

(c) MANNER AND SUITABILITY OF REVIEW.—The Secretary shall carry out the review required by subsection (a) in a manner such that the findings of the Secretary with respect to the review are suitable and applicable under subchapter VII of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, AIR, OR SPACE SERVICE.—The term ‘‘active military, naval, air, or space service’’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY.—The term ‘‘toxic exposure risk activity’’ has the meaning given such term in section 1710(e)(4) of such title.

(3) VETERAN.—The term ‘‘veteran’’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of such title.

SA 1265. Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV of division C, insert the following:

SEC. ____.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency may adjust the limit established under section 408(h)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and

Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(h)(1)) with respect to a major disaster declared under section 401 of that Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) outside the continental United States after August 1, 2023, based on appropriate economic indicators demonstrating high local repair and construction costs. *Provided*, that such amounts are designated by Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 951(b)(2)(A)(i)).

SA 1266. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ___. AMOUNTS FOR ROSECRANS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, MISSOURI.

The is appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $2,000,000 to carry out a project at Rosecrans Air National Guard Base, Missouri, relating to 139th airlift wing entry control point planning and design.

SA 1267. Mr. SCHMITT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ___. AMOUNTS FOR ROSECRANS AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, MISSOURI.

The is appropriated, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $2,000,000 to carry out a project at Rosecrans Air National Guard Base, Missouri, relating to entry control point planning and design.

SA 1268. Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. HASSAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1092 proposed by Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) to the bill H.R. 4366, making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. REVIEW OF VETERANS WHO ENGAGED IN TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES WHILE SERVING IN KOSOVO AND THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF SUCH TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.

(a) REVIEW REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the following:

(1) Data regarding the mortality of covered veterans.

(2) Any data on toxic exposure experienced by covered veterans that is both relevant and available, including toxicology studies.

(3) The type of toxic exposure risk activities covered veterans engaged in while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo.

(b) COVERED VETERANS.—For purposes of subsection (a), a covered veteran is a veteran who—

(1) served in the active military, naval, air, or space service in Kosovo; and

(2) as part of such service, engaged in a toxic exposure risk activity.

(c) MANNER AND SUITABILITY OF REVIEW.—The Secretary shall carry out the review required by subsection (a) in a manner such that the findings of the Secretary with respect to the review are suitable and applicable under subchapter VII of chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, AIR, OR SPACE SERVICE.—The term ''active military, naval, air, or space service'' has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY.—The term ''toxic exposure risk activity'' has the meaning given such term in section 1710(e)(4) of such title.

(3) VETERAN.—The term ''veteran'' has the meaning given such term in section 101 of such title.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I submit the following notice in writing: In accordance with Rule V of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby give notice in writing that it is my intention to move to suspend Rule XVI and Rule XXII, including germaneness requirements and dilatory provisions, to offer the following amendments, either as floor amendments, or as motions to recommit with instructions: Vance No. 1210, Lee No. 1121, Cruz No. 1176, Rubio No. 1159, Rubio No. 1237, Hawley No. 1200, Marshall No. 1161, Braun No. 1182, Paul No. 1226, Paul No. 1217. Scott of Florida S. 2721, as amended with a Scott of Florida–Rubio substitute amendment.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I have four requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct an open hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND SPENDING OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

The Subcommittee on Health Care of the Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 20 AS NATIONAL SERVICE DOG DAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 238.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 238) expressing support for recognizing September 20 as National Service Dog Day.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the Tester amendment at the desk to the preamble be considered and agreed to; that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 238) was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1261) to the preamble was considered and agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the preamble)

In the first whereas clause of the preamble, strike ''including—'' and all that follows through ''disabilities''.

In the second whereas clause of the preamble, strike '', hear'' and all that follows through ''seizure''.

Strike the fourth whereas clause of the preamble.

In the fifth whereas clause of the preamble, strike '', including'' and all that follows through ''ideation''.

In the sixth whereas clause of the preamble, strike '', located in all 50 States, Puerto Riceo, and Guam''.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution with its preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 238

Whereas service dogs assist individuals with a wide range of challenges,

Whereas service dogs are able to support veterans struggling after war;

Whereas service dogs have assisted individuals in the United States since 1929;

Whereas evidence-based research has shown that service dogs provide numerous health and fitness benefits;

Whereas tens of thousands of service dogs are estimated to be working in the United States today; and

Whereas National Service Dog Day is an appropriate tribute to service dogs and the organizations that offer service dogs free of charge to United States veterans and individuals with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports recognizing September 20 as National Service Dog Day;

(2) encourages all individuals in the United States to learn about the history of service dogs and the unique, positive impact service dogs have on individuals with disabilities; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for organizations that train and pair service dogs with disabled individuals in the United States.

NATIONAL LOBSTER DAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 351, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 351) designating September 25, 2023, as ''National Lobster Day''.

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

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 351) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 352, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 352) designating September 2023 as ''National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month''.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 352) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, September 20; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 4366; that the cloture motion with respect to the motion to suspend rule XVI ripen at 12:15 p.m.; further, that the Senate recess from 5 p.m. until 6:15 p.m. to allow for the all-Senators briefing.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REED. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:52 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

JENNIFER L. FAIN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION, VICE JAY NEAL LERNER, RESIGNED.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

STUART ALAN LEVEY, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION FOR A TERM OF THREE YEARS, VICE MICHAEL O. JOHANNS, TERM EXPIRED.

JAMES MADISON MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION

CHRISTOPHER H. SCHROEDER, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE JAMES MADISON MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 3, 2024, VICE HARVEY M. TETTLEBAUM, TERM EXPIRED.

CHRISTOPHER H. SCHROEDER, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE JAMES MADISON MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 3, 2030. (REAPPOINTMENT)

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

DARYLE WILLIAMS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2024, SHELLY COLLEEN LOWE, TERM EXPIRED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

MELISSA L. HULL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

ALICIA C. PALLETT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

JULIE A. GRIFFITH

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

JOSHUA N. YOUNG

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

AMANDA R. CAMPEAU
ANDREW T. ERICKSON
AUDREY L. FIELDING
JASON H. GRACIDA
ANTHONY J. MORTRUD
CHARLES V. SLIDER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

BRIAN J. ALLEN
HERBERT L. BREARD IV
CRAIG A. BROYLES
DAVID P. COUGHRAN
CASEY L. DEGROOF
RODNEY C. EDENFIELD
MARSHALL J. HUNT
JESSE C. JOHNSON
JOHN P. MIRE, JR.
STEVEN R. OVERBY
ERICK H. TERRY
NICOLE A. WASHINGTON
DAVID A. WORTHY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 605 AND 7064:

To be colonel

KRISTA L. BARTOLOMUCCI
TRAVIS W. ELMS
STEPHEN M. HERNANDEZ
BRENDAN J. MAYER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

DAVID A. BOUDREAUX, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

ARTHUR A. BLAIN IV

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

JAMES A. FAVUZZI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

BRYAN A. SHIPMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

PETER D. HELZER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

STEPHEN L. BOSSIER
JEFFREY A. COUILLARD
CHRISTOPHER A. DAY
CHRISTOPHER M. MELVIN
ZEBULAN V. MURRAY
STEPHEN M. WARREN

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 19, 2023:

THE JUDICIARY

RITA F. LIN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

VERNON D. OLIVER, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT.