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No. 170

House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 18, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN S. DUARTE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2024, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

HOLDING SECRETARY BLINKEN ACCOUNTABLE

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over the past 3 years, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has withheld critical information and worked to conceal the truth about the decisions that were made in the weeks and months leading up to the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The American people deserve to know the details about the failed strat-

egy that allowed the Taliban to topple the Afghan Government.

These failures have created a crisis that once again is providing a safe haven for terrorists in Afghanistan, giving space to al-Qaida and ISIS-K so that they can train, equip, and arm themselves to attack Americans and our allies.

It is time to hold Secretary Blinken accountable for this coverup and for the State Department to fully comply with the congressional investigation into the withdrawal that has put Americans into danger and the failures that resulted in the deaths of 13 courageous American servicemembers at Abbey Gate.

BRENDAN CARR TO BE NAMED FCC CHAIR

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last night, President-elect Donald Trump announced that Commissioner Brendan Carr would be named as the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

Over the past several years, I have been proud to work with Commissioner Carr to help deliver reliable high-speed internet to the communities across south central and southwestern Pennsylvania. Together, we have sat down with teachers, doctors, and businessowners in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District and heard firsthand about the hardships that occur with the lack of access to internet connectivity.

We spoke to a teacher who could tell which students had internet access by how well they had prepared their homework assignments. We spoke with a doctor about how spotty connections made it impossible to conduct telehealth visits for patients who cannot leave their homes. We spoke with businessowners who were struggling to reach new customers and work with vendors because of slow connection speeds.

Commissioner Carr will help lead the way on internet connectivity, and I

look forward to working together to ensure that everyone in Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District can have access to affordable and reliable internet throughout the district.

UNLEASHING AMERICAN ENERGY

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, under President Donald J. Trump, we used the energy that is underneath the feet of my constituents in Pennsylvania. President Trump lowered gas and electricity prices and expanded our national security through energy dominance.

In sharp contrast to that, on his first day in office, President Biden sent a clear message to Americans when he canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and halted new permits for oil and natural gas development.

With President Trump set to return to the Oval Office, we have a chance to unleash American energy by reissuing these permits and encouraging the development of new technologies that harness the oil and natural gas that we can produce right here in the United States.

I look forward to working with President Trump's nominee, Chris Wright, once he is confirmed as our next Secretary of Energy, to utilize Pennsylvania's energy resources to power our Nation and to provide to our allies throughout the world.

USE EXECUTIVE ORDER TO IMPOSE FINANCIAL SANCTIONS ON EXTREMIST SETTLER MOVEMENT LEADERS

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

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, last month, Congresswoman DELAURO and I, along with Senators VAN HOLLEN and DURBIN, led over 80 congressional Democrats to urge the Biden administration to impose financial sanctions on certain members of the Netanyahu

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

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



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government—specifically, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir for their role in the rise of settler violence, settlement expansion, and general destabilization of the West Bank.

I represent one of the largest Palestinian populations in the United States. I have had constituents who have lost loved ones, have had family land seized, and even, as American citizens, have been detained in Israeli prisons simply for the crime of visiting their families.

I am also a staunch supporter of Israel and categorically support their right to defend themselves and recover hostages taken during the horrific acts of October 7.

Let us be very clear: There is no conflict between supporting the Nation of Israel and the dignity of the Palestinian people so long as you are committed to a permanent and durable regional peace in this lifetime. That peace will never be realized until people on both sides of the green line have equal property rights, security, and opportunity.

That is not possible as long as Israeli hostages are being detained or as rockets continue to fly into Israel from Hezbollah, Hamas, and Iran, but it is also not possible as long as Palestinians on the West Bank are having their property confiscated, livestock killed, and their communities bulldozed.

Violent settlers in the West Bank have carried out almost 1,300 known attacks against Palestinians since October 7. At least 25 new outposts have been established. Seventy illegal outposts were recognized and are eligible for funding by the Israeli Government. All of these actions are illegal under international law.

Earlier this year, President Biden issued Executive Order No. 14115 that authorized the imposition of sanctions on anyone determined “to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged or attempted to engage in . . . actions . . . that threaten the peace, security, or stability of the West Bank.”

To date, President Biden has used this order to sanction Palestinian militant groups, organizations involved in violent extremist activity, instigators from the settler movement, and the outposts from which violent attacks are launched.

Just as it is appropriate for Israel to target Hamas leadership in their response to October 7, it is necessary for the United States to target financial sanctions on the leaders of the extremist settler movement.

This brings us to Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Gvir. They have distributed rifles to extremists. They have allowed those extremists to attack humanitarian aid convoys. They have prevented the Palestinian Authority from accessing the international banking network. These ministers’ stated goal is the annexation of the West Bank,

and they have acted in ways that violate both the spirit and letter of the President’s executive order.

Frederick Douglass famously said that “the best friend of a nation is he who most faithfully rebukes her for her sins—and he her worst enemy who, under the specious . . . garb of patriotism, seeks to excuse, palliate, and defend” those sins.

It is out of love for the Palestinian people and a deep, abiding friendship with Israel that we must now rebuke Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Gvir for their sins.

Mr. Speaker, I urge President Biden to heed the calls of over 80 Members of Congress and use his executive order to issue these sanctions and to help put a stop to settler violence in the West Bank.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week.

Each year, industry, labor, workforce, education, and government leaders come together to showcase the successes of apprenticeship programs.

This week is a time to highlight apprenticeship programs, which offer earn-and-learn opportunities that are proven to build careers. It is a time to celebrate the power of learning through hands-on experience and the vital role that apprenticeships play in strengthening our Nation’s workforce and economy.

Apprenticeships are more than just a job training program. They represent opportunity. They are pathways that open doors for individuals from all walks of life, allowing them to earn while they learn and develop the skills they need to thrive in their chosen careers.

Whether it is in manufacturing, healthcare, technology, or the skilled trades, apprenticeships bridge the gap between education and employment in ways that benefit workers, employers, and communities alike.

For individuals, apprenticeships provide a foundation for success. They are not just about acquiring technical skills. They are about gaining confidence, building networks, and setting a course for long-term career growth.

In today’s rapidly changing economy, having a trade or skill you can rely on is invaluable. For many, the apprenticeship model, where learning happens in a real-world environment, is far more impactful than sitting in a traditional classroom.

For employers, apprenticeships are a game changer. They offer a direct pipeline to a highly skilled workforce tailored specifically to the needs of their industry.

By investing in apprentices, companies aren’t just filling jobs. They are

building their future. They are fostering loyalty, reducing turnover, and ensuring their teams are equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

As co-chair of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus and a senior member on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, I will continue to support policies that promote work-based learning and equip Americans of all ages with the skills necessary to climb the next rung on the ladder of opportunity.

As we celebrate National Apprenticeship Week, let’s also look ahead. Our challenge is to expand access to these programs and ensure that they are as inclusive and diverse as the workforce that we envision for our Nation’s future.

We must break down barriers, from lack of awareness to outdated perceptions, and create opportunities for everyone, from young people exploring their first career options to midcareer workers seeking to re-skill and adapt.

Mr. Speaker, often students graduate high school unaware of their educational options and potential career paths. By highlighting skills-based education and recognizing apprenticeship programs, we are putting our students in a position of success.

These programs put our workforce back in the driver’s seat of careers. By participating in apprenticeship programs and other skills-based training, our workforce develops knowledge and skills for long-term, family-sustaining jobs.

□ 1215

CO₂’S ROLE IN CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out the continued deception that keeps being fostered by government and by those who would tax us, by those environmental groups that want to corral us into their idea of where we should live and what their utopia is.

That keeps coming back to the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere that some believe actually is the greatest existential threat to the U.S. and to mankind. I have to continue to point out to folks that hear this and are scared into it, that the government does a good job and the media does a good job of scaring people into things like a good percentage of the COVID situation and then climate.

So what are we talking about here?

Here is my handy chart. When I ask people, what percent of the atmosphere is CO₂—you hear all this hype—I even ask it in committee hearings where we have expert panelists coming in to tell us about how they think we should shift our vehicles, even trucks and trains, to all electric, things like that—experts. They already know the number.

It makes me wonder: What is the baseline we are working from?

What are the goals going to be?

If you don't even know what the baseline is, how the heck do you set a goal?

Here in yellow—again, when I ask people, they think, wow, it must be somewhere between 20, 50, 70 percent, right? No. No.

It is here on the chart. We show that the yellow portion is nitrogen in the atmosphere, 78 percent. That is nitrogen gas.

Number two, oxygen, is 21 percent. Well, that is 99 percent right there.

Okay. Third place is argon gas, right there in that skinny sliver of green; that is 0.93 percent. Then you finally come in amongst trace gases here and here, the remaining portion of 0.07 percent. CO₂ is contained in that. The number is 0.04 percent of the atmosphere is CO₂.

It is not this existential threat as pronounced by those who want to regulate you and control you; control where you go, how you drive, even so far as to what you eat.

They are banning cattle, banning beef. There are actually less beef and dairy cattle in North America than there were buffalo before the European intervention happened 300 or 400 years ago. There are a lot of misnomers that are put out, just flat out lies and deceit about this in order for the government to control things.

So given the small fraction, they are trying to attribute major climate shifts to CO₂ which is really disproportionate and deceptive. Beyond current levels, additional CO₂ has a negligible impact on global temperatures.

Water vapor is the primary so-called greenhouse gas accounting for most of whatever greenhouse effect we do have. Its immediate and powerful feedback effects overshadow CO₂'s influence on whatever level of warming we may be having.

Earth's history shows significantly higher CO₂ levels back then, even going as far back as the Jurassic period without catastrophic warming. Ecosystems flourished with abundant plant and animal life. Climate models often over-emphasize CO₂'s role while ignoring key natural drivers like solar activity, ocean currents, and other factors.

The medieval warm period occurred without significant human CO₂ emissions from the Industrial Age that everybody seems to criticize from that side of the aisle, which highlights a natural variability in our climate.

CO₂ is vital for photosynthesis, which is the process of plants growing and producing, the process through which plants convert sunlight into energy, releasing oxygen as a byproduct. This process also occurs when growing the food that we consume. Without CO₂, without carbon—we are all carbon-based—without it, life on Earth would actually not exist.

Let's say we are really too good at reducing the number, that level of car-

bon dioxide from 0.04 percent to somewhere around 0.02 percent, then plant life starts dying off. Now, I don't think we could be that good at reducing CO₂ and getting it down to that level and maybe the sanity would prevail, we would stop producing it at that point, but that is what we are talking about.

Plant growth is actually boosted by CO₂. You have seen hothouses, greenhouses, et cetera. They introduce extra CO₂ and will speed plant growth so we can get more crops or better, stronger plants.

Satellite imagery shows that the increased CO₂ has contributed to a greening of the planet, with vegetation cover expanding in many regions.

We all like green, right? Forests and grasslands, which rely on CO₂, play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity and absorbing other environmental pollutants that may occur.

Elevated CO₂ levels in controlled environments, such as greenhouses, as I mentioned, are intentionally increased in those greenhouses to enhance our productivity. Yet, it seems CARB in California and the EPA want to take away our vehicles, take away our lawnmowers, take away our leaf blowers, and make us all fit in some narrative.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Creator God, to whom the Earth belongs and everything in it, in Your time, You founded it on the seas and established it on the waters, and so we ask that You take this day and our lives into Your keeping.

Direct our energies to seek Your will. Instruct our minds to understand Your precepts. Sustain our will and motivation that we would prove faithful in our service to You.

Make this day a day of obedience to You and not to our own desires. May it be a day of spiritual joy as we yield to Your design for peace. Make this day's work contribute to the work of Your kingdom, that at the day's end, You would be glorified.

In Your sovereign name, we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania 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.

RECOGNIZING LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lions Clubs International for its historic year of service.

Lions Clubs International is the largest service club organization in the world. More than 1.4 million members and over 48,000 clubs serve in 200 countries and geographic areas worldwide.

Since 1917, Lions have strengthened local communities through hands-on service and humanitarian projects. They focus on supporting vision, the environment, childhood cancer, hunger, diabetes, and other pressing humanitarian needs to help address some of humanity's biggest challenges.

From July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, Lions helped more than 420 million people worldwide. Over the past year, Lions engaged in more than 1.6 million service projects, a 4 percent increase over the year prior; inducted nearly 150,000 new members, an 8 percent increase from the previous year; and awarded more than 1,500 grants totaling \$46.4 million, helping millions of people in need globally.

As co-chair of the Congressional Service Organization Caucus, I applaud Lions Clubs International's commitment to making our communities better and brighter.

DISASTER RELIEF

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart as we have witnessed the devastating impact of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

These storms have wreaked havoc with homes lost, businesses destroyed,

and lives upended. Tragically, over 200 people were killed, and the damage is estimated to be as much as \$300 billion.

During this dark moment, we have seen the incredible resilience of the people across the Southeast. Our brothers and sisters in western North Carolina are strong, united, and determined to rebuild.

However, we cannot wait any longer. Our communities need help now. Congress must act swiftly and pass a supplemental appropriations bill. We must ensure Federal resources are made available quickly and efficiently to support recovery efforts, whether for temporary housing, debris removal, or rebuilding infrastructure.

Together, we will emerge stronger for us to continue to move forward.

VIRGIN ISLANDS SUPREME COURT

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the importance of the Virgin Islands Supreme Court, the highest court in the Virgin Islands of the United States.

As a member of the bar of both New York and the Virgin Islands, as a former prosecutor, and a former political appointee at the Justice Department, I understand how important our courts are.

I congratulate Associate Justice Harold Willocks on his recent investiture to the Virgin Islands Supreme Court. He boasts a distinguished career of more than 40 years as a jurist, as both a prosecutor and public defender, and served in multiple roles within the Virgin Islands Superior Court.

I thank the Virgin Islands Supreme Court for their continued commitment to making decisions in the strictest fidelity to justice. The independence of our courts has never been more critical. Democracy relies upon judicial independence and the ability to deliver impartial, prompt decisions in accordance with the rule of law.

We must keep our courts free from political influence or pressures to ensure our judges can make decisions solely on the law and the facts of a case. The integrity of the courts will determine the future of our Nation.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 06 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1601

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) at 4 o'clock and 1 minute p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

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

GRANT TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2023

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5536) to require transparency in notices of funding opportunity, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5536

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 "Grant Transparency Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. NOTICES OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TRANSPARENCY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term "agency"—

(A) has the meaning given the term "Executive agency" in section 105 of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) does not include the Government Accountability Office.

(2) COMPETITIVE GRANT.—The term "competitive grant" means a discretionary award (as defined in section 200.1 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations) awarded by an agency—

(A) through a grant agreement or cooperative agreement under which the agency makes payment in cash or in kind to a recipient to carry out a public purpose authorized by law; and

(B) the recipient of which is selected from a pool of applicants through the use of merit-based selection procedures for the purpose of allocating funds authorized under a grant program of the agency.

(3) EVALUATION OR SELECTION CRITERIA.—The term "evaluation or selection criteria" means standards or principles for judging, evaluating, or selecting an application for a competitive grant.

(4) NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY.—The term "notice of funding opportunity" has the meaning given the term in section 200.1 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations.

(5) RATING SYSTEM.—The term "rating system"—

(A) means a system of evaluation of competitive grant applications to determine how such applications advance through the selection process; and

(B) includes—

(i) a merit criteria rating rubric;

(ii) an evaluation of merit criteria;

(iii) a methodology to evaluate and rate based on a point scale; and

(iv) an evaluation to determine whether a competitive grant application meets evaluation or selection criteria.

(b) TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS.—Each notice of funding opportunity issued by an agency for a competitive grant shall include—

(1) a description of any rating system and evaluation and selection criteria the agency uses to assess applications for the competitive grant;

(2) a statement of whether the agency uses a weighted scoring method and a description of any weighted scoring method the agency uses for the competitive grant, including the amount by which the agency weights each criterion; and

(3) any other qualitative or quantitative merit-based approach the agency uses to evaluate an application for the competitive grant.

(c) APPLICATIONS; DATA ELEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in coordination with the Executive department designated under section 6402(a)(1) of title 31, United States Code, shall develop data elements relating to grant applications to ensure common reporting by each agency with respect to applications received in response to each notice of funding opportunity of the agency.

(2) CONTENTS.—The data elements developed under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) the number of applications received; and

(B) the city and State of each organization that submitted an application.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—With respect to a particular competitive grant, nothing in this Act shall be construed to supersede any requirement with respect to a notice of funding opportunity for the competitive grant in a law that authorizes the competitive grant.

(e) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out this Act.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This Act shall take effect on the date that is 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) NO RETROACTIVE EFFECT.—This Act shall not apply to a notice of funding opportunity issued before the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, before serving in Congress, I served in the South Carolina State legislature. Now, here in Washington, I am passionate about ensuring that State, local, and Federal Governments all work together and work together well.

During my time in office, I have heard from many of our local governments, and particularly in my district in those rural communities, that applying for Federal grant money can be a complicated and often confusing process.

In big cities, you often have professional staff that do this. In a small town, it is the mayor or his spouse that is doing this.

After putting time and effort into filling out a competitive grant application, applicants are left wondering why

they were not chosen to be awarded Federal grant money, especially if they met all of the criteria listed when applying. This leads to grant applicants feeling as though the decisions are made behind closed doors. I think we can all agree that navigating the bureaucratic labyrinth known as Washington, D.C., can be complicated for local governments and for organizations.

Grant writers and applicant staff may even be unaware of which selection criteria are weighted more heavily when filling out applications.

The Grant Transparency Act requires Federal Government agencies to shine a light on their decisionmaking process when awarding competitive Federal grant money. With this legislation, Federal Government agencies would be required to disclose their selection methods when awarding competitive grants.

Specifically, the bill requires that notice of funding opportunities for all Federal competitive grants to have: one, a description of any rating system, evaluation, and selection criteria the agency uses to assess the grant application; two, a statement on whether the agency uses a weighted scoring method and a description of that method; and, three, any other qualitative or quantitative merit-based approach the agency may use to evaluate applications.

State and local governments across South Carolina's Seventh Congressional District and nationwide compete for Federal grant money on a continual basis. Federal grant money allows investment to come to our communities and improve the daily lives of our constituents, ranging from sewer and wastewater systems to airports, fire stations, and recreational facilities.

These are all things that Americans rely on and utilize in their daily lives. The Grant Transparency Act would help out our local governments and organizations when they fill out applications to compete for that funding. They deserve this transparency from their Federal Government.

Today, let's empower grant applicants to put their best foot forward and bring those Federal dollars home. I thank my Oversight Committee colleague JASMINE CROCKETT for co-leading on this bill. This simple bill has the potential to make a very meaningful impact in countless communities and nonprofits nationwide.

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

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 5536 and applaud Representatives RUSSELL FRY and JASMINE CROCKETT for their bipartisan leadership on this bill.

H.R. 5536 aims to increase transparency in the Federal grantmaking review and award process. It does so by

strengthening agency compliance with title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which describes the contents that notices of funding opportunities must include.

It requires that each notice of funding opportunity for a competitive Federal grant to include specific information about how applications will be assessed, providing all applicants with greater access to the information they need to submit competitive applications.

The Biden-Harris administration has taken important steps to strengthen transparency in and improve accessibility to the Federal grantmaking process.

For example, in April 2024, the Office of Management and Budget announced significant updates to the Uniform Grants Guidance, which governs how agencies make grants and provide other forms of financial assistance. The updates focused on reducing compliance costs, removing barriers to entry and accessibility, and making Federal funds easier to track.

H.R. 5536 is aligned with these goals, and I urge my colleagues to support it today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to support this commonsense and bipartisan bill to make the application process for competitive grants much more transparent on our local governments and nonprofits.

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

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5536, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VOTE BY MAIL TRACKING ACT

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5658) to amend title 39, United States Code, to require mail-in ballots to use the Postal Service barcode service, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5658

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 "Vote by Mail Tracking Act".

SEC. 2. MAIL-IN BALLOTS AND POSTAL SERVICE BARCODE SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title 39, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 30 the following new chapter:

CHAPTER 31—ELECTION MAIL

"Sec.

"3101. Trackable election mail.

"§ 3101. Trackable election mail

"(a) IN GENERAL.—No entity of government shall furnish a ballot envelope for the purpose of being carried or delivered by mail unless such envelope—

"(1) contains a Postal Service barcode (or successive service or marking) that enables tracking of each individual ballot consistent with parameters that the Postal Service may promulgate by regulation;

"(2) satisfies requirements for ballot envelope design that the Postal Service may promulgate by regulation;

"(3) satisfies requirements for machineable letters that the Postal Service may promulgate by regulation; and

"(4) includes the Official Election Mail Logo (or any successor label that the Postal Service may establish for ballots).

"(b) APPLICATION.—Subsection (a) does not apply to a Federal write-in absentee ballot under section 103 of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (52 U.S.C. 20303).

"(c) INFORMATION.—Not later than June 1 of each calendar year, the Postmaster General shall provide, to the entities described in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of subsection (a), the information necessary to comply with the requirements of this subsection, including how to access Postal Service tools to assist in generating the barcode or successive marking required by subsection (a)(1)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for part IV of title 39, United States Code, is amended by adding after the item relating to chapter 30 the following:

"31. Election Mail 3101".

(c) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to any election for Federal office occurring in 2026 and any succeeding year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5658, the Vote by Mail Tracking Act.

Every American citizen who votes deserves to know that their vote has been counted and their voice has been heard.

This bill, the Vote by Mail Tracking Act, would ensure that this is the case. H.R. 5658 requires that all ballots for Federal election mailed within the United States to or from a voter contain a Postal Service barcode. This barcode would allow voters to track the status of their ballot in the United States Postal Service system, allowing voters to know in real time when their

ballot is received by the Postal Service, when it is in transit, and when it has arrived at their election authority.

Beyond a Postal Service barcode, under the bill, a ballot must meet other requirements, including utilizing the Postal Service's envelope design standards. Additionally, the ballot must include the official election mail logo or any future logo the Postal Service establishes for ballots.

While I encourage every citizen who wishes to vote in person on election day to do so, many States have adopted vote-by-mail policies. We must take the integrity of our elections serious and account for the fact that a significant number of Americans choose to cast their ballots by mail.

This bill is a commonsense, bipartisan response to a rising level of mail-in voting nationwide and will put in place requirements to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service can more efficiently handle and more transparently track the mailed ballots of every American citizen.

I thank my colleagues, Representatives PORTER, DONALDS, and MACE, for their work on this important legislation. I encourage all my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, regardless of party affiliation, every voting American wants to be confident that their ballot will get processed. No matter who we vote for, we all want our ballots to get smoothly to their final destination on time to be counted.

After all, this desire applies to anything important that we want processed. When was the last time anyone here sent a family heirloom through the mail to their relative without getting a tracking number? Who hasn't tracked an order of clothing or medicine at least once? I don't know about you, but for me, it is comforting to know what city my new shoes are in when they are being shipped so I know they are truly on the way.

Ballots are so much more important than shoes. When something is important to us, we all want to know it is in good hands, and our ballots are no exception.

Fortunately, the United States Postal Service created a tracking barcode for mail-in ballots, but unfortunately, right now, not everyone gets to use ballot envelopes that meet the Postal Service design requirements. That is why I joined Republican Representatives BYRON DONALDS and NANCY MACE in introducing the Vote by Mail Tracking Act, to fix that problem.

Under this nonpartisan bill, every ballot envelope will meet Postal Service standards and get a tracking barcode. Voters of all political stripes can have confidence that their ballot is accounted for along the journey to our election officials.

This commonsense modernization can improve transparency and trust in

our elections for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. That is exactly why this bill is led by 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats who represent every major ideological caucus in the House. That includes both Chairman COMER and Ranking Member RASKIN, two people named Jamie who couldn't be more different but both co-sponsor this bill.

Madam Speaker, it just doesn't get more bipartisan than this bill. These days, it can be hard enough just to get Democrats to agree with Democrats and Republicans to agree with Republicans in this Congress, let alone to have conservatives, moderates, progressives, and Members somewhere in between all teaming up to back legislation. The Vote by Mail Tracking Act has support from every corner of the House because it is not partisan. It is just good policy.

If the shipment carrying Christmas presents that I order online is trackable, then we should certainly all expect something as valuable and as sacred as our ballots to be trackable, too.

This bill doesn't just make things more streamlined for the American people; it also makes processing easier and more efficient for the Postal Service, reducing its burden and making efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

I thank all of my colleagues who co-sponsored this legislation and unanimously voted to advance it out of the Oversight Committee. I give a special thank-you to Chairman COMER, Ranking Member RASKIN, and their staff for their work on this bill.

The Vote by Mail Tracking Act is truly a reflection that it is still possible, even in this political moment, to find consensus in Washington and come together on real solutions. I urge every single Member of this body to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I urge the passage of H.R. 5658, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I encourage my House colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense bill that will help further build trust in American Federal elections in the future, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5658, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further pro-

ceedings on this motion will be postponed.

BANNING OPERATIONS AND LEASES WITH THE ILLEGITIMATE VENEZUELAN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME ACT

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 825) to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 825

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 "Banning Operations and Leases with the Illegitimate Venezuelan Authoritarian Regime Act" or the "BOLIVAR Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH PERSONS THAT HAVE BUSINESS OPERATIONS WITH THE MADURO REGIME.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), the head of an executive agency may not enter into a contract for the procurement of goods or services with any person that the head of an executive agency determines, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, knowingly engages in significant business operations, as defined by the Secretary in consultation with the Director, with an authority of the Government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate Government of Venezuela by the United States.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibition under subsection (a) does not apply to a contract that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, determines—

(A) is necessary—

(i) for purposes of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela;

(ii) for purposes of providing disaster relief and other urgent humanitarian aid or life-saving measures; or

(iii) to carry out noncombatant evacuations; or

(B) is in the national security interests of the United States.

(2) SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to contracts and agreements that support United States Government activities in Venezuela, including those necessary for the maintenance of United States Government facilities in Venezuela, or to contracts with international organizations.

(3) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of any contract entered into on the basis of an exception provided for under paragraph (1), which may be submitted in a classified form, as appropriate.

(c) OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL LICENSES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to a person that has a valid license to operate in Venezuela issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

(d) AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN VENEZUELA.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to contracts related to the operation and maintenance of the United

States Government's consular offices and diplomatic posts in Venezuela.

(e) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.), any authorized intelligence activity of the United States, or any activity or procurement that supports an authorized intelligence activity.

(f) WAIVER.—The Secretary of State may waive the requirements of subsection (a) if the Secretary of State determines that to do so is in the national interest of the United States.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) BUSINESS OPERATIONS.—The term “business operations” means engaging in commerce in any form, including acquiring, developing, maintaining, owning, selling, possessing, leasing, or operating equipment, facilities, personnel, products, services, personal property, real property, or any other apparatus of business or commerce.

(3) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term “executive agency” has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(4) GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA.—(A) The term “Government of Venezuela” includes the government of any political subdivision of Venezuela, and any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term “agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela” means an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state as defined in section 1603(b) of title 28, United States Code, with each reference in such section to “a foreign state” deemed to be a reference to “Venezuela”.

(5) PERSON.—The term “person” means—

(A) a natural person, corporation, company, business association, partnership, society, trust, or any other nongovernmental entity, organization, or group;

(B) any governmental entity or instrumentality of a government; and

(C) any successor, subunit, parent entity, or subsidiary of, or any entity under common ownership or control with, any entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(h) TERM OF APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to any contract entered into during the three-year period beginning on the date that is 180 days after the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, the people of Venezuela have faced years of repression. Political persecution, human rights abuses, and press censorship are all commonplace under the brutal, illegitimate, and anti-American regime of Nicolas Maduro, a regime closely allied with Russia, Iran, Cuba, and the People's Republic of China.

The American Government should always stand in solidarity with the long-suffering people of Venezuela and against the Maduro dictatorship. Part of that solidarity should be to ensure that the Maduro regime is denied any resources that will allow it to continue the oppression of its own citizenry.

This past July, Maduro and his representatives falsely claimed victory in Venezuela's Presidential election. Maduro has since been accused of intimidating and repressing his opposition in order to cling to power.

A couple of months ago, on September 12, the United States sanctioned 16 of Nicolas Maduro's allies in response to accusations that they engaged in human rights abuses and election obstruction. While not all of Maduro's allies will be subject to sanctions, the money of hardworking U.S. taxpayers should not ultimately find its way to those who support the regime of a ruthless dictator.

H.R. 825 is straightforward. It requires Federal agencies to ensure that they are not contracting with any entity that conducts significant business operations with Maduro and his allies.

That said, it also includes appropriate exceptions, such as situations of national security, for the purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other urgent lifesaving measures or to carry out noncombatant evacuations.

This is not a new concept to the U.S. Congress. The fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act contained a provision in section 890 that prohibited the Pentagon from entering into contracts with companies that also have contracts with any Venezuelan Government entity under Maduro's control. As with H.R. 825, there are waivers for contracts related to providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, among other exceptions.

The BOLIVAR Act would extend prohibitions under section 890 to the rest of the Federal Government.

I support the BOLIVAR Act and thank my colleagues on the committee, Representative MIKE WALTZ and Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for leading this bill.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues support H.R. 825, a measured response and most timely piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the BOLIVAR Act would temporarily prohibit executive agencies from entering into contracts for the procurement of goods or serv-

ices with any person or business that they determine, with the concurrence of the Department of State, knowingly engages in significant business operations with the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

The bill goes on to list certain exceptions, including contracts vital to U.S. national security or necessary for the purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other urgent lifesaving measures, or to carry out noncombatant evacuations.

I certainly understand the motivation behind this bill. The Maduro regime's blatant disregard of the recent election results in Venezuela is a violation of international law and has left the regime more isolated than ever.

I know that the administration has some concerns about this bill. However, the Department of Defense, which conducts almost two-thirds of Federal procurement, has had a policy in place like the BOLIVAR Act for 2 years now. I thank the majority for working with us to address some of those concerns in the bill before us today.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I encourage my House colleagues to support this bill to ensure that Federal agencies not contract with any entity that conducts business with the Maduro dictatorship and his allies, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 825, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MARK OUR PLACE ACT

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3126) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish or replace a headstone, marker, or medallion for the grave of an eligible Medal of Honor recipient, regardless of the recipient's dates of service in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3126

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 “Mark Our Place Act”.

SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED HEADSTONE, MARKER, OR MEDALLION FOR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2306(d)(5)(C) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking clause (i);

(2) in clause (ii), by inserting “(except that subparagraph (B)(i) of such paragraph shall not apply)” after “paragraph (4)”; and

(3) by redesignating clauses (ii) and (iii) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 2306(d)(5) of such title is amended by striking “section 491” both places it appears and inserting “section 2732”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 3126.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3126. This bill was introduced by Senator BRAUN.

I thank my friend, Representative LUTTRELL, who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for leading the House companion bill to this important bill.

The Mark Our Place Act would ensure that every Medal of Honor recipient is properly honored where they have been laid to rest.

Under current law, only Medal of Honor recipients who served on or after April 6, 1917, can receive a headstone, grave marker, or medallion that reflects the Medal of Honor status. S. 3126 would remove that unjust date limitation.

It should go without saying that every Medal of Honor recipient's story of service should be displayed on their headstone should their family wish to do so.

The Medal of Honor is our Nation's highest military award. It is reserved for servicemembers who have demonstrated extraordinary bravery and self-sacrifice in combat. Over 2,000 servicemembers were awarded Medals of Honor before April 6, 1917, and this bill would ensure that they are all recognized for their bravery.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 3126, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3126, the Mark Our Place Act. I thank Senator MIKE BRAUN for introducing this bill and Representative MORGAN LUTTRELL for introducing the House companion.

This bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish a headstone, marker, or medallion signifying the status of a deceased member of the Armed Forces as a Medal of Honor re-

ipient regardless of when the member served.

In spite of what the President-elect may think, the Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force that can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. Since 1976, VA has provided distinctive government-furnished headstones and markers for Medal of Honor recipients to recognize this prestigious honor.

Under current law, only Medal of Honor recipients who served after 1917 are eligible for such markers, meaning many recipients, principally from the Civil War era, have not been able to receive the full array of honors from VA. This will remedy that situation and allow descendants of those recipients who served prior to 1917 to request appropriate markers to honor their loved ones.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL), who is my good friend and the chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Mr. LUTTRELL. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to be here today to speak on S. 3126, the Mark Our Place Act. I was proud to lead the House companion bill, H.R. 6507.

Under current law, VA is authorized to furnish or replace a headstone, grave marker, or medallion for only those Medal of Honor recipients who served on or after April 6, 1917.

The Mark Our Place Act would remove unnecessary red tape that prohibits VA from providing headstones with Medal of Honor markers to veterans buried in private cemeteries.

These veterans have risked everything to protect our freedoms, and honoring their service and sacrifice should be timeless. We must ensure that every recipient of our Nation's highest military decoration is recognized for their heroism.

Madam Speaker, I thank Senator BRAUN, Chairman BOST, and Ranking Member TAKANO for their leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support S. 3126.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I support S. 3126, the Mark Our Place Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no more speakers.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3126.

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

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KEEPING MILITARY FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2181) to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal the sunset on entitlement to memorial headstones and markers for commemoration of veterans and certain individuals and to repeal the sunset on authority to bury remains of certain spouses and children in national cemeteries, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2181

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 “Keeping Military Families Together Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF ENTITLEMENT TO MEMORIAL HEADSTONES AND MARKERS FOR COMMEMORATION OF VETERANS AND CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.

Section 2306(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” both places it appears and inserting “September 30, 2032”.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO BURY REMAINS OF CERTAIN SPOUSES AND CHILDREN IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

Section 2402(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2025” and inserting “September 30, 2032”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 2181, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2181, as amended. This bill was introduced by Senator PETERS. My colleagues, Representative JAMES and Representative RESCHENTHALER, introduced companion bills.

This bill would ensure that veterans can be laid to rest and mourned together with their spouses and children.

Under current law, VA can inter certain family members together with their veteran loved one in a VA national cemetery only if those family members passed away before September 30, 2025.

VA can provide headstones or markers for certain family members whose

remains are unavailable for burial only if they passed away before September 30, 2025. S. 2181, as amended, would extend those date limitations.

As a veteran myself, this is a deeply personal issue to me. We must ensure that veterans and their families have the option of being laid to rest together. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 2181, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2181, as amended, the Keeping Military Families Together Act. I thank Senator GARY PETERS for introducing this bill and Representative CHRIS PAPPAS, the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, for introducing similar legislation in the House.

This bill extends two Department of Veterans Affairs burial benefits provided to spouses and dependent children of veterans or Active Duty servicemembers. Specifically, the bill requires VA to provide memorial headstones or markers for spouses or dependent children of veterans or servicemembers who were serving on Active Duty at the time of the spouse's or child's death.

□ 1630

Additionally, the bill authorizes burial in any open national cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration for a spouse or dependent child of veterans or servicemembers who were serving on Active Duty at the time of the spouse's or child's death.

Madam Speaker, these burial authorities were set to expire at the end of October, and many families would have been faced with extremely difficult decisions about where to inter their loved ones. Thankfully, we were able to extend these authorities for an additional year in the most recent continuing resolution.

However, families of veterans need more certainty. While I am disappointed that we couldn't extend these authorities permanently, as Senator PETERS and Ranking Member PAPPAS had originally intended, the additional 7 years presented in this bill will still allow for some time for some long-term end-of-life planning for many families.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I am ready to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I support S. 2181, as amended, the Keeping Military Families Together Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2181, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the entitlement to memorial headstones and markers for commemoration of veterans and certain individuals and to extend authority to bury remains of certain spouses and children in national cemeteries, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT READINESS YIELD ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7653) to amend title 38, United States Code, to update certain terminology regarding veteran employment. The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H. R. 7653

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024" or the "VERY Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. UPDATE OF CERTAIN TERMINOLOGY REGARDING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "employment handicap" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barrier"; and

(2) by striking "employment handicaps" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barriers".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 7653.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7653 offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS).

Madam Speaker, the VERY Act would strike the term "employment

handicap" from the law that authorizes the Veteran Readiness and Employment program and replace it with the term "employment barrier."

This term is used in the law to describe participants who are eligible and entitled to receive benefits and services. The bill is a simple fix that would remove a negative view of the term "handicap" and replace it with a more positive word.

This Congress, VA has made significant mistakes that have damaged their relationship with veterans, and it is our job as Congress to help VA rebuild trust with our veterans.

While the new Trump administration has many issues to fix that were created by the current administration, this change is a step in the right direction. This Congress, the Republican majority has worked hard to improve the VR&E program.

Now, we have put the VA's feet to the fire to ensure that veterans are put first when using the VR&E program. Representative DAVIS' bill takes a step in the right direction to do exactly that.

We must continue to break down barriers to level the playing field for veterans seeking employment. I thank the VFW and the DAV for supporting this bill. I also recognize the work of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7653.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024, introduced by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), my good friend.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment, or VR&E, program offers vital services to help veterans and servicemembers with service-connected disabilities and those determined to have an employment handicap prepare for, find, and maintain suitable employment or live more independently.

This bill would replace the terms "employment handicap" and "serious employment handicap" with the terms "employment barrier" and "serious employment barrier."

Historically, the term "handicap" has been associated with disadvantage or burden, which does not accurately reflect our veteran population. By making this change, we acknowledge the challenges that veterans with service-connected disabilities often face in the job market. Eliminating the stigma associated with these disabilities will encourage more veterans to participate in the VR&E program, ultimately assisting them in preparing for and securing meaningful employment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs requested this change, which has bipartisan support and incurs no cost.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) for his work on

veterans' issues during his first term in office. I am proud of his work to open doors at VA for more veterans so they may access the benefits they have earned through their service.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), my good friend and also a veteran who is a member of the House Agriculture Committee and House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act. On behalf of North Carolina's First Congressional District's veterans, who I am proud to represent, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI), in particular, who coled the bill with me; the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for moving it forward; and, also, the Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America for endorsing this legislation.

H.R. 7653 amends terminology in the Veteran Readiness and Employment program to replace the term "employment handicap" with "employment barrier" and the term "serious employment handicap" with "serious employment barrier," while leaving the definitions unchanged.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment program helps former service-members find jobs and ensure their mental and financial well-being. Updating the terminology will improve efficiency and encourage disabled veterans to use the VR&E program.

No veteran should have any discomfort advocating for themselves and seeking help for their service-connected disabilities. We will not stop fighting until every disabled veteran has what they need to get the assistance that they deserve and have earned.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, in closing, I support H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage Members to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7653.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERANS HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8371) to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8371

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act".

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Subtitle A—Veterans Community Care Program Matters

Sec. 101. Implementation of provision of care under Veterans Community Care Program upon determination of eligibility by veteran and veteran's referring clinician.

Sec. 102. Outreach regarding care and services under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 103. Annual review and report on waivers of certain payment rates under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 104. Modification of requirements for standards for quality of care from Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 105. Pilot program to improve administration of care under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 106. Pilot program on consolidating approval process of Department of Veterans Affairs for covered dental care.

Sec. 107. Strategic plan on value-based health care system for Veterans Health Administration; pilot program.

Sec. 108. Plan on adoption of certain health information standards for Department of Veterans Affairs and certain health care providers.

Sec. 109. Report on use of value-based reimbursement models under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 110. Inspector General assessment of implementation of Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 111. Comptroller General report on dentistry under Veterans Community Care Program.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Nursing Home and Other Long Term Care and Family Caregivers

Sec. 120. Increase of expenditure cap for non-institutional care alternatives to nursing home care.

Sec. 121. Coordination with Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.

Sec. 122. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants or contracts to entities to improve provision of mental health support to family caregivers of veterans.

Sec. 123. Home- and community-based services: programs.

Sec. 124. Coordination with assistance and support services for caregivers.

Sec. 125. Improvements to program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers.

Sec. 126. Improvements relating to Home-maker and Home Health Aide program.

Sec. 127. Pilot program to furnish assisted living services to certain veterans.

Sec. 128. Provision of medicine, equipment, and supplies available to Department of Veterans Affairs to State homes.

Sec. 129. Recognition of organizations and individuals to assist veterans, family members, and caregivers navigating programs and services of Veterans Health Administration.

Sec. 130. Reviews and other improvements relating to home- and community-based services.

Sec. 131. GAO report on mental health support for caregivers.

Sec. 132. Development of centralized website for program information.

Sec. 133. Definitions.

Subtitle C—Medical Treatment and Other Matters

Sec. 140. Quarterly report on referrals for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

Sec. 141. Elimination of certain requirements for certain Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Under Secretaries.

Sec. 142. Modification of pay limitation for physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 143. Reimbursement of ambulance cost for care for certain rural veterans.

Sec. 144. Pilot program to furnish dental care from the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain veterans diagnosed with ischemic heart disease.

Sec. 145. Documentation of preferences of veterans for scheduling of appointments for health care under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 146. Staffing model and performance metrics for certain employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 147. Online health education portal for veterans enrolled in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 148. Limitation on detail of directors of medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs to different positions.

Sec. 149. National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

Sec. 150. Report on physical infrastructure required by medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs to provide dental care services.

Sec. 151. Comptroller General report on certain oral health care programs under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

- Sec. 152. Review of workflows associated with processing referrals between facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.
- Sec. 153. Plan for timely scheduling of appointments at medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 154. Authorization of appropriations to support initiatives for mobile mammography services for veterans.

TITLE II—ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY MATTERS

Subtitle A—Educational Assistance

- Sec. 201. Temporary expansion of eligibility for Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.
- Sec. 202. Removal of expiration on entitlement to Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship for surviving spouses.
- Sec. 203. Sole liability for transferred educational assistance by an individual who fails to complete a service agreement.
- Sec. 204. Notice to educational institutions of risk-based surveys.
- Sec. 205. Relationship of participation by an educational institution in certain Federal student financial aid programs to approval of such institution for purposes of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs.
- Sec. 206. Expansion of Department of Veterans Affairs oversight of certain educational institutions.
- Sec. 207. Requirement that educational institutions approved for purposes of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs provide digital official transcripts.
- Sec. 208. Payment of full monthly housing stipend for veterans enrolled in final semester using educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.
- Sec. 209. Modification of rules for approval of commercial driver education programs for purposes of educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 210. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means.
- Sec. 211. Retroactive effective date of law regarding charge to entitlement to educational assistance for individuals who do not transfer credits from certain closed or disapproved programs of education.
- Sec. 212. Department of Veterans Affairs high technology program.
- Sec. 213. Notice of changes to Department of Veterans Affairs policies and guidance affecting the educational assistance programs of the Department.
- Sec. 214. Payment of VA educational assistance via electronic fund transfer to a foreign institution of higher education.
- Sec. 215. Improving transparency and accountability of educational institutions for purposes of veterans educational assistance.

Subtitle B—Employment and Training

- Sec. 221. Improvements to reemployment rights of members of the Armed Forces.

- Sec. 222. Review of investigations manual of Veterans' Employment and Training Service.
- Sec. 223. Warrior Training Advancement Course.

Subtitle C—Home Loans

- Sec. 231. Improvements to program for direct housing loans made to Native American veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 232. Native community development financial institution relending program.

TITLE III—DISABILITY AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS MATTERS

- Sec. 301. Burial allowance for certain veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care furnished by Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 302. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans.
- Sec. 303. Definition of surviving spouse.
- Sec. 304. Ensuring only licensed health care professionals perform medical disability examinations under certain Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program.
- Sec. 305. Provision of information regarding an agent or attorney to a licensed health care professional who performs a medical disability examination under certain Department of Veterans Affairs pilot program.
- Sec. 306. Modernization of Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefit questionnaires.
- Sec. 307. Department of Veterans Affairs automatic processing of certain claims for temporary disability ratings.

TITLE IV—HOMELESSNESS MATTERS

- Sec. 401. Short title.
- Sec. 402. Per diem payments provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for services furnished to homeless veterans.
- Sec. 403. Authorization for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use of certain funds for improved flexibility in assistance to homeless veterans.
- Sec. 404. Access to Department of Veterans Affairs telehealth services.

TITLE V—OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS MATTERS

- Sec. 501. Department of Veterans Affairs employee training regarding Office of Inspector General.
- Sec. 502. Annual review of security at covered facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 503. Modification of certain housing loan fees.

TITLE I—HEALTH CARE MATTERS
Subtitle A—Veterans Community Care Program Matters

- SEC. 101. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISION OF CARE UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM UPON DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY BY VETERAN AND VETERAN'S REFERRING CLINICIAN.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—During the period specified in subsection (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement section 1703(d)(1)(E) of title 38, United States Code, in compliance with the implementing regulations for such section under section 17.4010(a)(5) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, such that the determination of eligibility for care is final and shall be made by

the veteran and the veteran's referring clinician.

(b) CORRECTION OF ERRORS.—A covered veteran and the referring clinician of such veteran may correct any errors made with respect to a determination described in subsection (a).

(c) PERIOD SPECIFIED.—The period specified in this subsection is the two-year period beginning on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year and not later than two years after the commencement of the period specified by subsection (c), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the care provided under section 1703(d)(1)(E) of title 38, United States Code, during the one-year period preceding the date of the report, including—

- (1) the number of instances of care provided;
- (2) the type of care provided; and
- (3) the cost of such care.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the Secretary's authority to prescribe, amend, or rescind regulations under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

(f) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered veteran" has the meaning given that term in section 1703(b) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 102. OUTREACH REGARDING CARE AND SERVICES UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

- (1) by redesignating subsection (o) as subsection (p); and
- (2) by inserting after subsection (n) the following new subsection (o):

“(o) OUTREACH REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF CARE AND SERVICES.—(1) The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform veterans of the following:

“(A) The conditions for care or services under subsections (d) and (e).

“(B) How to request such care or services.

“(C) How to appeal a denial of a request for such care or services using the clinical appeals process of the Veterans Health Administration.

“(2) Upon enrollment of a veteran in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title, and not less frequently than every two years thereafter, the Secretary shall inform the veteran of information described in paragraph (1).

“(3) The Secretary shall ensure that information described in paragraph (1) is—

“(A) publicly displayed in each medical facility of the Department;

“(B) prominently displayed on a website of the Department; and

“(C) included in other outreach campaigns and activities conducted by the Secretary.”.

(b) SOLID START PROGRAM.—Section 6320(a)(2)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “, including how to enroll in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 1705 of this title and the ability to seek care and services under sections 1703 and 1710 of this title” before the semicolon.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON OUTREACH.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that veterans are informed of the conditions for eligibility for care and services under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, including such efforts to conduct outreach pursuant to subsection (q) of such section (as added by subsection (a)).

SEC. 103. ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORT ON WAIVERS OF CERTAIN PAYMENT RATES UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (p) as subsection (q); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (p) the following new subsection (q):

“(q) ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORT ON WAIVERS OF PAYMENT RATES.—(1) On an annual basis, the Secretary shall—

“(A) conduct a review of waivers of payment rates under subsection (i) for Third Party Administrators to identify whether such waivers help to alleviate community-specific challenges, including scarcity of medical services associated with access to health care; and

“(B) submit to Congress a report on the results of such review.

“(2) Each report under paragraph (1)(B) shall include, with respect to the period covered by the report—

“(A) a statement, disaggregated by region, of the total number of waivers described in subparagraph (A) of such paragraph requested by Third Party Administrators;

“(B) a statement of the total number of such waivers that were—

“(i) granted by the Secretary;

“(ii) denied by the Secretary; or

“(iii) withdrawn by a Third Party Administrator;

“(C) a description of the process for the review required under paragraph (1);

“(D) a statement, disaggregated by region, of the average time to process such waivers;

“(E) an assessment, disaggregated by region, of the extent to which such waivers that were granted by the Secretary improved access to health care for covered veterans; and

“(F) a description of trends, if any, identified by the Secretary with respect to such waivers.

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘Third Party Administrator’ has the meaning given such term in section 1703B of this title.”

(b) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall submit the first report required under subsection (q) of section 1703 of such title (as added by subsection (a)) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. MODIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS FOR STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF CARE FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1703C of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “In establishing” and inserting “(A) In establishing”; and

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

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) are comparable to industry standards to ensure there is adequate data transference between care furnished by the Department and care furnished by a non-Department provider.”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(v) Outcomes relating to patient quality of life.”;

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking “and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services” and inserting “the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Indian Health Service”; and

(ii) by striking “and other nongovernmental entities” and inserting “and other non-governmental entities including Third Party Administrators”; and

(D) by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

“(5) When collecting, considering, and applying data related to patient care for purposes of establishing standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure no metric is being over or under analyzed.

“(6) In establishing standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) utilize the most up-to-date practices for extracting and analyzing relevant data;

“(B) utilize all relevant data available to the Secretary;

“(C) ensure the most efficient use of time and resources related to the use of data scientists employed by the Department; and

“(D) collaborate, as appropriate, with entities specified in paragraph (4).

“(7)(A) Not less frequently than once every five years, the Secretary shall update the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) pursuant to the requirements for the establishment of such standards under this subsection.

“(B) Not later than 30 days after any date on which the Secretary updates, pursuant to subparagraph (A), the standards for quality under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on such updated standards for quality.”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary establishes standards for quality under subsection (a)” and inserting “Not less frequently than once every three years”; and

(ii) by inserting “pursuant to standards for quality under subsection (a)” after “medical facilities of the Department”; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “or updates” after “establishes”.

(b) DEADLINE FOR UPDATE.—The Secretary, pursuant to paragraph (7) of section 1703C(a) of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), shall make the first update to the standards for quality established under paragraph (1) of such section not later than the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary submits the report under paragraph (2) of subsection (d).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on how the Secretary—

(1) has consulted with entities specified in paragraph (4) of section 1703C(a) of title 38, United States Code, before the date of the enactment of this Act in establishing standards for quality under such section;

(2) has continued to consult with those entities on and after such date of enactment; and

(3) intends to leverage data sciences to improve standards for quality care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(d) UPDATES TO QUALITY CARE METRICS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on how the Secretary plans to implement the amendments made by subsections (a).

(2) DEADLINE; SUMMARY REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(A) implement the amendments made by subsection (a), including by updating the standards for quality established under section 1703C of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report detailing the standards for quality updated pursuant to such amendments.

(e) AUDIT OF QUALITY CARE METRICS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act,

the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into one or more contracts with a non-Department entity described in paragraph (2) to conduct an audit on the quality of care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including through non-Department health care providers pursuant to section 1703 of title 38 United States Code.

(2) NON-DEPARTMENT ENTITY DESCRIBED.—A non-Department entity described in this paragraph is an entity that—

(A) specializes in analyzing large-scale organizational data collection and analysis efforts, especially with respect to the health care sector; and

(B) has experience and proven outcomes in optimizing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collection and analysis related to the quality of health care services.

(3) ELEMENTS.—The audit required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the methodology used by the Department to collect and assess data on the quality of care furnished by the Department, including any vulnerabilities in such methodology.

(B) An assessment of the accuracy and reliability of the data sources used by the Department to compile data on the quality of care furnished by the Department.

(C) The extent to which the standards the Department uses to assess the quality of care furnished by the Department are—

(i) comparable with industry standards;

(ii) easily accessible to, and understood by—

(I) veterans;

(II) employees of the Department; and

(III) other individuals, as the private sector entity considers appropriate.

(D) Any recommendations of such private sector entity with respect to improvements that the Secretary could administer to more accurately capture the quality of care furnished by the Department.

(4) REPORTS ON AUDIT.—

(A) REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after any date on which a private sector entity described in paragraph (2) completes an audit under paragraph (1), such private sector entity shall submit to the Secretary, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(i) the findings of such audit; and

(ii) recommendations of such private sector entity with respect to such audit.

(B) REPORT ON PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after any date on which the Secretary receives a report under subparagraph (A), 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 on how the Secretary plans to improve the standards for quality of care of the Department.

(f) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” has the meaning given such term in section 1703C of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 105. PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION OF CARE UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Pursuant to section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under such section, shall carry out a pilot program to seek to develop and implement a plan—

(1) to provide monetary and non-monetary incentives to a covered health care provider—

(A) to allow the Secretary to see the scheduling system of the provider, to assess the availability of, and to assist in scheduling appointments for, veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title, including through synchronous, asynchronous, and asynchronous assisted digital scheduling;

(B) to complete continuing professional educational training available through the VHA TRAIN program (or any successor program or initiative) regarding veteran cultural competency, the opioid safety initiative (or any successor program or initiative), and other subjects determined appropriate by the Secretary;

(C) to improve methods of accounting for non-Department training that is equivalent or substantially similar to the continuing professional educational training described in subparagraph (B);

(D) to improve the rate of the timely return to the Secretary of medical record documentation for care or services provided under the Veterans Community Care Program;

(E) to improve the timeliness and quality of the delivery of care and services to veterans under such program; and

(F) to achieve other objectives determined appropriate by the Secretary; and

(2) to decrease the rate of no-show appointments under such program.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the establishment of the pilot program under this section, and annually thereafter during the term of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes, with respect to the period covered by the report—

(1) an assessment of the extent to which—

(A) the system of the Department of Veterans Affairs for scheduling appointments for veterans under the Veterans Community Care Program has improved;

(B) the rate of timely return to the Secretary of medical record documentation described in subparagraph (D) of subsection (a)(1) has improved;

(C) the timeliness and quality of the delivery of care and services described in subparagraph (E) of such subsection has improved; and

(D) the frequency of no-show appointments described in paragraph (2) of such subsection decreased;

(2) a list of the continuing professional educational training courses under subparagraph (B) of such subsection available to covered health care providers;

(3) the rate of participation in such continuing professional education training courses; and

(4) any other matter the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered health care provider” means a health care provider—

(A) described in subsection (c) of section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, that furnishes care or services under the Veterans Community Care Program pursuant to a contract or agreement with a Third Party Administrator; or

(B) that otherwise furnishes care or services outside of Department facilities pursuant to a contract or agreement with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) The term “opioid safety initiative” means the programs, processes, and guidelines of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to the management of opioid therapy and chronic pain.

(3) The term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a network of health care providers and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of such title.

(4) The term “VHA TRAIN program” means the free program of the Veterans Health Administration that offers veteran-specific continuing medical education courses.

SEC. 106. PILOT PROGRAM ON CONSOLIDATING APPROVAL PROCESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR COVERED DENTAL CARE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall hire—

(1) general dentists at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to manage approval by the Department of treatment plans requested by dental providers in providing covered dental care; and

(2) dental specialists at Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department to manage approval by the Department of treatment plans for specialty dental care requested by dental providers in providing covered dental care.

(b) **LOCATIONS.**—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program in not fewer than 20 Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department.

(c) **REPORTS.**—

(1) **INITIAL REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program, that includes—

(A) an identification of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks participating in such pilot program;

(B) a description of the implementation of such pilot program;

(C) an identification of any barriers or challenges to implementing such pilot program;

(D) an assessment of the efficacy of hiring general dentists and dental specialists pursuant to such pilot program;

(E) aggregated feedback with respect to such pilot program from dentists of the Department in Veterans Integrated Service Networks participating in such pilot program; and

(F) aggregated feedback from dental providers providing covered dental care within such Veterans Integrated Service Networks regarding any changes in the timeliness of treatment plan approvals by the Department.

(2) **FINAL REPORT.**—Not later than 90 days before the date of the completion of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program that—

(A) includes, with respect to the period covered by the report, each element of the report required under paragraph (1) described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of such paragraph;

(B) includes recommendations of the Secretary on whether the pilot program should be—

(i) extended;

(ii) expanded; or

(iii) adopted throughout the Department; and

(C) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(d) **SUNSET.**—The authority to carry out the pilot program under this section shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(e) **COVERED DENTAL CARE DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “covered dental care” means dental care provided—

(1) under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code; or

(2) pursuant to a Veterans Care Agreement under section 1703A of such title.

SEC. 107. STRATEGIC PLAN ON VALUE-BASED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM FOR VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION; PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish a working group on value-based care; and

(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the strategic plan developed by the working group pursuant to subsection (b).

(2) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(A) **REQUIRED MEMBERS.**—The working group shall include, at a minimum, the following members:

(i) The Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(ii) The Director of the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention of the Department of Veterans Affairs (or any successor office).

(iii) The Director of the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department (or any successor office).

(iv) The Director of the Office of Rural Health of the Department (or any successor office).

(v) The Director of the Office of Connected Care of the Department (or any successor office).

(vi) The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Information Technology (or any successor office).

(vii) The Chief Officer of the Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning of the Office of Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks of the Veterans Health Administration (or any successor office).

(viii) An individual designated by the Secretary from the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment of the Department under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code.

(ix) An individual designated by the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

(x) An individual designated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services from the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy of the Health Resources and Services Administration.

(xi) The Chief of Human Capital Management for the Veterans Health Administration.

(xii) An individual designated by the Secretary of Defense that is a representative of the Defense Health Agency.

(xiii) An individual selected by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from the special medical advisory group established under section 7312 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) **OPTIONAL MEMBERS.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may appoint any of the following individuals as members of the working group:

(i) An individual representing the Health and Medicine Division of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

(ii) Three individuals representing a private health care system that has made the transition to value-based care.

(iii) Three individuals representing an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—All meetings deliberations, and products of the working group shall be made publicly available throughout the duration of the working group, including to individuals representing organizations recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(4) EXEMPTION FROM FACA.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to the working group established under paragraph (1).

(b) DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN.—The working group shall develop a strategic plan to implement value-based care into the Veterans Health Administration that includes the following:

(1) An identification of the state of the Veterans Health Administration as of the date of the enactment of this Act, including an assessment of the current model of health care delivery used by the Veterans Health Administration in medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) An assessment of the capacity needs of the Veterans Health Administration during the five-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) An analysis of the leadership of the Veterans Health Administration, including an assessment of leadership acumen and ability to implement a clear, shared vision and effective change management and care coordination.

(4) An identification of goals for the future of the Veterans Health Administration.

(5) An identification and classification of the current capabilities, capacity, and gaps in access and quality of the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(6) An analysis of value-based care models, including—

(A) a selection of potential models that would best work for the Veterans Health Administration;

(B) the capacity and capabilities of each such model; and

(C) a thorough justification of the selection of each selected model, including an summary of the ability of such model to improve the metrics described under paragraph (9).

(7) A definition of what quality means with respect to—

(A) access to health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) delivery of such health care.

(8) A definition of what value means with respect to care furnished by the Veterans Health Administration,

(9) A system for measuring value within the Veterans Health Administration that includes metrics for—

(A) outcomes;

(B) safety;

(C) service;

(D) access;

(E) productivity;

(F) capacity; and

(G) total cost of patient care.

(10) With respect to the system described in subparagraph (H), an analysis of variable value with respect to patient outcomes across different health care types and specialties.

(11) An assessment of—

(A) previous or ongoing assessments of the current information technology infrastructure of the Veterans Health Administration, including—

(i) such assessments conducted pursuant to the Electronic Health Record Modernization

program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(ii) any other ongoing information technology modernization programs of such Department and any unimplemented relevant recommendations from such assessments;

(B) the information technology infrastructure of the Veterans Health Administration in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act;

(C) the value-driven framework of the Department, in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act, for evaluating health care innovations, and how improvements in such framework could be used to encourage innovation; and

(D) workforce challenges and needs of the Veterans Health Administration based on—

(i) reviews of workforce assessment data available as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) the findings of—

(I) the report required by section 301(d) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146);

(II) the reports required by section 505 of the John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-182);

(III) the report required by section 301 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-46); and

(IV) any comprehensive health care inspection conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(12) Any recommendations of the working group with respect to improving the information technology infrastructure described in clause (i) of subparagraph (J).

(13) An analysis of how the value-driven framework described in clause (iii) of such subparagraph could be used to improve the model of care delivery by the Department.

(14) A description of how a value-based care system would apply to primary care, inpatient and outpatient mental health care, and inpatient and outpatient substance use treatment, spinal cord injury disorder care, and polytrauma care furnished by the Veterans Health Administration.

(15) With respect to legislative or administrative action necessary to incorporate value-based care models into the Veterans Health Administration, a description of the estimated timelines, effect on workforce, and costs.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the submission of the strategic plan pursuant to subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment established under section 1703E of title 38, United States Code, shall commence a three-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall implement the elements of such strategic plan relating to the delivery, by the Veterans Health Administration, of primary care, inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, spinal cord injury disorder care, and polytrauma care.

(2) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out such pilot program in four Veterans Integrated Service Networks that are geographically dispersed and shall include the following:

(A) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that predominately serves veterans in rural and highly rural areas.

(B) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that predominately serves veterans in urban areas.

(C) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has a high rate of suicide among veterans.

(D) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has a high rate of substance use disorder among veterans.

(E) A Veterans Integrated Service Network that has access or productivity challenges.

(3) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(A) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the commencement of the pilot program, and annually thereafter during the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days before the conclusion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot program that includes—

(i) lessons learned during the administration of such pilot program; and

(ii) specific health outcomes in veteran patient care compared to the Veterans Health Administration system of care in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 108. PLAN ON ADOPTION OF CERTAIN HEALTH INFORMATION STANDARDS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) PLAN FOR CERTAIN HEALTH INFORMATION STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall create and implement a plan to adopt, as rapidly and to the most comprehensive extent feasible, national health information interoperability standards for the Department of Veterans Affairs and community care providers with respect to—

(A) coordination of—

(i) care; and

(ii) benefits;

(B) patient identity matching;

(C) measurement and reporting of quality;

(D) population health; and

(E) public health.

(2) CONSIDERATION.—In developing the plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consider challenges faced by—

(A) small community care providers; and

(B) community care providers located in rural areas.

(b) PLAN ON ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD EXCHANGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a plan to provide, at no cost, to community care providers of the Department, through Third Party Administrators, a capability to facilitate the electronic direct exchange, between such providers and the Department, of—

(A) the health records of veterans; and

(B) documents relating to health care of veterans, clinical notes, and any other information the Secretary determines necessary.

(2) PRIORITIZATION.—In developing the plan required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize providing the capability described in such paragraph to community care providers that—

(A) provide care under the laws administered by the Secretary to—

(i) a lower volume of veterans; and

(ii) veterans who are located in rural areas; and

(B) are unable or unwilling to exchange the records and documents described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of such paragraph with the Department through standards-based or direct exchange mechanisms in effect as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) REPORTS ON PLAN FOR INTEROPERABILITY STANDARDS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives—

- (A) the plan required by subsection (a); and
- (B) a report that includes—

(i) an analysis of gaps, if any, between the use, by the Department and other agencies, health information exchanges, and technology companies, of national health information interoperability standards and the potential, or optimal, use of such national health information interoperability standards;

(ii) an analysis and description of the participation by the Department, community care providers, and other relevant entities in the Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement program of the Department of Health and Human Services as of the date of the enactment of this Act;

(iii) recommendations of the Secretary with respect to development of health information interoperability standards;

(iv) timelines or schedules to implement the plan required by subsection (a); and

(v) an identification of any legislative authorities or resources the Secretary requires to implement such plan.

(2) RECURRING REPORT REQUIREMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter for four years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the status of implementation of the plan required under subsection (a).

(B) ELEMENTS OF SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Each report under subparagraph (A) submitted after the date on which the first report required by such subparagraph is submitted shall include a description of any revisions to—

(i) the plan required by subsection (a) made during the period covered by the report; and

(ii) the analysis, recommendations, timelines, and legislative authorities reported pursuant to paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “community care provider” means a non-Department health care provider providing care (including dental care)—

(A) under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) pursuant to a Veterans Care Agreement under section 1703A of such title; or

(C) under any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(2) The term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 109. REPORT ON USE OF VALUE-BASED REIMBURSEMENT MODELS UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) REPORT ON VALUE-BASED REIMBURSEMENT MODELS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1703E of title 38 United States Code, the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, and Third Party Administrators, shall sub-

mit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing—

(1) an assessment of the efforts of the Department pursuant to section 1703(i)(5) of such title, to incorporate value-based reimbursement models under the Veterans Community Care Program to promote the provision of high-quality care to veterans; and

(2) such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as the Secretary considers appropriate regarding the use of value-based reimbursement models throughout the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—This section shall not be construed to be a pilot program subject to the requirements of section 1703E of title 38, United States Code.

(c) THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 110. INSPECTOR GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and periodically thereafter, the Inspector General shall assess the performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs in—

(1) appropriately identifying veterans eligible for care and services under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code;

(2) informing veterans of their eligibility for such care and services; and

(3) delivering such care and services in a timely manner.

(b) BRIEFING ON ASSESSMENTS.—Upon the submission of the assessment required by subsection (a), the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a briefing on the results of such assessment.

SEC. 111. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON DENTISTRY UNDER VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on dental care furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, that includes a review of—

(1) the impact current reimbursement rates provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to dental providers under such program have on—

(A) the availability of dental care for veterans; and

(B) the ability of Third Party Administrators to meet their contractual obligations for network adequacy;

(2) the satisfaction of dental providers providing dental care under such program with the processes of the Department for approving dental care under such program; and

(3) the current processes of the Department for approving emergent dental care under such program.

(b) THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Nursing Home and Other Long Term Care and Family Caregivers

SEC. 120. INCREASE OF EXPENDITURE CAP FOR NONINSTITUTIONAL CARE ALTERNATIVES TO NURSING HOME CARE.

(a) INCREASE OF EXPENDITURE CAP.—Section 1720C(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “The total cost” and inserting “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the total cost”;

(2) by striking “65 percent” and inserting “100 percent”;

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

“(2)(A) The total cost of providing services or in-kind assistance in the case of any veteran described in subparagraph (B) for any fiscal year under the program may exceed 100 percent of the cost that would otherwise have been incurred as specified in paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines, based on a consideration of clinical need, geographic market factors, and such other matters as the Secretary may prescribe through regulation, that such higher total cost is in the best interest of the veteran.

“(B) A veteran described in this subparagraph is a veteran with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a spinal cord injury, or a condition the Secretary determines to be similar to such conditions.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to fiscal years beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 121. COORDINATION WITH PROGRAM OF ALL-INCLUSIVE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY.

Section 1720C of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 120, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) In furnishing services to a veteran under the program conducted pursuant to subsection (a), if a medical center of the Department through which such program is administered is located in a geographic area in which services are available to the veteran under a PACE program (as such term is defined in sections 1894(a)(2) and 1934(a)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395eee(a)(2); 1396u-4(a)(2))), the Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with the PACE program operating in that area for the furnishing of such services.”.

SEC. 122. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS OR CONTRACTS TO ENTITIES TO IMPROVE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF VETERANS.

Subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 1720K. Grants or contracts to provide mental health support to family caregivers of veterans

“(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance mental health counseling, treatment, or support to the family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(b) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant or contract under this section, an entity shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant or contract.

“(B) A description of the programs or efforts through which the entity will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (g).

“(C) A description of how the entity will distribute grant or contract amounts equitably among areas with varying levels of urbanization.

“(D) A plan for how the grant or contract will be used to meet the unique needs of veterans residing in rural areas, Native American, Native Hawaiian, or Alaska Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

“(c) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants and contracts awarded under this section are equitably distributed among entities located in States with varying levels of urbanization.

“(d) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants or contracts under this section that will serve the following areas:

“(1) Areas with high rates of veterans enrolled in the family caregiver program.

“(2) Areas with high rates of—

“(A) suicide among veterans; or

“(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

“(e) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used—

“(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

“(2) to establish new or additional programs, activities, and services; or

“(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

“(f) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section written guidance on the following:

“(A) Outcome measures.

“(B) Policies of the Department.

“(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

“(A) Increasing the utilization of mental health services among family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(B) Reducing barriers to mental health services among family caregivers of veterans participating in such program.

“(g) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish appropriate tracking requirements with respect to the entities receiving a grant or contract under this section.

“(2) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on such tracking requirements.

“(h) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—The Secretary shall—

“(1) review the performance of each entity that receives a grant or contract under this section; and

“(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

“(i) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of an entity that receives a grant or contract under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (g), the Secretary shall require the entity to submit to the Secretary a remediation plan under which the entity shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

“(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant or contract under this section to an entity described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the entity under such paragraph.

“(j) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant or contract awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of amounts made

available for grants or contracts under this section for the fiscal year in which the grant or contract is awarded.

“(k) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant or contract awarded under this section shall be used to supplement and not supplant funding that is otherwise available through the Department to provide mental health support among family caregivers of veterans participating in the family caregiver program.

“(1) OUTREACH TO FAMILY CAREGIVERS.—The Secretary shall include, in the outreach materials regularly provided to a family caregiver who participates in the family caregiver program, notice of mental health support provided by recipients of grants or contracts under this section that are located in the relevant Veterans Integrated Service Network.

“(m) FUNDING.—(1) Amounts for the activities of the Department under this section shall be budgeted and appropriated through a separate appropriation account.

“(2) In the budget justification materials submitted to Congress in support of the budget of the Department for any fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), the Secretary shall include a separate statement of the amount requested to be appropriated for that fiscal year for the account specified in paragraph (1).

“(n) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary, for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026, \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

“(o) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The terms ‘caregiver’ and ‘family caregiver’ have the meanings given those terms in section 1720G of this title.

“(2) The term ‘family caregiver program’ means the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under section 1720G of this title.

“(3) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F of this title.”

SEC. 123. HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES: PROGRAMS.

(a) PROGRAMS.—Such subchapter is further amended by inserting after section 1720K (as added by section 122) the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 1720L. Home- and community-based services: programs

“(a) IN GENERAL.—In furnishing non-institutional alternatives to nursing home care pursuant to the authority of section 1720C of this title (or any other authority under this chapter or other provision of law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs), the Secretary shall carry out each of the programs specified in this section in accordance with such relevant authorities except as otherwise provided in this section.

“(b) VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Veteran-Directed Care program’. Under such program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with the providers described in paragraph (2) to provide to eligible veterans funds, to the extent practicable, to obtain such in-home care services and related items that support clinical need and improve quality of life, as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and selected by the veteran, including through the veteran hiring individuals to provide such services and items or directly purchasing such services and items.

“(2) The providers described in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) An Aging and Disability Resource Center, an area agency on aging, or a State agency.

“(B) A center for independent living.

“(C) An Indian tribe or tribal organization receiving assistance under title VI of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3057 et seq.).

“(D) Any other entity that the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, determines appropriate.

“(3) In carrying out the Veteran-Directed Care program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

“(A) administer such program through each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and any other territory or possession of the United States, to the extent practicable; and

“(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for eligible veterans who are Native American veterans receiving care and services furnished by the Indian Health Service, a tribal health program, an Urban Indian organization, or (in the case of a Native Hawaiian veteran) a Native Hawaiian health care system, to the extent practicable.

“(4) If a veteran participating in the Veteran-Directed Care program is hospitalized, the veteran may continue to use funds under the program during a period of hospitalization in the same manner that the veteran would be authorized to use such funds under the program if the veteran were not hospitalized.

“(c) HOMEMAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Homemaker and Home Health Aide program’ under which the Secretary may enter into agreements with home health agencies to provide to eligible veterans such home health aide services as may be determined appropriate by the Secretary.

“(2) In carrying out the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program, the Secretary shall—

“(A) administer such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(3);

“(B) seek to ensure the availability of such program in the locations specified in subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(3); and

“(C) seek to ensure the availability of such program for the veteran populations specified in subparagraph (C) of subsection (b)(3).

“(d) HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Home-Based Primary Care program’ under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans in-home health care, the provision of which is overseen by a provider of the Department.

“(e) PURCHASED SKILLED HOME CARE PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘Purchased Skilled Home Care program’ under which the Secretary may furnish to eligible veterans such in-home care services as may be determined appropriate and selected by the Secretary for the veteran.

“(f) CAREGIVER SUPPORT.—(1) With respect to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran participating in a program under this section, the Secretary shall—

“(A) if the veteran meets the requirements of a covered veteran under section 1720G(b) of this title, provide to such caregiver the option of enrolling in the program of general caregiver support services under such section;

“(B) provide to such caregiver covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually; and

“(C) conduct on an annual basis (and, to the extent practicable, in connection with in-person services provided under the program in which the veteran is participating), a wellness contact of such caregiver.

“(2) Covered respite care provided to a resident eligible caregiver of a veteran under paragraph (1) may exceed 30 days annually if such extension is requested by the resident eligible caregiver or veteran and determined medically appropriate by the Secretary.

“(g) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary to carry out programs providing home- and community-based services under any other provision of law.

“(h) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The terms ‘Aging and Disability Resource Center’, ‘area agency on aging’, and ‘State agency’ have the meanings given those terms in section 102 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3002).

“(2) The terms ‘caregiver’ and ‘family caregiver’, with respect to a veteran, have the meanings given those terms, respectively, under subsection (e) of section 1720G of this title with respect to an eligible veteran under subsection (a) of such section or a covered veteran under subsection (b) of such section, as the case may be.

“(3) The term ‘center for independent living’ has the meaning given that term in section 702 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796a).

“(4) The term ‘covered respite care’ has the meaning given such term in section 1720G(d) of this title.

“(5) The term ‘eligible veteran’ means any veteran—

“(A) for whom the Secretary determines participation in a specific program under this section is medically necessary to promote, preserve, or restore the health of the veteran; and

“(B) who absent such participation would be at increased risk for hospitalization, placement in a nursing home, or emergency room care.

“(6) The term ‘home health aide’ means an individual employed by a home health agency to provide in-home care services.

“(7) The term ‘in-home care service’ means any service, including a personal care service, provided to enable the recipient of such service to live at home.

“(8) The terms ‘Indian tribe’ and ‘tribal organization’ have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

“(9) The terms ‘Native American’ and ‘Native American veteran’ have the meanings given those terms in section 3765 of this title.

“(10) The terms ‘Native Hawaiian’ and ‘Native Hawaiian health care system’ have the meanings given those terms in section 12 of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. 11711).

“(11) The terms ‘tribal health programs’ and ‘Urban Indian organizations’ have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

“(12) The term ‘resident eligible caregiver’ means an individual who—

“(A) is a caregiver, or a family caregiver, of a veteran and resides with that veteran; and

“(B) has not entered into a contract, agreement, or other arrangement for such individual to act as a caregiver for that veteran unless such individual is a family member of

the veteran or is furnishing caregiver services through a medical foster home.”.

(b) **HEADLINE FOR IMPROVED ADMINISTRATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the Veteran-Directed Care program and the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program are administered through each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with section 1720L of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), by not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) **ADMINISTRATION OF VETERAN-DIRECTED CARE PROGRAM.**—

(1) **PROCEDURES.**—

(A) The Secretary shall establish procedures to—

(i) identify the staffing needs for the Veteran-Directed Care program of the Department of Veterans Affairs under such section (as added by subsection (a)); and

(ii) define the roles and responsibilities for personnel of the Department responsible for the administration of such program, including such personnel employed at the national, Veterans Integrated Service Network, or medical facility level.

(B) The responsibilities described in clause (ii) of subparagraph (A) shall include responsibilities for engagement with—

(i) veterans participating in such program;

(ii) veterans interested in participating in such program; and

(iii) providers described in section 1720L(b)(2) (as added by subsection (a)).

(2) **STAFFING MODEL; REPORT.**—Not later than two years after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) establish a staffing model for the administration of such program at each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the following:

(i) A description of—

(I) the staffing model described in subparagraph (A); and

(II) the rationale for such staffing model.

(ii) An identification of the ratio of staff required to administer such program to the number of veterans served by such program, disaggregated by each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(iii) A description of budgetary resources or other support, if any, required to accommodate an increase in staffing at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to the requirements of the staffing model described in subparagraph (A).

(iv) Such other matters as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

SEC. 124. COORDINATION WITH ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS.

(a) **COORDINATION WITH PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS.**—

(1) **COORDINATION.**—Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(14)(A) In the case of a veteran or caregiver who seeks services under this subsection and is denied such services, or a veteran or the family caregiver of a veteran who is discharged from the program under this subsection, the Secretary shall—

“(i) if the veteran meets the requirements of a covered veteran under subsection (b), provide to such caregiver the option of enrolling in the program of general caregiver support services under such subsection;

“(ii) assess the veteran or caregiver for participation in any other available program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs

specified in section 1720L of this title) for which the veteran or caregiver may be eligible and, with respect to the veteran, store (and make accessible to the veteran) the results of such assessment in the electronic medical record of the veteran; and

“(iii) provide to the veteran or caregiver written information on any such program identified pursuant to the assessment under clause (ii), including information about facilities, eligibility requirements, and relevant contact information for each such program.

“(B) The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, provide to a veteran or family caregiver the option of obtaining clinically appropriate services under any other available program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs specified in section 1720L of this title) for which the veteran or family caregiver may be eligible prior to discharging the veteran or family caregiver from the program under this subsection.

“(C) For each veteran or family caregiver who is discharged from the program under this subsection, a caregiver support coordinator shall provide for a smooth and personalized transition from such program to an appropriate program of the Department for home- and community-based services (including the programs specified in section 1720L of this title), including by integrating caregiver support across programs.”.

(2) **APPLICABILITY.**—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to denials and discharges occurring on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) **TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 1720G(d) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “or a covered veteran” each place it appears and inserting “, a veteran denied or discharged as specified in paragraph (14) of such subsection, or a covered veteran”; and

(B) by striking “under subsection (a), means” each place it appears and inserting “under subsection (a) or a veteran denied or discharged as specified in paragraph (14) of such subsection, means”.

(b) **CONFORMITY OF RESPITE CARE ACROSS PROGRAMS.**—Section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(3), is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A)(ii)(III) to read as follows:

“(III) covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually.”; and

(B) by striking subparagraph (B) and redesignating subparagraphs (C) and (D) as subparagraphs (B) through (C), respectively; and

(2) by amending subsection (b)(3)(A)(iii) to read as follows:

“(iii) Covered respite care of not less than 30 days annually.”; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

“(2) The term ‘covered respite care’ means, with respect to a caregiver of a veteran, respite care under section 1720B of this title that—

“(A) is medically and age appropriate for the veteran (including 24-hour per day care of the veteran commensurate with the care provided by the caregiver); and

“(B) includes in-home care.”.

(c) **REVIEW RELATING TO CAREGIVER CONTACT.**—The Secretary shall conduct a review of the capacity of the Department to establish a streamlined system for contacting all caregivers enrolled in the program of general

caregiver support services under section 1720G(b) of title 38, United States Code, to provide to such caregivers program updates and alerts relating to emerging services for which such caregivers or the veterans for which they provide care may be eligible.

SEC. 125. IMPROVEMENTS TO PROGRAM OF COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS.

Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 124, is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (12)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “, which shall include all criteria used to determine eligibility for such assistance and, in the case of a completed evaluation, how such criteria were used to evaluate information provided in assessments to determine such eligibility” before the period at the end; and

(B) in subparagraph (C)(i), by striking “who submits” and all that follows through the end of the clause and inserting the following: “who—

“(I) submits an application for the program established under paragraph (1); or

“(II) is being reassessed for eligibility to continue in such program.”; and

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

“(15)(A) Not less frequently than annually, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a comprehensive report on the program required by paragraph (1) that includes, with respect to one-year period preceding the date of the submission of such report, the following:

“(i) The number of applications received for such program.

“(ii) The number, disaggregated by race, sex, and era and branch of service in the Armed Forces of the applicant, of—

“(I) approvals of such applications; and

“(II) denials of such applications.

“(iii) The number of reassessments conducted for such program.

“(iv) An identification of each decision made with respect to a reassessment conducted for such program, disaggregated by decisions resulting in—

“(I) disenrollment, including removal, discharge, or voluntary withdrawal;

“(II) tier reduction; and

“(III) tier continuation.

“(v) The number of appeals of decisions made with respect to such program, disaggregated by type of appeal.

“(vi) With respect to each appeal described in clause (v), the decision rendered, if any.

“(vii) A description of all tools used in assessments conducted for such program, including an explanation of how and by whom such tools are administered.

“(viii) A description of procedures used under such program for reviewing and integrating clinical records from health care providers that includes an explanation of how such records are used in determinations of eligibility for such program.

“(ix) A description of procedures available under such program for health care providers to communicate medical opinions to the teams conducting assessments to determine eligibility for such program, including health care providers in the private sector and health care providers specified in subsection (c) of section 1703 of this title.

“(x) A description of information technology systems and processes used under such program to upload and integrate all clinical records from all non-Department providers, including providers in the private sector and providers under the Veterans Community Care Program established under such section.

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that all data included in a report under subparagraph (A)—

“(i) relating to a decision made under the program required by paragraph (1), are disaggregated by the specific reason for the decision;

“(ii) relating to a veteran, include comprehensive demographic information of the veteran, including the time period of the injuries, if any, of the veteran and the Veterans Integrated Service Network in which the veteran is located; and

“(iii) with respect to eligibility determinations relating to a serious injury of a veteran, specify—

“(I) how many such determinations relate to the ability of the veteran to perform activities of daily living; and

“(II) how many such determinations relate to the need of a veteran for supervision and protection.

“(C) The Secretary shall provide the data under paragraph (B) pursuant to Federal laws and in a manner that is wholly consistent with applicable Federal privacy and confidentiality laws, including but the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Public Law 104-191; 42 U.S.C. 201 note) and regulations (title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, parts 160 and 164, or successor regulations), and sections 5701, 5705, and 7332 of this title to ensure that the provided data, or some portion of the data, will not undermine the anonymity of a veteran.”.

SEC. 126. IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO HOME-MAKER AND HOME HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITIES WITH SHORTAGE OF HOME HEALTH AIDES.—

(1) PROGRAM.—Beginning not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall carry out a three-year pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide homemaker and home health aide services to veterans who reside in communities with a shortage of home health aides.

(2) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall select not fewer than five geographic locations in which the Secretary determines there is a shortage of home health aides at which to carry out the pilot program under paragraph (1).

(3) NURSING ASSISTANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the pilot program under paragraph (1), the Secretary may hire nursing assistants as new employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or reassign nursing assistants who are existing employees of the Department, to provide to veterans in-home care services (including basic tasks authorized by the State certification of the nursing assistant) under the pilot program, in lieu of or in addition to the provision of such services through non-Department home health aides.

(B) RELATIONSHIP TO HOME-BASED PRIMARY CARE PROGRAM.—Nursing assistants hired or reassigned under subparagraph (A) may provide services to a veteran under the pilot program under paragraph (1) while serving as part of a health care team for the veteran under the Home-Based Primary Care program.

(4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year before the date of the termination of the pilot program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report that includes—

(A) a statement of the results of such pilot program; and

(B) an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of—

(i) extending such pilot program; or

(ii) making such pilot program a permanent program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) REPORT ON USE OF FUNDS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing, with respect to the period beginning in fiscal year 2012 and ending in fiscal year 2024, the following:

(1) An identification of the amount of funds that were included in a budget of the Department of Veterans Affairs during such period for the provision of in-home care to veterans under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program but were not expended for such provision, disaggregated by medical center of the Department for which such unexpended funds were budgeted (if such disaggregation is possible).

(2) To the extent practicable, an identification of the number of veterans for whom, during such period, the hours during which a home health aide was authorized to provide services to the veteran under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program were reduced for a reason other than a change in the health care needs of the veteran, and a detailed description of the reasons why any such reductions may have occurred.

(c) UPDATED GUIDANCE ON PROGRAM.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue updated guidance for the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program. Such updated guidance shall include the following:

(1) A process for the transition of veterans from the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program to other covered programs.

(2) A requirement for the directors of the medical facilities of the Department to complete such process whenever a veteran with care needs has been denied services from home health agencies under the Homemaker and Home Health Aide program as a result of the clinical needs or behavioral issues of the veteran.

SEC. 127. PILOT PROGRAM TO FURNISH ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES TO CERTAIN VETERANS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Beginning not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess—

(1) the effectiveness of providing assisted living services to eligible veterans, at the election of such veterans; and

(2) the satisfaction with the pilot program of veterans participating in such pilot program.

(b) PROGRAM LOCATIONS.—

(1) VETERANS INTEGRATED SERVICE NETWORKS.—The Secretary shall select two Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a).

(2) FACILITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Within the Veterans Integrated Service Networks selected under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall select facilities at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1).

(B) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting facilities under subparagraph (A) at which to carry out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(i) the locations of such facilities are in geographically diverse areas;

(ii) not fewer than one such facility serves veterans in rural or highly rural areas (as determined through the use of the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture);

(iii) not fewer than one such facility is located in each Veterans Integrated Service Network selected under paragraph (1); and

(iv) not fewer than one such facility is a State home.

(c) PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.—Not more than 60 eligible veterans may participate in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) in each Veterans Integrated Service Network selected under subsection (b)(1).

(d) PROVISION OF ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES.—

(1) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary may enter into agreements for the provision of assisted living services on behalf of eligible veterans with—

(A) a provider participating under a State plan or waiver under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); or

(B) a State home recognized and certified under subpart B of part 51 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations.

(2) STANDARDS.—The Secretary may not place, transfer, or admit a veteran to any facility for assisted living services under the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) unless the Secretary determines that—

(A) the facility meets the standards for community residential care established under sections 17.61 through 17.72 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, or successor regulations, and any additional standards of care as the Secretary may specify; or

(B) in the case of a facility that is a State home, the State home meets such standards of care as the Secretary may specify.

(3) INSPECTION.—The Secretary shall inspect facilities at which veterans are placed under the pilot program under subsection (a)(1)—

(A) with respect to a facility that is a State home, not less frequently than annually and in the same manner as the Secretary conducts inspection of State homes under section 1742 of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) with respect to any other facility, not less frequently than annually and in the same manner as the Secretary conducts inspection of facilities under section 1730 of such title.

(4) PAYMENT TO CERTAIN FACILITIES.—

(A) STATE HOMES.—In the case of a facility participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) that is a State home, the Secretary shall pay to the State home a per diem for each veteran participating in the pilot program at a rate agreed to by the Secretary and the State home.

(B) COMMUNITY ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES.—In the case of a facility participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) that is a community assisted living facility, the Secretary shall—

(i) pay to the facility an amount that is less than the average rate paid by the Department for placement in a community nursing home in the same Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(ii) re-evaluate payment rates annually to account for current economic conditions and current costs of assisted living services.

(e) CONTINUITY OF CARE.—Upon the termination of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall—

(1) provide to all veterans participating in the pilot program at the time of such termination the option to continue to receive assisted living services at the site they were assigned to under the pilot program, at the expense of the Department; and

(2) for such veterans who do not opt to continue to receive such services—

(A) ensure such veterans do not experience lapses in care; and

(B) provide such veterans with information on, and furnish such veterans with, other extended care services based on their preferences and best medical interest.

(f) DETERMINATION OF QUALITY.—The Secretary shall determine a method for assessment of quality of care provided to veterans participating in the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) and shall communicate that method to providers of services under the pilot program.

(g) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the initiation of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), and annually thereafter for the duration of such pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes—

(1) an identification of Veterans Integrated Services Networks and facilities of the Department participating in the pilot program and assisted living facilities and State homes at which veterans are placed under the pilot program;

(2) the number of participants in the pilot program, disaggregated by facility;

(3) general demographic information of participants in the pilot program, including average age, sex, and race or ethnicity;

(4) disability status of participants in the pilot program;

(5) an identification of any barriers or challenges to furnishing care to veterans under the pilot program, conducting oversight of the pilot program, or any other barriers or challenges;

(6) the cost of care at each assisted living facility and State home participating in the pilot program, including an analysis of any cost savings by the Department when comparing that cost to the cost of nursing home care;

(7) aggregated feedback from participants in the pilot program, including from veteran resident surveys and interviews; and

(8) such other matters the Secretary considers appropriate.

(h) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the pilot program terminates under subsection (j), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that—

(1) includes the matters required under paragraphs (1) through (8) of subsection (g);

(2) includes recommendations on whether the model studied in the pilot program should be continued or adopted throughout the Department; and

(3) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(i) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three years after the initiation of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1), the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of—

(A) the quality of care provided to veterans at facilities participating in the pilot program, measured pursuant to the method determined under subsection (f);

(B) the oversight of such facilities, as conducted by the Department, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, State agencies, and other relevant entities; and

(C) such other matters as the Inspector General considers appropriate.

(3) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the submission of the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to

the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan to address the deficiencies identified in the report, if any.

(j) TERMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) shall terminate on September 30, 2026.

(2) EXTENSION.—The Secretary may extend the duration of the pilot program for an additional two-year period if the Secretary, based on the results of the reports submitted under subsection (g), determines such an extension is appropriate.

(k) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “assisted living services” means services of a facility in providing room, board, and personal care for and supervision of residents for their health, safety, and welfare.

(2) The term “eligible veteran” means a veteran who is—

(A) receiving nursing home care paid for by the Department of Veterans Affairs, eligible to receive such care pursuant to section 1710A of title 38, United States Code, or requires a higher level of care than the domiciliary care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but does not meet the requirements for nursing home level care provided by the Department pursuant to such section; and

(B) eligible for assisted living services, as determined by the Secretary or meets such additional criteria for eligibility for the pilot program under subsection (a)(1) as the Secretary may establish.

(3) The term “State home” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 128. PROVISION OF MEDICINE, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO STATE HOMES.

(a) PROVISION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may provide to State homes medicine, personal protective equipment, medical supplies, and any other equipment, supplies, and assistance available to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section:

(1) The term “personal protective equipment” means any protective equipment required to prevent the wearer from contracting an infectious disease, including gloves, N-95 respirator masks, gowns, goggles, face shields, or other equipment required for safety.

(2) The term “State home” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 129. RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO ASSIST VETERANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND CAREGIVERS NAVIGATING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a process through which the Department of Veterans Affairs may recognize organizations and individuals to assist a veteran, a family member of a veteran, or a caregiver of a veteran (as defined in section 1720G(d) of title 38, United States Code) in navigating the programs and services of the Veterans Health Administration.

(b) SOLICITATION OF FEEDBACK.—The Secretary shall solicit feedback and recommendations in the creation of the process under subsection (a) from such organizations as the Secretary may consider relevant.

(c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not recognize an organization or individual pursuant to the process established under subsection (a) unless the organization or individual has certified to the Secretary that no

fee or compensation of any nature will be charged to any individual for services rendered in providing assistance pursuant to such subsection.

SEC. 130. REVIEWS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.

(a) OFFICE OF GERIATRIC AND EXTENDED CARE.—

(1) REVIEW OF PROGRAMS.—The Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of each program administered through the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care of the Department and the Caregiver Support Program Office of the Department, or any successor offices, to—

(A) eliminate service gaps at the medical center level; and

(B) ensure—

(i) the clinical needs of veterans are met;

(ii) consistency in program management;

(iii) the availability of, and the access by veterans to, home- and community-based services, including for veterans living in rural areas; and

(iv) proper coordination between covered programs.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF STAFFING NEEDS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an assessment of the staffing needs of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care of the Department and the Caregiver Support Program Office of the Department, or any successor offices.

(3) GOALS FOR GEOGRAPHIC ALIGNMENT OF CARE.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT OF GOALS.—The Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, shall establish quantitative goals to enable aging or disabled veterans who are not located near medical centers of the Department to access extended care services (including by improving access to home- and community-based services for such veterans).

(B) IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE.—Each goal established under subparagraph (A) shall include a timeline for the implementation of the goal at each medical center of the Department.

(4) GOALS FOR IN-HOME SPECIALTY CARE.—The Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, shall establish quantitative goals to address the specialty care needs of veterans through in-home care, including by ensuring the education of home health aides and caregivers of veterans in the following areas:

(A) Dementia care.

(B) Care for spinal cord injuries and diseases.

(C) Ventilator care.

(D) Other specialty care areas as determined by the Secretary.

(5) INPUT ON GOALS.—To the extent practicable, the head of the Caregiver Support Program Office, or successor office, shall provide to the Director of the Office of Geriatric and Extended Care, or successor office, input with respect to the establishment of the goals under paragraphs (3) and (4).

(6) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the findings of the review under paragraph (1), the results of the assessment under paragraph (2), and the goals established under paragraphs (3) and (4).

(b) REVIEW OF INCENTIVES AND EFFORTS RELATING TO HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the following:

(A) The financial and organizational incentives or disincentives for the directors of

medical centers of the Department to establish or expand covered programs at such medical centers.

(B) Any incentives or disincentives for such directors to provide to veterans home- and community-based services in lieu of institutional care.

(C) The efforts taken by the Secretary to enhance spending of the Department for extended care by balancing spending between institutional care and home- and community-based services consistent with the demand for such services.

(D) The plan of the Under Secretary for Health of the Department to accelerate efforts to enhance spending as specified in subparagraph (C), to match the progress of similar efforts taken by the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services with respect to spending of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for extended care.

(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the findings of the review under paragraph (1).

(c) REVIEW OF RESPITE CARE SERVICES.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the use, availability, cost, and effectiveness, of the respite care services furnished by the Secretary under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) the frequency at which the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to meet demand for such services;

(2) a detailed description of—

(A) the reasons the Department of Veterans Affairs is unable to meet the demand for such services; and

(B) any actions, or planned actions, of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure such demand is met.

(d) COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE HOME- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES.—

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(A) DEVELOPMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations as follows:

(i) With respect to home- and community-based services for veterans, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations regarding new services (in addition to those furnished as of the date of enactment of this Act) in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(ii) With respect to the national shortage of home health aides, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop recommendations regarding methods to address such shortage in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor.

(B) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing the recommendations developed under subparagraph (A) and an identification of any changes in existing law or new statutory authority necessary to implement the recommendations, as determined by the Secretary.

(C) CONSULTATION WITH SECRETARY OF LABOR.—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with the Secretary of Labor.

(2) FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAREGIVER SUPPORT.—

(A) FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall solicit from the entities described in subparagraph (B) feedback and recommendations regarding opportunities for the Secretary to enhance

home- and community-based services for veterans and the caregivers of veterans, including through the potential provision by the entity of care and respite services to veterans and caregivers who may not be eligible for any program under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, or section 1720L of such title (as added by section 124), but have a need for assistance.

(B) COVERED ENTITIES.—The entities described in this subparagraph are veterans service organizations and nonprofit organizations with a focus on caregiver support or long term care (as determined by the Secretary).

(3) COLLABORATION FOR CERTAIN VETERANS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall collaborate with the Director of the Indian Health Service and representatives from tribal health programs and Urban Indian organizations to ensure the availability of home- and community-based services for—

(A) Native American veterans, including Native American veterans receiving health care and medical services under multiple health care systems; and

(B) Native Hawaiian veterans, including Native Hawaiian veterans receiving health care and medical services under the Native Hawaiian health care system.

SEC. 131. GAO REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the provision of mental health support to caregivers of veterans.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the need for mental health support among caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(2) An assessment of options for mental health support in facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(3) An assessment of the availability and accessibility of mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(4) An assessment of the awareness among caregivers of the availability of mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(5) An assessment of barriers to mental health support in facilities of the Department and in the community for caregivers participating in the caregiver programs.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "caregiver" has the meaning given that term in section 1720G of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term "caregiver programs" means—

(A) the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) the program of support services for caregivers under subsection (b) of such section.

SEC. 132. DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRALIZED WEBSITE FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION.

(a) CENTRALIZED WEBSITE.—The Secretary shall develop and maintain a centralized and publicly accessible internet website of the Department as a clearinghouse for information and resources relating to covered programs.

(b) CONTENTS.—The website under subsection (a) shall contain the following:

(1) A description of each covered program.
 (2) An informational assessment tool that—

(A) explains the administrative eligibility, if applicable, of a veteran, or a caregiver of a veteran, for any covered program; and

(B) provides information, as a result of such explanation, on any covered program for which the veteran or caregiver (as the case may be) may be eligible.

(3) A list of required procedures for the directors of the medical facilities of the Department to follow in determining the eligibility and suitability of veterans for participation in a covered program, including procedures applicable to instances in which the resource constraints of a facility (or of a community in which a facility is located) may result in the inability to address the health needs of a veteran under a covered program in a timely manner.

(c) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall ensure the website under subsection (a) is updated on a periodic basis.

SEC. 133. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) The terms “caregiver” and “family caregiver” have the meanings given those terms under section 1720L(h) of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 123).

(2) The term “covered program”—

(A) means any program of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home- and community-based services; and

(B) includes the programs specified in section 1720L of title 38, United States Code (as added by section 123).

(3) The term “home- and community-based services”—

(A) means the services referred to in section 1701(6)(E) of title 38, United States Code; and

(B) includes services furnished under a program specified in section 1720L of such title (as added by section 123).

(4) The terms “Home-Based Primary Care program”, “Homemaker and Home Health Aide program”, and “Veteran-Directed Care program” mean the programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in subsection (d), (c), and (b) of such section 1720L, respectively.

(5) The terms “home health aide”, “Native American”, “Native American veteran”, “tribal health programs”, and “Urban Indian organizations” have the meanings given those terms in subsection (h) of such section 1720L.

(6) The term “Vet Center” has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of title 38, United States Code.

(7) The term “veterans service organization” means any organization recognized by the Secretary under section 5902 of such title.

Subtitle C—Medical Treatment and Other Matters

SEC. 140. QUARTERLY REPORT ON REFERRALS FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE.

Subchapter I of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section (and amending the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§ 534. Quarterly report on referrals for non-Department health care

“Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and not less frequently than quarterly thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing, with respect to referrals for non-Department health care originating from a medical facility of the Department during the quarter preceding the date of the submis-

sion of the report, a measurement of, for each such medical facility—

“(1) the period of time between—

“(A) the date on which a clinician employed by the Department determines that a veteran requires care, or a veteran presents to the Department requesting care, and the date on which the referral for care is sent to a non-Department health care provider;

“(B) the date on which such referral is sent to a non-Department health care provider and the date on which such non-Department health care provider accepts such referral;

“(C) the date on which such non-Department health care provider accepts such referral and the date on which such referral is completed;

“(D) the date on which such referral is completed and the date on which an appointment with a non-Department health care provider is made; and

“(E) the date on which such an appointment is made and the date on which such appointment occurs; and

“(2) any other period of time that the Secretary determines necessary.”.

SEC. 141. ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARIES.

Section 7306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) by redesignating subsections (c) through (g) as subsections (b) through (f), respectively; and

(3) in subsection (c) (as so redesignated), by striking “subsection (e)” and inserting “subsection (f)”.

SEC. 142. MODIFICATION OF PAY LIMITATION FOR PHYSICIANS, PODIATRISTS, OPTOMETRISTS, AND DENTISTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7431 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by inserting “optometrists,” after “podiatrists,” each place it appears;

(B) by inserting “optometrist” after “podiatrist,” each place it appears;

(C) in subsection (c)—

(i) in paragraph (5), by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Such a notice shall include a statement of whether the market pay will increase, decrease, or remain unchanged following such evaluation.”; and

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

“(7) The Secretary shall ensure that each physician, podiatrist, optometrist, and dentist in the Veterans Health Administration is—

“(A) advised, on an annual basis, of the criteria described in subparagraph (F) of paragraph (4);

“(B) evaluated in accordance with such criteria; and

“(C) compensated in accordance with—

“(i) applicable assignment and pay levels, subject to relevant pay limitations; and

“(ii) the extent to which such criteria is met.

“(8) Not later than 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes the following:

“(A) A list of each facility and specialty that conducted an evaluation of pay during the period covered by the report.

“(B) For each evaluation described in subparagraph (A)—

“(i) a list of occupations for which pay was evaluated, disaggregated by medical specialty, number of authorized full-time employees, and onsite full-time employees as of the date of the evaluation;

“(ii) the date such evaluation was completed;

“(iii) whether a market pay adjustment was made following the evaluation per each occupation and specialty evaluated;

“(iv) whether applicable employees were notified of such evaluation;

“(v) whether local labor partners were notified of such evaluation; and

“(vi) in the case of an evaluation that resulted in an adjustment of pay—

“(I) the date such adjustment—

“(aa) was implemented; and

“(bb) became effective; and

“(II) the percentage of employees of each occupation and specialty for which pay was adjusted pursuant to such evaluation.

“(C) A list of facilities of the Department that have not conducted an evaluation of market pay, pursuant to paragraph (5), during the 18-month-period that precedes the date of the submission of such report.”;

(D) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “optometrists,” after “podiatrists,”; and

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

“(5) Notwithstanding any compensation or pay limitations under this title or title 5, the Secretary may authorize the Under Secretary for Health to pay physicians, podiatrists, optometrists and dentists—

“(A) awards authorized under this title;

“(B) advance payments, recruitment or relocation bonuses, and retention allowances authorized under section 7410(a) of this title or as otherwise provided by law;

“(C) incentives or bonuses under section 706 of this title or as otherwise provided by law; and

“(D) earnings from fee-basis appointments under section 7405(a)(2) of this title.

“(6)(A) The Secretary may waive any pay limitation described in this section (including tier limitations) that the Secretary determines necessary for the recruitment or retention of critical health care personnel whom the Secretary determines would provide direct patient care.

“(B) Priority for such waivers shall be given for positions, locations, and care provided through contracts at a high cost to the Department.

“(C) The Chief Human Capital Officer of the Department, the Chief Financial Officer of the Department, and the Office of the General Counsel of the Department shall review any waiver issued under subparagraph (A).

“(D) During the period the authority under subparagraph (A) is effective, the Secretary may not issue more than 300 waivers under such subparagraph.

“(E) The Secretary may prescribe requirements, limitations, and other considerations for waivers under such subparagraph.

“(F) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes—

“(i) any updates to the requirements, limitations, and considerations prescribed under subparagraph (B) during the period covered by the report;

“(ii) a description of the findings of each review, if any, conducted pursuant to subparagraph (C);

“(iii) a description of each waiver under subparagraph (A) in effect as of the date of the submission of the report, including the—

“(I) duty location, position, specialty, market and performance considerations for the waiver; and

“(II) impact, if any, of the waiver on contracted care purchased by the Department for the region; and

“(iv) a list of any separation actions during the period covered by the report with respect to a position for which a waiver under subparagraph (A) is in effect.

“(G) The authority of the Secretary under subparagraph (A) shall terminate on the last day of the third full fiscal year following the date of the enactment of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.”.

(2) **REPORT ON WAIVER AUTHORITY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report that includes a description of the requirements, limitations, and other considerations prescribed under section 7431(b)(6)(D) of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1).

(3) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **PAY OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH.**—Section 7432(b)(1) of such title is amended by inserting “, podiatrist, optometrist,” after “physician”.

(B) **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.**—Section 7433 of such title is amended by inserting “optometrists,” after “physicians,” each place it appears.

(C) **COMPETITIVE PAY.**—Section 7451(a)(2)(C) of such title is amended by inserting “optometrist,” after “physician,”.

(4) **CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **SUBCHAPTER HEADING.**—Subchapter III of chapter 74 of such title is amended in the heading by inserting “**Optometrists,**” after “**Podiatrists,**”.

(B) **TABLE OF SECTIONS.**—The table of sections for such chapter is amended by striking the item relating to subchapter III and inserting the following:

“SUBCHAPTER III—PAY FOR PHYSICIANS AND OTHER HEALTH-CARE PERSONNEL”.

(5) **APPLICABILITY DATES.**—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to any pay period of the Department of Veterans Affairs beginning on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) **MODIFICATION AND CLARIFICATION OF PAY GRADE FOR OPTOMETRISTS.**—Section 7404 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)(A), by striking “podiatrists, and dentists” and inserting “podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “podiatrist (dpm), and dentist” and inserting “podiatrist (dpm), optometrist (od), and dentist”;

(B) by striking “clinical chiropractor and optometrist schedule,” and inserting “clinical chiropractor schedule”; and

(C) by inserting “optometrist grade” after “Podiatrist grade”.

(c) **RETROACTIVE AUTHORITY FOR COMPENSATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may pay retroactive compensation to a covered employee in an amount that equals the amount of compensation that was authorized to be paid to such covered employee during the period specified in paragraph (2), but was deferred and paid to such employee in the calendar year following the calendar year in which such compensation was authorized because the payment such compensation would have exceeded an applicable cap on annual compensation.

(2) **PERIOD SPECIFIED.**—The period specified in this paragraph is the period beginning on January 8, 2006, and ending on December 31, 2017.

(3) **EXCLUSION.**—Compensation authorized under this subsection shall not be included

in the calculation of any aggregate limit on compensation for a covered employee for the year in which it is paid.

(4) **CHARGING OF COMPENSATION.**—Compensation authorized under this subsection shall be charged to the appropriate medical care appropriation account of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the fiscal year in which the work was performed except as follows:

(A) In the case of an account that has closed pursuant to section 1552 of title 31, United States Code, the compensation shall be charged to a current appropriation account in accordance with section 1553 of such title.

(B) In the case of an expired account that has not closed, if charging the compensation to the expired account would cause such account to have a negative unliquidated or unexpended balance, the compensation may be charged to a current appropriation account available for the same purpose.

(5) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

(A) The term “compensation” means any pay, including salary, awards, and incentives.

(B) The term “covered employee” means a physician, podiatrist, or dentist subject to market pay under section 7431 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 143. REIMBURSEMENT OF AMBULANCE COST FOR CARE FOR CERTAIN RURAL VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall pay, or reimburse a covered veteran for, the cost of transporting the veteran by ambulance, including air ambulance, from a covered location to a provider of the Department of Veterans Affairs, a non-Department provider, or the nearest hospital that can meet the needs of the veteran (including a hospital that compacts with the Indian Health Service) for covered care.

(b) **AMOUNT COVERED.**—The maximum cumulative amount covered under this section for a covered veteran is \$46,000.

(c) **SUNSET.**—This section shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2026.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered care” means care for a veteran eligible for care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs under title 38, United States Code, or any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, even if the care associated with the transport described in subsection (a) is not authorized by the Department.

(2) The term “covered location” means a location that is—

(A) in a State that is 100 miles or more from the nearest medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) in an area rated as a 10 or higher under the rural-urban commuting areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture.

(3) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) has a service-connected disability rated by the Secretary as between 0 and 30 percent disabling;

(B) is not eligible for payments or reimbursements for beneficiary travel or other transportation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, other than under this section; and

(C) is not entitled to care or services under a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health-plan contract.

(4) The term “health-plan contract” has the meaning given that term in section 1725 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The term “service-connected” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of such title.

SEC. 144. PILOT PROGRAM TO FURNISH DENTAL CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO CERTAIN VETERANS DIAGNOSED WITH ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Beginning not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a two-year pilot program (in this section referred to as the “pilot program”) under which the Secretary shall furnish covered care to covered veterans through means that include the use of community care.

(b) **LOCATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall select not more than four States in which to carry out the pilot program.

(2) **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—In selecting States under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prioritize States in which—

(A) the Department of Veterans Affairs serves a high proportion, as determined by the Secretary, of veterans residing in rural or highly rural areas (as determined through the use of the Rural-Urban Commuting Areas coding system of the Department of Agriculture);

(B) dental clinics operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs currently utilize teledentistry;

(C) the Department of Veterans Affairs does not currently operate a dental clinic; or

(D) the Secretary determines a large percentage of veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under paragraphs (1) or (2) of section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, visit emergency rooms for dental emergencies at high rates.

(c) **PARTICIPATION LIMITATION.**—Participation in a pilot program established pursuant to this section shall be limited to a covered veteran who receives health care in a facility of the Department located in a State selected under subsection (b).

(d) **USE OF CERTAIN METHODS TO PROVIDE CARE.**—

(1) **MOBILE DENTAL CLINICS.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall test the efficacy of mobile dental clinics to service rural areas that do not have a population base to warrant a full-time clinic but where there are covered veterans in need of dental care.

(2) **HOME-BASED DENTAL CARE.**—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall test the efficacy of portable dental care units to service rural veterans in their homes, as the Secretary considers medically appropriate.

(e) **ADMINISTRATION.**—

(1) **COMMUNITY CARE NETWORK REVIEW.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Before commencing the pilot program, the Secretary shall work with third party administrators to conduct a review of dental providers who are part of the community care network of the Department in each State selected under subsection (b)(1) to ensure—

(i) dental providers who are no longer accepting patients from the Department—

(I) are not still listed as providers accepting referrals from the Department; and

(II) are not sent referrals from the Department; and

(ii) dental providers participating in each such network are capable of receiving an influx of patients from the Department under the pilot program.

(B) **EXPANSION OF NETWORK.**—If, pursuant to a review under subparagraph (A), the Secretary determines the community care network in a State selected under subsection (b)(1) is not capable of receiving an influx of patients under the pilot program, the Secretary shall coordinate with the Third Party

Administrator for such State to ensure the dental provider network of such community care network is sufficiently expanded before the initiation of the pilot program.

(2) NOTICE TO COVERED VETERANS.—In carrying out the pilot program, the Secretary shall inform all covered veterans in States selected under subsection (b)(1) of the covered care available under the pilot program.

(3) LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY.—Any veteran participating in the pilot program who ceases to be a covered veteran shall be removed from the pilot program on the date that is 90 days after the Secretary determines the participant is no longer a covered veteran.

(4) CONTINUITY OF CARE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon the termination of the pilot program, the Secretary shall provide to all veterans participating in the pilot program at the time of such termination—

(i) information on how to enroll in the dental insurance plan of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1712C of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) if appropriate, information on the VETSmile program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or any successor program; or

(iii) contact information for dental providers in the surrounding community who provide low- or no-cost dental care and whom the Secretary has confirmed are available to take on new patients.

(B) CONTINUATION OF TREATMENT PLAN.—Any veteran participating in the pilot program may continue to receive services under the pilot program after the termination of the pilot program to complete a treatment plan commenced under the pilot program, as determined necessary by the Secretary.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the commencement of the pilot program, and annually thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that includes—

(A) an identification of the States participating in the pilot program;

(B) a description of the implementation and operation of the pilot program;

(C) the number of participants in the pilot program, disaggregated by—

(i) State; and

(ii) disability rating;

(D) an identification of any barriers or challenges to implementing the pilot program;

(E) aggregated feedback from participants in the pilot program, including from interviews and surveys;

(F) the average annual cost of providing covered care to a participant in the pilot program, disaggregated by—

(i) State;

(ii) disability rating; and

(iii) whether the care was provided through the community care network or through a provider of the Department;

(G) an analysis of the communication and collaboration of the Department with Third Party Administrators and community care dental providers, disaggregated by State;

(H) an analysis of any cost savings by the Department with respect to the treatment of ischemic heart disease;

(I) an assessment of the impact of the pilot program on appointments for care, prescriptions, hospitalizations, emergency room visits, wellness, employability, satisfaction, and perceived quality of life of covered veterans related to their diagnosis of ischemic heart disease;

(J) an analysis and assessment of the efficacy of mobile clinics and portable dental care units, to the extent such modalities are

used, to service the needs of covered veterans under the pilot program;

(K) an analysis and assessment of the usage of teledentistry to service the needs of covered veterans under the pilot program, to include a cost benefit analysis of such services; and

(L) such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days before the completion of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the pilot program that—

(A) includes the matters required under paragraph (1);

(B) includes recommendations on whether the pilot program should be continued, expanded, or adopted throughout the Department; and

(C) indicates whether the Secretary requests action by Congress to make the pilot program permanent.

(g) IMPACT ON COMMUNITY CARE.—Participants in the pilot program shall be able to access covered care in the community under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered care” means dental care that is consistent with the dental services and treatment furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans pursuant to section 1712(a)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department established and operated under paragraphs (1) or (2) of section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code;

(B) is not eligible for dental services and treatment and related dental appliances under the laws administered by the Secretary as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(C) has a diagnosis of ischemic heart disease.

(3) The term “Third Party Administrator” has the meaning given such term in section 1703F of such title.

SEC. 145. DOCUMENTATION OF PREFERENCES OF VETERANS FOR SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a mechanism to solicit information regarding the preference of veterans enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, for scheduling of appointments for health care and related services under the laws administered by the Secretary, including through non-Department providers.

(b) DOCUMENTATION OF PREFERENCE.—Preferences provided voluntarily by a veteran pursuant to subsection (a) shall be documented on My HealthVet or another system designated by the Secretary that allows the veteran to view and change such preferences at any time.

(c) INCLUSION IN PREFERENCE.—Preferences solicited under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) How and when the veteran prefers to be contacted about an appointment for health care.

(2) Whether the veteran prefers to schedule appointments without the assistance of the Department, if able.

(3) Whether the veteran prefers to select a provider without the assistance of the Department, if able.

(4) Whether the veteran prefers appointments to be scheduled during certain days or times.

(d) USE OF PREFERENCE.—The Secretary shall make the preferences provided under subsection (a) easily accessible to medical support assistants and other staff of the Department, or non-Department staff, as the Secretary determines appropriate, who assist in the appointment scheduling process.

(e) DEPLOYMENT OF MECHANISM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning after the date on which the Secretary develops the mechanism required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(A) test the mechanism in not fewer than three geographically diverse Veterans Integrated Service Networks; and

(B) gather feedback about the effectiveness of such mechanism from veterans, medical support assistants, staff and other stakeholders as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not implement such mechanism across the Veterans Health Administration of the Department before the Secretary addresses the feedback described in paragraph (1)(B).

SEC. 146. STAFFING MODEL AND PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) STAFFING MODEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(A) develop, validate, and implement a staffing model for the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor office, Veterans Integrated Services Networks, and medical centers of the Department that includes appropriate target staffing levels nationally, regionally, and locally to ensure timely access to care and effectively oversee the provision of care by the Department, whether at a facility of the Department or through a non-Department provider; and

(B) provide to Congress a briefing on such staffing model, which shall include—

(i) the metrics and measures used by the Secretary in developing such staffing model;

(ii) an analysis of how such staffing model compares to the staffing models of other relevant Government-owned and private sector health care systems; and

(iii) an estimate of the portion of the roles in such staffing model that will be filled by contracted staff at any given time.

(2) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STAFFING MODEL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the Secretary implements the staffing model required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress and the Comptroller General of the United States a report containing—

(A) an update on such implementation; and

(B) information on the outcomes yielded by such staffing model in terms of improved access to care for veterans and improved compliance with relevant laws, regulations, policy directives, and guidance governing access to care.

(b) PERFORMANCE METRICS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop and implement a plan, with an appropriate tracking system, to incorporate appropriate standardized performance metrics and oversight measures within the performance appraisal systems for employees of the Department specified in paragraph (2).

(2) EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT SPECIFIED.—Employees of the Department specified in this paragraph are employees who are responsible for ensuring timely access to care from the Department, compliance with

relevant statutes and regulations relating to the provision of care, including section 1703 of title 38, United States Code, and overseeing the provision of care, whether at a facility of the Department or through a non-Department provider, including employees within the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, employees of a Veterans Integrated Service Network, and employees of a medical center of the Department.

(3) **REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE METRICS.**—Not later than one year after implementing the performance metrics required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to Congress and the Comptroller General of the United States a report containing—

(A) an update on such implementation; and

(B) information on the outcomes yielded by such performance metrics in terms of improved access to care for veterans and improved compliance with relevant laws, policy directives, and guidance governing access to care.

(c) **GAO REPORT.**—Not later than two years after the later of the date on which the Comptroller General receives the report under subsection (a)(2) or the report under subsection (b)(3), the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of the performance of the Office of Integrated Veteran Care of the Department, or successor office, in improving access to care for veterans in facilities of the Department and pursuant to section 1703 of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) such recommendations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate with respect to improving access to the care described in paragraph (1) for veterans.

SEC. 147. ONLINE HEALTH EDUCATION PORTAL FOR VETERANS ENROLLED IN PATIENT ENROLLMENT SYSTEM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, on an Internet website of the Department, a health education portal that includes interactive educational modules to ensure veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, understand the basic health care eligibilities and entitlements of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary, including under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of such title.

SEC. 148. LIMITATION ON DETAIL OF DIRECTORS OF MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO DIFFERENT POSITIONS.

(a) **NOTIFICATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to a different position within the Department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives of such detail.

(2) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The notification required by paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to a director of a medical center who is detailed to a different position within the Department, the following information:

(A) The location at which the director is detailed.

(B) The position title of the detail.

(C) The estimated time the director is expected to be absent from their duties at the medical center.

(D) Such other information as the Secretary may determine appropriate.

(b) **APPOINTMENT OF ACTING DIRECTOR.**—Not later than 120 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, the Secretary shall appoint an individual as acting director of such medical center with all of the authority and responsibilities of the detailed director.

(c) **UPDATE ON DETAIL.**—Not later than 120 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, and not less frequently than every 30 days thereafter while the detail is in effect or while the director position at the medical center is vacant, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives an update regarding the status of the detail.

(d) **RETURN TO POSITION OR REASSIGNMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), not later than 180 days after detailing a director of a medical center of the Department to a different position within the Department, for a reason other than an ongoing investigation or administrative action with respect to the director, the Secretary shall—

(A) return the individual to the position as director of the medical center; or

(B) reassign the individual from the position as director of the medical center and begin the process of hiring a new director for such position.

(2) **WAIVER.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may waive the requirement under paragraph (1) with respect to an individual for successive 90-day increments for a total period of not more than 540 days from the original date the individual was detailed away from their position as director of a medical center.

(B) **NOTIFICATION.**—Not later than 30 days after exercising a waiver under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall notify Congress of the waiver and provide to Congress information as to why the waiver is necessary.

SEC. 149. NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) **NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than September 30 of each year thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and publish on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a report to be known as the "National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report".

(2) **EXTENSION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—If the Secretary requires an extension of the deadline for a report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a written request for such an extension.

(B) **ELEMENTS.**—Each written request under paragraph (1) for an extension for a report shall include the following:

(i) The rationale for the delay in the submission of the report.

(ii) An explanation of the need for an extension.

(iii) A proposed amended date for the submission and publication of the report.

(3) **BRIEFING.**—With respect to each report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, before the date on which the Secretary submits such report, provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on such report.

(4) **ELEMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Each report required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(i) the findings of the national analysis of veteran suicide rates for the latest year for which data is available;

(ii) an identification of trends, if any, demonstrated by such data; and

(iii) a comparison of such data to data on veteran suicide rates during preceding years.

(B) **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS.**—Each report under paragraph (1) shall include, for the year covered by the report, the following:

(i) Suicide rates of veterans disaggregated by age, gender, and race or ethnicity.

(ii) Trends in suicide rates of veterans compared to engagement of those veterans with health care from the Veterans Health Administration, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among—

(I) veterans who have recently received health care from the Veterans Health Administration as compared to veterans who have never received health care from the Veterans Health Administration;

(II) veterans who are enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, as compared to veterans who have never enrolled in such system;

(III) veterans who have recently used services from a Vet Center as compared to veterans who have never used such services;

(IV) to the extent practicable, veterans who have a diagnosis of substance use disorder; and

(V) other groups of veterans relating to engagement with health care from the Veterans Health Administration, as the Secretary considers practicable.

(iii) To the extent practicable, trends in suicide rates of veterans compared to engagement of those veterans with benefits from the Veterans Benefits Administration, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among—

(I) veterans who are currently using, have previously used, or have never used educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary;

(II) veterans who are currently receiving, have previously received, or have never received services or assistance under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code;

(III) with respect to compensation under chapter 11 of such title—

(aa) veterans who were recipients of such compensation as compared to veterans who never applied for such compensation prior to death;

(bb) veterans who had a claim denied for such compensation prior to death;

(cc) veterans who had a pending claim for such compensation at time of death; and

(dd) veterans who had an entitlement for such compensation reduced prior to death;

(IV) veterans who are currently receiving or have never received pension under chapter 15 of title 38, United States Code;

(V) veterans who are currently using, have recently used, or have never used programs or services provided by the Homeless Programs Office of the Department, including an examination of trends in suicide rates or deaths among veterans who made contact with such office but were denied or deemed ineligible for any such program or service;

(VI) with respect to housing loans guaranteed by the Secretary under chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, veterans who are current recipients of, were recent recipients of, or have never received such a loan;

(VII) veterans owing debts to the Department;

(VIII) veterans who were involved in a veterans treatment court program, whether they graduated successfully or not; and

(IX) veterans who were successfully contacted, unsuccessfully contacted, or never contacted by the Department through the

Solid Start program under section 6320 of title 38, United States Code.

(C) STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—

(i) INITIAL REPORT.—The initial report under paragraph (1) shall include a strategy and recommendations developed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for—

(I) improving data collection at the State and local levels to accurately capture suicide deaths of veterans;

(II) improving the timeliness, efficacy, and standardization of data reporting on suicide deaths of veterans at the Federal level, including by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(III) improving the timeliness of identification and analysis of suicide deaths of veterans by Federal agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(IV) any other necessary process improvements for improving the timeliness, efficacy, and standardization of reporting of data relating to suicide deaths of veterans, particularly with respect to the annual report under this section.

(ii) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Each report after the initial report under paragraph (1) shall include updates on actions taken to meet the strategy and recommendations developed under subparagraph (A).

(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(B) The term “Vet Center” means a center for readjustment counseling and related mental health services for veterans under section 1712A of title 38, United States Code.

(b) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into one or more contracts with a private sector entity described in paragraph (5) to conduct an independent assessment of the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a).

(2) FREQUENCY.—The private sector entity or entities carrying out the assessment required under paragraph (1) shall complete such assessment not later than 240 days after entering into the contract described in such subsection and not less frequently than every five years thereafter.

(3) ELEMENTS.—Each assessment required under paragraph (1) shall analyze the following:

(A) The methodology used by the Department to track, analyze, categorize, and report suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans.

(B) Whether data sources used by the Department to compile data on suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans are accurately reflecting such data.

(C) Vulnerabilities in the methodology used by the Department that could lead to inaccurate counting of suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans.

(D) The ability of the Department to cross reference suicide deaths and suicide rates among veterans with trends in usage of programs of the Veterans Health Administration or the Veterans Benefits Administration or other programs that could serve as widespread protective factors against suicide.

(E) Improvements that could be made to ensure the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a) is accurate and comprehensive and provides insights for making improve-

ments to the suicide prevention efforts of the Department.

(4) REPORT ON ASSESSMENT.—

(A) REPORT ON FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 60 days after completing an assessment required by paragraph (1), the private sector entity or entities carrying out the assessment shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the findings and recommendations of the private sector entity or entities with respect to such assessment.

(B) REPORT ON PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after receiving a report under paragraph (1) with respect to an assessment required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on how the Department plans to improve the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report required under subsection (a) based on such assessment.

(5) PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITY DESCRIBED.—A private sector entity described in this paragraph is a private entity that—

(A) specializes in analyzing large-scale organizational data collection and analysis efforts, especially with respect to the health care sector; and

(B) has experience and proven outcomes in optimizing the accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collection and analysis related to suicide.

(c) REPORT ON ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PREVENT VETERAN SUICIDE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and publish on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a report that analyzes which benefits and services under the laws administered by such Secretary, including such benefits and services furnished by the Veterans Benefits Administration, have the greatest impact on the prevention of suicide among veterans, including recommendations for potential expansion of services and benefits to reduce the number of veteran suicides.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF SOLID START PROGRAM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an analysis of the effectiveness of the Solid Start program under section 6320 of title 38, United States Code, on prevention of suicide among veterans.

(d) TOOLKIT FOR STATE AND LOCAL CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS ON BEST PRACTICES FOR IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ON SUICIDE DEATHS OF VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall develop a toolkit for State and local coroners and medical examiners that contains best practices for—

(A) accurately identifying and reporting suicide deaths of veterans, including how to identify veteran status; and

(B) reporting such deaths to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other applicable entities.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall make the toolkit developed under paragraph (1) available on a publicly available website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(3) OUTREACH.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shall conduct outreach to appropriate State and local

agencies to promote the availability and use of the toolkit developed under paragraph (1).

SEC. 150. REPORT ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED BY MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE DENTAL CARE SERVICES.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report, for each medical center or other relevant health care facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that includes—

(1) an identification of the physical infrastructure, including new facilities, renovations, remodels, leases, or other infrastructure, such medical center or health care facility requires to provide dental care services to veterans eligible for such services under the laws administered by the Secretary; and

(2) an analysis of the physical infrastructure such medical center or health care facility would require if a greater number of veterans became eligible for such dental care services pursuant to a modification of the laws administered by the Secretary.

SEC. 151. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON CERTAIN ORAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on the status of the oral health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, that includes an assessment of—

(1) any issues with information technology programs, including Dental Record Manager Plus, that affect dental care staff of the Department;

(2) the implementation of the dental insurance plan of the Department under section 1712C of title 38, United States Code;

(3) the implementation and expansion of the VETSmile program of the Department;

(4) barriers preventing the Department from expanding dental care eligibility to all veterans with ischemic heart disease, including such barriers relating to physical infrastructure, workforce, and cost of such dental care;

(5) barriers preventing dental clinics of the Department, if any, from adopting teledentistry;

(6) the demographic makeup of veterans eligible for dental care paid for by the Department as of the commencement of the pilot program under section 145 of this Act, including information on—

(A) age;

(B) gender;

(C) race or ethnicity, disaggregated by—

(i) membership in an Indian Tribe; and

(ii) the major race groups used in the decennial census;

(D) employment status; and

(E) location of residence, disaggregated by rural, highly rural, and urban locations; and

(7) changes to such demographic makeup if any, that would result from an expansion of eligibility for dental care under the laws administered by the Secretary to all veterans with ischemic heart disease including changes to demographics specified in paragraph (6).

(b) THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATOR DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Third Party Administrator” means an entity that manages a provider network and performs administrative services related to such network under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 152. REVIEW OF WORKFLOWS ASSOCIATED WITH PROCESSING REFERRALS BETWEEN FACILITIES OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a review of the workflows directly associated with processing referrals of patients between facilities of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify specific delays or bottlenecks in such referrals.

(b) ELEMENTS OF REVIEW.—The review required under subsection (a) shall include a review of—

(1) the interfacility consult management guidance of the Veterans Health Administration that assists facilities described in subsection (a) in constructing a workflow for consults between such facilities; and

(2) the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the consult management process in managing such consults, including the role of the referral coordination team.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the review required under subsection (a).

SEC. 153. PLAN FOR TIMELY SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS AT MEDICAL FACILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PLAN REQUIRED.—To improve responsiveness in the provision of hospital care and medical services at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a plan to—

(1) ensure that whenever a covered veteran contacts the Department by telephone to request the scheduling of an appointment for care or services for the covered veteran at such a facility, the scheduling for the appointment occurs during that telephone call (regardless of the prospective date of the appointment being scheduled); and

(2) provide timely and, where applicable, same-day scheduling for an appointment described in paragraph (1).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the plan under subsection (a).

(c) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means a veteran who is enrolled in the system of patient enrollment of the Department under section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 154. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES FOR MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY SERVICES FOR VETERANS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2025 for the Office of Women's Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs 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 those initiatives and equipment.

TITLE II—ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY MATTERS

Subtitle A—Educational Assistance

SEC. 201. TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall treat an individual de-

scribed in subsection (b) as a covered individual described in section 3311(b) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) COVERED INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this subsection is an individual who is the child or spouse of a person—

(1) who dies from a service-connected disability during the 120-day period immediately following the day on which the person was discharged or released from duty as a member of the Armed Forces (without regard to whether such duty was active duty); and

(2)(A) who received an honorable discharge; or

(B) whose service in the Armed Forces is characterized by the Secretary concerned as honorable service.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to—

(1) deaths that occur before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing—

- (A) on or after August 1, 2025; and
- (B) before October 1, 2027.

SEC. 202. REMOVAL OF EXPIRATION ON ENTITLEMENT TO MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES.

Section 3311(f) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2);

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (5) as paragraphs (2) through (4), respectively;

(3) in paragraph (2), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section, by striking “in paragraph (4)” and inserting “in paragraph (3)”; and

(4) in paragraph (3)(A), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this section, by striking “under paragraph (3)” and inserting “under paragraph (2)”.

SEC. 203. SOLE LIABILITY FOR TRANSFERRED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BY AN INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE A SERVICE AGREEMENT.

Subsection (i) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “In the event” and inserting “Subject to paragraph (2), in the event”; and

(B) by inserting “of this title” after “section 3685”;

(2) in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the heading, by striking “IN GENERAL” and inserting “SOLE LIABILITY”; and

(B) by striking “under paragraph (1)” and inserting “for which the individual shall be solely liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title”; and

(3) in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “Subparagraph (A) shall not apply” and inserting “Neither the individual nor the dependent shall be liable to the United States for the amount of the overpayment for purposes of section 3685 of this title”; and

(B) in clause (ii), by inserting “of this title” after “section 3311(c)(4)”.

SEC. 204. NOTICE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF RISK-BASED SURVEYS.

Section 3673A(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “one business day” and inserting “two business days”.

SEC. 205. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTICIPATION BY AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN CERTAIN FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS TO APPROVAL OF SUCH INSTITUTION FOR PURPOSES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

Paragraph (4) of section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(4) The educational institution—

“(A) is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.); or

“(B) does not participate in such a program and the Secretary has waived the requirement under this paragraph with respect to the educational institution, and submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives notice of such waiver, because the Secretary determines that the educational institution—

“(i) elects not to participate in such a program;

“(ii) cannot participate in such a program; or

“(iii) is in the process of making a good-faith effort to submit an initial application for approval to participate in such a program, except that a waiver under this clause may not be provided for a period of longer than 36 months.”.

SEC. 206. EXPANSION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OVERSIGHT OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL.—Section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 205, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) The educational institution agrees to, not later than 30 days after any date on which such educational institution becomes subject to an action or event described in section 3673(e)(3) of this title, submit to the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency, a notification of such action or event in such form and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(b) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF NONACCREDITED COURSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3676(c) of such title is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (14) through (16) as paragraphs (15) through (17), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (13) the following new paragraph:

“(14) The institution agrees to, not later than 30 days after any date on which such institution becomes subject to an action or event described in section 3673(e)(3) of this title, submit to the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency, a notification of such action or event in such form and containing such information as the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such title is further amended—

(A) in section 3672(b)(2)(C), by striking “paragraph (14) or (15)” and inserting “paragraph (15) or (16)”;

(B) in section 3675(b)(3), by striking “(14), (15), and (16)” and inserting “(15), (16), and (17)”;

(C) in section 3679(d), by striking “described in paragraph (14) or (15)” and inserting “described in paragraph (15) or (16)”;

(D) in section 3680A(a)(4)(C)(iii), by striking “section 3676(c)(14) and (15)” and inserting “section 3676(c)(15) and (16)”.

(c) ADDITIONAL GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OF APPROVAL.—Section 3679(f)(1) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(I) Comply with the notification requirements under sections 3675(b)(5) and 3676(c)(14) of this title, when applicable.”.

(d) DEADLINE FOR RISK-BASED SURVEYS DATABASE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the database required under section 3673A(c) of title 38, United States Code, by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 207. REQUIREMENT THAT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS APPROVED FOR PURPOSES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS PROVIDE DIGITAL OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

(a) REQUIREMENT.—Section 3675(b) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 205 and 206, is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph: “(6) The educational institution makes available to each eligible person or veteran a copy of the person or veteran’s official transcript in a digital format.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) APPROVAL OF COURSES.—Section 3672(b)(2)(A) of such title is amended by striking “(b)(1) and (b)(2)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), and (6) of section 3675(b)”.

(2) APPROVAL OF NONACCREDITED COURSES.—Section 3676(c) of such title is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (17) as paragraph (18); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following new paragraph (17):

“(17) In the case of a course that leads to a standard college degree, the educational institution satisfies the requirements of section 3675(b)(6) of this title.”.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 3675(b)(3) of such title is amended by striking “(15), (16), and (17)” and inserting “(15), (16), and (18)”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2025, and apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after such date.

SEC. 208. PAYMENT OF FULL MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND FOR VETERANS ENROLLED IN FINAL SEMESTER USING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) HOUSING ALLOWANCE.—Section 3680(a)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively (and by redesignating each subordinate provision and the margins thereof accordingly);

(2) by striking “Notwithstanding paragraph (1)” and inserting “(A) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)”;

(3) by striking “, including a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313(c) of this title.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph (B):

“(B) For purposes of providing a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313(c) to an eligible veteran or eligible person for whom the Secretary is providing educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title during a period that is the last semester, term, or academic period pursuant to subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall treat the veteran or person as pursuing a program of education on a full-time basis.”.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after January 1, 2025.

SEC. 209. MODIFICATION OF RULES FOR APPROVAL OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “except as provided in paragraph (2),” before “the course”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to this paragraph, a commercial driver education program is exempt from paragraph (1)(B) for a branch of an educational institution if the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—

“(i) is appropriately licensed; and

“(ii)(I) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is offered by the same educational institution at another branch of that educational institution in the same State that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency; or

“(II)(aa) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is not offered at another branch of the same educational institution in the same State; and

“(bb) the branch has been operating for a period of at least one year using the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

“(B)(i) In order for a commercial driver education program of an educational institution offered at a branch described in paragraph (1)(B) to be exempt under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the educational institution shall submit to the Secretary each year that paragraph (1)(B) would otherwise apply a report that demonstrates that the curriculum at the new branch is the same as the curriculum at the primary location.

“(ii) Reporting under clause (i) shall be submitted in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish in consultation with the State approving agencies.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may withhold an exemption under subparagraph (A) for any educational institution or branch of an educational institution as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(ii) In making any determination under clause (i), the Secretary may consult with the Secretary of Transportation on the performance of a provider of a commercial driver program, including the status of the provider within the Training Provider Registry of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration when appropriate.

“(D) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a notification not later than 30 days after the Secretary grants an exemption under this paragraph. Such notification shall identify the educational institution and branch of such educational institution granted such exemption.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish requirements under section 3680A(e)(2)(B)(ii) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(2) RULEMAKING.—In promulgating any rules to carry out paragraph (2) of section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with State approving agencies.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to commercial

driver education programs on and after the day that is 365 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the requirements under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY.—Not later than 365 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study to—

(A) ascertain the effects of the amendments made by subsection (a); and

(B) the feasibility and advisability of similarly amending the rules for approval of programs of education for other vocational programs of education; and

(2) submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to such study.

SEC. 210. PROVISION OF CERTIFICATES OF ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD LETTERS USING ELECTRONIC MEANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3698 the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

“§3698A. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means

“(a) REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided by subsection (b), the Secretary shall provide to an individual the following documents using electronic means:

“(1) A certificate of eligibility for the entitlement of the individual to covered educational assistance.

“(2) An award letter regarding the authorization of the individual to receive covered educational assistance.

“(b) ELECTION TO OPT OUT.—An individual may elect to receive the documents specified in subsection (a) by mail rather than through electronic means under subsection (a). An individual may revoke such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the Secretary.

“(c) COVERED EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—In this section, the term ‘covered educational assistance’ means educational assistance under chapter 30, 33, or 35 of this title, or section 3699C of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3698 the following new item:

“3698A. Provision of certificates of eligibility and award letters using electronic means.”.

SEC. 211. RETROACTIVE EFFECTIVE DATE OF LAW REGARDING CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT TRANSFER CREDITS FROM CERTAIN CLOSED OR DISAPPROVED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.

Section 3699(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following new subparagraph (C):

“(C) This paragraph, including clauses (ii) and (iii) of subparagraph (A), shall apply with respect to the closure or discontinuation of a course or program of education, as described in subsection (b)(1), that occurs during the period beginning on August 1, 2021, and ending on September 30, 2025.”.

SEC. 212. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.

(a) HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 210, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§3699C. High technology program

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall carry out a program under which the

Secretary provides covered individuals with the opportunity to enroll in high technology programs of education that the Secretary determines provide training or skills sought by employers in a relevant field or industry.

“(2) Not more than 4,000 covered individuals may participate in the program under this section in any fiscal year.

“(b) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary shall provide, to each covered individual who pursues a high technology program of education under this section, educational assistance in amounts equal to the amounts provided under section 3313(c)(1) of this title, including, except as provided in paragraph (3), with respect to the housing stipend described in that section and in accordance with the treatment of programs that are distance learning and programs that are less than half-time.

“(2) Under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide such amounts of educational assistance to a covered individual for each of the following:

“(A) A high technology program of education.

“(B) A second such program if—

“(i) the second such program begins at least 18 months after the covered individual graduates from the first such program; and

“(ii) the covered individual uses educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title to pursue the second such program.

“(3) No covered individual may receive a housing stipend under this subsection for any month if such individual is in receipt of a housing stipend under chapter 33 of this title for that month.

“(c) CONTRACTS.—(1) For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall seek to enter into contracts with any number of qualified providers of high technology programs of education for the provision of such programs to covered individuals. Each such contract shall provide for the conditions under which the Secretary may terminate the contract with the provider and the procedures for providing for the graduation of students who were enrolled in a program provided by such provider in the case of such a termination.

“(2) A contract under this subsection shall provide that the Secretary shall pay to a provider—

“(A) upon the enrollment of a covered individual in the program, 25 percent of the cost of the tuition and other fees for the program of education for the individual;

“(B) upon graduation of the individual from the program, 25 percent of such cost; and

“(C) 50 percent of such cost upon—

“(i) the successful employment of the covered individual for a period—

“(I) of 180 days in the field of study of the program; and

“(II) that begins not later than 180 days following graduation of the covered individual from the program;

“(ii) the employment of the individual by the provider for a period of one year; or

“(iii) the enrollment of the individual in a program of education to continue education in such field of study.

“(3) For purposes of this section, a provider of a high technology program of education is qualified if—

“(A) the provider employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (5);

“(B) the provider has successfully provided the high technology program for at least one year;

“(C) the provider does not charge tuition and fees to a covered individual who receives assistance under this section to pursue such program that are higher than the tuition and

fees charged by such provider to another individual; and

“(D) the provider meets the approval criteria developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

“(4)(A) The Secretary shall prescribe criteria for approving providers of a high technology program of education under this section.

“(B) In developing such criteria, the Secretary may consult with State approving agencies.

“(C) Such criteria are not required to meet the requirements of section 3672 of this title.

“(D) Such criteria shall include the job placement rate, in the field of study of a program of education, of covered individuals who complete such program of education.

“(5) The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—

“(A) identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;

“(B) effectively teach the skills offered to covered individuals;

“(C) provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming covered individuals; and

“(D) demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.

“(6) In entering into contracts under this subsection, the Secretary shall give preference to a provider of a high technology program of education—

“(A) from which at least 70 percent of graduates find full-time employment in the field of study of the program during the 180-day period beginning on the date the student graduates from the program; or

“(B) that offers tuition reimbursement for any student who graduates from such a program and does not find employment described in subparagraph (A).

“(d) EFFECT ON OTHER ENTITLEMENT.—(1) If a covered individual enrolled in a high technology program of education under this section has remaining entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, such entitlement shall be charged at the rate of one month of such entitlement for each month of educational assistance provided under this section.

“(2) If a covered individual enrolled in a high technology program of education under this section does not have remaining entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, any educational assistance provided to such individual under this section shall be provided in addition to the entitlement that the individual has used.

“(3) The Secretary may not consider enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section to be assistance under a provision of law referred to in section 3695 of this title.

“(4)(A) An application for enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section shall include notice of the requirements relating to use of entitlement under paragraphs (1) and (2), including—

“(i) in the case of the enrollment of an individual referred to under paragraph (1), the amount of entitlement that is typically charged for such enrollment;

“(ii) an identification of any methods that may be available for minimizing the amount of entitlement required for such enrollment; and

“(iii) an element requiring applicants to acknowledge receipt of the notice under this subparagraph.

“(B) If the Secretary approves the enrollment of a covered individual in a high tech-

nology program of education under this section, the Secretary shall deliver electronically to the individual an award letter that provides notice of such approval and includes specific information describing how paragraphs (1) and (2) will be applied to the individual if the individual chooses to enroll in the program.

“(e) REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—(1) The Secretary shall not approve the enrollment of any covered individual, not already enrolled, in any high technology programs of education under this section for any period during which the Secretary finds that more than 85 percent of the students enrolled in the program are having all or part of their tuition, fees, or other charges paid to or for them by the educational institution or by the Department of Veterans Affairs under this title or under chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, except with respect to tuition, fees, or other charges that are paid under a payment plan at an educational institution that the Secretary determines has a history of offering payment plans that are completed not later than 180 days after the end of the applicable term, quarter, or semester.

“(2) The Secretary may waive a requirement of paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines, pursuant to regulations which the Secretary shall prescribe, such waiver to be in the interest of the covered individual and the Federal Government. Not later than 30 days after the Secretary waives such a requirement, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding such waiver.

“(3)(A)(i) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a process by which an educational institution may request a review of a determination that the educational institution does not meet the requirements of paragraph (1).

“(ii) The Secretary may consult with a State approving agency regarding such process or such a review.

“(iii) Not later than 180 days after the Secretary establishes or revises a process under this subparagraph, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding such process.

“(B) An educational institution that requests a review under subparagraph (A)—

“(i) shall request the review not later than 30 days after the start of the term, quarter, or semester for which the determination described in subparagraph (A) applies; and

“(ii) may include any information that the educational institution believes the Department should have taken into account when making the determination, including with respect to any mitigating circumstances.

“(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter until the termination date specified in subsection (i), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the operation of program under this section during the year covered by the report. Each such report shall include each of the following:

“(1) The number of covered individuals enrolled in the program, disaggregated by type of educational institution, during the year covered by the report.

“(2) The number of covered individuals who completed a high technology program of education under the program during the year covered by the report.

“(3) The average employment rate of covered individuals who completed such a program of education during such year, as of 180 days after the date of completion.

“(4) The average length of time between the completion of such a program of education and employment.

“(5) The total number of covered individuals who completed a program of education under the program and who, as of the date of the submission of the report, are employed in a position related to technology.

“(6) The average salary of a covered individual who completed a program of education under the program and who is employed in a position related to technology, in various geographic areas determined by the Secretary.

“(7) The average salary of all individuals employed in positions related to technology in the geographic areas determined under subparagraph (F), and the difference, if any, between such average salary and the average salary of a covered individual who completed a program of education under the program and who is employed in a position related to technology.

“(8) The number of covered individuals who completed a program of education under the program and who subsequently enrolled in a second program of education under the program.

“(g) COLLECTION OF INFORMATION; CONSULTATION.—(1) The Secretary shall develop practices to use to collect information about covered individuals and providers of high technology programs of education.

“(2) For the purpose of carrying out program under this section, the Secretary may consult with providers of high technology programs of education and may establish an advisory group made up of representatives of such providers, private employers in the technology field, and other relevant groups or entities, as the Secretary determines necessary.

“(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘covered individual’ means any of the following:

“(A) A veteran whom the Secretary determines—

“(i) served an aggregate of at least 36 months on active duty in the Armed Forces (including service on active duty in entry level and skill training) and was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; and

“(ii) has not attained the age of 62.

“(B) A member of the Armed Forces that the Secretary determines will become a veteran described in subparagraph (A) fewer than 180 days after the date of such determination.

“(2) The term ‘high technology program of education’ means a program of education—

“(A) offered by a public or private educational institution;

“(B) if offered by an institution of higher learning, that is provided directly by such institution rather than by an entity other than such institution under a contract or other agreement;

“(C) that does not lead to a degree;

“(D) that has a term of not less than six and not more than 28 weeks; and

“(E) that provides instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information sciences.

“(i) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may not provide educational assistance under this section for a high technology program of education that begins after September 30, 2027.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699B the following new item:

“3699C. High technology program.”

(b) EFFECT ON HIGH TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM.—Section 116 of the Harry W.

Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

“(d) HOUSING STIPEND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall pay to each eligible veteran (not including an individual described in the second sentence of subsection (b)) who is enrolled in a high technology program of education under the pilot program on a full-time or part-time basis a monthly housing stipend equal to the product—

“(A) of—

“(i) in the case of a veteran pursuing resident training, the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E-5 residing in the military housing area that encompasses all or the majority portion of the ZIP code area in which is located the campus of the institution where the individual physically participates in a majority of classes; or

“(ii) in the case of a veteran pursuing a program of education through distance learning, a monthly amount equal to 50 percent of the national average of the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E-5, multiplied by

“(B) the lesser of—

“(i) 1.0; or

“(ii) the number of course hours borne by the individual in pursuit of the program of education involved, divided by the minimum number of course hours required for full-time pursuit of such program of education, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

“(2) BAR TO DUAL ELIGIBILITY.—No covered individual may receive a housing stipend under this subsection for any month if such individual is in receipt of a housing stipend under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, for that month.”

(2) in subsection (g), by striking paragraph (6); and

(3) by striking subsection (h) and inserting the following new subsection (h):

“(h) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may not, under this section, pay a provider for a high technology program of education that begins after September 30, 2024.”

(c) APPROVAL OF CERTAIN HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS.—Section 3680A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

“(4) Any independent study program except—

“(A) an independent study program (including such a program taken over open circuit television) that—

“(i) is accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education under subpart 2 of part H of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b);

“(ii) leads to—

“(I) a standard college degree;

“(II) a certificate that reflects educational attainment offered by an institution of higher learning; or

“(III) a certificate that reflects graduation from a course of study offered by—

“(aa) an area career and technical education school (as defined in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 3(3) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302(3))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; or

“(bb) a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c)))

that provides education at the postsecondary level; and

“(iii) in the case of a program described in clause (ii)(III)—

“(I) provides training aligned with the requirements of employers in the State or local area where the program is located, which may include in-demand industry sectors or occupations;

“(II) provides a student, upon graduation from the program, with a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by employers in the relevant industry, which may include a credential recognized by industry or sector partnerships in the State or local area where the industry is located; and

“(III) meets such content and instructional standards as may be required to comply with the criteria under section 3676(c)(14) and (15) of this title; or

“(B) an online high technology program of education (as defined in subsection (h)(2) of section 3699C of this title)—

“(i) the provider of which has entered into a contract with the Secretary under subsection (c) of such section;

“(ii) that has been provided to covered individuals (as defined in subsection (h)(1) of such section) under such contract for a period of at least five years;

“(iii) regarding which the Secretary has determined that the average employment rate of covered individuals who graduated from such program of education is 65 percent or higher for the year preceding such determination; and

“(iv) that satisfies the requirements of subsection (e) of such section.”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the following:

“(8) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the enrollment of a veteran in an online high technology program described in subsection (a)(4)(B).”

SEC. 213. NOTICE OF CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICIES AND GUIDANCE AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by sections 210 and 212, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699D. Notice of changes to policies and guidance relating to educational assistance programs

“In the case of any change to any policy or guidance provided by the Secretary that relates to any educational assistance program of the Department, the Secretary may not implement the change before the date that is 90 days after the date on which the Secretary makes available to students, educational institutions, and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives notice of, and justification for, the change.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699B the following new item:

“3699D. Notice of changes to policies and guidance relating to educational assistance programs.”

SEC. 214. PAYMENT OF VA EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE VIA ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER TO A FOREIGN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary, to a foreign institution of higher education that—

(1) provides an approved course of education to an eligible recipient of such assistance; and

(2) does not have—

- (A) an employer identification number; or
- (B) an account with a domestic bank.

SEC. 215. IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) REQUIREMENT RELATING TO G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL.—

(1) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN TOOL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall maintain the G.I. Bill Comparison Tool that was established pursuant to Executive Order 13607 (77 Fed. Reg. 25861; relating to establishing principles of excellence for educational institutions serving service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members) and in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, or a successor tool, to provide relevant and timely information about programs of education approved under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, and the educational institutions that offer such programs.

(2) DATA RETENTION.—The Secretary shall ensure that historical data that is reported via the tool maintained under paragraph (1) remains easily and prominently accessible on the benefits.va.gov website, or a successor website, for a period of not less than six years from the date of initial publication.

(b) PROVIDING TIMELY AND RELEVANT EDUCATION INFORMATION TO VETERANS, MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall make such changes to the tool maintained under subsection (a) as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate to ensure that such tool is an effective and efficient method for providing information pursuant to section 3698(b)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REQUIRED.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Education and the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate, to obtain information on outcomes with respect to individuals who are entitled to educational assistance under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and who are attending educational institutions. Such memorandum of understanding may include data sharing or computer matching agreements.

(3) MODIFICATION OF SCOPE OF COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PROVIDING EDUCATION INFORMATION.—Section 3698 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “veterans and members of the Armed Forces” and inserting “individuals entitled to educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs”; and

(B) in subsection (b)(5)—

(i) by striking “veterans and members of the Armed Forces” and inserting “individuals described in subsection (a)”; and

(ii) by striking “the veteran or member” and inserting “the individual”.

(4) G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL REQUIRED DISCLOSURES.—Paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

“(B) for each individual described in subsection (a) seeking information provided under subsection (b)(5), the name of each Federal student aid program, and a description of each such program, from which the individual may receive educational assistance; and”;

(B) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (i), by inserting “and a definition of each type of institution” before the semicolon;

(ii) in clause (iv), by inserting “and if so, which programs” before the semicolon;

(iii) by striking clause (v) and inserting the following:

“(v) the average annual cost and the total cost to earn an associate’s degree and a bachelor’s degree, with available cost information on any other degree or credential the institution awards;”;

(iv) in clause (vi), by inserting before the semicolon the following: “disaggregated by—

“(I) the type of beneficiary of educational assistance;

“(II) individuals who received a credential and individuals who did not; and

“(III) individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary and individuals who are not;”;

(v) in clause (xiv), by striking “and” at the end;

(vi) in clause (xv), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(vii) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

“(xvi) the number of veterans or members who completed covered education at the institution leading to—

“(I) a degree, disaggregated by type of program, including—

“(aa) an associate degree;

“(bb) a bachelor’s degree; and

“(cc) a postbaccalaureate degree; and

“(II) a certificate or professional license, disaggregated by type of certificate or professional license;

“(xvii) programs available and the average time for completion of each program;

“(xviii) employment rate and median income of graduates of the institution in general two and five years after graduation, disaggregated by—

“(I) specific program; and

“(II) individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary and individuals who are not; and

“(xix) the number of individuals using educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary who are enrolled in the both the institution and specific program per year.”.

(5) CLARITY AND ANONYMITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED.—Paragraph (2) of such subsection is amended—

(A) by inserting “(A)” before “To the extent”; and

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

“(B) The Secretary shall ensure that information provided pursuant to subsection (b)(5) is provided in a manner that is easy for, and accessible to, individuals described in subsection (a).

“(C) In providing information pursuant to subsection (b)(5), the Secretary shall maintain the anonymity of individuals described in subsection (a) and, to the extent that a portion of any data would undermine such anonymity, ensure that such data is not made available pursuant to such subsection.”.

(c) IMPROVEMENTS FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b)(2) of such section is amended—

(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) provides institutions of higher learning—

“(i) up to 30 days to review and respond to feedback from individuals described in subsection (a) and address issues regarding the feedback before the feedback is published; and

“(ii) if an institution of higher learning contests the accuracy of the feedback, the opportunity to challenge the inclusion of such data with an official appointed by the Secretary;”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (C), by striking “that conforms with criteria for relevancy that the Secretary shall determine.” and inserting “, and responses from institutions of higher learning to such feedback, that conform with criteria for relevancy that the Secretary shall determine;”;

(D) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(D) for each institution of higher learning that is approved under this chapter, retains, maintains, and publishes all of such feedback for not less than six years; and

“(E) is easily accessible to individuals described in subsection (a) and to the general public.”.

(2) ACCESSIBILITY FROM G.I. BILL COMPARISON TOOL.—The Secretary shall ensure that—

(A) the feedback tracked and published under subsection (b)(2) of such section, as amended by paragraph (1), is prominently displayed in the tool maintained under subsection (a) of this section; and

(B) when such tool displays information for an institution of higher learning, the applicable feedback is also displayed for such institution of higher learning.

(d) TRAINING FOR PROVISION OF EDUCATION COUNSELING SERVICES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall ensure that personnel employed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, or a contractor of the Department, to provide education benefits counseling, vocational or transition assistance, or similar functions, including employees or contractors of the Department who provide such counseling or assistance as part of the Transition Assistance Program, are trained on how—

(A) to use properly the tool maintained under subsection (a); and

(B) to provide appropriate educational counseling services to individuals described in section 3698(a) of such title, as amended by subsection (b)(3)(A).

(2) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “Transition Assistance Program” means the program of counseling, information, and services under section 1142 of title 10, United States Code.

Subtitle B—Employment and Training

SEC. 221. IMPROVEMENTS TO REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) USERRA PURPOSES.—Section 4301(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “encourage noncareer service in the uniformed services” and inserting “encourage service in the uniformed services”.

(b) PROHIBITION OF RETALIATION.—Subsection (b) of section 4311 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “or other retaliatory action” after “employment action”.

(c) EXPANSION OF INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—Subsection (e) of section 4323 of such title is amended—

(1) by striking “The court shall use” and inserting “(1) The court shall use”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) A person bringing an action to enforce a provision of this chapter pursuant to subsection (a) shall be entitled to an injunction under paragraph (1) if such person demonstrates—

“(A) a violation—

“(i) of the provisions of this chapter; or

“(ii) of the provisions of this chapter is threatened or is imminent;

“(B) the harm to the person outweighs the injury to the employer;

“(C) a likelihood of success on the merits of such action; and

“(D) awarding such relief is in the public interest.

“(3) The court may not deny a motion for injunctive relief on the basis that a party bringing an action to enforce a provision of this chapter may be awarded wages unearned due to an unlawful termination or denial of employment at the conclusion of such action.”.

(d) DAMAGES AGAINST A STATE OR PRIVATE EMPLOYER.—Section 4323 of such title is further amended, in paragraph (1) of subsection (d), by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

“(C) The court may require the employer to pay the person the amount referred to in subparagraph (B) and interest on such amount, calculated at a rate of 3 percent per year.

“(D) The court may require the employer to pay the person the greater of \$50,000 or the amount equal to the amounts referred to in subparagraphs (B) and (C) as liquidated damages, if the court determines that the employer knowingly failed to comply with the provisions of this chapter.”.

(e) MANDATORY ATTORNEY FEES AWARD IN SUCCESSFUL ACTIONS FOR REEMPLOYMENT.—

(1) MSPB ACTIONS.—Paragraph (4) of subsection (c) of section 4324 of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “may, in its discretion,” and inserting “shall”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The Board may, in its discretion, award reasonable attorney fees in a case settled before the issuance of an order if the person can demonstrate that significant attorney fees were incurred and that justice requires such an award.”.

(2) FEDERAL CIRCUIT ACTIONS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) In such Federal Circuit proceeding, the court shall award such person reasonable attorney fees, expert witness fees, and other litigation expenses if such person—

“(A) prevails in such Federal Circuit proceeding; and

“(B) is not represented by the Special Counsel in such Federal Circuit proceeding.”.

(3) ACTIONS AGAINST A STATE OR PRIVATE EMPLOYER.—Paragraph (2) of section 4323(h) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking “subsection (a)(2)” and inserting “subsection (a)(3)”; and

(B) by striking “the court may award any such person who prevails in such action or proceeding reasonable attorney fees” and inserting “the court shall award any such person who prevails in such action or proceeding reasonable attorney fees”.

(f) GAO REVIEW AND REPORT ON USERRA.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall review the methods through which the Secretary of Labor, acting through the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, processes actions for relief under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the

House of Representatives and the Senate a report that includes—

(A) the findings of the review required under paragraph (1);

(B) an identification of the number of actions for relief under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code, initiated during the period covered by the report, disaggregated by size of employer and geographic region;

(C) an identification of the number of such actions for relief that were erroneously dismissed, as determined by the Comptroller General;

(D) an identification of the number of such actions for relief that were referred to the Department of Justice; and

(E) an assessment of trends, if any, in such actions for relief initiated during such period.

(g) GAO REVIEW OF PROTECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES BY FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the processes and procedures adopted and used by the intelligence community to provide the protections for members of the uniformed services otherwise established under chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

(B) The term “intelligence community” has the meaning given such term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

SEC. 222. REVIEW OF INVESTIGATIONS MANUAL OF VETERANS’ EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and once every two years thereafter for the period of five years beginning on such date, the Secretary of Labor, shall review the manual of the Department of Labor titled “Veterans’ Employment and Training Service Investigations Manual: USERRA, VEOA, and VP” (or a successor manual) and make such revisions to such manual as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after any date on which the Secretary completes a review required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate—

(1) a report that includes a description of any revision to such manual made pursuant to such review; and

(2) a copy of the entire such manual which—

(A) shall be provided to the Chairman and Ranking Member of each such committee; and

(B) may contain a separate addendum for portions of the manual that contain law enforcement sensitive materials.

SEC. 223. WARRIOR TRAINING ADVANCEMENT COURSE.

(a) REPORTING ON THE WARRIOR TRAINING ADVANCEMENT COURSE.—

(1) REPORTS REQUIRED.—

(A) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on WARTAC.

(B) ANNUAL REPORT.—One year after the submission of the report required under

paragraph subparagraph (A) and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report that contains the elements under subparagraphs (A) and (C) of paragraph (2) with regards to the preceding year.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Except as provided in paragraph (1)(B), the reports under this subsection shall include the following elements:

(A) BEST PRACTICES.—With regards to best practices of WARTAC—

(i) how many covered members have applied to participate in WARTAC;

(ii) how many covered members have participated in WARTAC;

(iii) how the Secretary provides training to covered members during TAP;

(iv) how many covered members have completed WARTAC; and

(v) any other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

(B) COST SAVINGS.—With regards to cost savings of WARTAC—

(i) how much money the Secretary determines WARTAC saves the United States each fiscal year;

(ii) how much money the Secretary determines WARTAC has saved the United States since its establishment; and

(iii) the determination of the Secretary whether other Federal agencies may save money by establishing a program similar to WARTAC.

(C) HIRING.—With regards to hiring covered members who complete WARTAC—

(i) how the Secretary identifies positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs for which such covered members may qualify;

(ii) the grades of such positions on the General Schedule under section 5332 of title 5, United States Code; and

(iii) how many such covered members the Secretary has hired to such positions.

(3) DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 30 days after submitting the report under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transmit a copy of the report under this section to the head of each Federal agency.

(4) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) The term “covered member” means members of the Armed Forces participating in TAP.

(B) The term “TAP” means the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

(C) The term “WARTAC” means the Warrior Training Advancement Course of the Veterans Benefit Administration, in which the Secretary provides training to covered members so such covered members may qualify for certain employment in the Veterans Benefit Administration.

(b) PILOT PROGRAM TO EMPLOY VETERANS IN POSITIONS RELATING TO CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.—

(1) BEST PRACTICES FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.—The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training, in consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall establish guidelines containing best practices for departments and agencies of the Federal Government that carry out programs to employ veterans who are transitioning from service in the Armed Forces. Such guidelines shall include the findings of the initial report required under subsection (a)(1).

(2) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall establish a pilot program under which veterans are employed by the Federal Government in positions that relate

to the conservation and resource management activities of the Department of the Interior.

(B) POSITIONS.—The Secretary of the Interior shall—

(i) identify vacant positions in the Department of the Interior that are appropriate to fill using the pilot program; and

(ii) to the extent practicable, fill such positions using the pilot program.

(C) APPLICATION OF CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—A veteran employed under the pilot program shall be treated as an employee as defined by section 2105 of title 5, United States Code.

(D) BRIEFINGS AND REPORT.—

(i) INITIAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the submission of the report required under subsection (a)(1)(A), the Secretary of the Interior and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training shall jointly provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on the pilot program under this subsection, which shall include a description of how the pilot program will be carried out in a manner to reduce the unemployment of veterans and any recommendations for legislative actions to improve the pilot program.

(ii) IMPLEMENTATION BRIEFING.—Not later than one year after the date on which the pilot program under this paragraph commences, the Secretary of the Interior and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training shall jointly provide to the appropriate congressional committees a briefing on the implementation of the pilot program.

(iii) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the pilot program under this paragraph is completed, the Secretary of the Interior and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the pilot program that includes the following:

(I) The number of veterans who applied to participate in the pilot program.

(II) The number of such veterans employed under the pilot program.

(III) The number of veterans identified in subclause (II) who transitioned to full-time positions with the Federal Government after participating in the pilot program.

(IV) Any other information the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary determine appropriate with respect to measuring the effectiveness of the pilot program.

(E) DURATION.—The authority to carry out the pilot program under this paragraph shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date on which the pilot program commences.

(3) OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM ATTENDANCE.—The Secretary of each of the military department is encouraged to allow members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty to participate in programs related to environmental stewardship or guided outdoor recreation.

(4) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

Subtitle C—Home Loans

SEC. 231. IMPROVEMENTS TO PROGRAM FOR DIRECT HOUSING LOANS MADE TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) DIRECT HOUSING LOANS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—Section 3762(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(a) The Secretary may make a direct housing loan to a Native American veteran under this subchapter if the Secretary ensures the following:

“(1) That each Native American veteran to whom the Secretary makes a direct housing loan under this subchapter—

“(A) holds, possesses, or purchases using the proceeds of the loan a meaningful interest in a lot or dwelling (or both) that is located on trust land; and

“(B) will purchase, construct, or improve (as the case may be) a dwelling on the lot using the proceeds of the loan.

“(2) That each such Native American veteran will convey to the Secretary by an appropriate instrument the interest referred to in paragraph (1)(A) as security for a direct housing loan under this subchapter.

“(3) That the Secretary, including the Secretary's employees or agents, may enter upon the trust land for the purposes of carrying out such actions as the Secretary determines are necessary, including—

“(A) to evaluate the advisability of the loan;

“(B) to monitor any purchase, construction, or improvements carried out using the proceeds of the loan; and

“(C) to manage any servicing or post-foreclosure activities, including acquisition, property inspections, and property management.

“(4) That there are established standards and procedures that apply to the foreclosure of the interest conveyed by a Native American veteran pursuant to paragraph (2), including—

“(A) procedures for foreclosing the interest; and

“(B) procedures for the resale of the lot or dwelling (or both) purchased, constructed, or improved using the proceeds of the loan.

“(5) That the loan is made in a responsible and prudent manner, subject to standards and procedures as are necessary for the reasonable protection of the financial interests of the United States.”.

(2) MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING, AGREEMENTS, AND DETERMINATIONS.—Section 3762(b) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(b)(1) To carry out the purpose of subsection (a), the Secretary may—

“(A) enter into a memorandum of understanding with a tribal organization, other entity, or individual;

“(B) rely on agreements or determinations of other Federal agencies to guarantee, insure, or make loans on trust land; and

“(C) enter into other agreements or take such other actions as the Secretary determines necessary.

“(2) If the Secretary determines that the requirements under subsection (a) are not being enforced by a tribal organization, other entity, or individual that is a party to any memorandum of understanding, agreement, or determination described in paragraph (1), the Secretary may cease making new direct housing loans to Native American veterans under this subchapter within the area of the authority of the tribal organization, other entity, or individual (as the case may be).”.

(b) DIRECT LOANS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS TO REFINANCE EXISTING MORTGAGE LOANS.—Section 3762(h) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(h) The Secretary may make direct loans to Native American veterans in order to enable such veterans to refinance existing mortgage loans for any of the following purposes:

“(1) To refinance an existing loan made under this section, if the loan—

“(A) meets the requirements set forth in subparagraphs (B), (C), and (E) of paragraph (1) of section 3710(e) of this title;

“(B) will bear an interest rate at least one percentage point less than the interest rate borne by the loan being refinanced; and

“(C) complies with paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 3710(e) of this title, except that for the purposes of this subsection the reference to subsection (a)(8) of section 3710 of this title in such paragraphs (2) and (3) shall be deemed to be a reference to this subsection.

“(2) To refinance an existing mortgage loan not made under this section on a dwelling owned and occupied by the veteran as the veteran's home, if all of the following requirements are met:

“(A) The loan will be secured by the same dwelling as was the loan being refinanced.

“(B) The loan will provide the veteran with a net tangible benefit.

“(C) The nature and condition of the property is such as to be suitable for dwelling purposes.

“(D) The amount of the loan does not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) An amount equal to the sum of the balance of the loan being refinanced and such closing costs (including any discount points) as may be authorized by the Secretary to be included in the loan.

“(E) Notwithstanding subparagraph (D), if a loan is made for both the purpose of this paragraph and to make energy efficiency improvements, the loan must not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling as improved for energy efficiency, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) The amount referred to under subparagraph (D)(ii), plus the applicable amount specified under section 3710(d)(2) of this title.

“(F) The loan meets all other requirements the Secretary may establish under this subchapter.

“(G) The existing mortgage being refinanced is a first lien on the property and secured of record.

“(3) To refinance an existing mortgage loan to repair, alter, or improve a dwelling owned by the veteran and occupied by the veteran as the veteran's home, if all of the following requirements are met:

“(A) The loan will be secured by the same dwelling as was the loan being refinanced.

“(B) The nature and condition of the property is such as to be suitable for dwelling purposes, and the repair, alteration, or improvement substantially protects or improves the basic livability or utility of such property.

“(C) The amount of the loan, including the costs of repairs, alterations, and improvements, does not exceed either of the following:

“(i) 100 percent of the reasonable value of the dwelling as repaired, altered, or improved, with such reasonable value determined under the procedures established by the Secretary under subsection (d)(2).

“(ii) An amount equal to the sum of—

“(I) the balance of the loan being refinanced;

“(II) the actual cost of repairs, alterations, or improvements; and

“(III) such closing costs (including any discount points) as may be authorized by the Secretary to be included in the loan.

“(D) The loan meets all other requirements the Secretary may establish under this subchapter.

“(E) The existing mortgage loan being refinanced is a first lien on the property and secured of record.”

(c) EXPANSION OF OUTREACH PROGRAM ON AVAILABILITY OF DIRECT HOUSING LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—Section 3762(i)(2) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) Pursuant to subsection (g)(4), assisting Native American veterans in qualifying for mortgage financing by—

“(i) partnering with local service providers, such as tribal organizations, tribally designated housing entities, Native community development financial institutions, and nonprofit organizations, for conducting outreach, homebuyer education, housing counseling, and post-purchase education; and

“(ii) providing other technical assistance as needed.

“(H) Attending conferences and conventions conducted by the network of Native community development financial institutions and other Native American homeownership organizations to provide information and training to Native community development financial institutions about the availability of the relending program under section 3762A of this title.”

(d) ADEQUATE PERSONNEL.—Section 3762 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(k) The Secretary shall assign a sufficient number of personnel of the Department dedicated to carrying out the authority of the Secretary under this subchapter, including construction and valuation specialists to assist with issues unique to new construction and renovations on trust land.”

(e) DEFINITIONS.—Section 3765 of such title is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) is located in the State of Alaska within a region established under section 7(a) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1606(a));”

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(E) is defined by the Secretary of the Interior and recognized by the United States as land over which an Indian Tribe has governmental dominion; or

“(F) is on any land that the Secretary determines is provided to Native American veterans because of their status as Native Americans.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(6) The term ‘community development financial institution’ has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Community Development Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 (12 U.S.C. 4702).

“(7) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

“(8) The term ‘Native community development financial institution’ means any entity—

“(A) that has been certified as a community development financial institution by the Secretary of the Treasury;

“(B) that is not less than 51 percent owned or controlled by Native Americans; and

“(C) for which not less than 51 percent of the activities of the entity serve Native Americans.

“(9) The term ‘net tangible benefit’ shall have such meaning as the Secretary determines appropriate, but shall include the refinancing of an interim construction loan.

“(10) The term ‘other technical assistance’ means services to assist a Native American veteran to navigate the steps necessary for securing a mortgage loan on trust land, including pre-development activities related to utilities, identifying appropriate residential construction services, and obtaining lease clearances and title status reports from the applicable tribal organization or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“(11) The term ‘tribally designated housing entity’ has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103).”

(f) INTEREST RATE REDUCTION FINANCING LOAN.—Section 3729(b)(4)(F) of such title is amended by striking ‘3762(h)’ and inserting ‘3762(h)(1)’.

(g) REGULATIONS.—Section 3761 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this subchapter.”

SEC. 232. NATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION RELENDING PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3762 the following new section:

“§ 3762A. Native community development financial institution relending program

“(a) PURPOSE.—The Secretary may make a loan to a Native community development financial institution for the purpose of allowing the institution to relend loan amounts to qualified Native American veterans, subject to the requirements of this section.

“(b) STANDARDS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish standards to be used in evaluating whether to make a loan to a Native community development financial institution under this section.

“(2) In establishing standards under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that a Native community development financial institution—

“(A) is able to originate and service loans for single-family homes;

“(B) is able to operate the relending program in a manner consistent with the mission of the Department to serve veterans; and

“(C) uses loan amounts received under this section only for the purpose of relending, as described in subsection (c), to Native American veterans.

“(c) RELENDING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) A Native community development financial institution that receives a loan under this section shall use the loan amounts to make loans to Native American veterans residing on trust land.

“(2) A loan to a Native American veteran made by a Native community development financial institution under paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) be limited either to the purpose of purchase, construction, or improvement of a dwelling located on trust land or to the refinancing of an existing mortgage loan for a dwelling on trust land, consistent with the requirements of section 3762(h) of this title; and

“(B) comply with such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines are nec-

essary to protect against predatory lending, including the interest rate charged on a loan to a Native American veteran.

“(d) REPAYMENT.—A loan made to a Native community development financial institution under this section shall—

“(1) be payable to the Secretary upon such terms and conditions as are prescribed in regulations pursuant to this subchapter; and

“(2) bear interest at a rate of one percent.

“(e) OVERSIGHT.—Subject to notice and opportunity for a hearing, whenever the Secretary finds with respect to loans made under subsection (a) or (c) that any Native community development financial institution has failed to maintain adequate loan accounting records, to demonstrate proper ability to service loans adequately, or to exercise proper credit judgment, or that such Native community development financial institution has willfully or negligently engaged in practices otherwise detrimental to the interest of veterans or of the Government, the Secretary may take such actions as the Secretary determines necessary to protect veterans or the Government, such as requiring immediate repayment of any loans made under subsection (a) and the assignment to the Secretary of loans made under subsection (c).

“(f) SUNSET.—The Secretary may not make a loan under this section after September 30, 2027.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 37 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3762 the following new item:

“3762A. Native community development financial institution relending program.”

(c) NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN PROGRAM ACCOUNT.—Section 3763 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) Of amounts available in the Account, the Secretary may use for loans made under section 3762A of this title—

“(1) in fiscal year 2025, not more than \$5,000,000; and

“(2) in any fiscal year after fiscal year 2025, an amount determined necessary by the Secretary to meet the demand for such loans.”

TITLE III—DISABILITY AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS MATTERS

SEC. 301. BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WHO DIE AT HOME WHILE IN RECEIPT OF HOSPICE CARE FURNISHED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall treat a veteran described in subsection (b) as a veteran described in subparagraph (A) of section 2303(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) VETERAN DESCRIBED.—A veteran described in this subsection is a veteran who dies in a home or other setting at which the deceased veteran was, at the time of death, receiving hospice care pursuant to section 1717(a) of such title if such care was directly preceded by the Secretary furnishing to the veteran hospital care or nursing home care described in clause (ii) of such subparagraph.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply with respect to deaths that occur—

(1) on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) before October 1, 2026.

SEC. 302. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308 as sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after section 6306 the following new section 6307:

“§ 6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans

“(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to provide for assistance by the Secretary to States and Indian Tribes to carry out programs that improve covered outreach and assistance to veterans and the spouses, children, and parents of veterans, to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about, and assisted in applying for, any veterans and veterans-related benefits and programs (including veterans programs of a State or Indian Tribe) for which they may be eligible and facilitate opportunities for such individuals to receive competent, qualified services in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of veterans benefits claims.

“(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants to States and Indian Tribes—

“(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or otherwise enhance—

“(A) covered outreach activities; or

“(B) activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans and veterans-related benefits; or

“(2) to increase the number of county or Tribal veterans service officers serving in the State by hiring new, additional such officers.

“(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State or Indian Tribe shall submit to the Secretary an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

“(B) A description of the programs through which the State or Indian Tribe will meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j).

“(C) A description of how the State or Indian Tribe will distribute grant amounts equitably among counties or Tribal lands with varying levels of urbanization.

“(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to meet the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities.

“(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to ensure that grants awarded under this section are equitably distributed among States and Indian Tribes with varying levels of urbanization.

“(e) SET-ASIDE.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for grants under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall ensure that not less than five percent is used to make grants to Indian Tribes.

“(f) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize awarding grants under this section that will serve the following areas:

“(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or Tribal veterans service officers.

“(2) Areas with high rates of—

“(A) suicide among veterans; or

“(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

“(g) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS.—A State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section to carry out an activity described in subsection (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

“(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer of the State; or

“(2) if the State or Indian Tribe does not have a county or Tribal veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal veterans service officers of the State or Indian Tribe cover only a portion of that State or Indian Tribe,

an appropriate entity of a State, local, or Tribal government, as determined by the Secretary.

“(h) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded under this section shall be used—

“(1) to expand existing programs, activities, and services;

“(2) to hire new, additional county or Tribal veterans service officers; or

“(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

“(i) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—A grant under this section may be used to provide education and training, including on-the-job training, for State, county, local, and Tribal government employees who provide (or when trained will provide) covered outreach services in order for those employees to obtain accreditation in accordance with procedures approved by the Secretary.

“(j) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall develop and provide to each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section written guidance on the following:

“(A) Outcome measures.

“(B) Policies of the Department.

“(2) In developing outcome measures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

“(A) Increasing the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable populations.

“(B) Increasing the number of county and Tribal veterans service officers recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under chapter 59 of this title.

“(k) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary shall track the use of veterans and veterans-related benefits among the population served by the grant, including the average period of time between the date on which a veteran applies for such a benefit and the date on which the veteran receives the benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

“(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life of the grant program established under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

“(A) the information tracked under paragraph (1);

“(B) how the grants awarded under this section serve the unique needs of American Indian veterans, Alaska Native veterans, or Native Hawaiian veterans, elderly veterans, and veterans from other underserved communities; and

“(C) other information provided by States and Indian Tribes pursuant to the grant reporting requirements.

“(l) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—The Secretary shall—

“(1) review the performance of each State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section; and

“(2) make information regarding such performance publicly available.

“(m) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State or Indian Tribe that receives a grant under this section and does not meet the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under subsection (j), the Secretary shall require the State or Indian Tribe to submit a remediation plan under which the State shall describe how and when it plans to meet such outcome measures.

“(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent grant under this section to a State or Indian Tribe described in paragraph (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan submitted by the State or Indian Tribe.

“(n) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘county or Tribal veterans service officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans service officer.

“(2) The term ‘covered outreach’ means outreach with respect to—

“(A) benefits administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits; or

“(B) similar benefits administered by a State or Indian Tribe.

“(3) The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning given such term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

“(4) The term ‘State’ includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

“(5) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the toll-free hotline for veterans established under section 1720F(h) of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States and Indian Tribes to improve outreach to veterans

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents

“6309. Biennial report to Congress”.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal years 2026 and 2027, \$10,000,000 to carry out section 6307 of title 28, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 303. DEFINITION OF SURVIVING SPOUSE.

Paragraph (3) of section 101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The term ‘surviving spouse’ means (except for purposes of chapter 19 of this title) a person who was the spouse of a veteran at the time of the veteran’s death, and who lived with the veteran continuously from the date of marriage to the date of the veteran’s death (except where there was a separation which was due to the misconduct of, or procured by, the veteran without the fault of the spouse) and who has not remarried.”.

SEC. 304. ENSURING ONLY LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS PERFORM MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATIONS UNDER CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PROHIBITION ON USE OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS.—Section 504(c)(1) of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by inserting “only” before “a health care professional”.

(b) REMEDIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take such actions as the Secretary considers appropriate to ensure compliance with section 504(c) of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by subsection (a).

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and not less frequently than once each year 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 on—

(1) the conduct of the pilot program established under section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note); and

(2) the actions of the Secretary under subsection (b).

(d) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—Section 504 of the Veterans’ Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended, in the section heading, by striking “PHYSICIANS” and inserting “HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS”.

SEC. 305. PROVISION OF INFORMATION REGARDING AN AGENT OR ATTORNEY TO A LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO PERFORMS A MEDICAL DISABILITY EXAMINATION UNDER CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 504 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by section 304, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) CERTAIN INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.—The Secretary shall provide to a health care professional who performs an examination under subsection (a), or a contractor performing a contract under such subsection, the contact information of any agent or attorney recognized by the Secretary under chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, with regards to a claim for benefits that gives rise to such examination.”

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to an examination described in subsection (a) of such section that is performed on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 306. MODERNIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY BENEFIT QUESTIONNAIRES.

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR TRANSMISSION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION IN MACHINE-READABLE FORMAT.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require all disability benefit questionnaire data collected in the course of medical disability examinations made by covered non-Department providers to be transmitted to the Department in a machine-readable format.

(2) ISSUANCE OF STANDARDS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue standards for the transmission of disability benefit questionnaire data in a machine-readable format as required under paragraph (1).

(3) UPDATES.—In making updates to disability benefit questionnaires after the date specified in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) ensure that the updates are made in a manner that allows for the data collected under the questionnaires to be in a machine-readable format as of the date on which the update goes into effect; and

(B) not later than 30 days before an update goes into effect, notify the covered non-Department providers (or the contractor performing a contract under section 504 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note)) described in such paragraph of such updates.

(b) PLAN FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM MODIFICATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a plan to modify the information technology systems and processes of the Department to enable a non-Department health care professional, assigned to or selected by a claimant, to transmit to the Department, in a machine-readable format, disability benefit questionnaire data, including complete disability benefit questionnaires rather than partial questionnaires or elements of medical evidence.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall make publicly available on the internet website of the Department referred to in section 5101(d) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) a description of the standards issued under subsection (a)(2); and

(2) the plan required under subsection (b).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “claimant” has the meaning given such term in section 5100 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered non-Department provider” means a health care provider who—

(A) is not an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) pursuant to a contract under section 504 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-275; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note), as amended by sections 304 and 305, examines a claimant for a medical disability.

SEC. 307. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUTOMATIC PROCESSING OF CERTAIN CLAIMS FOR TEMPORARY DISABILITY RATINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall modify the information technology systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs to use automation technology for claims for temporary disability ratings for veterans described in section 1156(a)(1)(C) of title 38, United States Code.

(b) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In providing for the automatic processing of claims as required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) medical evidence is obtained from the corporate data warehouse of the Department or other sources of data, the Secretary determines appropriate;

(2) employees of the Department continue to determine whether a veteran is entitled to a temporary disability rating under section 1156(a)(1)(C) of title 38, United States Code; and

(3) claims may be processed manually if the evidence of record is not sufficient to decide the claim or if the medical evidence is provided in a format that is not compatible with the system developed under subsection (a).

TITLE IV—HOMELESSNESS MATTERS

SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Housing our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2024” or the “HOME Act of 2024”.

SEC. 402. PER DIEM PAYMENTS PROVIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR SERVICES FURNISHED TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(i) in clause (i)(II)(aa)(BB), by striking “115 percent” and inserting “115 percent (or, during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act and ending on September 30, 2027, 133 percent)”; and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) For each of fiscal years 2025 through 2027, the Secretary may waive the maximum rate for per diem payments under clause (i)(II)(aa)(BB) or (ii) and, subject to the availability of appropriations, provide such payments at a rate that does not exceed 200 percent of the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section, if the Secretary notifies Congress of such waiver.

“(iv) The Secretary may not, pursuant to clause (iii), waive the maximum rate described in such clause for more than 50 percent of all grant recipients and eligible entities for a fiscal year.”; and

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

“(4) The Secretary may not provide more than 12,000 per diem payments under this section for a fiscal year.”; and

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

“(f) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the HOME Act of 2024, and not less frequently than twice each year 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 on the rate for per diem payments under this section that includes, for each Veterans Integrated Service Network of the Department, the following data:

“(1) The average rate for such a payment.

“(2) A list of locations where the rate for such a payment is within 10 percent of the maximum rate for such a payment authorized under this section.

“(3) The average length of stay by a veteran participating in a program described in section 2012(a) of this title.”.

(b) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the amendments made by subsection (a) through interim guidance in advance of the issuance of regulations for such purpose.

(c) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30, 2025, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a strategic plan for the provision of grants and per diem payments for services furnished to homeless veterans under sections 2011 and 2012 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A method for administering grant funding equitably without using the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of title 38, United States Code, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section, that takes into account—

(i) the wide variety of services furnished by grant recipients and eligible entities under sections 2011 and 2012 of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) varying costs of living across different geographic locations;

(iii) varying availability of affordable housing in different geographic locations;

(iv) circumstances of housing insecurity in rural and Tribal communities;

(v) veterans with significant medical care needs; and

(vi) the changing dynamic of the veteran population nationwide.

(B) A plan and timeline for implementation of the method included under subparagraph (A).

(C) An estimate of increased costs or savings per year under the plan.

(D) An overview of the different grants that will be available once the plan is implemented.

SEC. 403. AUTHORIZATION FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS FOR IMPROVED FLEXIBILITY IN ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) USE OF FUNDS.—During the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the termination date specified in subsection (d), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may provide to a covered veteran, as the Secretary determines necessary—

(1) food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items required for the safety and survival of the veteran;

(2) transportation required to support the stability and health of the veteran for appointments with service providers, the conduct of housing and employment searches, and the obtaining of food and supplies; and

(3) tablets, smartphones, disposable phones and other technology, and related service plans required to support the stability and health of the veteran through the maintenance of contact with service providers, prospective landlords, and family members.

(b) HOMELESS VETERANS ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may collaborate, to the extent practicable, with one or more organizations to manage the use of land of the Department of Veterans Affairs for homeless veterans for living and sleeping.

(2) FORMS OF COLLABORATION.—Collaboration under paragraph (1) may include the provision by either the Secretary or the head of the organization concerned of food services and security for property, buildings, and other facilities owned or controlled by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the date specified in subsection (d), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes, with respect to the period covered by such report—

(1) a statement, disaggregated by each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, of the amount of funds under this section—

(A) each such medical center requested from the Secretary; and

(B) to which the Secretary provided each such medical center;

(2) data, disaggregated by each such medical center, relating to how each such medical center used amounts provided by the Secretary under this section;

(3) the number of covered veterans to which the Secretary provided assistance under this section;

(4) the total amount of assistance the Secretary provided to covered veterans pursuant to subsection (a)(3) for communications equipment, broken down by the type of equipment provided;

(5) the total amount of assistance the Secretary provided covered veterans pursuant to subsection (a)(2) for ridesharing;

(6) the number of covered veterans who received such assistance; and

(7) a description, for each rideshare used by a covered veteran with such assistance, of the reasons such covered veteran used such rideshare.

(8) the number of covered veterans who lived or slept on Department land;

(9) the amount of funds used to make available Department land for covered veterans to live and sleep;

(10) the number of Department employees whose primary responsibilities involved providing services for covered veterans living or sleeping on Department land;

(11) the average length of time a covered veteran lived or slept on Department land, and

(12) the period of time the Secretary expects Department land will be made available for covered veterans to live and sleep.

(d) TERMINATION DATE.—The termination date specified in this subsection is September 30, 2027.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the term “covered veteran” means—

(1) a homeless veteran, as such term is defined in section 2002 of title 38, United States Code; and

(2) a veteran participating in the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)).

SEC. 404. ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TELEHEALTH SERVICES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle VII of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 2069. Access to telehealth services

“To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans participating in or receiving services from a program under this chapter have access to telehealth services to which such veterans are eligible under the laws administered by the Secretary, including by ensuring that telehealth capabilities are available to—

“(1) such veterans;

“(2) case managers of the Department of programs for homeless veterans authorized under this chapter; and

“(3) community-based service providers for homeless veterans receiving funds from the Department through grants or contracts.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“2069. Access to telehealth services.”.

TITLE V—OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS MATTERS

SEC. 501. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMPLOYEE TRAINING REGARDING OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) TRAINING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require each employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who begins employment with the Department on or after the date of the enactment of this Act to receive training that the Inspector General of the Department shall develop on the reporting of wrongdoing to, responding to requests from, and the duty of cooperating with the Office of Inspector General of the Department.

(b) TIMING OF TRAINING.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall require each employee of the Department covered under such subsection to undergo the training required by such subsection not later than one year after the date on which the employee begins employment with the Department.

(c) ELEMENTS.—Training developed and required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) Definition of the role, responsibilities, and legal authority of the Inspector General of the Department and the duties of employees of the Department for engaging with the Office of Inspector General.

(2) Identification of Federal whistleblower protection rights, including the right to report fraud, waste, abuse, and other wrongdoing to Congress.

(3) Identification of the circumstances and mechanisms for reporting fraud, waste, abuse, and other wrongdoing to the Inspector General, including making confidential complaints to the Inspector General.

(4) Identification of the prohibitions and remedies that help to protect employees of the Department from retaliation when reporting wrongdoing to the Inspector General.

(5) Recognition of opportunities to engage with staff of the Office of Inspector General to improve programs, operations, and services of the Department.

(6) Notification of the authority of the Inspector General to subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses, including former employees of the Department, as necessary to carry out the duties of the Office of Inspector General under section 312 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) DESIGN AND UPDATE.—The Inspector General of the Department shall design, and update as the Inspector General considers appropriate, the training developed and required by subsection (a).

(e) SYSTEM.—The Secretary shall provide, via the talent management system of the Department, or successor system, the training developed and required under subsection (a).

(f) RELATION TO CERTAIN TRAINING.—The Secretary shall ensure that training developed and required under subsection (a) is separate and distinct from training provided under section 733 of title 38, United States Code.

(g) NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES.—The Secretary shall ensure that the Inspector General is afforded the opportunity, not less frequently than twice each year and more frequently if the Inspector General considers appropriate under extraordinary circumstances, to use the electronic mail system of the Department to notify all authorized users of such system of the following:

(1) The roles and responsibilities of the employees of the Department when engaging with the Office of Inspector General.

(2) The availability of training provided under subsection (a).

(3) How to access training provided under subsection (a).

(4) Information about how to contact the Office of Inspector General, including a link to any website-based reporting form of the Office.

SEC. 502. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SECURITY AT COVERED FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ANNUAL SURVEY.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for each of the following five fiscal years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Director of the Office of Security and Law Enforcement of the Department of Veterans Affairs, shall conduct a survey of the covered employees at each covered facility to collect information regarding security. Each annual survey shall include questions about—

(1) the type and frequency of criminal activity experienced at the covered facility during the fiscal year which most recently concluded including whether or not the criminal activity was related to residents at the facility or campus such as those in a residential rehabilitation treatment program or enhanced-use lease facility;

(2) the number of vacancies and number of days vacant for Department police officers at the covered facility at the time of the survey delineated by recruitment status and stage;

(3) the availability and adequacy of covered equipment;

(4) the availability and adequacy of resources, classes, or other time set aside for training Department police officers who work at each covered facility about any skill or tactic related to law enforcement, including the proper use of force, firearms qualifications and training, procedures for responding to an active threat, and any other training required for Department police officers;

(5) any security weakness at covered facilities;

(6) the relationship between the covered facility (including the Department police officers who work at the covered facility) and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies including what agreements or memorandums of understanding exist between each covered facility and external law enforcement agencies;

(7) efforts by the personnel of the covered facility to address and reduce criminal activity at, or in close proximity to, the covered facility; and

(8) recommendations for the Secretary to better address and reduce criminal activity at, or in close proximity to, covered facilities so as to improve the safety of veterans, employees, visitors, other authorized personnel, and the surrounding community.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the end of the next full Fiscal Year after the enactment of this Act and for each of the following five fiscal years, the Secretary shall submit to each of the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding the results of the surveys conducted under subsection (a) during the previous fiscal year. The report shall include—

(1) the results of the annual survey described under subsection (a) for the year covered by the report;

(2) an analysis, made in coordination with the Director of the Office of Security and Law Enforcement of such Department, each director and police chief of a Veterans Integrated Service Network, and the directors and police chiefs of the medical centers within the Veterans Integrated Service Network of the results of the triannual security inspections conducted in prior fiscal year, to include a plan of action that describes how the Secretary plans to address any security weakness identified in the results of the triannual security inspections and includes clearly-stated goals with measurable benchmarks for each goal and deadlines for each benchmark; and

(3) a list of all vacant positions for police chief or deputy police chief at each covered facility during the prior fiscal year, the number of individuals who filled those positions over the two years prior to the date of the survey, the number of days the positions were vacant without someone serving in an acting capacity, and the number of days the positions were filled by individuals serving in an acting capacity.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered equipment” means any item issued by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to a Department police officer (including firearms, weapons detecting technology, ballistic vests, body-worn cameras, and radios) for use in the provision of services under section 902 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered employee” means an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who is employed and responsible for security operations at a covered facility including a covered facility's police chief, facility emergency management leader, facility director, or person carrying out the responsibilities of one of these positions in an acting capacity.

(3) The term “covered facility” means any facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs where Department police officers have jurisdiction.

(4) The term “Department police officer” is used as such term as used in section 902 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The term “security weakness” means a deficiency in the facilities, staffing, or covered equipment at a covered facility that a covered employee of the covered facility determines presents a risk to the safety of visitors or staff, including an unsecured door, inoperable security camera, unsecured police operations room, a lack of security presence at an entrance to the covered facility, and a lack of security presence in an area of the covered facility or the grounds of the covered facility that the director of the covered facility determines requires an increased security presence.

SEC. 503. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “November 29, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “June 9, 2034”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman

from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 8371, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 8371, as amended, offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI), my friend and colleague.

For nearly the entire 118th Congress, the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs have worked together to develop a bipartisan package of commonsense proposals. The Dole act is the result of that work and would enhance, reform, and modernize nearly every part of the VA.

Specifically, the Dole act would change the landscape for elderly veterans and finally give them a choice in where they choose to live out their sunset years; reform VA's homeless programs to embrace data and help lift veterans out of homelessness permanently; expand nontraditional education and employment programs, like VET TEC, to allow even more students to receive the training they need to land high-paying tech jobs; protect the MISSION Act to ensure that veterans have access to the timely healthcare they want and where they want it; cut red tape for schools to allow students using the GI Bill to use their benefits; and so much more.

Simply put, the Dole act would help deliver on the promises we have made to the veterans and their families.

Madam Speaker, some of the provisions in the Dole act would, quite literally, save veterans' lives. Since COVID, homeless prevention providers haven't been able to keep pace with rising costs and help as many veterans as they would like. The Dole act would fix that.

Veterans across the country are having their healthcare restricted by VA bureaucracy, who think they get to decide where veterans should get their healthcare. The Dole act would fix that.

The Dole act would rightfully make sure that a VA bureaucrat cannot veto a doctor's medical decisions.

Under current law, veterans' caregivers have limited options on where they can get mental health support services. The Dole act would not only fix that but would expand where they can reach these services.

Right now, only veterans who pass away at a VA facility are allowed burial or funeral allowances. The Dole act will fix that.

Madam Speaker, there are a lot of good things in this bill, and it is past

time for us to send it to the President's desk before it is too late.

I thank the over 50 veterans service organizations, advocacy organizations, and stakeholders from every corner of this country for their support of the Dole act. Their advocacy and work in collaborating with the House and the Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs has finally brought this bill to the finish line.

I ask unanimous consent to include in the RECORD two letters of support from these organizations.

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

There was no objection.

NOVEMBER 13, 2024.

Re: Letter of Support for H.R. 8371, The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

Hon. MIKE BOST,

Chairman, Veterans' Affairs Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,

Ranking Member, Veterans' Affairs Committee, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BOST AND RANKING MEMBER TAKANO: As the country turned its attention this week to celebrating and honoring our nation's veterans, the undersigned also express our gratitude and offer strong support for H.R. 8371, The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. We represent the advocates for older adults, including those suffering from Alzheimer's and related dementia, and the leading senior living industry organizations who have made this legislation a priority for the lame duck session of Congress. The time is now to get this important bill over the finish line to deliver much needed options for long-term care to our veterans. Please place this important legislation on the Suspension calendar next week.

This legislation includes several bipartisan and bicameral proposals to reform and improve the delivery of healthcare, benefits, and services at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their families, and their survivors. In addition to the groups represented in this request, the broad support for this legislation includes 20 veteran service organizations (VSOs), major homelessness prevention organizations, education training providers, health and aging services organizations, as well as private companies, which underscores the urgency for immediate action. (See list of supporters).

Included in this bill under Subtitle B, Section 127, is the key provisions of the “Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act,” which the undersigned organizations have endorsed and strongly supported this Congress. This particular section authorizes the VA to offer assisted living settings for aging and disabled veterans who would otherwise require more costly nursing home care. This pilot program will give veterans additional options for how and where they can get the long-term care they need as well as inform future policy decisions to meet the growing care needs of our nation's aging veterans.

The VA has acknowledged the challenges relative to the aging veteran population and the need and value of rebalancing its long-term care programs. The proposal is an economically sound and sensible approach to demonstrate the benefits of assisted living settings to the resident veteran, their families, friends, and fellow veterans. It provides the VA critical flexibility to address the

needs of a rapidly growing population of aging or disabled veterans who are not able to live at home and future costs savings will help more veterans receive the assistance they need.

Please take action to advance this legislation this year and place it on the Suspension calendar.

Thank you for your work to improve the lives of our veterans.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association.
Alzheimer's Impact Movement.
American Seniors Housing Association.
Argentum.
LeadingAge.
National Center for Assisted Living.

MAY 24, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK SCHUMER,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Since the beginning of the 118th Congress, we, the undersigned organizations, have been working with the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs on legislation to improve the health care and benefits provided to our nation's veterans, their caregivers, their families, and their survivors. Over the course of many months, our collective engagement with Members and staff through congressional hearings, committee briefings, stakeholder roundtables, and informal discussions have led to the development of bills that address several of our highest legislative priorities for those we serve.

We were pleased to see many of these bills incorporated into the recently introduced Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 8371). From improving access to mental health and long-term care for the veterans who need it, to supporting those who care for them, as well as their survivors, this bipartisan and bicameral measure would have a tremendous impact on the entire veteran community if enacted. We have been patient and collaborative as these proposals have been reviewed and adjusted to fit into a meticulously crafted legislative package. The time to act has arrived.

We recognize that this legislation is a compromise package, one that requires all sides and interested parties to engage in good faith, as we did with the House and Senate committees. We appreciated receiving regular updates from committee staff as this omnibus package progressed, and were pleased to help resolve many differences throughout the entire process leading to the introduction of this bill. We assumed committee leaders were doing the same as the negotiations moved behind closed doors. As engaged and involved stakeholders, we were deeply disappointed to learn that the bill will not advance to the House floor for a vote before Memorial Day.

While the path forward for this bill is now unclear, we continue to stand united in our belief that Congress must pass this vital legislation as quickly as possible. The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act addresses some of the most urgent needs of veterans and the people who care for them; they should not have to wait any longer. On their behalf, we call on all of you to put aside politics, work together in good faith to

find a path forward through the House and the Senate, and enact this critical legislation before the Fourth of July. America's veterans, their caregivers, families and survivors deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Carl Blake, Chief Executive Officer, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Ryan M. Gallucci, Executive Director, VFW Washington Office; Steve Schwab, Chief Executive Officer, Elizabeth Dole Foundation; Jose Ramos, Vice President for Government and Community Relations, Wounded Warrior Project; Cara Rinkoff, USAWOA Executive Director.

Daniel Seehafer, National Commander, The American Legion; Edward R. Reese, Jr., Executive Director, DAV Washington Headquarters; Brian T. Kelly, Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Ret), President and CEO, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); Donald D. Overton, Jr., National Executive Director, Blinded Veterans Association; Allison Jaslow, Chief Executive Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

CAPT Jacqueline Rychnovsky, USN (Ret.), PhD, CAE, Executive Director, Commissioned Officers Association of the USPHS; Michael D. Zeiders, President, Quality of Life Foundation; Keith A. Reed, Executive Director, Air Force Sergeants Association, President and Secretary, Board of Directors, Airmen Memorial Foundation; James McCormick, Director, Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; Deborah Oelschig, TREA National President; Calaneet Balas, President & CEO, The ALS Association; Carder Ferguson, National Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart USA.

Additional Supporting Organizations:

Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Team Services Group, I AM ALS, National PACE Association, U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association & Enlisted Association, Military Chaplains Association, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, while I think we could and should have been able to pass this bill months ago, I am pleased to be here today. I know that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle took issue with some provisions in the Dole act due to a disagreement on the provision's intent.

The provision that was opposed only affected about 6 percent of the VA's current community referrals. This provision would rightfully make sure that VA bureaucracy cannot veto a doctor's medical decisions.

Veterans groups understand this, and that is why they support this bill from the start and without reservation. Thanks to the hard work of these groups of pushing Members to do the right thing, we have come to a compromise on the language before us today. I think it is obvious to everyone that our veterans and their families simply can't wait.

□ 1645

Before I reserve my time, I will thank Representative CISCOMANI and dozens of Members that have provisions in this bill. I am so happy to have Members like Representative CISCOMANI on our team.

I also thank my friend, Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE, for bringing the Dole act to the floor. He has reaffirmed

his and the rest of the House Republicans' commitment to veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

Last but certainly not least, I will personally thank my friend and recent Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, this bill's namesake, Senator Elizabeth Dole, for working for months to get this bill to where it is today. Our Nation's veterans have no better friend than Senator Dole, and I am honored that she is with us here today.

Madam Speaker, 2 weeks ago the American people voted and gave us a mandate to fix problems they talk about at their kitchen tables that affect their families and communities every single day. The Dole act is the foundation for that work to begin for the veteran community, and I urge my colleagues to do right by the veterans and support the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, November 4, 2024.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 8371, the "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act," which contains legislative provisions within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration, the Committee on Natural Resources will forgo formal consideration of the legislation. I do so with the understanding that the Committee on Natural Resources does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill that fall within its jurisdiction. I also request that you urge the Speaker to name members of this committee to any conference committee which is named to consider such provisions.

Please place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

Sincerely,
BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, November 6, 2024.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WESTERMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 8371, the "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act". I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources over the subject matters contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, I would support your request to have the Committee on Natural Resources appropriately consulted on any issues in this bill or similar legislation that fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Natural Resources.

I will place copies of this exchange into the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

Sincerely,
MIKE BOST,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 15, 2024.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BOST: I write concerning H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act offered by Representative Juan Ciscomani. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 8371 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services, I agree to forego any further consideration of this resolution so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Committee on Armed Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 8371 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this resolution or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction.

Finally, I ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in the Congressional Record during floor consideration, to memorialize our understanding. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL D. ROGERS,
Chairman,
House Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, November 18, 2024.

Hon. MIKE ROGERS,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROGERS: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 8371, the "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act". I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services over the subject matters contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, I would support your request to have the Committee on Armed Services appropriately consulted on any issues in this bill or similar legislation that fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

I will place copies of this exchange into the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor. I appreciate your willingness to work together to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

MIKE BOST,
Chairman.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8371, as amended, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

This omnibus package of veterans' legislation isn't perfect; such packages rarely are. However, it achieves progress on many of the goals we set out to accomplish at the beginning of the 118th Congress.

The backbone of this bill is legislation that was originally introduced by my colleague, JULIA BROWNLEY, the ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health.

Representative BROWNLEY has worked tirelessly for nearly 3 years to pass the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, H.R. 542. This bill will enable veterans to remain at home, safely age in place, and avoid or delay admission to nursing homes and other costly institutional settings of care by expanding veterans' access to home- and community-based services such as home health aides.

This legislation will also help connect veterans' caregivers to respite care and other support services that help them care for veterans at home. Further, it will help improve VA's coordination with other Federal long-term care programs that promote aging at home.

I am very thankful to my colleague JULIA BROWNLEY for her important work, but I know she worked very closely with Senator Elizabeth Dole, and Senator Dole has risen to an amazing stature in our country. I am so proud that she is also here in this Chamber with us today as the chairman mentioned. I hope someone will get her a blanket because it is so dang cold in this Chamber that I don't want her to freeze up there.

This legislation is an investment in care for millions of veterans and current servicemembers who need this help now and in the future.

Despite the great need for this bill, it has been an uphill battle to get it passed. This Chamber had an opportunity almost a year ago to pass the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act as a stand-alone bill. Unfortunately, House Republicans decided to bring a version to the floor they knew the Senate wouldn't pass.

Why would they do that you may ask? Well, because they decided to hold the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act and other bipartisan policy priorities hostage, attempting to use them as leverage to achieve their goal of outsourcing more VA care to for-profit healthcare providers. The Democratic Caucus stood firmly against these efforts.

It can be difficult and isolating to stand on policy principles, but I will always do so when the future of veterans' healthcare is on the line, and it is. The system is already straining, and if we don't take real and serious action, it will break.

House Republicans attempted nearly for a year to use H.R. 8371 to advance harmful provisions that would have undermined healthcare directly provided by VA, driving veterans to for-profit, lower-quality care from contracted providers. We want VA to remain a strong provider of care instead of diminishing it to nothing more than an insurance company where profits are prioritized over outcomes for veterans.

Madam Speaker, if we have learned anything during the 118th Congress, it is that anything meaningful that we have accomplished has been done on a bipartisan basis with Democratic votes.

It should never have taken this long to get here, but last week, we successfully negotiated a compromise on the most objectionable provision of H.R. 8371, which will preserve VA healthcare for current and future generations of veterans.

Unfortunately, in the year it took to get to this point, House Republicans also held hostage critical legislation to help homeless veterans. In December 2023, my colleagues in the majority knowingly and intentionally took a flawed version of the HOME Act, which includes two Democratic-led bills to the House floor to use these provisions as leverage in negotiations for this package. They used homeless veterans as political pawns in the same way that they did with elderly and disabled veterans and their caregivers.

Meanwhile, VA and its community partners continued doing the hard work to help veterans experiencing homelessness. On Veterans Day, the VA announced that veteran homelessness dropped to its lowest level on record, and that VA had helped place nearly 48,000 veterans into permanent housing in 2024.

While I celebrate VA's success in addressing this issue, there are still nearly 300,000 veterans who interact with VA's homelessness programs each year. We must continue investing resources into these programs and into our communities to ensure that every veteran has a stable place to call home. We hope the next administration will continue this work and adhere to the models that have proven effective like Housing First.

Therefore, the second pillar of this legislation supports our shared goal of ending veteran homelessness. H.R. 8371 includes provisions from Congresswoman WILLIAMS' H.R. 491, the Return Home to Housing Act and Congresswoman CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK'S H.R. 645, the Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act. These provisions will provide direct investments in communities across the country as they move veterans from the streets into stable housing.

During the pandemic, VA used authorities contained in Representative WILLIAMS' bill to enhance the services that traditional housing providers could offer to veterans through an increased per diem reimbursement rate. It used the flexible authorities in Representative CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK'S bill to save lives by bringing veterans out of unsafe living conditions into stable, permanent housing and meeting their basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing.

It also ensured homeless veterans had the transportation needed to get to and from medical appointments and job interviews.

These long overdue reauthorizations will ensure VA and its community partners can continue to address the veteran homelessness crisis in this country with the urgency and focus it deserves.

There is still more work to do to get every veteran into housing, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to provide VA, HUD, and communities across the country the support they need to end veteran homelessness.

Madam Speaker, I will also acknowledge several Democratic Members who have contributed to the drafting of this package. Representatives MIKE LEVIN, DON DAVIS, ELISSA SLOTKIN, FRANK MRVAN, DEAN PHILLIPS, MORGAN MCGARVEY, CHRIS PAPPAS, and LAUREN UNDERWOOD all have provisions in their own bills included in this package. Many of them are or have been members of our committee, and their commitment to serving veterans continues with our work here today.

Among other things, these provisions will increase outreach to veterans about their eligibility for benefits, mandate training for VA employees on reporting wrongdoing to the inspector general, and remove statutory restrictions on the qualifications of senior leaders within the Veterans Health Administration.

Madam Speaker, that does not mean this bill is perfect, and I will stress my objection, once again, to the backward practice of the majority to offset discretionary spending along with mandatory spending in every bill. This means taxpayers will be paying for these programs twice and many remaining legislative priorities from the VSOs who are with us here today are at risk of being left undone next Congress when we must unnecessarily waste our limited offsets in order to advance this legislation.

Also missing from this package is a strong piece of bipartisan, bicameral, good-government legislation that would have installed much-needed guardrails on VA's electronic health record modernization project.

It is no secret that the Oracle-driven modernization effort has struggled at VA. The program is woefully behind schedule and is only operational at 6 of 172 medical centers. I am not convinced the system is fully functional. The EHR Program RESET Act would have required minimum operational criteria to be met before Oracle could be deployed to any further facilities, which would have prevented many of the current problems.

Further, this key legislation would have improved coordination with the Department of Defense and instituted major contracting and acquisition reforms over VA's IT modernization efforts that are long overdue.

Unfortunately, RESET was stripped from the package, which is not surprising given the army of lobbyists that Oracle unleashed to kill it.

That said, I thank the Veterans Service Organization community and other

stakeholders whose tireless efforts and refusal to compromise their values proved critical in finally getting our Republican majority back to the negotiating table to reach a compromise on H.R. 8371 last week.

As we saw with the passage of the PACT Act, we know good things can be accomplished when VSOs are unified and committed to doing the right thing. I am glad that House Democrats also held firm to our values in negotiations and fought to preserve VA healthcare for current and future generations of veterans.

This package has taken more than a year to get to the finish line, but I am pleased that we as a caucus will be able to support passage on this compromise today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that the rules do not permit Members to refer to persons in the gallery.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN).

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8371.

This important bill package will strengthen VA community care, streamline the disability benefits process, and improve oversight and accountability at VA. Its consideration here today is the culmination of months of committee work, negotiation, and fine-tuning on behalf of our Nation's veterans. Included in this package is language from the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2023, which will improve support for aging veterans and their caregivers.

I was proud to join Congresswoman BROWNLEY in introducing the bill last year, and I am proud to support this larger bill package as a veteran and as a member of the House VA Committee.

While I could fill an hour of time discussing this and the many other important reforms of this bill, I will focus on a relatively small provision that exemplifies the good advocacy and policymaking that often goes unnoticed by the media. Gerald's Law, which I originally introduced as H.R. 234, is named after Gerald Elliott, a U.S. Army veteran and a resident of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in my district.

Jerry passed away in 2019 while receiving VA hospice care at his home. Following his death, Jerry's family discovered that, even though he received hospice care through the VA, the fact that he received this care at home meant his family did not qualify for burial benefits after his death.

I was made aware of this injustice by Denise Formolo, the Veterans Service Officer who was assisting Jerry's family. Her advocacy led me to create Gerald's Law, a bill to fix this legislative oversight and ensure that no veteran will have to worry about losing VA benefits for their family when choosing to spend their last days in the comfort of their own home.

I am grateful for the inclusion of Gerald's Law in this package, and I thank Chairman BOST and the VA committee staff for their tireless work getting this across the finish line.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8371.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), my good friend and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health.

□ 1700

Ms. BROWNLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

As you know, last week on Veterans Day, many of us attended events in our congressional districts to commemorate Veterans Day and to honor the men and women who have served our Nation in uniform. As Members of Congress, on Veterans Day, we recognize every man and woman who has answered the call to duty. In fact, it has been nearly a century since Veterans Day was first established as a Federal holiday in 1938.

While celebrating Veterans Day is an important tradition, we also owe our Nation's veterans more than words of thanks. Our words ring hollow if we don't do our part to fulfill our Nation's solemn promise to serve our veterans and their families as well as they have served our country.

As you may know, access to long-term care is one of the biggest challenges facing our aging veteran population and the families who care for them. I have been working for several years now to address this need, working with former Senator Elizabeth Dole, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, veterans service organizations, and with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses of Congress.

I was proud when the bill passed the House in November of 2023 with overwhelming bipartisan support. It has been a year, and we simply cannot deny our veterans this crucial care any longer. We must get the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act across the finish line and signed into law.

Passage of my legislation would be the most impactful change in VA long-term care in decades. It would also be one of the smartest. Currently, every veteran enrolled in the VA has the right to nursing home care if clinically eligible, but it is important to note that nursing homes are not where veterans want to live their golden years. They want to be at home with their families and in their communities.

It turns out care at home is also less expensive than institutionalized care. Probably most important of all, health outcomes are far, far better by having received care at home than it is in an institutionalized setting.

As you know all too well, our healthcare system is facing a silver tsunami as baby boomers enter their

later years. The VA is not exempt from this tsunami, and immediate preparation is critical. Almost half of the VA's patient population is over 65. Without fixing veteran home and community care in the next 15 years, the VA will double its spending on institutionalized long-term care services, nearing \$15 billion to meet these needs.

Congress has a great deal of difficulty coming to agreement on most things, but we all agree that long-term care at home is better for our veterans. It is better for the VA, and it is better for our country.

I am proud to say my bill has been incorporated into the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. The package before us also includes legislation that Senator SANDERS and I have worked on to create a new pilot program to expand VA comprehensive dental care to veterans diagnosed with diabetes and other heart disease, as well as numerous bipartisan, bicameral provisions to improve VA's benefits for veterans.

I thank Chairman BOST, and I thank Ranking Member TAKANO for their work to reach an agreement on this package that will help veterans all over the country by delivering the relief caregivers and veterans need and what they have been advocating for. I also thank Senator Elizabeth Dole for her help and support in making this the perfect bill.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8371, the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

As a veteran, physician, a caregiver myself, and a Member of Congress actively addressing these issues, I have witnessed firsthand the immense challenges that caregivers face, especially as our veteran population continues to age.

Access to mental health services remains inconsistent, leaving many caregivers struggling to find the support they desperately need. The weight of caring for veterans with complex conditions can lead to significant stress, anxiety, and burnout. That is why it is crucial for us to pass this bill which includes critical provisions to enhance and reform the delivery of care and services at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Among its key measures, this legislation expands access to home- and community-based services, allowing aging veterans to receive care at home instead of at institutions. It also fully funds the VA's VET TEC program which provides high-tech career training for veterans, with an 84 percent graduation rate and an average starting salary of over \$66,000.

This bill would also improve the timeliness and quality of care for vet-

erans under community care, ensuring that medical records are returned more quickly, and veterans receive the care they need in a timely manner.

Additionally, it includes important provisions to help address veteran homelessness by increasing funding for services that assist veterans with transportation to medical, housing, and employment appointments.

As a Member of Congress and as Americans, we have a responsibility to care for those who bravely fought for our country. By advocating for meaningful solutions that genuinely support our veterans and their caregivers, we can take important steps toward improving the lives of our Nation's heroes and those who care for them.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Agriculture and a veteran himself.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, which, among several provisions, includes the Veteran Caregiver Application and Appeals Reform Act of 2023.

As we recognize National Veterans and Military Families Month and National Family Caregivers Month, we must recommit ourselves to helping our Nation's veterans and their caregivers, often the unsung heroes of the healthcare system. Support of the CARE Act does exactly that. We must always lend a helping hand to our veterans and their families. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8371.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN).

Mr. VAN ORDEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 8371, the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

I do this for two individuals in one group, the two individuals being Robert Francis Mulligan and Mary Jean Mulligan, my Uncle Bob and Aunt Mary Jean. They were both World War II veterans and members of the Greatest Generation who, unfortunately, died in nursing homes in poor conditions because of the fact that they were not able to have funding through this act. I am very supportive of it.

The group that I stand in strong support of today is our Gold Star families. When a member passes and their family members remain, that is not a mortgage. It is not a 30-year commitment. It is a lifetime commitment. We have to do everything we possibly can so that they can move on with their lives in memory of their loved ones that served our Nation and allowed us to have this debate in freedom.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LUTTRELL).

Mr. LUTTRELL. Madam Speaker, I am honored to speak on H.R. 8371, the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

H.R. 8371 includes provisions from H.R. 4461, the Modernizing Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Benefit Questionnaire Act. Current practice does not require VA contractors who perform disability exams to submit disability benefits questionnaires, or DBQs, in a format that can be easily processed by VA claims automation software. This currently leads to backlogs and delays that can be avoided by submitting the DBQs based on a standard that computers can read.

Computerizing the data is the key to helping VA process and adjudicate veterans' claims faster. The Modernizing Department of Veterans Affairs Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act would improve these DBQs which are a critical part of the disability compensation process. As the VA moves forward with automation, standardizing the DBQ data will be critical to timely and accurate claims processing.

Our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for our country, deserve a system that works for them. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8371.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI), the chief sponsor of this bill.

Mr. CISCOMANI. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, the flagship bipartisan, bicameral veterans package of the 118th Congress.

Simply put, our veterans are our Nation's heroes. When duty called, these brave men and women answered, risking life and limb in service to their fellow citizens.

In my district, I organized the Veterans Advisory Council to hear directly from those who served about the unique challenges facing all of our veterans. As I continue to hear from our veterans, it is clear there is still work to be done to close the gaps in economic opportunity, care, and access to housing.

This legislation encompasses a number of bipartisan and bicameral proposals to address veteran homelessness by increasing reimbursement rates to partner organizations; improve the delivery of healthcare by increasing coordination with providers and expanding access to home and community care; modernize delivery of benefits by cutting red tape; and overall improvement to the delivery of services for veterans, their families, and survivors.

Specifically, I am proud my bill includes a provision I have spearheaded to reauthorize and fund the VET TEC program to cover costs for veterans seeking job training in high-tech industries. Currently, the program has an 84

percent graduation rate for the 12,000 veterans who have already completed it. By reauthorizing this program, we are creating the same opportunity for thousands of veterans to come.

Additionally, I want to highlight that it authorizes appropriations for the Office of Women's Health at the VA to expand access for women to mobile mammography units and outreach.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, to ensure we provide our veterans and their families with the support and benefits they earned through their service.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the Representative from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

One percent of Americans answered the call to defend our Nation with: Send me. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Our veterans should receive healthcare and benefits they have earned without having to battle the VA.

The Dole act expands economic opportunities, broadens nontraditional educational programs, and does so much for our veterans. Today, 60 percent of our Nation is veterans. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Madam Speaker, I am a decorated Army combat veteran who served in the Vietnam war. I know how well and how much the sacrifices our servicemembers make to defend our Nation. Access to timely healthcare for our veterans is mission critical for the VA, and failure to deliver is unacceptable.

In 2014, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs discovered that 40 veterans died while waiting for medical care. This is just one example. My bill, the VA Same-Day Scheduling Act, will ensure that no veteran is more than one phone call away from the care they have been promised.

I am encouraged that the spirit of the bill is included in the Elizabeth Dole act which requires a plan to get the VA to same-day scheduling. This is a step in the right direction to fix that bureaucratic travesty.

□ 1715

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, may I inquire of the Chair as to how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS). The gentleman from Illinois has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

I have said as much as I can about this important piece of legislation. What I will finally say is I am very glad that we got here, and I thank the chairman. We spent all this time, and we have reached a compromise. That is what we have to do in Congress, put our veterans and the people first. I think the American people want to see more of this sort of thing happening.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that we could get this done before the Thanksgiving weekend.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 8371, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close. I offer a very special thank-you to the ranking member, the staff who have been involved in the negotiations back and forth, the Senate, all of our VSOs that came out—as I said in my opening, there were over 50—in support of this bill, and for the hard work and pushing forward that Senator Elizabeth Dole has done on this bill. We are so glad that we can call it up tonight.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 8371, as amended, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

This bipartisan legislation contains consequential reforms that will significantly improve the lives of veterans and their families across the country.

I'm very proud that my bill, the Caregiver Outreach and Program Enhancement Act, is included in this package.

Known as the COPE Act, my bill would authorize the VA to award grants to organizations that provide mental health resources to those who care for our nation's veterans.

Caregivers play a critical role in the lives of older Americans—especially our veterans—and as the only geriatric nurse practitioner in Congress, I know being a caregiver comes with immense emotional challenges.

By ensuring veteran caregivers can properly take care of their mental health, the COPE Act will improve the lives of our nation's heroes and solidify the support system they need to age with dignity.

In addition to the COPE Act, this package also includes the VA Medical Center Security Report Act of 2023, which I introduced to increase veterans' safety and support police officers at VA Medical Centers amid an uptick in violent crime.

Madam Speaker, I am the granddaughter of a veteran, the daughter of a veteran, the wife of a veteran, the mother of future veterans, and I served 10 years in the U.S. Navy myself.

I'm blessed to represent one of the largest veteran populations in the U.S. in Hampton Roads.

Improving the lives of our nation's heroes is, and always will be, one of my top priorities in Congress . . . and the legislation before us on the House Floor today helps Congress do just that.

I'd like to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—Representatives CHRISSEY HOULAHAN and CHRIS PAPPAS—who joined me in originally introducing the COPE Act.

I'd also like to thank Chairman BOST for his commitment to our veterans and for spearheading the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

I'm confident with the passage of this impactful legislation, we will move closer to fulfilling our promise to provide for America's veteran population and those who care for them.

I urge all my colleagues on both sides to support the Elizabeth Dole Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8371, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 8371; and

H.R. 5658.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERANS HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8371) to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 389, nays 9, not voting 34, as follows:

[Roll No. 466]
YEAS—389

Adams	Cloud	Gonzales, Tony
Aderholt	Clyburn	Gonzalez, V.
Aguilar	Clyde	Gooden (TX)
Alford	Cohen	Graves (MO)
Allen	Cole	Green (TN)
Allred	Collins	Green, Al (TX)
Amo	Comer	Greene (GA)
Amodei	Correa	Griffith
Arrington	Costa	Grothman
Auchincloss	Courtney	Guest
Bacon	Craig	Guthrie
Baird	Crawford	Hageman
Balderson	Crockett	Harder (CA)
Balint	Crow	Harris
Banks	Cuellar	Harshbarger
Barr	Curtis	Hayes
Barragán	Dauids (KS)	Hern
Bean (FL)	Davidson	Higgins (LA)
Beatty	Davis (IL)	Hill
Bentz	Davis (NC)	Himes
Bera	Dean (PA)	Hinson
Bergman	DeGette	Horsford
Beyer	DeLauro	Houchin
Bice	DelBene	Houlihan
Bilirakis	Deluzio	Hoyer
Bishop (GA)	DeSaulnier	Hoyle (OR)
Bishop (NC)	Diaz-Balart	Hudson
Blumenauer	Dingell	Huffman
Blunt Rochester	Doggett	Huizenga
Bonamici	Duarte	Hunt
Bost	Dunn (FL)	Issa
Bowman	Edwards	Ivey
Boyle (PA)	Ellzey	Jackson (IL)
Brown	Emmer	Jackson (NC)
Brownley	Escobar	Jackson (TX)
Buchanan	Eshoo	Jacobs
Buchon	Espallat	James
Budzinski	Estes	Jayapal
Burchett	Ezell	Jeffries
Burgess	Fallon	Johnson (GA)
Burlison	Feenstra	Johnson (SD)
Bush	Ferguson	Joyce (OH)
Calvert	Finstad	Joyce (PA)
Cammack	Fischbach	Kamlager-Dove
Caraveo	Fitzgerald	Kaptur
Carbajal	Fitzpatrick	Kean (NJ)
Cárdenas	Fleischmann	Keating
Carey	Fletcher	Kelly (IL)
Carl	Flood	Kelly (MS)
Carson	Fong	Kelly (PA)
Carter (GA)	Foster	Kennedy
Carter (LA)	Foushee	Khanna
Carter (TX)	Fox	Kiggans (VA)
Casar	Frankel, Lois	Kildee
Case	Franklin, Scott	Kiley
Casten	Frost	Kilmer
Castor (FL)	Fry	Kim (CA)
Castro (TX)	Fulcher	Kim (NJ)
Chavez-DeRemer	Gallego	Krishnamoorthi
Cherfilus-	Garamendi	Kuster
McCormick	Garbarino	Kustoff
Chu	Garcia (IL)	LaLota
Ciscomani	Garcia (TX)	LaMalfa
Clark (MA)	Garcia, Robert	Lamborn
Clarke (NY)	Gimenez	Landsman
Cleaver	Golden (ME)	Langworthy
Cline	Goldman (NY)	Larsen (WA)

Larson (CT)	Neguse	Smith (WA)
Latta	Nehls	Smucker
LaTurner	Newhouse	Sorensen
Lawler	Nickel	Soto
Lee (CA)	Norcross	Spanberger
Lee (FL)	Nunn (IA)	Stansbury
Lee (PA)	Obenoltz	Stanton
Lee Carter	Ocasio-Cortez	Stauber
Leger Fernandez	Ogles	Steel
Lesko	Omar	Stefanik
Letlow	Owens	Steil
Levin	Pallone	Stevens
Lieu	Palmer	Strickland
Lofgren	Panetta	Strong
Lopez	Pappas	Suozzi
Loudermilk	Peltola	Sykes
Lucas	Pence	Takano
Luetkemeyer	Perez	Tenney
Luna	Perry	Thanedar
Luttrell	Peters	Thompson (CA)
Lynch	Pettersen	Thompson (MS)
Mace	Pfluger	Thompson (PA)
Magaziner	Phillips	Tiffany
Malliotakis	Pingree	Timmons
Maloy	Pocan	Titus
Mann	Porter	Tlaib
Manning	Posey	Tokuda
Massie	Pressley	Tonko
Mast	Quigley	Torres (CA)
Matsui	Ramirez	Torres (NY)
McBath	Raskin	Trahan
McCaul	Reschenthaler	Trone
McClain	Rodgers (WA)	Turner
McClellan	Rogers (AL)	Underwood
McClintock	Rogers (KY)	Valadao
McCollum	Rose	Van Drew
McCormick	Ross	Van Dуйne
McGarvey	Rouzer	Van Orden
McGovern	Ruiz	Vargas
McHenry	Rulli	Vasquez
McIver	Ruppersberger	Veasey
Meeks	Rutherford	Velazquez
Menendez	Ryan	Wagner
Meuser	Salazar	Walberg
Mfume	Salinas	Wasserman
Miller (IL)	Sánchez	Webster (FL)
Miller (OH)	Sarbanes	Weber (TX)
Miller-Meeks	Scalise	Webster (FL)
Mills	Scanlon	Wenstrup
Molinaro	Schakowsky	Westerman
Moolenaar	Schiff	Wied
Moore (AL)	Schneider	Wild
Moore (UT)	Scholten	Williams (GA)
Moore (WI)	Schrier	Williams (NY)
Moran	Schweikert	Williams (TX)
Morelle	Scott (VA)	Wilson (FL)
Moskowitz	Scott, Austin	Wilson (SC)
Moulton	Sessions	Wittman
Mrvan	Sewell	Womack
Mullin	Sherman	Yakym
Murphy	Simpson	Zinke
Nadler	Slotkin	
Napolitano	Smith (MO)	
Neal	Smith (NJ)	

NAYS—9

Brecheen	Good (VA)	Rosendale
Crane	Gosar	Roy
Duncan	Norman	Self

NOT VOTING—34

Armstrong	Garcia, Mike	Pelosi
Babin	Gomez	Scott, David
Biggs	Gottheimer	Sherrill
Boebert	Granger	Smith (NE)
Cartwright	Graves (LA)	Spartz
Connolly	Grijalva	Steube
Crenshaw	Jordan	Swalwell
D'Esposito	LaHood	Waltz
De La Cruz	Lee (NV)	Waters
DesJarlais	Meng	Wexton
Donalds	Miller (WV)	
Evans	Mooney	

□ 1852

Messrs. LARSON of Connecticut and CLEAVER changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466.

VOTE BY MAIL TRACKING ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5658) to amend title 39, United States Code, to require mail-in ballots to use the Postal Service barcode service, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 396, nays 6, not voting 30, as follows:

[Roll No. 467]
YEAS—396

Adams	Cherfilus-	Fleischmann
Aderholt	McCormick	Fletcher
Aguilar	Chu	Flood
Alford	Ciscomani	Fong
Allen	Clark (MA)	Foster
Allred	Clarke (NY)	Foushee
Amo	Cleaver	Fox
Amodei	Cline	Frankel, Lois
Arrington	Cloud	Franklin, Scott
Auchincloss	Clyburn	Frost
Babin	Clyde	Fry
Balderson	Cohen	Fulcher
Balint	Cole	Garamendi
Banks	Collins	Garbarino
Barr	Comer	Garcia (IL)
Barragán	Correa	Garcia (TX)
Bean (FL)	Costa	Garcia, Robert
Beatty	Courtney	Gimenez
Bentz	Craig	Golden (ME)
Bera	Crane	Goldman (NY)
Bergman	Crawford	Gomez
Beyer	Crenshaw	Gonzales, Tony
Bice	Crockett	Gonzalez, V.
Bilirakis	Crow	Good (VA)
Bishop (GA)	Cuellar	Gooden (TX)
Bishop (NC)	Curtis	Gosar
Blumenauer	D'Esposito	Graves (LA)
Blunt Rochester	Dauids (KS)	Graves (MO)
Bonamici	Davidson	Green (TN)
Bost	Davis (IL)	Green, Al (TX)
Bowman	Davis (NC)	Greene (GA)
Boyle (PA)	Dean (PA)	Griffith
Brecheen	DeGette	Grothman
Brown	DeLauro	Guest
Brownley	DelBene	Guthrie
Buchanan	Deluzio	Harder (CA)
Buchon	DeSaulnier	Harris
Budzinski	Diaz-Balart	Harshbarger
Burchett	Dingell	Hayes
Burgess	Doggett	Hern
Burlison	Duarte	Higgins (LA)
Bush	Duncan	Hill
Calvert	Dunn (FL)	Himes
Cammack	Edwards	Hinson
Caraveo	Ellzey	Horsford
Carbajal	Emmer	Houchin
Carey	Escobar	Houlihan
Carl	Eshoo	Hoyer
Carson	Espallat	Hoyle (OR)
Carter (GA)	Estes	Hudson
Carter (LA)	Ezell	Huffman
Carter (TX)	Fallon	Huizenga
Casar	Feenstra	Hunt
Case	Ferguson	Issa
Casten	Finstad	Ivey
Castor (FL)	Fischbach	Jackson (IL)
Castro (TX)	Fitzgerald	Jackson (NC)
Chavez-DeRemer	Fitzpatrick	Jackson (TX)

Jacobs	Mfume	Schrier
James	Miller (IL)	Schweikert
Jayapal	Miller (OH)	Scott (VA)
Jeffries	Miller (WV)	Scott, Austin
Johnson (GA)	Miller-Meeks	Sessions
Johnson (SD)	Mills	Sewell
Joyce (OH)	Molinaro	Sherman
Joyce (PA)	Moolenaar	Simpson
Kamrager-Dove	Moore (AL)	Slotkin
Kaptur	Moore (UT)	Smith (MO)
Kean (NJ)	Moore (WI)	Smith (NE)
Keating	Moran	Smith (NJ)
Kelly (IL)	Morelle	Smith (WA)
Kelly (MS)	Moskowitz	Smucker
Kelly (PA)	Moulton	Sorensen
Kennedy	Mirvan	Soto
Khanna	Mullin	Spanberger
Kiggans (VA)	Murphy	Spartz
Kildee	Nadler	Stansbury
Kiley	Napolitano	Stanton
Kilmer	Neal	Steel
Kim (CA)	Neguse	Stefanik
Kim (NJ)	Nehls	Steil
Krishnamoorthi	Newhouse	Stevens
Kuster	Nickel	Strickland
Kustoff	Norcross	Strong
LaLota	Norman	Suozzi
LaMalfa	Nunn (IA)	Sykes
Lamborn	Obernolte	Takano
Landsman	Ocasio-Cortez	Tenney
Langworthy	Ogles	Thanedar
Larsen (WA)	Omar	Thompson (CA)
Larson (CT)	Owens	Thompson (MS)
Latta	Pallone	Thompson (PA)
LaTurner	Palmer	Tiffany
Lawler	Panetta	Timmons
Lee (CA)	Pappas	Titus
Lee (FL)	Peltola	Tlaib
Lee (PA)	Pence	Tokuda
Lee Carter	Perez	Tonko
Leger Fernandez	Perry	Torres (CA)
Lesko	Peters	Torres (NY)
Letlow	Pettersen	Trahan
Levin	Pfluger	Trone
Lieu	Phillips	Turner
Lofgren	Pingree	Underwood
Lopez	Pocan	Valadao
Loudermilk	Porter	Van Drew
Lucas	Posey	Van Duyne
Luetkemeyer	Pressley	Van Orden
Luna	Quigley	Vargas
Luttrell	Ramirez	Vasquez
Lynch	Raskin	Veasey
Mace	Reschenthaler	Velázquez
Magaziner	Rodgers (WA)	Wagner
Malliotakis	Rogers (AL)	Walberg
Maloy	Rogers (KY)	Wasserman
Mann	Rose	Schultz
Manning	Ross	Watson Coleman
Mast	Rouzer	Weber (TX)
Matsui	Ruiz	Webster (FL)
McBath	Rulli	Wenstrup
McCaul	Ruppersberger	Westerman
McClain	Rutherford	Wied
McClellan	Ryan	Wild
McClintock	Salazar	Williams (GA)
McCollum	Salinas	Williams (NY)
McCormick	Sánchez	Williams (TX)
McGarvey	Sarbanes	Wilson (FL)
McGovern	Scalise	Wilson (SC)
McHenry	Scanlon	Wittman
McIver	Schakowsky	Womack
Meeks	Schiff	Yakym
Menendez	Schneider	Zinke
Meuser	Scholten	

NAYS—6

Hageman	Rosendale	Self
Massie	Roy	Steube

NOT VOTING—30

Armstrong	Donalds	Meng
Bacon	Evans	Mooney
Baird	Gallego	Pelosi
Biggs	Garcia, Mike	Scott, David
Boebert	Gottheimer	Sherrill
Cárdenas	Granger	Stauber
Cartwright	Grijalva	Swalwell
Connolly	Jordan	Waltz
De La Cruz	LaHood	Waters
DesJarlais	Lee (NV)	Wexton

□ 1859

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I had to miss votes today due to travel from Illinois to Washington. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466 and YEA on Roll Call No. 467.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 466 and YEA on Roll Call No. 467.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, my votes were not recorded today. Had they been recorded, I would have voted YES on Roll Call No. 466 and YES on Roll Call No. 467.

CONGRATULATING DR. BRITTNEY F. MOBLEY

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Brittney F. Mobley, who was named the 2024 National Distinguished Principal of Georgia.

This award was administered by the National Association of Elementary School Principals National Distinguished Principals program, an annual award that honors the exemplary leadership of principals across each State.

In 2020, while educators across the country were facing challenges with remote teaching due to the pandemic, Ms. Mobley was working to open her county's newest elementary school, Frances Meeks Elementary School.

Frances Meeks resides in Richmond Hill, Georgia, and serves its students with unique learning experiences such as the elementary agricultural education program that provides students with hands-on learning experiences pertaining to agriculture and creates longstanding community partnerships.

Thanks to Dr. Mobley, the school boasts a 95 percent curriculum mastery rate and a growing number of students qualifying for its gifted programs.

Congratulations to Dr. Mobley on this award. We greatly appreciate the work she has dedicated to the students of Georgia's First Congressional District.

CONGRATULATING CARM BASILE ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the tremendous work and lasting contributions made by Carm Basile, CEO of the Capital District Transportation Authority, as he retires from a 43-year career connecting our capital region communities.

Starting at CDTA as a transportation planner in 1981, Carm steadily moved

up the ranks with his signature determination to improve the lives of those he served. Through trials and tribulations, pandemic and recovery, Carm has spent the past 15 years growing and strengthening the Authority in his role as CEO.

From developing bus rapid transit lines, to starting Albany's first bike share program, to expanding services into Montgomery County, Carm has steadily guided CDTA into the 21st century.

As Carm moves into the next chapter of his life, I thank him for keeping our capital region moving and moving forward. I pass on congratulations of the entire 20th District to Carm for a well-earned retirement. We wish him well.

PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP NOMINATES PATRIOTS KRISTI NOEM AND TOM HOMAN

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the failure of border security under Biden-Harris has endangered every American family. President Donald Trump and House Republicans will secure the border and restore safety to American families.

The final 2024 U.S. Customs and Border Protection report showed that since Biden, up to 16 million illegal aliens have entered America, as cited by Speaker MIKE JOHNSON.

Border czar HARRIS has put Americans at risk by failing to remove 99 percent of illegal aliens released into the United States and allowing 300,000 illegal crossings in December 2023, the highest month in history. There have been 14,000 convicted murderers who entered into the United States. American families have spoken.

President Donald Trump has nominated a proven border czar, Tom Homan, to work and serve with Governor Kristi Noem as Secretary of Homeland Security. The Homan-Noem team means safety for American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators puts all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent, as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstate existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOHN HARRY CRANDALL

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to honor the life of John Harry Crandall, who passed away on October 11 at the age of 86.

A University of Toledo graduate, John began a long career in engineering at R.A. Finch, later joining the

Lucas County Engineer's Office, where he served for more than 30 years. He was instrumental in work on the Millard Overpass, Dussel Drive Interchange, and Veterans Glass City Skyway. He helped rebuild our whole city.

John, simply known as JC to friends and family, was the pragmatic voice of reason. He was never the loudest, but he always knew how to solve problems.

John served as president of both the Sylvania Area Joint Recreation District and the Sylvania Metro Hockey Association. He also served on the board of Lourdes University, on the Sylvania School Board, and the Sylvania Township Board of Trustees. What a great American. Sylvania Mayor Craig Stough proclaimed June 18 as John Crandall Day in honor of his life of service.

John was married to the love of his life, Sue, for more than 60 years. They were inseparable until her passing in May of this year.

John is survived by their sons: Bob, Dan, Matt, and Kevin; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandson. May John's precious memory always bring them light and comfort.

RECOGNIZING CORPORAL PAUL PHELPS AS THE TENNESSEE SECOND DISTRICT'S VETERAN OF THE MONTH

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

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Corporal Paul Phelps. Corporal Phelps was 18 years old and working in the Baltimore shipping yards when he was drafted into the Army in 1943. He was sent to Fort Bragg in North Carolina for basic training before he was shipped to Massachusetts for infantry training.

Corporal Phelps was assigned to the 7th Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division and was sent to Liverpool, England, in May of 1944.

He was promoted to a T5 corporal during the Siege of Bastogne and received a citation from President Roosevelt. Corporal Phelps received four battle stars from his time overseas. Even though he stared death in the face, Corporal Phelps said he doesn't consider himself to be a hero.

Corporal Phelps married his high school sweetheart, Dorothy, and they were married for 54 glorious years before she passed away. They have two daughters, five grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

Corporal Phelps lives in Knoxville and will turn 100 years old in early 2025. Corporal Phelps loves this country, and it is my honor to recognize Corporal Phelps as the Tennessee Second District's November 2024 Veteran of the Month.

HONORING JEREMY EMANUEL HONEY

(Mr. LAWLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Jeremy Emanuel Honey, a lifelong resident of Suffern, New York, who passed away in September at the age of 77.

Jeremy was a U.S. Army veteran, serving proudly during the Vietnam war, and at posts including West Point and Walter Reed Hospital. After his service, he dedicated his career to veterans at Montrose Veterans Hospital, earning recognition as Federal Employee of the Year from President Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Jeremy's impact on his community was extraordinary. He volunteered as an EMT with the Ramapo Valley Ambulance Corps, established several veterans agencies in Rockland County where they had not been represented, and served as commander of the local Disabled American Veterans for over 20 years.

His dedication earned him a place in the New York State Senate Veterans Hall of Fame in 2019. Jeremy's legacy extends beyond his accomplishments. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, he was a man of compassion and selflessness, known for mentoring others and lifting up those who needed it most. He will be missed by all of our veterans and our broader Rockland County community.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week marks National Apprenticeship Week. I recognize the dedicated apprentices and those who are training them in my district of northern California, especially.

Apprentices are a crucial way to good-paying jobs that don't require a 4-year degree, allowing folks to earn while they learn.

My district is home to the Quanta Services Northwest Lineman College, where over 750 apprentices were trained last year alone.

One in five students there happens to be a veteran, which speaks to the strong commitment to the service they have in our region and others.

When hurricanes and wildfire and other disasters hit, linemen are often the first responders working around the clock to get power back on for homes and businesses, under very unfavorable conditions, such as in one case we had a very deep ice storm that knocked out power.

Many of these linemen start out as apprentices in places like the one in our northern California district. The work they do is essential for building and maintaining the strong, resilient energy grid we have and hope to have, as well as broadband networks that keep our country moving forward and strong.

It is important we continue supporting this kind of workforce development to meet the challenges of our supply chain and security. I am grateful for people like these folks at the college that value the skills these apprentices bring to the table.

ARPA DOLLARS AT WORK

(Mrs. LEE CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I had the honor, in Houston, before I came back here, of opening a medical gas training lab in the heart of the 18th Congressional District, paid for by ARPA dollars supported strongly by President Joe Biden and Vice President KAMALA HARRIS and this House.

These funds will provide training for apprentices with our local plumbers union, Local 68, our hardworking men and women, and they will help our large medical center that is an economic engine for Houston, Texas, and ensure that patients, nurses, and doctors are safe when these vital gases are put into their facilities.

I was grateful to be there, and I thank the Harris County Commissioners Court: Judge Hidalgo, Commissioner Ellis, Commissioner Garcia, Commissioner Briones, and Commissioner Ramsey for their partnership with our Federal dollars.

When we work together, there is nothing better we can do for America.

COMMEMORATING THE 30TH ANNUAL RED MASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUNT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 30th annual Red Mass of the St. Thomas More Society, which was held in Little Rock in October.

The St. Thomas More Society is a nonprofit organization of lawyers and judges dedicated to honoring the life of St. Thomas More, the Lord High Chancellor of England, who opposed Henry VIII's separation from the Catholic Church.

The Red Mass brings together lawyers, judges, and government officials to pray for the holy spirit's guidance over their work.

At this year's mass, Reginald Rogers was honored as the 2024 St. Thomas More recipient, an award that recognizes Catholics in legal professions who demonstrate exemplary character.

To my longtime friend from high school, Reggie, what a great recognition of his wonderful, caring approach to his professional and civic life.

RECOGNIZING AIRCARE'S PEDESTAL HUMIDIFIER

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Aircare's Pedestal Humidifier, which was recently named the

coolest thing made in Arkansas in 2024. Organized through a partnership between the Arkansas State Chamber and Arkansas Business News, this contest highlights the most innovative and noteworthy products manufactured in The Natural State.

Nearly 16,000 votes were cast in a highly competitive final round, and the Pedestal Humidifier emerged as the champion from a field of 16 products made by companies across our State. This product not only showcases Aircare's ingenuity but also reflects the broader excellence of Arkansas' manufacturing sector.

I congratulate Aircare and all the visionary companies that contribute to our State's growing reputation for high quality, innovative products. I look forward to seeing more achievements from Arkansas businesses in the years ahead.

RECOGNIZING MADDOX BERRY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a remarkable young athlete from central Arkansas, Morrilton High School's standout quarterback, Maddox Berry.

Maddox recently made Arkansas sports history by throwing a State record 11 touchdown passes in a single game, a feat that speaks to his skill, dedication, and poise under pressure.

The game itself was an offensive clash, with Morrilton and Farmington combining for 153 points and 1,519 yards, nearly setting an all-time State record. Despite Morrilton's narrow 78 to 55 loss, Maddox's performance stands as one of Arkansas' all-time great athletic accomplishments.

Maddox made central Arkansas proud, and we are all excited to see where his talents take him next.

RECOGNIZING POINT REMOVE BREWING COMPANY

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Point Remove Brewing Company, an outstanding Arkansas business that has become a staple of our State's craft brewing industry.

Point Removed recently opened a new location in Russellville, furthering its impact on the local economy and the community. Based in Morrilton, Point Removed Brewing produced over 24,000 gallons of beer last year and partnered with Little Rock Central Moon Distributors to place its products throughout stores in The Natural State.

Point Removed Brewing is more than just a brewery. They are also ambassadors for The Natural State because the beers that they make are named after Arkansas landmarks, like Long Pool and Petit Jean State Park. They proudly celebrate our heritage.

As Point Removed Brewing opens this new location in Russellville, I hope they will continue to embody the entrepreneurial spirit that keeps our State growing.

RECOGNIZING HAKEEM JORDAN

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a really brave, dedicated Arkansan, Hakeem Jordan.

This extraordinary central Arkansan heroically rescued 26-year-old Jelani Proctor of North Little Rock following a tragic car accident.

After witnessing the crash on Interstate 630, Hakeem immediately called 911. He ran to the site of the crash and rescued Jelani from his burning vehicle. He was treated at a Little Rock hospital, and is in stable condition.

Unfortunately, Jelani's father, Conrad, did not survive the crash. Martha and I send our condolences to the entire Proctor family during this difficult time.

Make no mistake, Hakeem's actions are nothing short of heroic. Without this incredible display of bravery and selflessness, Jelani would not be alive today. Central Arkansas stands better off because of our citizens like Hakeem.

RECOGNIZING JOHN JUMPER

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate central Arkansan, John Jumper.

John recently won the 2024 Noble Prize for chemistry. John graduated from Pulaski Academy in 2003, and is the youngest chemistry laureate in over 70 years.

John and his research partners developed an AI model called AlphaFold2, which can predict the protein structure of nearly 200 million proteins.

Today, over 2 million people in 190 countries have used this technology to improve their understanding of proteins and their potential for antibiotic resistance and even decomposing plastic.

John's tremendous scientific success serves as an inspiration to us all. I am proud of his achievement. What a role model for excellence for all of our students across our city, district, State, and the globe. To those chemistry students out there: Study hard.

CONCERNS FROM SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I have heard many concerns from small businesses across Arkansas and across the country about the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, FinCEN's, new detrimental beneficial ownership reporting rule.

As many of you may know, this rule is required by the Corporate Transparency Act, a law that I strongly opposed and fought against its basic design.

As a former entrepreneur and small business owner, I understand the significance of this substantial new reporting requirement that forces small businesses to upload an individual ownership interest report into a new national database maintained at FinCEN, in my view, Mr. Speaker, potentially endangering the privacy of millions of American citizens.

The worst part is that the Biden-Harris administration has failed to properly educate and inform small businesses and millions of others connected to small businesses about this new rule and the harsh penalties of up to \$10,000 in fines and even 2 years in jail for fail-

ure to comply by submitting the form by January 1 of 2025. That is right, Mr. Speaker. This form is due January 1, 2025.

Now, breaking news: Of the 322 million businesses in America that Treasury believes should be filing this new form, only 2 million have filled it out as of the first of October.

Certified public accountants are eligible to help small businesses make the necessary filings on a company's behalf, but the issue is that many CPAs are reluctant to make the filings given the high threshold for accuracy and the potential civil and criminal penalties for a mistake.

Further, in some States, filing such a form is considered the practice of law and therefore not covered by a CPA's liability insurance. This burdensome reporting requirement is due, as I noted, in just a few short weeks. That is why I am fighting against it in this House on this floor by using my position as vice chairman of the House Financial Services Committee to delay this new beneficial ownership reporting requirement, the penalties, and the due date.

In August, I supported the Protect Small Business From Excessive Paperwork Act, which would extend the filing deadline by a full year to January 1 of 2026, buying small businesses more time to even understand this is a new rule they are required to follow, much less be educated about it and figure out what the least costly way is to comply with it.

I also introduced my own bill, the Financial Privacy Act, to rein in the massive amount of personal financial information that FinCEN collects in the name of its anti-money laundering mission. That is an important mission, but this is a flawed methodology for fighting it.

I stand tonight on the floor to create awareness about FinCEN's reporting requirement to the American people and deliver this crucial message that time is running out.

Please know that the concerns of small business owners across the country are valid, they are heard, and I will continue to do everything I can, along with my colleagues here in the House, to push back against FinCEN's reporting requirement and that fast approaching deadline of January 1.

TIGRAN GAMBARYAN'S WRONGFUL DETAINMENT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, after almost a year of being wrongfully detained by the Nigerian Government, Tigran Gambaryan is now home here in America with his family in Georgia where he should have been all along.

Last February, Nigeria took Tigran into detention on money laundering and tax charges as leverage in Nigeria's goal of pressing Tigran's employer, Binance, into a relationship, a negotiation, a satisfaction of concerns that Nigeria had about Binance.

□ 1930

This deserves repeating, Mr. Speaker.

Nigeria arrested an American citizen with an American passport in Abuja on business and charged this American citizen with money laundering and tax evasion because the Government of Nigeria has a dispute with an international company, a crypto finance company called Binance.

While I was traveling to west Africa over the summer with the House Intelligence Committee, I visited Tigran in Kuje prison where I saw firsthand his deteriorating health condition.

Kuje prison, Mr. Speaker, is a tough place. It is where the Boko Haram terrorists were locked up and where there was a major Boko Haram attack and prison break. It is a tough place.

During his detainment in Nigeria, Mr. Gambaryan suffered malaria, double pneumonia, and had a herniated disc.

Mr. Speaker, Nigeria is considered a friend of the United States, yet their government's treatment of Tigran, who devoted his professional life to fighting money laundering and tax evasion as an agent of the U.S. IRS for over a decade, in my view, that treatment was unacceptable and shameful and not commiserate with a Nation that is on friendly partnership terms with our country.

It was well past time for the Nigerians to drop the trumped-up charges of tax evasion and money laundering against Tigran Gambaryan personally, which they finally did, Mr. Speaker, last month. Let me be clear: Tigran should have never been wrongfully detained by the Nigerian Government in the first place.

I thank my friends and colleagues on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, particularly Chairman MIKE MCCAUL and Representative RICH MCCORMICK who worked with me and led efforts to bring Tigran Gambaryan home to his wife and children for the holidays.

I am thrilled to report to this House floor that he is home safely with his family in Georgia, in Representative MCCORMICK's district, and he is on the road to health recovery.

Mr. Speaker, let Tigran's case be heard, and let it be a clear example to the incoming Trump administration about how not to handle an American citizen who is wrongfully detained by our allies and friends.

CHEVRON DEFERENCE REVERSAL

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, recently, in recent months, the Federal courts have taken decisions that are rolling back what is termed the "Chevron deference." This dates back to the 1980s and the 1984 Supreme Court case that basically said that if an independent Federal agency issued a rulemaking and published it in the Federal register and put it in final form, that in effect it had the rule of law, that it was in compliance effectively with our statutes here in the House; in other words, that it is deferring to the agency that it is in compliance with the Article I power here in the House.

Recently, in recent years, several important cases of the Supreme Court are

rolling that deference of 40 years ago back.

In a post-Chevron deference world, I believe balance must be restored, primacy must be restored to the Article I powers given to this body and the Senate under the Constitution and end the activist regulatory agencies that have grown too large, too out of control, and been, in this administration, weaponized against the American people.

This Chevron reversal did not automatically turn off the power of that administrative state, and it did not instantly empower Congress to be more directive of agency and Cabinet rulemakings.

Mr. Speaker, while various interest groups must continue to bring lawsuits in this area where they believe congressional intent is not being followed, Congress must be proactive in identifying areas where we can tighten statutory language and make congressional intent crystal clear.

I believe Congress needs to look at three big areas in this post-Chevron deference universe. First, we need to strengthen the role of Congress and consider changes to the Administrative Procedures Act and the Congressional Review Act to require more collaboration between Congress and even the administration about making sure that they are clear that we have the authority to approve or disapprove regulations.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be good if the incoming Trump administration modeled good behavior here by actually, in every Federal rulemaking that a Cabinet agency or independent agency puts forward, they say they are in compliance with the intent of Congress, that they are following the statute and the statutory intent of Congress in designing that rulemaking.

I believe agencies should do regular reviews of all of their regulations to ensure they are not outdated, they are necessary, and that they ensure that they are tailored to limit their compliance impact, cost, liability risk, and other burdens.

I would encourage the Trump administration to work with Congress to where we can have the right kind of cost-benefit analysis on evaluating the true cost, both marginal and cumulative cost, of regulatory rulemakings.

We must increase the transparency of how agency rulemakings are made. We must tailor specific statutes so that it is clear that Congress, Article I power, is in charge, our intent is clear, and that we are seeing that the Cabinet agencies and the independent agencies are following that intent.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 37 minutes

p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-6088. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, FDA, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Color Additive Certification; Increase in Fees for Certification Services [Docket No.: FDA-2022-N-1635] (RIN: 0910-AI69) received November 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-6089. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Central African Republic that was declared in Executive Order 13667 of May 12, 2014, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); Public Law 94-412, Sec. 401(c); (90 Stat. 1257) and 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); Public Law 95-223, Sec. 204(c); (91 Stat. 1627); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-6090. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a request for urgently needed emergency funding for an expeditious and meaningful Federal response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton and other natural disasters, pursuant to Public Law 118-42, Sec. 6; (138 Stat. 26) and Public Law 118-47, Sec. 6 (H. Doc. No. 118—181); to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

EC-6091. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Offshore Regulatory Programs, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Bonding Requirements When Filing an Appeal of a Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Civil Penalty [Docket ID: BSEE-2023-0014 EEEEE500000 245E1700D2 ET1SF0000.EAQ000] (RIN: 1014-AA57) received November 14, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6092. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's notice — Medicare Program; CY 2025 Inpatient Hospital Deductible and Hospital and Extended Care Services Coinsurance Amounts [CMS-8086-N] (RIN: 0938-AV36) received November 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-6093. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's notice — Medicare Program; CY 2025 Part A Premiums for the Uninsured Aged and for Certain Disabled Individuals Who Have Exhausted Other Entitlement [CMS-8087-N] (RIN: 0938-AV37) received November 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-6094. A letter from the Federal Register Liaison, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of the Crystal Springs of Napa Valley Viticultural Area; Modification of the Calistoga Viticultural Area [Docket No.: TTB-2023-0002; T.D. TTB-197; Ref. Notice No.: 221] (RIN: 1513-AC78) received November 14, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-6095. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's notice — Medicare Program; Medicare Part B Monthly Actuarial Rates, Premium Rates, and Annual Deductible Beginning January 1, 2025 [CMS-8088-N] (RIN: 0938-AV38) received November 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 6951. A bill to lower the cost of postsecondary education for students and families; with an amendment (Rept. 118-739). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 8449. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes; with amendments (Rept. 118-740, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. STEIL: Committee on House Administration. H.R. 3196. A bill to provide for the appointment of the Architect of the Capitol, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-741, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Ms. FOXX: Committee on Education and the Workforce. H.R. 4507. A bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to promote transparency in health coverage and reform pharmacy benefit management services with respect to group health plans, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-742, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 2666. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to codify value-based purchasing arrangements under the Medicaid program and reforms related to price reporting under such arrangements, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-743, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 3293. A bill to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish an interagency strike force to ensure that certain Federal land management agencies, including the organizational units of such agencies, prioritize the review of requests for communications use authorizations, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-744, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 7513. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from finalizing a proposed rule regarding minimum staffing for nursing facilities, and to establish an advisory panel on the skilled nursing facility workforce; with amendments (Rept. 118-745, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. LUCAS: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 7687. A bill to amend title 51, United States Code, to authorize the transfer to NASA of funds from other agencies for scientific or engineering research or education, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-746, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 4377. A bill to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 with

respect to extensions, additions, and revisions to the Barry M. Goldwater Range in Arizona (Rept. 118-747, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 200. A bill to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to provide that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior are not required to reinstate consultation on a land management plan or land use plan under certain circumstances, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-748, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1380. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to issue guidance on climbing management in designated wilderness areas, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-749, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3396. A bill to require the standardization of reciprocal fire suppression cost share agreements, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-750, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 5665. A bill to require a comprehensive assessment of certain Federal trails, campsites, boat docks, and outdoor recreation facilities to determine the accessibility options for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-751, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6070. A bill to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 to clarify the authority of Department of Defense to conduct certain military activities at the Nevada test and training range, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-752, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 8811. A bill to reauthorize the America's Conservation Enhancement Act, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-753, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mrs. FISCHBACH: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 1576. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1449) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to increase the frequency of lease sales, to require replacement sales, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 9495) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to postpone tax deadlines and reimburse paid late fees for United States nationals who are unlawfully or wrongfully detained or held hostage abroad, to terminate the tax-exempt status of terrorist supporting organizations, and for other purposes (Rept. 118-754). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Homeland Security discharged from further consideration. H.R. 8449 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

TIME LIMITATIONS OF REFERRED BILLS

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XII, the following actions were taken by the Speaker:

H.R. 200. Referral to the Committee on Agriculture extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 1380. Referral to the Committee on Agriculture extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 2666. Referral to the Committee on Ways and Means extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 3196. Referral to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 3293. Referral to the Committees on Natural Resources and Agriculture extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 3396. Referral to the Committees on Agriculture, Armed Services, and Science, Space, and Technology for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 4377. Referral to the Committee on Armed Services extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 4507. Referral to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 5665. Referral to the Committee on Agriculture extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 6070. Referral to the Committee on Armed Services extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 7513. Referral to the Committee on Energy and Commerce extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 7687. Referral to the Committee on Appropriations extended for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

H.R. 8811. Referral to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Energy and Commerce for a period ending not later than December 19, 2024.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania (for herself and Ms. MACE):

H.R. 10151. A bill to amend title 44, United States Code, to modernize data practices to improve government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. EZELL (for himself and Mr. KELLY of Mississippi):

H.R. 10152. A bill to allow the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to enter into agreements with private and commercial entities and State governments to provide certain supplies, support, and services; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Ms. GARCIA of Texas:

H.R. 10153. A bill to designate Regional Breast and Gynecologic Cancer Care Coordinators to expand the work of the Breast and Gynecologic Oncology System of Excellence at the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS):

H.R. 10154. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to prohibit destroying or damaging ballot boxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. GREENE of Georgia:

H.R. 10155. A bill to amend section 7504 of title 31, United States Code, to improve the single audit requirements; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 10156. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to repeal certain provisions

relating to the acceptance and use of contributions for public-private partnerships, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 10157. A bill to redesignate the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, as the "Barbara L. Cubin National Historic Trails Interpretive Center"; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HARDER of California (for himself and Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida):

H.R. 10158. A bill to extend the break-in-service consideration for firefighter retirements, and other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 10159. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to lower the interest rate on Federal student loans to 1 percent; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. LEE of Florida (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 10160. A bill to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. LEE of Florida:

H.R. 10161. A bill to increase the penalty for prohibited provision of a phone in a correctional facility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. PORTER:

H.R. 10162. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. SALINAS:

H.R. 10163. A bill to amend the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with respect to the eligible activities under the Continuum of Care Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER (for himself, Mr. TRONE, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Ms. UNDERWOOD, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H.R. 10164. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for a teacher leader development program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. PALMER:

H.J. Res. 222. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit"; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ADERHOLT (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. MACE, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. EZELL, Ms. NORTON, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. SWALWELL, Mr. FINSTAD, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. STAUBER, Ms. BROWNLEY, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. KEAN of New Jersey, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mrs. HOUCHEIN, Mr. LAWLER, Mr. ELLZEY, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CARL, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. HINSON, Ms. LETLOW, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H. Res. 1577. A resolution expressing support for the goals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, and encouraging the people of the United States to secure safety, permanency, and well-being for all children; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. COSTA, Ms. STEVENS, Mrs. FLETCHER, and Mr. RULLI):

H. Res. 1578. A resolution honoring and commending the American Jewish Committee on its 118th anniversary; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Ms. MACE:

H. Res. 1579. A resolution prohibiting Members, officers, and employees of the House from using single-sex facilities other than those corresponding to their biological sex, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia (for himself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. MULLIN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. PRESSLEY):

H. Res. 1580. A resolution supporting the designation of July as Uterine Fibroids Awareness Month; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND SINGLE SUBJECT STATEMENTS

Pursuant to clause 7(c)(1) of rule XII and Section 3(c) of H. Res. 5 the following statements are submitted regarding (1) the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution and (2) the single subject of the bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 10151.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to make "all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof," as enumerated in Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is: Government Operations and Politics

By Mr. EZELL:

H.R. 10152.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To allow the Administrator of NASA to enter into agreements with private and commercial entities and State governments to provide certain supplies, support, and services.

By Ms. GARCIA of Texas:

H.R. 10153.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is: Veterans' Affairs

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H.R. 10154.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Sec. 8, Clause 1

The single subject of this legislation is:

This legislation would amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to prohibit destroying or damaging ballot boxes

By Ms. GREENE of Georgia:

H.R. 10155.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, United States Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend section 7504 of title 31, United States Code, to improve the single audit requirements.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 10156.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to repeal certain provisions relating to the acceptance and use of contributions for public-private partnerships, and for other purposes.

By Ms. HAGEMAN:

H.R. 10157.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To redesignate the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, as the "Barbara L. Cubin National Historic Trails Interpretive Center".

By Mr. HARDER of California:

H.R. 10158.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

To extend the break-in-service consideration for firefighter retirements.

By Mr. LAWLER:

H.R. 10159.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to lower the interest rate on Federal student loans to 1 percent.

By Ms. LEE of Florida:

H.R. 10160.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Prison Security.

By Ms. LEE of Florida:

H.R. 10161.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Prison Security.

By Ms. PORTER:

H.R. 10162.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

By Ms. SALINAS:

H.R. 10163.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

The single subject of this legislation is:

Housing.

By Mr. SCHNEIDER:

H.R. 10164.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To expand Teacher Quality Partnership grant eligibility to professional development and leadership growth opportunities for teachers.

By Mr. PALMER:

H.J. Res. 222.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To disapprove of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Advanced Manufacturing Production Credit".

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 427: Mr. BURLISON, Mr. FONG, Ms. VAN DUYN, Ms. GREENE of Georgia, and Ms. FOX.

H.R. 598: Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 895: Ms. BROWNLEY.
 H.R. 913: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
 H.R. 994: Ms. TOKUDA.
 H.R. 1230: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 1247: Mrs. MCIVER.
 H.R. 1511: Mr. MENENDEZ.
 H.R. 1572: Mr. HILL.
 H.R. 1768: Mr. GRIFFITH.
 H.R. 1776: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
 H.R. 2370: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 2395: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
 H.R. 2584: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 2830: Ms. LEE of Nevada.
 H.R. 2878: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
 H.R. 2880: Mr. MENENDEZ.
 H.R. 2923: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 3413: Mr. TORRES of New York.
 H.R. 3425: Mrs. FISCHBACH.
 H.R. 3548: Mr. LANDSMAN.
 H.R. 3759: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas.
 H.R. 3850: Mr. KENNEDY.
 H.R. 3970: Mr. KENNEDY.
 H.R. 4104: Mr. STEUBE.
 H.R. 4273: Mr. SOTO.
 H.R. 4274: Mr. MRVAN.
 H.R. 4326: Mr. KENNEDY.
 H.R. 4335: Mr. CONNOLLY and Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.
 H.R. 4886: Ms. LEE of Nevada.
 H.R. 4933: Mr. LANDSMAN.
 H.R. 5041: Ms. SCHRIER.
 H.R. 5268: Mr. PANETTA.
 H.R. 5488: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
 H.R. 5563: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 5589: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
 H.R. 5784: Mr. GARAMENDI.
 H.R. 5940: Mr. CARTER of Louisiana.
 H.R. 6031: Mr. KENNEDY.
 H.R. 6089: Mr. KEAN of New Jersey.
 H.R. 6330: Ms. ROSS and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
 H.R. 6373: Ms. LEE of Nevada.
 H.R. 6727: Ms. SPANBERGER.
 H.R. 6773: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 6985: Mr. MOONEY and Mrs. MCBATH.
 H.R. 7165: Mr. THANEDAR.
 H.R. 7174: Mr. MCCORMICK.
 H.R. 7257: Mr. THANEDAR.
 H.R. 7354: Mr. FROST and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 7365: Mr. DESAULNIER and Ms. LEE of Nevada.
 H.R. 7629: Mrs. BEATTY.
 H.R. 7635: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas.
 H.R. 7779: Mr. VASQUEZ.
 H.R. 7829: Mr. COHEN and Ms. TOKUDA.
 H.R. 7924: Mr. NICKEL.
 H.R. 7954: Mr. SHERMAN.
 H.R. 7996: Mr. MOULTON.
 H.R. 8061: Mr. KHANNA and Mr. MCCAUL.
 H.R. 8147: Mr. VAN ORDEN, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. COLE, and Mr. PALMER.
 H.R. 8303: Mr. HUDSON.
 H.R. 8307: Mr. CALVERT.
 H.R. 8370: Ms. WILSON of Florida and Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 8371: Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.
 H.R. 8404: Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 8505: Ms. SCHOLTEN.
 H.R. 8545: Ms. TOKUDA.
 H.R. 8560: Mr. POCAN.
 H.R. 8679: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
 H.R. 8698: Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. SORENSEN, and Ms. CHU.
 H.R. 8753: Mrs. KIM of California.
 H.R. 8794: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 8833: Ms. SLOTKIN.
 H.R. 8971: Mr. PHILLIPS.
 H.R. 8977: Mr. LEVIN.
 H.R. 9060: Mrs. HINSON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Mr. COURTNEY.
 H.R. 9096: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 9215: Mr. FOSTER.
 H.R. 9233: Mr. GREEN of Texas.
 H.R. 9275: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 9299: Mr. AUCHINCLOSS.
 H.R. 9333: Mrs. LUNA.
 H.R. 9382: Mr. GRIFFITH.
 H.R. 9424: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, and Mr. BEYER.
 H.R. 9523: Mr. NEHLS.
 H.R. 9527: Mr. BRECHEEN.
 H.R. 9534: Mrs. LUNA.
 H.R. 9535: Ms. PELOSI and Mr. KHANNA.
 H.R. 9581: Mr. CASTEN.

H.R. 9657: Mr. BRECHEEN.
 H.R. 9729: Ms. TITUS.
 H.R. 9814: Mr. SHERMAN.
 H.R. 9817: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
 H.R. 9836: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Mr. MOYLAN.
 H.R. 9873: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 9885: Mr. EMMER.
 H.R. 9971: Ms. PINGREE.
 H.R. 9989: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 10028: Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois.
 H.R. 10045: Mr. ALFORD and Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas.
 H.R. 10058: Mr. MCGOVERN.
 H.R. 10060: Mr. MCGOVERN.
 H.R. 10073: Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mrs. FOUSHEE, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. NICKEL, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. KUSTOFF.
 H.R. 10090: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
 H.R. 10097: Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.
 H.R. 10099: Ms. MCCLELLAN and Ms. ADAMS.
 H.R. 10127: Mr. DUNN of Florida.
 H.R. 10130: Mrs. LUNA.
 H.R. 10142: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
 H.R. 10144: Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. CHU, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, and Mr. CARBAJAL.
 H.R. 10150: Mr. RUIZ and Ms. JACOBS.
 H.J. Res. 72: Ms. HOULAHAN, Ms. SALINAS, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.
 H.J. Res. 167: Mr. MOONEY.
 H.J. Res. 193: Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
 H. Res. 561: Ms. CASTOR of Florida and Mr. MULLIN.
 H. Res. 882: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
 H. Res. 1286: Ms. CROCKETT.
 H. Res. 1318: Ms. SCHRIER.
 H. Res. 1350: Ms. WILD, Ms. SALAZAR, and Ms. TITUS.
 H. Res. 1558: Mr. CROW.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The amendments to be offered by Representative GRIJALVA or a designee to H.R. 1449, the Committing Lease for Energy Access Now Act, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.



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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Magnificent God, great are Your mercies, for You are a God of compassion. All day long, we put our hope in You. Thank You for fueling this hope with Your compassion and unfailing love. Give us the humility to depend on Your guidance as we strive to live for Your glory.

Lord, forgive us for our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Use our lawmakers to accomplish Your purposes as You show them the path they should choose. Remind them that You are a friend to those who choose to do Your will.

We pray in Your marvelous 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 legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 18, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. DUCKWORTH 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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Embry J. Kidd, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Senate gavels in this week with a lot to do. Off the floor, we will keep working on government funding, the NDAA, and try to move the ball forward on the farm bill and helping communities battered by disaster.

On the floor, the Senate will focus this week on confirming more of President Biden's judicial nominees. The majority will keep working to confirm

as many of President Biden's judicial nominees as we can before the end of the year. That will be one of the Senate's top priorities.

We will begin today by voting on the confirmation of Embry Kidd to serve as circuit court judge for the 11th Circuit. Judge Kidd boasts an impressive legal resume and is exceptionally qualified to serve on the Federal bench. I am confident he will make a great addition to the 11th Circuit. If confirmed, Judge Kidd would be the 45th circuit court judge and the 216th Federal judge confirmed to a lifetime appointment under President Biden and this Senate Democratic majority.

The judges we have confirmed represent perhaps the widest range of backgrounds and experiences ever seen under any President. We have more judges that worked as defenders, legal aid attorneys, civil rights lawyers, Federal prosecutors, voting rights lawyers, and more women and people of color than we have ever had under one administration.

After we vote today, we will keep going. Tonight, I will file on additional judges whom we will move forward on the floor this week. We also have several more nominees coming out of the Judiciary Committee on Thursday, and we will work quickly to move them out of this Chamber and onto the bench.

So let me repeat: The Senate is going to keep prioritizing judicial and administrative confirmations this week, this month, and for the rest of the year.

Now, on disaster aid, in addition to confirming more judges and administrative officials, the Senate also has much to do on the legislative side. We must keep the government open after December 20. We must pass the annual Defense authorization bill, the NDAA, just as we have done for over six decades. We hope to keep making progress on the farm bill. I see the Senator from Michigan here, and she is working diligently on that.

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



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But today I want to focus on disaster aid, something both Democrats and Republicans have long supported and which impacts people in every State of the country. Earlier today, the OMB, the Office of Management and Budget, released a letter addressed to Congress calling for swift action on disaster aid, along with a detailed breakdown of where that money is needed.

Right now, a host of Federal programs from various Agencies are running critically low on the funding they need to function. In some cases like the SBA, Small Business Administration, funding has already dried up. Without congressional action, the Federal Government may not be ready to respond to the next wave of disasters when they strike.

Many of the programs in need of replenishing focus on the long-term elements of disaster recovery. When disaster strikes, obviously, the first priority is getting people out of danger, providing for their needs. But then homes need to be rebuilt. Schools need to be reopened. Farmers need help recovering their losses from ruined crops. Roads and bridges and railways need funding for repairs. Businesses need loans to get back on their feet. All of these priorities are running critically low on Federal dollars.

A month ago, Speaker JOHNSON said getting disaster aid would be his priority upon Congress's return this month. I hope the Speaker honors that commitment and works with Democrats to get disaster aid done as soon as we can. We should not kick the can down the road nor withhold vital resources the Federal Government needs to properly help recovering communities.

It is a longstanding tradition that when any community is hit by disaster in this great country, we all rally together to help our fellow Americans. With just a few exceptions, this has almost always been nonpartisan. That is how it should be on issues like this that impact communities of all kinds and in all places.

We must work together to get disaster aid done as soon as possible so that we will be ready the next time disaster strikes.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam 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.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I was talking before about the ongoing campaign to undermine the Federal judiciary. Leftwing activists and elected colleagues, alike, continue to make

their disapproval of constitutionalist orthodoxy known at all levels, and Federal judges who are worried about where things are headed are in a bind.

They can't retaliate using their office because they swore an oath to uphold the law without respect to persons. They can't go on social media to defend themselves or put out press statements. That is because the American people rightly expect their judges to focus on deciding cases and interpreting the law, and not engaging in crisis communications.

Of course, the Founders anticipated some of this dynamic by giving Federal judges life tenure. They hold their offices until they give them up, regardless of how loudly law professors may complain.

So recent unanswered attacks may not have professional consequences for individual judges, but they do have an alarming effect on the judiciary as a whole. The article III branch lacks Congress's power of the purse. It can't exercise force like the President. Instead, it relies on the legitimacy of its judgments for its power, and these constant attacks are designed to erode that legitimacy.

Leftist law professors and journalists attack the courts seemingly with impunity. They know they can affect the institution, while their targets have to just sit there and take it. That is why I am so vocal and consistent in my defense of the Federal judiciary.

Sometimes—very rarely—the tables turn. Sometimes a judge does get a chance to respond to those who seek to undermine the integrity of the judiciary. It actually happened just last week.

At the latest Federalist Society convention, Judge Edith Jones of the Fifth Circuit was on a panel with one of the field marshals of the academic project to undermine the judiciary. Any of our colleagues who know Judge Jones wouldn't be surprised to hear that, in this academic context, she let the law professor have it.

When he complained that this is unfair and that he wanted to talk about abstract legal principles of judicial integrity, she pulled out his tweets denigrating conservative judges in Texas. The reaction from liberals in the legal academy—although I repeat myself—was outrage. How dare, they said, the judge give one of their own the sort of tongue-lashing they give conservative judges every day.

Well, bullies always cry foul when they are the ones who get punched right in the nose. So kudos to Judge Jones for standing up for her colleagues. She proved yet again why she is a lion of the bench.

And even if organizations like the American Bar Association and the American Law Institute continue to refuse to defend the judiciary from partisan attacks, our Federal judges can know that I, at least, will be in their corner.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Now, on another matter, I would like to pay tribute to an organization that has dedicated 40 years to protecting America's children.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has saved literally thousands of lives, and I hold it in particular high regard because its roots run deep in Kentucky.

Over 40 years ago, when I was a local official, the issue of missing and exploited children had yet to receive the national focus it deserved. Thankfully, two public servants, Ernie Allen and John Rabun, had vision and drive on this issue when few others did.

John and Ernie proposed to me that Jefferson County create a special unit bridging social services and law enforcement to combat the problem. Together, I believe we created the first police-social services team in the Nation dedicated to working child abduction and exploitation cases. The team pioneered new techniques, like a statewide fingerprinting effort that met much success—enough success, in fact, that other jurisdictions adopted our model, eventually leading Congress to establish a national center in 1984.

Today, the national center quarterback platforms like AMBER Alerts and a central tip line, mobilizing a vast network of data, resources, and child welfare professionals to help thousands of families avert tragedy. To date, their work has directly led to the recovery of over 400,000 children. Last year, they recorded a success rate of 88 percent.

So I am honored to recognize the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children on 40 years of immense service to our country. I know parents all across America are thankful for the peace of mind that should the unspeakable ever occur, this fine organization stands ready to bring their children home.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

FARM BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, for more than 2 years, I have been working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass my sixth farm bill, the third one that I have either been chair or ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

I have met with farmers across the country who have made clear that crop insurance is their No. 1 risk management tool, farmers who made clear that the farm safety net must be the backbone of support for all farmers and not just a handful of mostly southern commodities.

I have met with families who are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet as food insecurity in our country continues to grow.

I have met with rural communities who are struggling to access the basic things they need to thrive, like access to healthcare, including mental health,

childcare, clean drinking water, and high-speed internet that we are all working to address.

The farm bill has always been the place where we put the power of the Federal Government at work in a bipartisan way to support farmers and families and communities. That is the coalition that has always been the foundation of a successful, bipartisan farm bill.

In May, the House released a proposal that would put immense taxpayer resources into a handful of mostly southern commodity programs. I am not saying that these farmers don't need support—they do—but it can't be at the expense of millions of other farmers and ranchers in this country, farmers in the middle of the country, farmers who grow fruits and vegetables, who run smaller and diversified operations or lack access to the tools and support that are overwhelmingly favored in the House bill. The large increases in farm subsidies should not be paid for on the backs of families in need or the broader needs of our small towns and rural communities.

In the spring, I unveiled our Democratic proposal, a 90-page, section-by-section bill to try to refocus our negotiations on holding the farm bill coalition together and actually getting a bill passed, not robbing Peter to pay Paul but instead taking a balanced approach that supports all of agriculture, our friends, our families, and rural communities across the country.

But unfortunately this did not spark the serious negotiation I had hoped for in order to put forward a bipartisan farm bill that can both pass the House, pass the Senate, and be signed by the President of the United States. So today I am introducing my Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act, a 1,397-page bill. This is it. This is a tremendous amount of hard work that has gone on, both from my staff—and I want to thank a really incredibly smart, creative team of people—and great staff on both sides of the aisle that have worked with us and colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

This particular farm bill has over 100 bipartisan bills incorporated in it, and this is the full text of the farm bill that I believe should pass and can pass and needs to be passed for our farmers and for others so impacted by the farm bill.

It is a robust bill. It includes \$39 billion in new resources above the farm bill baseline—\$39 billion more in funding above the normal farm bill baseline. It puts more farm in the farm bill for all of our commodities, not at the expense, though, of rural communities or American families that are critical to holding the farm bill coalition together.

It provides farmers with the certainty of a 5-year farm bill, and this is really important. We can do ad hoc help, but our farmers need the certainty of a 5-year policy so they can go to the bank, so they can get the financ-

ing they need, so they can know how to plan. This does that and at the same time responds to current needs. We are going to move up payments so that we can respond now, to more urgent needs right now that need to happen.

It also authorizes a permanent disaster program to ensure we have a process in place when disasters like Hurricanes Helene and Milton strike. This new program will put a consistent process in place so farmers have certainty and the USDA can get the money out the door. No more scrambling. No more leaving farmers behind. Our farmers deserve this.

It also makes a significant investment in title I for the 22 row crops that receive the lion's share of the resources available in the House proposal. We know—I know Republican colleagues primarily are focused on title I, and so we do a number of things to be able to increase support.

We move up the Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Programs' payments by 6 months so that farmers receive assistance faster so they can keep their operations going. One of the things I have been concerned about, with so much reliance on ARC and PLC, is it doesn't pay out for a year and a half or 2 years. We have farmers that need help now, and we can fix that by putting dollars into speeding up the payments, and that is what we do in this bill.

It also increases the effective reference prices that trigger help by as much as 15 percent, with all 22 commodities getting at least a 5-percent increase for the first time in a decade.

The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act continues to include crop insurance. Again, the No. 1 risk management tool that farmers have told us they want—crop insurance. It makes it more affordable and ensures that all farmers have access to this critical tool. It provides more coverage to more farmers at a lower cost. This crop insurance responds much more quickly than the ARC and PLC Programs, and it is important that we continue to make that as affordable as possible.

Importantly, I include a provision that will partially reimburse farmers' crop insurance premiums and what is called NAP fees to put cash in people's pockets who urgently need it right now.

Again, we can use the structure and policies of a farm bill rather than ad hoc assistance and just move up the payments, provide more assistance right now, and do it while we are passing a 5-year farm bill. That is what we should be doing.

The bill also strengthens support for specialty crops, which are almost half of what we grow—our fruits and vegetables and horticulture in this country. It strengthens support for specialty crops and ensures that farmers have the support they need to make sure we have American fruits and vegetables on our tables.

This is a significant investment in all farmers and all of agriculture because,

frankly, farming is one of the riskiest businesses out there—maybe the riskiest. I don't know if other people get up and look at the weather every day to try to figure out what is going to be happening for them. But it is getting even riskier now because of what is happening with the climate crisis, and we know that.

The majority leader was talking about disaster assistance being put out. It is critical. I strongly support it for farmers as well as for communities. But that is going to get more and more and more because of what is happening in the atmosphere and what is happening with climate change. How many once-in-a-generation storms or droughts need to hit our farmers over the head before we take this crisis seriously?

This bill will roll the historic investment we made in the Inflation Reduction Act into the farm bill baseline for the future. We take dollars for voluntary conservation programs that farmers are using, that farmers want. Right now, that funding is outside the farm bill baseline. We can make a tremendous, tremendous move forward for farmers by moving it into the farm bill baseline while keeping the language regarding climate.

Popular voluntary conservation programs that go directly to farmers—that is what we are talking about. This will make our farmers more resilient, because it is very simple: You put more carbon in the ground, you have healthier soil. You take more carbon out of the atmosphere, it is healthier for everybody. So this is a win-win, and we need to continue to support our growers and embrace the investments that we have already made.

I also am including new investments in biofuels. I see our Presiding Officer, who has been such a leader in Illinois and across the country. So important for jobs. So important as another place in which we can have a cleaner environment and cleaner fuels and more jobs.

We put more into the loan programs and local foods, trade. The list goes on and on, including a downpayment on a much needed ag research moonshot. We need reinvestment in the future of agriculture, in the future of our food supply.

But a farm bill is not just about investing in our farmers and ranchers—of course that is critical—but it is also about investing in the communities they call home. We know that rural communities are shrinking, and it is getting harder and harder to pass the farm on to the next generation.

In this bill, we are betting that rural prosperity is American prosperity. It improves quality of life for rural families by improving rural healthcare, including mental health services, and also childcare, rural childcare, which is so critical and so often not available.

It grows the middle class by creating good-paying jobs in manufacturing and entrepreneurship and small businesses in rural America.

It increases our investment in connecting communities to high-speed internet, which everyone in this Chamber agrees is essential to our success in the world. Whether it is a child being able to do their homework or a farmer being able to see a doctor or small businesses being able to access new markets beyond their rural Main Street, that all starts with reliable, high-speed internet. We have made major steps in the infrastructure bill that we passed; but, frankly, there is more to be done, and there is more focus that needs to be put on our rural communities to get that done.

And, importantly, this bill makes sure that rural communities are not left behind when it comes to accessing the resources of the Federal Government. When it comes to securing Federal grants, I know my hometown of Clare, MI, can't compete with Detroit or New York City when it comes to staffing. So we leveled the playing field by investing in the resources rural communities need to compete for hiring grant writers and planners and advisers to provide technical assistance so they can get the resources that they need.

And, finally, it is discouraging to me that the needs of families have been lost in this debate over the last 2 years. Yes, the farm bill must be the backbone of support for farmers and ranchers across the country. Yes, the farm bill must ensure that farming and a rural way of life can thrive today and into the future. Yes, the farm bill is where we put the support of the American people behind the men and women who feed and clothe and fuel this country.

And I would challenge anyone to look at my record as the leader of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and say with a straight face that I am not a stalwart champion for farmers and ranchers.

But a farm bill must also be about the single mom in Michigan working two jobs who just needs a little bit of extra help to put food on the table for her kids so her children can thrive. At a time when food insecurity rates in our country have increased for the second year in a row, it is absolutely unacceptable for anyone to attempt to cut SNAP and other nutrition programs. I refuse to leave this mom behind. Not on my watch.

We should be investing in the farm bill nutrition programs that are the heart of the family safety net in this country. Our Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act does that. It does that and lays the groundwork to see a future where we could actually end hunger in America. It protects nutrition assistance and draws a clear line in the sand that we will not walk away from the progress we have made to keep families fed in this country.

This is a bill that keeps farmers farming and families fed and rural communities strong, all of which are critically—critically—important. And

it is a robust bill that is paid for by using the same resources our Republican colleagues in the House used to pay for their bill, but we don't divide the broad bipartisan coalition that is the foundation of the farm bill to do it.

In my time leading Democrats in the community, I have locked arms with Republican leaders like Senator Pat Roberts to defend programs that may not have been my priority, but it meant holding the coalition together. That is how you get legislation done. That is how you do it on a bipartisan basis.

You know, farm bills failed to pass the House in 2012 and 2018 because Republicans included cutting food assistance in their bill, and they didn't have the votes to pass it. They couldn't pass it.

In 2018, the farm bill passed the Senate with a historic 87 votes, and the only no votes were 13 nays by Republicans—just want to underscore that. So we know how to do this and get a bipartisan bill done that is robust support for our farmers and ranchers and communities and our families.

Now, frankly, today, as I look to the future and what comes if we don't get a farm bill done, I have a lot of question marks because Project 2025, the roadmap for the incoming Trump administration, actually proposes eliminating ARC and PLC—the very programs the House Republican bill makes their top priority. It would also gut crop insurance. It would terminate U.S. sugar production, and slash trade promotion programs.

Now, I don't know what is going to happen to that. Maybe nothing. But it should worry everybody that that is the vision that is out there. And, frankly, I think that is why it is no secret why the House farm bill that came out of committee on a primarily partisan vote last spring has not yet been put up for a vote on the House floor, because I don't think—and everyone tells me—there are not enough Republican votes to pass it. And the last time I checked, the Chamber will be similarly divided next Congress in the 119th.

So I would encourage my Republican colleagues to join with us, to join with me, to get this done now, to do what we need to do for farmers: provide them certainty, provide them more immediate help, and to do it right now.

I would encourage Republican colleagues to rethink their proposal to make the largest cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in more than 30 years. That is not the way we get a bill done. I would encourage them to join us to pass a meaningful 5-year farm bill now—there is no reason we can't—and a bill that provides immediate assistance, within the farm bill, for what our farmers need.

The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act is robust, adding \$39 billion to the farm bill baseline. It is bipartisan, with over 100 bipartisan bills included, and it balances the needs of farmers,

ranchers, families, and rural communities. It holds the broad farm bill coalition together, which is critical for the future of any farm bill, and I firmly believe that it is the best—and probably only—path to pass a 5-year farm bill this year. I urge my colleagues to come together and consider this bill seriously.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I hope that many people tuned into the presentation that Senator STABENOW just made. Those of us who serve in the U.S. Senate know that as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, she not only walks the walk, she talks the talk. She has passed a farm bill; no mean feat. She has shown her own expertise in achieving that goal and her understanding of a very complex piece of legislation.

Would the Senator from Michigan yield for a question?

Ms. STABENOW. Yes. Absolutely, yes.

Mr. DURBIN. Could you be kind enough to say for the record when the current farm bill expires?

Ms. STABENOW. The current farm bill expires at the end of December. So we have to do something before we leave in December.

Mr. DURBIN. Would you explain to those who are not familiar with it what happens if we do nothing.

Ms. STABENOW. Well, if we do nothing, then a number of programs revert to what is called a Depression-era policy, and there is something called the dairy cliff that everybody is always worried about because it goes back to a pricing structure that would completely throw the dairy industry into upheaval. And so this is not OK.

Mr. DURBIN. And when you say "Depression-era programs," are you literally talking about the 1930s?

Ms. STABENOW. Yes, yes. It throws it back to policies of the 1930s.

Mr. DURBIN. And there are consequences for dairy interests, for example.

Ms. STABENOW. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. So if we fail to come together on a bipartisan basis before the end of the year, that is the reality that will be faced by the new administration?

Ms. STABENOW. Yes. Now, we could pass an extension again and throw this into the lap of everyone next year. That doesn't create any more certainty for farmers. Those who want to just do some ad hoc payments, you know, that is not going to work.

And so the reality is we have short-term help in our bill. We have a 5-year farm bill, and we can get it done now. One hundred bipartisan bills that are included in our bill—this is a bipartisan effort, even though at this point not endorsed on a bipartisan basis. But our farmers and ranchers would be a whole lot better if we could get this done.

Mr. DURBIN. Well, currently, under the Senate schedule which we have been told, we literally have until a little past the middle of next month to do our business.

Ms. STABENOW. Right. This means now.

Mr. DURBIN. Yes, of course. I would add to that we have many worthy judicial nominees on this calendar to consider too. So there is work to be done.

Ms. STABENOW. There is. And thank you so much. And thank you for being a valuable member of the committee.

I would just say where—we know and you know leading the Judiciary Committee, where there is a will, there is a way. If people want to come together, we can get something done and get it done by the end of the year. But people have to decide they really want a bipartisan bill and are willing to come together to do that.

Mr. DURBIN. And the key to that, I think, goes back 60 years ago where we married nutrition programs and agriculture programs so that people living in the city of Chicago, for example, who hear over and over “Illinois is an agricultural State” but don’t have any evidence of it other than what is on the table for their family to eat will have as much interest in passing the bill as my farmers down State. I am sure the same is true in the State of Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. There is no question. And we also have extensive evidence that when a bill is put forward on the floor that cuts the nutrition title, it never passes—2012 in the House, 2018 in the House. When Republican colleagues only put a bill on the floor that cuts nutrition, they do not get the bipartisan support, and it fails every time. This feels like Groundhog Day to me every single time.

And so I would hope that we would learn from those lessons and do what we did in 2018 in the Senate and come together and get a bipartisan bill.

Mr. DURBIN. So we all know that the cost of food has gone up, making it more difficult for families to keep food on the table, and we also know that low income people face that. What are the nutrition programs that are part of this farm bill that will help them?

Ms. STABENOW. Well, first of all, let me say the basic program is called SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is about \$6 a day for an individual. So a mom gets \$6; her child gets \$6.

Mr. DURBIN. That is not a lot.

Ms. STABENOW. Not when you go to the grocery store, no, that is certainly not.

And then we add support for food banks. We add additional assistance and incentives if you are buying fresh fruits and vegetables. We do, you know, some other kinds of things, but the basic is SNAP.

And going forward, we gave an update that hadn’t been done in 50 years in SNAP in the last farm bill, and it added—that \$6 now includes \$1.35. That was an update based on cost over a 50-

year basis, and that is what folks are arguing about. And going forward, CBO says there would be an update every 5 years of about 2 percent for SNAP, and that is what our Republican colleagues are fighting about.

Mr. DURBIN. I see my colleague from Minnesota is on the floor, and I just want to say that this exchange is the reason why we are going to miss Senator STABENOW of Michigan when it comes to the Agriculture Committee and many other areas. She does her homework. She understands that in the complexity of a big bill, that there are real-life human issues that face us, and there are real people who are waiting for us to get our job done.

Thank you for doing this and doing the committee. I sincerely hope we can get this done before the end of the year and the disastrous consequences that you described.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I just wanted to reiterate what the chief whip has said here: that Senator STABENOW has, over and over again, against all odds, been able to negotiate a bipartisan bill. And when you look at these past bills—and you can correct me if I am wrong, Senator STABENOW—it has been, actually, majority Democrat in the Senate vote on these bills, well represented by the two Senators from Illinois, who are both in this Chamber today. But I just think the fact that you have over 100 provisions in here that are bipartisan—it is really important to note—because there is absolutely no way we can do this unless we do this together.

And the other thing, while we are going to miss you dearly, as we go into next year, we know there is going to be a major debate on tax reform—which, of course, there should—that will be dominating a lot of our Senate time, and other issues. And, you know, my concern—and you can address this—is that we not let this important bill, which, as you have pointed out and Senator DURBIN has pointed out, is so important for ag—and when we see the input costs, when we see the weather conditions that our farmers have been suffering through—but also important for conservation efforts, as well as nutrition for this Nation, and there is absolutely no way we are going to be able to do this unless we have those three legs in this bill, not to mention the economic development and research.

So I want to commend you and just ask you that one last question about how important it is that your bill includes 100 bipartisan provisions and that we continue that work and do anything we can to finish this by the end of the year.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you so much. And thank you, Senator KLOBUCHAR, for your current leadership and future leadership on the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

You know, I would say that, at any other time, putting forward a bill would be a starting point, and that then we would negotiate and work together, which I have been trying to do for 2 years. We put something out in May. We have been working and negotiating, but, now, here we are. And so the bill is more like the end, not the beginning. It is like: This we could pass, 100 different provisions that are bipartisan—and more than that.

There are a lot of titles. There are 12 titles of the farm bill, as you know, and a number of them we have negotiated. That is what is so frustrating. We have a number of those where we have a lot of agreement. There has been a lot of good work that has come together.

But in this one area, in terms of who gets the bulk of the resources, where they go—do we continue to honor what we did on conservation as it relates to climate, which is hitting farmers over the head? And do we try to pay for what farmers need? And I agree. I agree on what they need. But do we then say to the mom who is getting \$6 a day: You are going to pay for that.

And that is when I go: No.

And I know you feel the same way—that we have never said that. We have never said that. We have always said the resources in nutrition stay in the nutrition title.

We have also always said that, if you wanted to expand that, then you look for savings within the title. And so we don’t put money in or out in the nutrition title. But, somehow, we see this sense of being stuck.

So next year—you mentioned next year. And I would just say that I think this is incredibly risky for our colleagues from agriculture States that want very much to get a bill done, and I know there are many. I look at the fact that the House has not been able to bring their House Republican bill to the House of Representatives, which has a majority of Republicans. They can’t pass it.

And what happens next year with that?

I mean, at some point, it has to be bipartisan, and it has to be balanced and hold the whole farm bill coalition together.

The only question is, is it now or are you in a situation, in the midst of tax cuts and everything else next year, to try to put this back together to get it done? I would say farmers need certainty now. We can move up payments and get them more help now. There are legitimate concerns that farmers have in terms of costs. We need to do that now.

And I would love it if all the ag groups came in and said: We want to get this done now.

Now, I am not naive enough to assume that is going to happen, because of the politics of the world that we are in. But from an ag standpoint, it should.

So I appreciate both of you very much.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, I just want to add my voice of support. Why do we need a farm bill? Because we need farmers, and we need food. And one of the wonderful things about our farmers is they do a job that is incredibly hard to do.

It is a job that is filled with uncertainty. What is the weather going to be today? What are the prices on the futures market tomorrow? What is going to happen in our neighborhood?

It is incredibly uncertain, but the farmers love the work.

And who among us works harder than farmers? Maybe coal miners, but not many more. So they stand for hard work and feeding America.

The second thing is farmers need stability because they have no control over things that profoundly affect them. But the other thing is farmers actually are the custodians of our landscape. And they, in all of our communities—whether it is dairy, say, in Vermont, or it might be wheat or corn in Illinois, or cherries in Michigan—they are providing a benefit to all of us who are not farmers and can't take on the courage they have to do that work.

And on the conservation title, I have talked to a lot of farmers in Vermont. They are so appreciative that, in addition to feeding us with nutritious food, they have a chance to actually get some income to help us conserve the land. That is a good thing because that is another income stream for the farmers.

So this should not be a fight among opposing sides. What do we have to do to provide stability to farmers? They have to get a fair price for their crop. And then, if they are going to make contributions on the whole issue of conservation in reducing carbon emissions, they have to get some income for that. And that is in the farm bill.

So let's pass the farm bill because we need farmers, we need food, and we need a clean and healthy environment. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Vermont and remind people that his comments make it clear this is not just a Midwestern issue. It affects the whole Nation, from one side to the other.

As I said, Senator STABENOW has been our leader. I hope we can get a breakthrough in the coming days and weeks.

TRUMP CABINET

Madam President, it is hard to believe it has been less than 2 weeks since the last election—2 weeks. If it seems long, it is because you may have been following what has happened since.

Already, President-elect Donald Trump is selecting his proposed members of his Cabinet. Last week, when it came to the Department of Justice, Mark Paoletta, who is overseeing the Trump transition team for the Depart-

ment of Justice, warned that "career DOJ lawyers must be fully committed to implementing President Trump's policies or they should leave or be fired." He shamefully slandered these nonpartisan public servants as the "deep state"—whatever the heck that is.

And Cleta Mitchell, an adviser to President-elect Trump, argued that "every lawyer in the voting section and likely the Civil Rights Division needs to be terminated."

Of course, the President may set policy directives, but the Department of Justice is not—and should never be—any President's personal law firm. Civil servants have an independent duty to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States and should never be under pressure to take illegal action.

During his first term, then-President Trump tried to use the Department of Justice to overturn the 2020 Presidential election, as detailed in the Senate Judiciary Committee's "Subverting Justice" report.

Unfortunately, President-elect Trump has already made it clear that, in his second term, he will again undermine the rule of law and weaponize the Department of Justice to seek revenge on his perceived enemies.

The clearest illustration of Trump's resolve to remake the Justice Department into his personal political law firm is his intent to nominate former Congressman Matt Gaetz to be Attorney General.

Let me be clear. Former Congressman Gaetz is the least qualified person and the most radical person ever to be nominated to be Attorney General. While he is a lawyer, he practiced law for only a short time, and his congressional career has been distinguished by his extremism. For example, former Congressman Gaetz has regularly called for eliminating the Justice Department that he has now been nominated to lead. He also wants to abolish the Justice Department's components, most prominently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, "if they do not come to heel"—his words. Last year, he introduced legislation to eliminate the ATF.

Former Congressman Gaetz's main qualification seems to be unquestioning loyalty to Donald Trump.

Why do I keep referring to Mr. Gaetz as "former Congressman"? That is due to the most serious concern about his being entrusted with this new responsibility.

While Mr. Gaetz just won reelection and the 118th Congress is still in session, he resigned his seat in the House of Representatives of last week. Why? Why would he quit the House at this point if he has just been reelected? It was an apparent attempt to prevent the House Ethics Committee from releasing a damaging report on his personal alleged misconduct.

Mr. Gaetz has been credibly accused of engaging in sexual misconduct with

a minor, illicit drug use, sex trafficking, bribery, and obstructing government investigations into his alleged misconduct.

I might remind those listening to this debate: We are talking about Donald Trump's choice to be the Attorney General of the United States of America.

These grave public allegations against Mr. Gaetz speak directly to his fitness to serve. Let me add that President-elect Trump's announced intent to offer Mr. Gaetz's nomination without even a standard FBI background check that every Presidential appointee undergoes is completely unacceptable.

As chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee for the last 4 years and a member of that committee for over 20 years, I can tell you that people have been eliminated from consideration for judgeships and other important appointments because they smoked a joint—because they smoked a marijuana cigarette, eliminated from consideration. They have also been eliminated from consideration if they didn't file the proper tax returns for paying a babysitter or nanny.

I have had Members' nominees excoriated because of poetry they wrote while they were in college. And now we have the President-elect saying: We are not going to do an FBI background check on a man who could be Attorney General, and we may call for recess appointments so the Senate loses its opportunity for advice and consent.

The heartening thing that has occurred in the last few days is that a number of Republican Senators have stepped up and publicly joined me in calling on the House Ethics Committee to release this report on Mr. Gaetz so that we can review it, if he is truly going to be the nominee of President Trump in this capacity.

The Senate has a constitutional duty to advise and consent, and it is crucial that we consider all the information necessary. Before considering this nomination, the Senate Judiciary Committee must review this ethics report from the House, from a bipartisan committee—equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans—who have released it.

Last Thursday, all Democratic members of the Senate Judiciary Committee requested the House Ethics Committee provide these materials to us immediately. There is substantial precedent for the release of these materials in both Chambers. The House Ethics Committee released a preliminary report about former Congressman Bill Boner after he left Congress.

The preliminary report stated:

[T]he general policy against issuing reports . . . is outweighed by the responsibility of the Committee to fully inform the public regarding the status and results of its efforts up to the date of Representative Boner's departure from Congress.

It is difficult to imagine a more compelling instance where there is a need to inform the public of the results of an

ethics investigation than when the subject has been nominated to be the Nation's top law enforcement officer.

It is also deeply troubling that Mr. Gaetz is not the only example of President-elect Trump's intended nominees who would lead the Department of Justice and inevitably weaponize it to seek vengeance.

President-elect Trump also announced last week that he intends to nominate Todd Blanche as Deputy Attorney General and John Sauer as Solicitor General—two critically important appointments in the Department of Justice. Mr. Blanche and Mr. Sauer happen to have been two of Donald Trump's personal defense attorneys in the actions taken against him, and they now will be poised to be his attorneys at the Justice Department.

Mr. Gaetz would be a disaster as the next Attorney General. As the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am committed to ensuring my colleagues of both parties have every fact at hand to understand his danger. I will do everything in my power to ensure that Donald Trump cannot turn the Department of Justice into his personal law firm, and I will defend the career public servants who work at the Justice Department and have dedicated their lives to defending the rule of law.

President-elect Trump won the election fair and square, but that doesn't mean he is entitled to choose extreme, unqualified loyalists to fill his Cabinet. The Senate must fulfill its constitutional responsibility to advise and consent.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

GAZA

Mr. HELMY. Madam President, I come to the floor today as a New Jerseyan, as the only Arab American serving in the U.S. Senate, and as a human being utterly devastated—broken, even—by the unfathomable scale of human suffering taking place right now in Gaza and the West Bank as a direct consequence of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

This war has already claimed an estimated 44,000 lives across Gaza and the West Bank. Almost half of those killed by the bombshells and bullets of this war have been women and children—teens, toddlers, infants. That is not to mention the millions more who have been displaced from their homes by this conflict and threatened by famine and illness.

According to current estimates, every hour, this conflict claims the lives of 15 innocent people—every single hour. It is reported that fully rebuilding Gaza and the West Bank after the war could take at least 200 years or more—literal centuries from now, well beyond our lifetimes.

It should not matter what one's politics are, what one's religion is, what one's nationality is, or one's ethnicity. These facts should shock our conscience to the very core. On our watch,

right before our eyes, we are witnessing one of the most rapid decimations of human life in recent history.

Now, let me be clear about a couple of things. I have always and continue to firmly, unquestionably support Israel's right to exist and defend itself against all forms of terrorism and those who sponsor terrorism. I vehemently condemn Hamas and the barbaric attack against Israel and its civilians on October 7, 2023, when 1,200 innocent Israelis lost their lives—a dark day in history during which Hamas also took hundreds of innocent hostages, including U.S. citizens. One of those hostages is New Jersey resident Edan Alexander—a 20-year-old Tenafly High School graduate who should be immediately returned home safely along with all remaining hostages.

Again, all human beings, regardless of political persuasion or ideology, should be devastated by the widespread loss of human life and human suffering on all sides, but I have some real, some hard questions about what is causing the scale of suffering in Gaza and the West Bank and why we are seemingly unable to alleviate it in any significant way. These questions are not abstract. They stem from what I have seen and heard with my own eyes and ears during a recent official trip to Jordan to assess the state of humanitarian assistance in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

What I saw was this: There is a de facto blockade of even the most basic aid supplies getting through the Kerem Shalom crossing, the only viable point of entrance for aid to Gaza and the West Bank. This blockade has severely restricted the amount of aid to make it to the desperate Palestinians, whose lives literally depend on it. Just today, it was reported that nearly 100 trucks transporting lifesaving aid were violently looted at gunpoint, adding yet another unique challenge to getting aid to civilians.

The effects of this chokepoint have resulted in other absurd outcomes. I recently toured warehouses, including one that U.S. Secretary of State Blinken toured himself, stocked to the very brim, practically overflowing with lifesaving aid supplies. This blockade has prevented the safe transport of those supplies into Gaza and the West Bank, where just miles away women, children, and families are literally starving. These are pallets, upon pallets of food, medication, pillows, latrines, and winterized tents to keep families warm as winter sets in, all of it just sitting there because of a man-made blockade.

What I heard was this: I met with medical surgeons and doctors of the Jordanian Armed Forces serving in Gaza who recounted harrowing stories of amputations on children, futile attempts to keep the malnourished alive, and operations in makeshift tents under live fire and drone strikes. These frontline providers—heroes—told me

that a number of partially operational hospitals are resorting to using everyday materials like sewing thread for clothes to stitch up patients after surgeries because they have run out of appropriate medical supplies. That should appall every one of us.

Israel's recent passage of two laws to totally ban UNRWA from operating anywhere in Palestine has, of course, threatened to make the problem even worse. It is irrefutable that UNRWA is the primary, on-the-ground provider of aid, food, and other essential services to the people of Gaza and the West Bank. Shutting down UNRWA at this time is shutting down the very nerve center of humanitarian aid and assistance within Palestine.

These insights have left me with many questions: Do these actions intent on limiting aid into Gaza and the West Bank, taken under the pretense of security operations, comply with international humanitarian laws and norms? Are these the actions we should expect from one of our closest democratic allies in the world? Perhaps these are questions for people far more versed in the matters of war and legal compliance than I, but Members of this body should be asking these same questions. Many are, and I thank them for their bold leadership.

And what exactly are we doing to ensure that our closest ally in the Middle East is living up to the humanitarian principles and human rights that we claim to embrace and enforce around the world?

My conversations with Americans of all walks have revealed a deep desire for the United States to take a more aggressive role in protecting innocent civilians suffering from the brunt of this war, and on occasion, we have done that. I thank the Biden administration for their efforts thus far to alleviate the chokepoints and expand the flow of aid into the region.

I also think it is important that the administration agreed with the U.N. Security Council's statement that "UNRWA remains the backbone of all humanitarian response in Gaza" and that "no organization can replace or substitute UNRWA's capacity and mandate to serve Palestinian refugees and civilians in urgent need of lifesaving humanitarian assistance." However, so much more needs to and must be done.

As we enter a new Congress and a new administration takes office next year, the U.S. Government will and should continue debating the enormously complex policy and geopolitical issues that are at stake in the Middle East, but I am not here to opine on the Gordian knot of Middle East policy nor do I pretend to have cure-all solutions to the problems that have been plaguing the region for many decades.

I traveled through several States over the last 2 months and spoke with many students—Arab and Muslim Americans and many others—who are deeply concerned with the crisis. The

conversations were thoughtful and reflected the complexity of the situation. One can call terrorism what it is—terrorism. One can stand up and support Israel and the Jewish people worldwide, and yet one can speak to the truth that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank is simply unacceptable.

When I asked a young man what he hoped to see, he said to me, simply: I want to see the world say and show that the life of a Palestinian child is just as valuable as the life of a child anywhere else in the world.

I simply will conclude where I began. My fervent plea is for all of us in this body and in our country to see what is happening in the Middle East through the lens of our humanity, first and foremost. No human should be worth less than another based on which side of a checkpoint or crossing they may live on.

Perhaps, just perhaps, if we keep the principle at the center of our approach, we can do better by the innocent people of Gaza and the West Bank who so desperately demand and need our humanity.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, we just had an election 2 weeks ago. I am not here to lord it over anyone, to gloat or anything else, but it is an important observation that Americans let their voices be heard overwhelmingly to go in another direction, and they voted for Republicans, but they also voted against the status quo.

Americans in Louisiana feel that their government is not serving them the way it should. They are struggling to afford trips to the grocery store, their energy bills, and to afford flood insurance.

For over 50 years, Americans have relied on the National Flood Insurance Program, or the NFIP, to be a safety net in case of disaster. NFIP covers 4.7 million homes across the country, including families like those in LaPlace, LA, pictured here.

For those who are watching on television, there are a bunch of homes, and they are surrounded by water. You can tell where the street is because the water is in the street. Fortunately, there is a little bit of green around most homes, but you can tell that that community is flooded.

For many, flood insurance is the only option to have protection against something like this, but the program is

not serving Americans the way it should. Skyrocketing insurance premiums caused by FEMA's new risk assessment program, Risk Rating 2.0, has left many people in Louisiana and many families around the Nation with no way to protect their home. Risk Rating 2.0 makes flood insurance unaffordable and puts the entire program at financial risk.

Now, despite Congress never approving Risk Rating 2.0, it unfairly jacks up rates, driving people to drop their coverage. Let me repeat that. Despite Congress never approving Risk Rating 2.0, this program by NFIP is jacking up rates, forcing people to drop their coverage.

I hear the story from folks in Louisiana constantly, and that is what motivated me and my team to release a detailed report breaking down the current state of NFIP, how it reached this point, and what Congress can do to make flood insurance affordable again. What we found confirmed what people in Louisiana and Americans across the country already know: The National Flood Insurance Program is broken.

Now, by the way, this is 19 pages. It is not 600 pages of legalese. It is not something that you read to cure your insomnia. It is 19 pages that a Senator, that a staff person, that someone watching can download and read, and, with 19 pages, you can understand the complex program and understand why it is failing the people it is intended to serve. We did this with the goal that we would help get a program that is affordable, accountable, and sustainable as opposed to the program that FEMA has created, one that is unaffordable and going bankrupt as it forces Americans to drop unaffordable coverage.

After storms like Hurricane Helene—which, by the way, showed us that flooding is not just a coastal issue; it is also occurring inland in river systems—we should listen to the American people when they say they are not OK with the status quo.

So let's take a look at some of the things in the report. And I warn you, it is not good news.

First, we found that the average flood insurance cost in every State rose following Risk Rating 2.0. That was true for 80 percent of people in Louisiana, who saw a spike in their insurance premiums in the first year.

Second, NFIP premiums in Louisiana increased by 234 percent, resulting in 52,000 people in Louisiana dropping their policies last year alone. That is 52,000 Louisiana homeowners dropping their policies because it was no longer affordable in just 1 year. I represent Louisiana, but it is not just Louisiana in which this is an issue; nearly half a million Americans nationwide have dropped their coverage.

Third, FEMA itself now predicts that up to 1 million policyholders nationwide could lose flood insurance coverage in the next decade. They admit that their pricing is going to devastate the ability of Americans to afford this

program. That said, FEMA still refuses to be transparent in terms of how they are calculating premiums, and this lack of transparency with Risk Rating 2.0 leaves policyholders in the dark.

This is the reason that we pushed to delay the program's implementation when it was first announced. President Trump did delay it. In 2019, my office worked with the Trump administration to delay Risk Rating 2.0 because of this lack of transparency in how FEMA was calculating rates, but when the Biden administration took over, they allowed Risk Rating 2.0 to move forward even though concerns were never addressed. The end result: Homeowners have high premiums, no explanation, and—I repeat once more—52,000 people in Louisiana dropping coverage, 500,000 people nationwide.

A fourth key finding was, as we investigated NFIP and the lawsuits against Risk Rating 2.0 continued, it became clear that FEMA never had the authority to implement Risk Rating 2.0 without congressional approval. Again—I repeated it earlier; I will repeat it again—FEMA never had the authority to implement Risk Rating 2.0 without congressional approval. They never consulted Congress, and we never passed it. They went around Congress, and their explanation, I think, is flimsy. It is like when you catch your child doing something they know they shouldn't be doing. Risk Rating 2.0 did not even adhere to the proper procedure for rulemaking in the executive branch. Risk Rating 2.0 runs counter to what Congress intended, and FEMA had no right to do what they did.

So these are the four key findings of the report:

One, premiums rose in every State; two, they rose astronomically in places like Louisiana; three, up to 1 million policyholders will drop their coverage because they can no longer afford it; and fourth, FEMA sidestepped Congress to implement this without authority.

These findings reflect why the American people overwhelmingly voted for change. The status quo is unacceptable.

The NFIP is in desperate need of reform, and it has needed this reform for years. Now Republicans have an opportunity to finally listen to the American people on this issue.

Now, being too afraid to touch certain political issues may serve politicians well, but it sets the American people back. Enough is enough. NFIP affects every State.

On this chart, you will see States in dark yellow. They have been hit by flooding the most. California, as the Presiding Officer can see right there, through the gulf coast, up the Atlantic, including a State like Pennsylvania which is just tippy-tip on the Atlantic, and an inland State like Missouri—all these have had more than \$1 billion in NFIP claims since 1978. The 44 States other than these have had over \$50 million in total NFIP claims. This is a national issue.

So the message to my colleagues who represent States that rely upon the NFIP is, let's find a way forward. We know what the next steps must be. Congress must pass a comprehensive NFIP reform package that protects families from excessive premium hikes, strengthens mitigation efforts—mitigation: decreasing your risk of flooding—and simplifies the claims process by cutting redtape.

FEMA must—absolutely must—re-evaluate its pricing methodology and focus on affordability, just as Congress originally intended. FEMA must roll back Risk Rating 2.0, and we must ensure that FEMA does not go rogue, doing things without congressional approval. We also must demand that Congress listen to the feedback from State and local stakeholders.

I have a plan to make flood insurance affordable again for all Americans. I am encouraging my colleagues to join. Let's end the status quo.

With that, I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF EMBRY J. KIDD

Mr. DURBIN. Madam. President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Judge Embry Jerome Kidd to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Born in Birmingham, AL, Judge Kidd earned his B.A. with high honors at Emory University in 2005 and his J.D. from Yale Law School in 2008. After graduating from law school, he served as a law clerk to the Honorable Roger L. Gregory on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Following his clerkship, Judge Kidd worked as an associate attorney at Williams & Connolly LLP in Washington, DC, between 2009 and 2014.

Then, from 2014 to 2019, Judge Kidd served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida. In this role, he investigated and prosecuted individuals in cases involving public corruption, wire and mail fraud, financial crimes, violent crimes, crimes against children, and narcotics importation and distribution.

Since 2019, Judge Kidd has served a U.S. magistrate judge on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida. Judge Kidd has tried 15 cases to verdict, judgment, or final decision and, since joining the bench, has issued more than 13,700 written decisions.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Kidd as "well qualified."

Judge Kidd's experience in private practice and public service, coupled with his experience as a magistrate judge, has prepared him to serve with distinction on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

I am proud to support his nomination.

Mr. CASSIDY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask unanimous consent that we start the vote now.

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

VOTE ON KIDD NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kidd nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 264 Ex.]

YEAS—49

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

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—6

Braun	Fetterman	Rubio
Daines	Hagerty	Vance

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELMY). 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.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

VOTE ON MOTION

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 265 Ex.]

YEAS—48

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

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Graham	Mullin
Blackburn	Grassley	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—13

Braun	Hagerty	Sinema
Cramer	Manchin	Tuberville
Daines	Romney	Vance
Ernst	Rounds	
Fetterman	Rubio	

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SMITH). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Can I have the attention of all the Members?

I am asking unanimous consent that any remaining rollcall votes this evening be 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 539.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I give a sufficient second.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 266 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Tester, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—36

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Crapo, Cruz, Fischer.

Table with 3 columns of names: Graham, Grassley, Hawley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Schmitt, Scott (SC), Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—17

Table with 3 columns of names: Braun, Cassidy, Cramer, Daines, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Kennedy, Manchin, Romney, Rounds, Rubio, Scott (FL), Sinema, Sullivan, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Amir H. Ali, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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. 539, Amir H. Ali, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Tina Smith, Elizabeth Warren, Raphael G. Warnock, Gary C. Peters, Tim Kaine, Richard Blumenthal, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Peter Welch, Mark R. Warner, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Duckworth, Benjamin L. Cardin, Debbie Stabenow.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Before we call the roll, we are going to cut the vote off—no matter who is here—in 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE: The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—39

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Crapo, Cruz, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hawley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—15

Table with 3 columns of names: Braun, Cassidy, Cramer, Daines, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Manchin, Romney, Rounds, Rubio, Sinema, Tester, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 601.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

VOTE ON MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 268 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—40

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Cassidy, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Crapo, Cruz, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hawley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—14

Table with 3 columns of names: Braun, Cramer, Daines, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Manchin, Romney, Rounds, Rubio, Sinema, Tester, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sparkle L. Sooknanan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 601, Sparkle L. Sooknanan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Amy Klobuchar, Jack Reed, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch, Sheldon Whitehouse, Raphael G. Warnock, Laphonza R. Butler, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 269 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—40

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Cassidy, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Crapo, Cruz, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hawley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—14

Table with 3 columns of names: Braun, Cramer, Daines, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Manchin, Romney, Rounds, Rubio, Sinema, Tester, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 650.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 270 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz.

Schumer	Warner	Whitehouse
Shaheen	Warnock	Wyden
Smith	Warren	
Stabenow	Welch	

NAYS—42

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Blackburn	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeben	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Tuberville
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—12

Braun	Hagerty	Sinema
Daines	Manchin	Tester
Ernst	Romney	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Rubio	Vance

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian Edward Murphy, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 650, Brian Edward Murphy, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Debbie Stabenow, John W. Hickenlooper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Angus S. King, Jr., Gary C. Peters, Peter Welch, Margaret Wood Hassan, Brian Schatz.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN, I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 271 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hawley	Risch
Britt	Hoeben	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	McConnell	Tuberville
Crapo	Moran	Wicker
Cruz	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—13

Braun	Manchin	Tester
Daines	Marshall	Van Hollen
Ernst	Romney	Vance
Fetterman	Rubio	
Hagerty	Sinema	

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 707.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 272 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—41

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Blackburn	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hawley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeben	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Collins	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Wicker
Cruz	Moran	Young
Fischer	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—13

Braun	Manchin	Tuberville
Daines	Romney	Van Hollen
Ernst	Rubio	Vance
Fetterman	Sinema	
Hagerty	Tester	

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Anne Hwang, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 707, Anne Hwang, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Laphonza R. Butler, Peter Welch, Gary C. Peters, Chris Van Hollen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Tina Smith, Jack Reed, Christopher Murphy, Richard Blumenthal, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Catherine Cortez Masto, Tammy Duckworth, Sheldon Whitehouse.

Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith

Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Mullin
Murkowski
Paul
Ricketts

Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Wicker
Young

Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz

Schumer
Shaheen
Smith
Stabenow
Warner
Warnock

Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—38

Barrasso
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Fischer
Graham

Grassley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Mullin
Murkowski

Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—14

Braun
Daines
Ernst
Fetterman
Hagerty

Hawley
Manchin
Romney
Rubio
Sinema

Tester
Tuberville
Van Hollen
Vance

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 273 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Butler
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Helmy
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
Schumer
Shaheen
Smith
Stabenow
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—40

Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 711.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 274 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Butler
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth
Durbin
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Helmy
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
King
Klobuchar
Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff

Blackburn
Braun
Cassidy
Daines
Ernst
Fetterman

NOT VOTING—16

Hagerty
Hawley
Manchin
Romney
Rubio
Sinema
Tester
Tuberville
Van Hollen
Vance

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 711, Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Laphonza R. Butler, Peter Welch, Cory A. Booker, John W. Hickenlooper, Martin Heinrich, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Brian Schatz.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 275 Ex.] YEAS—45

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—38

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Cramer, Crapo, Cruz, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Rounds, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—17

Table with 3 columns of names: Blackburn, Braun, Cassidy, Coons, Daines, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Hawley, Manchin, Romney, Rubio, Sinema, Tester, Tuberville, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELMY). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 779.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 276 Leg.] YEAS—46

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, King, Klobuchar, Lujan, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Murray, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Smith, Stabenow, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—39

Table with 3 columns of names: Barrasso, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Cramer, Crapo, Cruz, Daines, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, Moran, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Rounds, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—15

Table with 3 columns of names: Blackburn, Braun, Cassidy, Ernst, Fetterman, Hagerty, Hawley, Manchin, Romney, Rubio, Sinema, Tester, Tuberville, Van Hollen, Vance.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Catherine Henry, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 779, Catherine Henry, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Peter Welch, Cory A. Booker, John W. Hickenlooper, Martin Heinrich, Laphonza R. Butler, Elizabeth Warren, Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Gary C. Peters, Brian Schatz.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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 Delaware (Mr. COONS), Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 277 Ex.] YEAS—45

Table with 3 columns of names: Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Brown, Butler, Cantwell, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Helmy, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly.

King	Padilla	Smith
Klobuchar	Peters	Stabenow
Luján	Reed	Warner
Markey	Rosen	Warnock
Merkley	Sanders	Warren
Murphy	Schatz	Welch
Murray	Schumer	Whitehouse
Ossoff	Shaheen	Wyden

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Kennedy	Schmitt
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—16

Blackburn	Hagerty	Tester
Braun	Hawley	Tuberville
Cassidy	Manchin	Van Hollen
Coons	Romney	Vance
Ernst	Rubio	
Fetterman	Sinema	

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 782.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Luján	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Kennedy	Schmitt
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—15

Blackburn	Hagerty	Sinema
Braun	Hawley	Tester
Cassidy	Manchin	Tuberville
Ernst	Romney	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Rubio	Vance

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 782, Noel Wise, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Peter Welch, Cory A. Booker, John W. Hickenlooper, Martin Heinrich, Laphonza R. Butler, Elizabeth Warren, Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Debbie Stabenow, Gary C. Peters, Tina Smith.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to legislative session.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 39, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 279 Ex.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Luján	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—39

Barrasso	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Kennedy	Schmitt
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lee	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—15

Blackburn	Hagerty	Sinema
Braun	Hawley	Tester
Cassidy	Manchin	Tuberville
Ernst	Romney	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Rubio	Vance

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE SESSION

[Rollcall Vote No. 281 Ex.]

YEAS—46

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—MOTION
TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 790.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. Mr. TILLIS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 280 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—38

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoehn	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—16

Blackburn	Hawley	Tester
Braun	Manchin	Tuberville
Cassidy	Marshall	Van Hollen
Ernst	Romney	Vance
Fetterman	Rubio	
Hagerty	Sinema	

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Gail A. Weilheimer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 790, Gail A. Weilheimer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, John W. Hickenlooper, Jeanne Shaheen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Sheldon Whitehouse, Gary C. Peters, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Jack Reed, Ron Wyden, Christopher A. Coons, Brian Schatz, Chris Van Hollen, Alex Padilla, Richard Blumenthal.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION—MOTION
TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

VOTE ON MOTION

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

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 Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 38, as follows:

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Helmy	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Welch
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—38

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Britt	Hoehn	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—16

Blackburn	Hawley	Tester
Braun	Manchin	Tuberville
Cassidy	Marshall	Van Hollen
Ernst	Romney	Vance
Fetterman	Rubio	
Hagerty	Sinema	

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have one final vote tonight. Votes will resume at 11:30 a.m. tomorrow.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Motion To
Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 817.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the

Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 282 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Helmy	Reed
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Butler	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Lujan	Warner
Casey	Markey	Warnock
Collins	Merkley	Warren
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Welch
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Gillibrand	Ossoff	
Hassan	Padilla	

NAYS—36

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Ricketts
Britt	Hooven	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Mullin	Young

NOT VOTING—18

Blackburn	Hagerty	Sanders
Braun	Hawley	Sinema
Cassidy	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	Romney	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Rubio	Vance

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Sharad Harshad Desai, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 817 Sharad Harshad Desai, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Alex Padilla, Tim

Kaine, Brian Schatz, Tina Smith, Tammy Baldwin, Laphonza R. Butler, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Van Hollen, Margaret Wood Hassan, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Duckworth, Cory A. Booker, Sheldon Whitehouse, Kirsten E. Gillibrand.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO U.S. CAPITOL POLICE SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT STANLEY PAWLOWSKI III

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in celebrating the career of U.S. Capitol Police Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) Stanley Pawlowski III, who is retiring in December after 22 years of service with the force.

Joining USCP in 2002, SSA Pawlowski was first assigned to the House division, until he was selected to be a dignitary protection division special agent in 2004. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 2011 and, in that capacity, was part of the 2012 Inaugural Task Force.

Since 2013, SSA Pawlowski has served as a supervisory special agent (SSA) in the dignitary protection division. During his tenure, he has been the supervisor for Speaker protective details, majority and minority leader protective details, and has been responsible for leading numerous congressional codels and special events. Most recently SSA Pawlowski was one of the lead planners for the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

I hope my colleagues here in the Senate will join me in thanking Supervisory Special Agent Stanley Pawlowski for his service to the U.S. Capitol Police, to the Congress of the United States, and to our Nation. I thank him for a job well done and wish him all the best in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO MACK ESTES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, since its founding, the Kentucky Farm Bureau (KFB) has been one of the strongest voices for agricultural communities in the Commonwealth, enhancing the quality of life for Kentucky's growers, processors, and all of us who enjoy the fruits of their labors. Each year, KFB recognizes a number of farmers in Kentucky for their long-standing contributions to the industry and their communities. This year, I am honored to join KFB and the Daviess County Farm Bureau in recognizing my good friend Mack Estes, recipient

of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Legacy Farm Award.

A third-generation farmer, Mack began farming full-time in 1963, shortly after graduating high school. On his family farm in eastern Daviess County, he has devoted his life to carrying on his family's legacy, growing corn and soybeans, two of our State's most prominent and versatile crops. Mack has remained an active leader in Daviess County throughout his life, serving on agricultural organizations like the Daviess County Farm Bureau, the Kentucky Young Farmers Association, and the Kentucky Corn Promotion Council.

I first had the privilege of meeting Mack through his many years at the Daviess County Farm Bureau, where he served across its leadership ranks for nearly four decades. As president of Daviess County Farm Bureau, Mack was always ready with recommendations and new ideas to improve the local Farm Bureau's success in Daviess County. He was instrumental in establishing the Farm Bureau's online footprint and building out its growing team, and he has put in countless hours to expand their presence both in the community and beyond Kentucky, traveling to Washington on numerous occasions to advocate on behalf of farm families in Daviess County. He has even taken his outreach beyond our borders to promote American agriculture abroad with farmers in sister countries, like Australia and the United Kingdom. His work earned him not one but two terms as president of the Daviess County Farm Bureau, a first in the county's history.

While much of his work lay on preserving farmers' way of life, Mack also understands the deep importance of paving the way for the next generation of Kentucky farmers, establishing the Farm Bureau's scholarship program for local high school seniors and encouraging young farmers to get involved in their communities and make their voices heard. Though Mack has taken a step back from farming full-time after six decades in the business, there is no doubt his friends and colleagues will continue to rely on his good judgement and mentorship for years to come. As one local official put it best, "I know he's always just a phone call away."

So I am proud to join the Kentucky Farm Bureau and the Daviess County Farm Bureau in recognizing Mack's lifelong commitment to advancing the agricultural community in Kentucky. On behalf of the Senate, I commend Mack and his entire family for three generations of the Estes Farm and for their stewardship of an industry that none of us could live without.

TRIBUTE TO ROY HANSEN

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I pay tribute to Roy Hansen, who has been an integral part of my Senate staff for more than 20 years. Roy's dedication to public service and his remarkable contributions in the areas of technology,

growing opportunities for Idaho's youth, and constituent services have left an indelible mark on the Senate and the citizens he has served so faithfully.

Roy Hansen began his career in public service in 2003 as an intern in my Boise office while attending Boise State University, where he earned a bachelor of science in political science with a focus on public law and political philosophy and a master of public administration specializing in State and local government. After showing his data analysis acumen, he, thankfully, became a full-time member of my staff in December 2003 as the web developer and deputy systems administrator. Roy quickly demonstrated his visionary leadership in technology, and, in 2015, Roy was promoted to systems administrator and IT director.

Roy's keen interest in creating technological solutions that lead to efficient and effective government has been evident throughout his work to streamline our ability to efficiently advocate on behalf of Idahoans and communicate with the constituency and each other. He has been instrumental in leading many efforts to modernize the office's digital storage and archiving systems, develop the public website and intranet systems, provide digital data collection and data analysis support for statewide survey projects, develop and maintain our customized scheduling system, manage systems and processes that tens of thousands of Idahoans use every year to communicate with my staff and me, and so much more.

His efforts have greatly enhanced our office's digital capabilities, providing more efficient and effective service to the people of Idaho, and he has dedicated considerable time to training and supporting staff across various platforms. He is perpetually available to help with any rising technological need of staff, be it helping to access share drives, dealing with glitches, and always kindly and patiently responding to user errors. His leadership and innovation in digital engagement were instrumental in the office earning the Congressional Management Foundation's Silver and Gold Mouse awards for excellence in providing constituents with services and information through electronic means.

Beyond his technological contributions, Roy is deeply committed to cultivating the next generation of public servants. His internship experience influenced him to help create a formalized, continuous internship program in the State offices so more Idahoans benefit from the internship opportunity he valued. This internship program continues to thrive today, thanks in large part to Roy's efforts. He has also played a key role in supporting numerous policy and educational initiatives encouraging and supporting students, including the Congressional Award Program, the "We the People" High School Civics Competition, the U.S.

Senate Youth Leadership Scholarship Selection Committee, and military academy appointment ceremonies.

Roy has faced the many technological changes over the past decades with curiosity, know-how, and inventiveness. Currently, he is leading efforts to evaluate and integrate emergent artificial intelligence technologies and applications within the office, demonstrating his forward-thinking approach to governance and service. He also gets called upon to help with any number of necessary tasks from managing office inventories and vendor contracts, to State office security, to remodels, and so much more. No task has proven too big or too small for him to take on with his can-do spirit. The bottom line is, Roy has a great ability to smooth the edges of any challenge and keep things running efficiently.

Roy also remains deeply connected to his Idaho roots. Born in Idaho Falls and a graduate of Rigby High School, Roy resides in the Boise area with his wife of 25 years, Jessica, and their three children: Garrett, Everett, and Grace. He enjoys spending his free time camping, fishing, and playing the piano.

Roy Hansen has been an exceptional member of the Senate family, combining his deep knowledge of public administration, his passion for technology, and his unwavering commitment to public service. I extend my deepest gratitude and congratulations to Roy for his dedicated service to the Senate and the people of Idaho, and I look forward to his continued contributions in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO STACI LANCASTER

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I pay tribute to Staci Lancaster, an indispensable part of my Senate staff for more than 20 years. Staci's writing acumen and understanding of the policy process have proven invaluable assets to the Senate and work on behalf of Idaho's citizens.

Staci Lancaster, née Stevenson, graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle, with a bachelor's degree in political science and communications. During her senior year of college, Staci interned for then U.S. Representative Richard Norman "Doc" Hastings and was tasked with a unique opportunity to work on drafting a bill to enable the transfer of a park within Washington's fourth congressional district. Staci also interned with the victims assistance unit of the King County Prosecutor's Office.

Although she initially had plans of attending law school, Staci's remarkable work for Representative HASTINGS earned her a full-time position on his staff in 1998, advising him on issues related to agriculture, trade, the judiciary, immigration, labor, foreign affairs, defense, transportation, and education. Staci joined my office in 2003 to handle agriculture and environment

issues and later served as my minority staff director for the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, and Rural Revitalization and, then, the Senate Finance Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness. Staci's planned 1 to 2 years in Washington, DC, quickly turned into 12.

Staci left Washington with her husband Arlen—whom she met in my office and to whom she has been married for 19 years—in August 2010. I have had many staff over the years, but none quite like Staci. Her impeccable attention to detail and writing skills are irreplaceable, so when she approached me about remaining on staff and working remotely as part of the communications staff, it was an easy decision. She has served as my most trusted staff writer ever since. Staci advises my writing on a wide range of issues from detailed policy papers for the Senate Finance Committee, to op-eds on veterans and rural issues, to highlighting encouraging and uplifting stories like adoption.

Staci's background growing up in a farm town gave her a deep respect for farming and ranching and has allowed her to thrive in her work on agriculture and trade policy. Her passion for others stretches her work even further. She recalls working on the authorization and expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program, which provides a variety of free, fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to children at eligible elementary schools. That work has come full circle as she now relishes in hearing about fresh produce at her daughter's local school, as well as others across the country.

As the daughter of a Vietnam war veteran and granddaughter of World War II veterans, Staci's reverence and commitment to Idaho veterans comes naturally. She has compiled beautiful summaries of Idaho's veterans and their services to others and jumps at every opportunity to honor their heroic dedication to our Nation.

Beyond her professional scope, Staci is a devoted mother and wife who enjoys walks and enriching her mind through reading. She is an active member of her local community and has served as president and service committee chairwoman for the Rotary Club of Lander, as well as a member of the Museum of the American West Board of Directors and Lander Valley Farmers Market Board of Directors.

Staci resides in Lander, WY, with her husband Arlen, their daughter Gracie, and their dog, Addie.

Staci Lancaster is a rare gem of the Senate who holds a deep understanding of the legislative process and the needed communication of important issues. She has a heart for positive stories, as well as for policy issues that improve the lives of so many across the country, and her knowledge is often reflected in thoroughly detailed explorations of complex issues. Staci is a go-to resource for staff at every level in

my offices, having provided counsel, friendship, and patience to all. She has a kindness and approachable demeanor unmatched in these halls of Congress.

I am eternally grateful for Staci's dedicated service to the U.S. Senate and the people of Idaho and congratulate her on a job very well done. I look forward to her contributions in the years ahead.

TRIBUTE TO JACKIE DeCARLO

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Jackie DeCarlo, chief executive officer of Manna Food Center, in recognition of her remarkable service to our community in Maryland. For over a decade, Jackie has been a tireless advocate in the fight against food insecurity, dedicating her career to serving the Montgomery County community and improving the lives of countless residents.

Jackie's journey of service began long before her tenure at Manna. She grew up in Atlanta, GA, where she started her career as an elementary school teacher, instilling compassion and a sense of purpose in her students. Seeking new challenges, Jackie moved to Maryland with her wife Kristen Moe, bringing her passion for advocacy and her educational expertise to tackle the pressing issue of food insecurity in our region.

Manna Food Center, founded in 1983, has been at the forefront of eliminating hunger in Montgomery County, MD. Under Jackie's leadership, the organization expanded its reach, providing essential food assistance to over 30,000 residents annually. Jackie played a pivotal role in relocating Manna's headquarters from Gaithersburg to Silver Spring, a strategic move aimed at addressing the growing needs of underserved communities in the eastern portion of the county, helped found the White House-recognized Montgomery County Farm to Food Bank and Small Business Vouchers Programs, among many others, and shepherded Manna and tens of thousands of our neighbors through the dangerous twists and turns of the COVID-19 pandemic. And during her time at the helm of Manna, Jackie has been invited to attend the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and to address the Senate Spouses Organization at the Naval Observatory. Her commitment to the mission of Manna is a testament to her leadership and dedication to social justice.

Jackie is also an active member of other local organizations, including Leadership Montgomery and Nonprofit Montgomery, where she continues to build partnerships and champion systemic change. Her influence extends beyond the nonprofit space; she has worked to create a more equitable and compassionate community, and indeed, the ripple effects of her endeavors will carry on for generations.

As Jackie departs Manna and embarks on this new chapter, spending

more time with her family and exploring new ways to engage with the public, her legacy of service will endure. Her work at Manna Food Center and her broader community involvement have left an indelible mark on Montgomery County, and we are forever grateful she has shared her buoyant spirit and visionary leadership with us. I ask my colleagues to join me in sending Jackie and Kris our deepest gratitude and best wishes.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING DELTA METALS

• 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. It is my privilege this week to recognize Delta Metals of Lamoni, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Before moving to Decatur County, IA, Marvin Peachey owned and operated Delta Metals in Delta, CO. After forming strong connections with friends and colleagues, in 2013, Marvin opened Delta Metals in Leon, offering a range of manufactured metal roll roofing and siding products.

After relocating, Marvin and the Delta Metals team spent the early years traveling throughout Iowa. They focused on building trust through providing high-quality products and services. The company specialized in metal roofing and producing metal sheets. Today, Delta Metals serves as a comprehensive solution for various construction needs, including metal paneling and building packages for barndominiums, post-frame, and steel-frame buildings. They continually expand their product line to include various sizes, shapes, and colors to be able to cater to various client needs. As the company expanded, they added a sales office in Knoxville, IA. In 2022, they opened their brandnew headquarters in Lamoni, IA. Today, Delta Metals has a design team and thirty-five community-based employees.

The Delta Metals team is deeply involved in the Decatur community through their volunteer work at local events such as the Leon Chamber Easter Egg Hunt and the Lamoni Fall Festival. Marvin and his family are dedicated to helping their communities; from supporting disaster relief efforts to organizing community donations, Marvin, his wife Tina, and the team at Delta Metals are committed to making a difference. Additionally, Delta Metals is also a member of the Leon and Lamoni Chambers of Commerce and sponsors events held by the Decatur County Development Corporation. In recognition of their industry contributions and service to the community, the Decatur County Development Corporation awarded Delta Met-

als with the 2019 Business of the Year Award. This past July, Delta Metals celebrated their 11th anniversary in Iowa.

I want to congratulate Marvin Peachey, his wife Tina Peachey, and the entire team at Delta Metals for their continued dedication to supplying top-quality metal roofing and construction supplies and services to Iowans. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING GREENFIELD DENTAL

• 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 Greenfield Dental of Greenfield, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Following in his grandfather's footsteps, Dr. Ryan Frost was driven by the desire to give back to his community through dentistry. After graduating from the University of Iowa's College of Dentistry in 2018, Dr. Frost relocated from Des Moines to Greenfield where he worked with Dr. James Elliott at Greenfield Family Dentistry. In the fall of 2020, he became the owner of Greenfield Family Dentistry and then merged with Nodaway Valley Dental, rebranding to Greenfield Dental.

Shortly after establishing Greenfield Dental, Dr. Frost and his team realized that expansion was the best way to cater to the diverse dental needs of the Greenfield community. As part of the expansion, Dr. Frost moved Greenfield Dental's location in order to grow from 4 workspaces to 11. He also invested in a cone-beam computed tomography (CBCT) machine for 3D x ray imaging, which allows for in-office root canals and dental implant procedures. This enabled Greenfield Dental to accommodate more patients, provide same-day emergency procedures, and offer a broader range of treatments, including dentures, teeth straightening, and pediatric dentistry. As the practice continued to grow, Greenfield Dental welcomed Dr. Erin Johnson as an associate dentist to help meet the community's dental care needs. In addition to Dr. Frost and Dr. Johnson, Greenfield Dental has a team of 11 employees who help with the dental practice in a variety of roles.

Over the past 4 years, Dr. Frost and his team have built a reputation as a practice deeply rooted in the community. Dr. Frost currently serves as the treasurer for the Greenfield Main Street Chamber Board, which annually recognizes Greenfield Dental and other local businesses for their community investments. Additionally, Greenfield Dental supports the Adair County Health and Fitness Center through annual donations. In the aftermath of the May tornadoes, the Greenfield community united in support of the cleanup

and recovery. Greenfield Dental, along with many others in the community, dropped everything to help their neighbors recover from the disaster. This fall, Greenfield Dental will celebrate its fourth business anniversary.

Greenfield Dental has quickly become a staple in Greenfield by providing residents with community-based, accessible dental care. I want to congratulate the team at Greenfield Dental for their contribution and commitment to their customers and community. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING KALEIDOSCOPE FACTORY

● 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 Kaleidoscope Factory of Pocahontas, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1997, Leonard Olson received a kaleidoscope as a gift while he was recovering in the hospital from a heart attack. This gift would go on to spark a lifelong passion of woodworking. A few years later, Leonard purchased a woodworking kit and began making his own kaleidoscopes. In 2000, he established the Palmer Kaleidoscope and Gavel Manufacturing Company to showcase his handmade woodwork that spanned from kaleidoscopes to household items. After 4 years, Leonard's passion project became a full-scale business, when he transitioned his studio into a store and opened Kaleidoscope Factory in Pomeroy, IA, in 2004. In 2014, Leonard moved Kaleidoscope Factory to downtown Pocahontas, where it quickly became a town staple. Kaleidoscope Factory has proudly welcomed visitors from across the world to not only purchase a kaleidoscope but also discover the art behind woodworking.

After Leonard's passing in 2019, his family and friends were determined to keep his dream alive. His family came together to carry on his mission of bringing joy to the community through woodworking and kaleidoscope making. Leonard's sisters Lois Hessenius and Margaret Egli stepped in and became owners of the business. Lois's husband Richard and son John handcraft the kaleidoscopes in their backyard, while a close family friend Patty manages the store. The community also got involved and assists with various aspects of the business, including handcrafting products or helping manage the website. Today, the unwavering support of friends and family has allowed Kaleidoscope Factory to offer a wide variety of products, from gameboards and trains to charcuterie boards, in addition to their signature kaleidoscopes.

Kaleidoscope Factory is actively involved with the Pocahontas commu-

nity. The team regularly attends county fairs across Iowa. The company is a member of the Pocahontas Chamber of Commerce. After Leonard's passing, the Pocahontas Chamber of Commerce renamed the annual Pocahontas Art Walk to the "Leonard Olson Memorial Art Walk", to honor Leonard's contribution to the Pocahontas Community and encourage visitors to support local businesses. The business also partners with the Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission to install life-sized kaleidoscopes throughout parks and community centers around Pocahontas. This April, Kaleidoscope Factory celebrated its 20th anniversary.

Kaleidoscope Factory's commitment to keeping the art of woodworking alive by providing quality handmade kaleidoscopes and wooden goods to Pocahontas and its visitors is clear. I want to congratulate Leonard Olson's family, Lois and Richard Hessenius, Margaret Egli, and Patty Mefferd, and the rest of the Kaleidoscope Factory team for their dedication to preserving Leonard Olson's passion and contribution to the Pocahontas community. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING LICHTSINN RV

● 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 Lichtsinn RV of Forest City, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1976, Ron Lichtsinn, Sr., founded Lichtsinn Motors and primarily sold American-made general motor vehicles. Three years later, a collaboration with the founder of Winnebago expanded the company into selling recreational vehicles and motorhomes as well.

Ron Sr.'s son, also named Ron, was born and raised in Forest City before he moved to Des Moines for college. After graduating and meeting his future wife Hope, he relocated to Minneapolis for work and established a successful corporate career. While in Minneapolis, his wife Hope commuted to New York City for her job, and when 9/11 occurred, she was just 4 blocks away. This prompted the couple to move back to Forest City, IA.

After owning and operating Lichtsinn Motors for 25 years, Ron Sr. sold the business to his son and daughter-in-law in 2001. Ron and Hope grew the business to encompass the RV industry and had immense success in restoring market share. Now, the family expanded the space to a 52,000-square-foot facility, officially changed their name to Lichtsinn RV, and is recognized for being the top Winnebago Motor Home Dealer in North America.

Lichtsinn RV prioritizes its community. In 2009, Lichtsinn RV created the

"We Care Charitable Giving Foundation" that matches all employee contributions and has now donated over \$275,000 to organizations such as schools, sports teams, cancer society, arts centers, and Tunnels to Towers. Ron also serves on the board of Forest City Education Foundation, which provides scholarships for students in the community.

Lichtsinn RV's commitment to industry excellence and passion for their community is evident. I want to congratulate the Lichtsinn Family and the whole team for their impactful role in providing American-made recreational vehicles and motorhomes to folks across the country. I look forward to seeing their continued work.●

RECOGNIZING REVELTON DISTILLING COMPANY

● 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 Revelton Distilling Company of Osceola, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

The Taylors' annual visits to the Kentucky Bourbon Festival inspired their creation of Revelton Distilling Company. Over the course of 6 years of attending this event, Robert and Christi connected with seasoned industry professionals, who revealed that many Kentucky distillers sourced their corn from Iowa. In 2016, the Taylors attended distillery school and officially opened Revelton Distilling Company in December 2020. As master distillers, the couple oversees every detail of their spirits' production.

Committed to supporting local agriculture, Revelton Distilling Company sources all its corn from Iowa farmers. The company then donates the byproduct of their spirit production back to those farmers for livestock feed. Revelton Distilling Company crafts all its products in-house, which includes 13 distinct spirits, ranging from flavored liqueurs to their multiple award-winning Revelton Mulberry Gin. Additionally, after 3 years of barrel aging and quality testing, the company launched their limited-release, single-barrel bourbon whisky.

Today, Revelton Distilling Company hosts a variety of community events, from corporate retreats to live music concerts in their 1930s-inspired art deco cocktail lounge. The company also offers hands-on whiskey-making experiences to demonstrate the inside workings of a distillery. Revelton's spirits have spread to four States and are currently in over 600 restaurants, bars, liquor stores, and grocery stores. Today, the company has grown to employ 21 members of the community.

Revelton Distilling Company has earned recognition not only in Iowa but globally. Over the years, Revelton

Distilling Company has won multiple Micro Liquor Spirit Awards and San Francisco Spirit Awards for their outstanding product design and incredible tasting spirits. The business actively participates in the community as a member of the Clarke County Development Corporation, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and numerous other community-based organizations. The Taylors also work with the World Food Prize to support the availability of food worldwide. In addition, they collaborate with student entrepreneurs from Iowa State University and Des Moines Area Community College to support agricultural education efforts. In addition to Dr. Christi Taylor's many roles with the business, she is also the chief medical officer for the McFarland Clinic, Iowa's largest physician-owned, multi-specialty practice. This December, Revelton Distilling Company will celebrate its fourth business anniversary.

Through community events, partnerships, and high-quality products, Revelton Distilling Company has become an integral part of the Clarke County community, creating shared memories that bring people together. I want to recognize the Taylors and the rest of the team at Revelton Distilling Company for their commitment to locally sourced production in southern Iowa. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa and beyond.●

RECOGNIZING SALVAGED DESIGNS

● 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 Salvaged Designs of Oskaloosa, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Jennifer Thomas-Maxwell was deeply involved in small business and entrepreneurship long before she founded Salvaged Designs. In 1950, her grandfather started a waste management business in Beacon, IA. Her parents took over the business in the 1980s and began operating it as a family business. Growing up, Jen worked in every part of the company, from the back of the garbage truck to looking over the books in the front office. In the fourth grade, Jen learned about recycling for the first time, which transformed her perspective on sustainability and waste management.

The first in her family to attend college, Jen studied graphic design and worked in the industry after graduating from college. After she started a family and she was spending time crafting gifts and costumes for her daughter, parents and other children in the neighborhood began wanting her personally designed items. As demand increased, she saw an opportunity to turn her projects into a full-scale busi-

ness. After years of hard work, Salvaged Designs opened its first storefront in 2016. Before long, Jen realized she needed a larger space. In 2018, Jen imagined her company's logo on a Main Street storefront she had admired. In March of 2020, Jen successfully opened Salvaged Designs on Oskaloosa's Main Street.

Today, Jen manages all repurposing and storefront operations for Salvaged Designs. Initially, the business focused primarily on repurposing old furniture, instruments, and other miscellaneous items brought in by customers and community members. With time, Salvaged Designs expanded to carry a variety of Iowa and Midwest-made products created with sustainability in mind, from recycled crayons to chemical-free detergents. The company also offers art classes for product revitalization, painting, and refinishing, which combines Jen's enthusiasm for design and recycling with her desire to empower others to create.

In addition to running Salvaged Designs, Jen is actively involved in the Oskaloosa community. In 2006, Jen raised money to fund the Beacon Park Playground, and, in 2008, she served as the project chair for the construction of a playground at the Lacey Recreation Complex. Jen previously served on the board of Oskaloosa Main Street, which aims to improve downtown Oskaloosa. Through Salvaged Designs, she continues to support the local high school, collaborating with the band to repurpose old instruments and donating half the proceeds back to the band. Jen is also working to start a program at the high school where students learn the value of repurposing materials. She previously served on the board of Oskaloosa Main Street, an organization that aims to improve downtown Oskaloosa. This November, Salvaged Designs will celebrate its eighth anniversary.

I want to applaud Salvaged Designs' commitment to sustainability and service to the community. Congratulations to their success and devotion to Mahaska County and the Oskaloosa community. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING SHIVVERS MANUFACTURING

● 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 Shivvers Manufacturing of Corydon, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Charles Shivvers noticed the limitations and availability of existing grain auger systems which inspired him to create Shivvers Manufacturing in 1968. He patented the tapered sweep auger system, revolutionizing the efficiency

of the grain drying process. This breakthrough led to the first commercially successful Continuous Counter-Flow Grain Drying System, and within a year, Charles moved production from a home garage to a facility in Corydon, IA.

Since its founding, Shivvers Manufacturing has been a family business with Charles' wife Anita, and their sons Carl and Steve have helped grow and manage the company. During the agriculture boom of the 1970s, Carl and Steve expanded Shivvers Manufacturing by forming a sister company in Illinois, which later merged at the Corydon facility.

Recognizing the value of diversifying their product line, Charles and Steve explored new manufacturing opportunities, such as coffee and woodburning stoves. In 1984, they shifted their focus and successfully developed a plan for a zero-turn radius lawnmower. Subsequently, they launched the first prototype for the Country Clipper ZTR. Today, this line of lawnmowers continues to dominate their sales. Shivvers Manufacturing has continued to innovate with products like the CompuDry, a computerized dryer control attachment, and many others. Shivvers Manufacturing continues to advance agricultural technology, expanding its presence nationwide.

In June 2023, a fire destroyed part of the Shivvers factory. Despite this setback, the Shivvers Manufacturing team is diligently rebuilding at their current location in Corydon. Manufacturing has continued, with plans to resume operations in the new facility by the end of the year.

Today, Carl serves as the president of Shivvers Manufacturing while his grandson Dustin serves as the vice president of marketing. Shivvers Manufacturing continues to be a staple in the Wayne County community. The business is a member of the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce. They also work to support local organizations and initiatives such as the Corydon Fire Department and the Wayne County Sheriff's Office. They are annual supporters of the Wayne County Fair and sponsored an upcoming housing development project in Corydon. Shivvers Manufacturing has 140 community-based employees and will be celebrating their 56th anniversary next year.

Shivvers Manufacturing's commitment to providing farmers with quality and innovative agricultural equipment is clear. I want to congratulate the Shivvers family and the rest of the team for their dedication to the agriculture industry. I look forward to seeing their continued growth and success in Iowa.●

RECOGNIZING THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF ALEXANDRIA

● Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria,

SFA. Since its founding in 1986, the SFA has played a vital role in propelling high-achieving students with financial need into top colleges across the Commonwealth of Virginia and the country. Its ongoing dedication to removing barriers for these students through wraparound advising, coaching, and scholarship programs has made a profound impact on their futures—and, by extension, on the community at large.

The recent milestone of awarding over \$1.4 million in the last year to support more than 400 Alexandria City High School graduates' matriculation to more than 60 different institutions is a testament to the SFA's commitment to ensuring that no student is left without the opportunity to pursue their educational and career goals. In the nearly four decades that it has been helping students, the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria has awarded nearly \$20 million in scholarships and helped send more than 5,700 Alexandria students to college.

Equally significant is the role the SFA plays in college and career advising. Starting as early as the ninth grade, the SFA guides students through the complex process of applying for financial aid, selecting a best-fit institution, and navigating the rigor and demands of postsecondary education. Through partnerships with the National College Attainment Network, the Virginia College Affordability Network, and annual Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshops, SFA provides individual FAFSA assistance to ensure Virginia scholars have ample opportunity and boundless choice.

Furthermore, the SFA's participation in the first beta testing phase of the 2025–26 FAFSA highlights the organization's national leadership in improving access to financial aid. The SFA was one of only six organizations selected nationwide, a testament to and reflection of its deep connections to the vibrant and diverse set of student and contributor populations within the Alexandria community.

Thank you to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria and its leadership, staff, volunteers, and community partners for continuing to open doors for the next generation of scholars and future leaders.●

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH OF THE JAMES MAGAZINE

● Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I would like to wish North of the James magazine a happy 30th anniversary and extend a heartfelt congratulations on reaching this milestone.

From its humble beginnings in a garage in Richmond's North Side, the magazine has flourished into an integral part of the Richmond community thanks to the tireless work of editor Charles McGuigan and his dedicated team. It has been delightful to watch the magazine's growth as a trusted

news outlet that uplifts the voices of local businesses, amplifies the voices of everyday Virginians, and highlights the efforts of not-for-profit organizations working to create a better community. The magazine's commitment to its readers is evident through its loyal following over the decades.

I was honored to have been featured by the magazine in 2012 and to have shared that distinction with many exceptional Virginians over the years. I am also proud of the accolades that the North of the James team has achieved this year, as recognized by the Virginia Press Association. Charles McGuigan and Rebecca D'Angelo earned first place for their combination picture and story, "Alleys: Roads Less Travelled," and Fran Withrow received second place for his commentary writing. Catherine McGuigan earned second place for her front cover designs for "Noah Scalin," "RampsRVA," and "Dawoud Bey."

Local news is essential to our communities, and North of the James magazine continues to be a shining example of this. From covering art exhibits and local cuisine to sharing the stories of everyday Virginians, the magazine has been a cherished resource for Richmonders. Congratulations again on a remarkable 30 years.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Kelly, 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 RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2023, the Secretary of the Senate, on November 15, 2024, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 1510. An act to amend provisions relating to the Office of the Inspector General of the Government Accountability Office, and for other purposes.

S. 2143. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 320 South 2nd Avenue in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as the "Staff Sergeant Robb Lura Roling Post Office Building".

S. 2274. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 Wyoming Street in Shoshoni, Wyoming, as the "Dessie A. Bebout Post Office".

S. 3267. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 410 Dakota Avenue South in Huron, South Dakota, as the "First Lieutenant Thomas Michael Martin Post Office Building".

S. 3419. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1765 Camp Hill Bypass in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, as the "John Charles Traub Post Office".

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:05 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 7409. An act to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to waive the requirement for a Federal drilling permit for certain activities, to exempt certain activities from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8446. An act to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to include critical materials in the definition of critical mineral, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8932. An act to establish an earlier application processing cycle for the FAFSA.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY) announced that on today, November 18, 2024, she had signed the following enrolled bills, which were previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 1510. A bill to amend provisions relating to the Office of the Inspector General of the Government Accountability Office, and for other purposes.

S. 2143. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 320 South 2nd Avenue in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as the "Staff Sergeant Robb Lura Roling Post Office Building".

S. 2274. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 Wyoming Street in Shoshoni, Wyoming, as the "Dessie A. Bebout Post Office".

S. 3267. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 410 Dakota Avenue South in Huron, South Dakota, as the "First Lieutenant Thomas Michael Martin Post Office Building".

S. 3419. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1765 Camp Hill Bypass in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, as the "John Charles Traub Post Office".

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 7409. An act to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to waive the requirement for a Federal drilling permit for certain activities, to exempt certain activities from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 8446. An act to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to include critical materials in the definition of critical mineral, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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-6514. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress on Section 508 of the Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. B, P.L.118-50)"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-6515. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Determination Under Section 614(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to Provide Assistance to Ukraine"; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-6516. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Mefenoxam; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 12001-01-OCSP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-6517. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Technical Amendments" (48 CFR Parts 205, 212, 214, 215, and 217) (DARS-2024-0001) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6518. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Technical Amendments" (48 CFR Part 225) (DARS-2024-0001) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6519. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation: Past Performance of Affiliate Companies of Small Business Concerns (DFARS Case 2024-D016)" ((RIN)0750-AM13) (DARS-2024-0035) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6520. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Procurement Technical Assistance Program (DFARS Case 2024-D006)" ((RIN)0750-AM03) (DARS-2024-0018) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6521. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Updates to the Definition of Departments and Agencies (DFARS Case 2024-D026)" ((RIN)0750-AM23) (DARS-2024-0033) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6522. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Inapplicability of Additional Defense-Unique Laws and Certain Non-statutory DFARS Clauses to Commercial Item Contracts (DFARS Case 2018-D074)" ((RIN)0750-DK33) (DARS-2023-0043) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6523. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Pilot Program to Incentivize Contracting with Employee-Owned Businesses (DFARS Case 2024-D004)" ((RIN)0750-AM01) (DARS-2024-0017) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-6524. A communication from the Chair and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a transaction involving U.S. exports to Ethiopia; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6525. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Conforming Amendments to Commission Rules and Forms" (17 CFR Parts 200, 230, 274, and 275) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6526. A communication from the Deputy Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Covered Clearing Agency Resilience and Recovery and Orderly Wind-Down Plans" (RIN3235-AN19) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6527. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Burma Sanctions Regulations" (31 CFR Part 525) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6528. A communication from the Deputy Associate Director of Offshore Regulatory Programs, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bonding Requirements When Filing an Appeal of a Bureau of Safety and Environmental Civil Penalty" (RIN1014-AA57) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-6529. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Use of Federal Real Property to Assist the Homeless: Revisions to Regulations" (RIN0991-AC14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6530. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Use of Federal Real Property to Assist the Home-

less" (RIN2506-AC49) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 14, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6531. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Outer Continental Shelf Air Regulations Update to Include New Jersey State Requirements" (FRL No. 12035-02-R2) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6532. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Integrating e-Manifest with Hazardous Waste Exports and Other Manifest-Related Reports, PCB Manifest Amendments, and Technical Corrections; Correction" ((RIN)2050-AH12) (FRL No. 7308-04-OLEM) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6533. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Delaware; Motor Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program" (FRL No. 12094-02-R3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6534. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Forsyth County, North Carolina; Removal of Excess Emissions Provisions" (FRL No. 12179-02-R4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6535. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Revisions; California; San Diego County Air Pollution Control District and Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District" (FRL No. 12225-02-R9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6536. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Mississippi; PSD and Air Quality Modeling Infrastructure Requirements for the 2015 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 12250-02-R4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6537. A communication from the Associate Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal 'Good Neighbor Plan' for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Response to Judicial Stay" ((RIN)2060-AW30) (FRL No. 8670.4-03-OAR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 30, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-6538. A communication from the President of the United States of America, transmitting, pursuant to section 203(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, a report relative to facilitating positive adjustment to competition from imports of fine denier polyester staple fiber; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6539. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; CY 2025 Inpatient Hospital Deductible and Hospital and Extended Care Services Coinsurance Amounts" (RIN0938-AV36) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6540. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Medicare Part B Monthly Actuarial Rates, Premium Rates, and Annual Deductible Beginning January 1, 2025" (RIN0938-AV38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6541. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; CY 2025 Part A Premiums for the Uninsured Aged and for Certain Disabled Individuals Who Have Exhausted Other Entitlement" (RIN0938-AV37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 12, 2024; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. SCHATZ, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 465. A bill to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-244).

By Mr. SCHATZ, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2783. A bill to amend the Miccosukee Reserved Area Act to authorize the expansion of the Miccosukee Reserved Area and to carry out activities to protect structures within the Osceola Camp from flooding, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-245).

By Mr. SCHATZ, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with amendments:

S. 2908. A bill to assist Tribal governments in the management of buffalo and buffalo habitat and the reestablishment of buffalo on Indian land (Rept. No. 118-246).

By Mr. SCHATZ, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3857. A bill to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-247).

By Mr. SCHATZ, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with amendments:

S. 4365. A bill to provide public health veterinary services to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for rabies prevention, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-248).

By Mr. DURBIN, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 4713. A bill to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 5333. A bill to subject certain private funds to joint and several liability with respect to the liabilities of firms acquired and controlled by those funds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 5334. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require a report with respect to delayed notice requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 5335. A bill to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2029, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 5336. A bill to reauthorize child welfare programs under part B of title IV of the Social Security Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELMY:

S. 5337. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require social media companies to disclose the gross revenues from transactions involving individuals who are younger than 21 years of age, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WELCH:

S. 5338. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to modify the experience requirement for direct farm ownership loans, eliminate the 10-year limitation on direct farm ownership loans, allow direct loans to be used for refinancing indebtedness, increase the lifetime limitation on debt forgiveness per borrower, and provide flexibility with respect to loan fund set asides for beginning farmers and ranchers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 5339. A bill to authorize the collection of supplemental payments to increase congressional investments in medical research, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 5340. A bill to provide the United States Government with additional tools to deter state and non-state actors from wrongfully detaining United States nationals for political leverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BUDD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 5341. A bill making supplemental appropriations for small business disaster relief for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 344

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr.

MARSHALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 344, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.

S. 633

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 633, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Everett Alvarez, Jr., in recognition of his service to the United States.

S. 1245

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1245, a bill to transfer unobligated balances made available for COVID-19 emergency response and relief to the Federal Communications Commission to enable the Commission to carry out the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program.

S. 1558

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1558, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the brave women who served in World War II as members of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps.

S. 1806

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1806, a bill to establish Ocean Innovation Clusters to strengthen the coastal communities and ocean economy of the United States through technological research and development, job training, and cross-sector partnerships, and for other purposes.

S. 1863

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1863, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to conduct a study and submit a report on the greenhouse gas emissions intensity of certain products produced in the United States and in certain foreign countries, and for other purposes.

S. 2379

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2379, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for certain cognitive impairment detection in the Medicare annual wellness visit and initial preventive physical examination.

S. 3193

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3193, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow for the use of telehealth in substance use disorder treatment, and for other purposes.

S. 3746

At the request of Ms. HASSAN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3746, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain spouses eligible for services under the disabled veterans' outreach program, and for other purposes.

S. 4141

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. HELMY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 4141, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the FIFA World Cup 2026, and for other purposes.

S. 4243

At the request of Ms. BUTLER, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 4243, a bill to award posthumously the Congressional Gold Medal to Shirley Chisholm.

S. 4778

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 4778, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the exclusion for certain employer payments of student loans under educational assistance programs permanent.

S. RES. 869

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr.

RICKETTS), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 869, a resolution designating the week beginning November 11, 2024, as "National Pregnancy Center Week" to recognize the vital role that community-supported pregnancy centers play in saving lives and serving women and men faced with difficult pregnancy decisions.

NOTICE: REGISTRATION OF MASS MAILINGS

The filing date for the 2024 third quarter Mass Mailing report is Friday, October 25, 2024. An electronic option is available on Webster that will allow forms to be submitted via a fillable PDF document. If your office did no mass mailings during this period, please submit a form that states "none."

Mass mailing registrations or negative reports can be submitted electronically at http://webster.senate.gov/secretary/mass_mailing_form.htm or e-mailed to OPR_MassMailings@sec.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact the Senate Office of Public Records at (202) 224-0322.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate complete its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19; 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 following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Kasubhai nomination; further, that the cloture motion with respect to the Kasubhai nomination ripen at 11:30 a.m.; that following the cloture vote, the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Kasubhai nomination, all time be considered expired at 2:15 p.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Tuesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 11:55 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

BENJAMIN J. CHEEKS, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE GONZALO P. CURIEL, RETIRED.

SERENA RAQUEL MURILLO, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE CORMAC J. CARNEY, RETIRED.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. TIMOTHY S. BRADY, JR.
COL. DUSTIN J. BYRUN
COL. HENRY DOLBERRY, JR.
COL. LAUREN S. EDWARDS
COL. CHRISTOPHER M. HAAR
COL. SEAN P. HOEWING
COL. RYAN M. HOYLE
COL. DAVID C. HYMAN
COL. ROBERT T. MEADE
COL. JOEL F. SCHMIDT
COL. JEREMY S. WINTERS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) JOHN E. DOUGHERTY IV
REAR ADM. (LH) JONATHAN E. RUCKER
REAR ADM. (LH) DOUGLAS L. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) THOMAS M. HENDERSCHIEDT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER A. ALEXANDER
REAR ADM. (LH) BRADLEY J. ANDROS
REAR ADM. (LH) SEAN R. BAILEY
REAR ADM. (LH) BRIAN H. BENNETT
REAR ADM. (LH) ADAN G. CRUZ
REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER A. KIJEK
REAR ADM. (LH) MAX G. MCCOY, JR.
REAR ADM. (LH) THOMAS P. MONINGER
REAR ADM. (LH) MARTIN J. MUCKIAN
REAR ADM. (LH) GREGORY D. NEWKIRK
REAR ADM. (LH) MARK A. SCHAFFER
REAR ADM. (LH) NICHOLAS R. TILBROOK
REAR ADM. (LH) ROBERT E. WIRTH
REAR ADM. (LH) MICHAEL S. WOSJE

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

JAY E. BUTTERFIELD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be colonel

THOMAS A. HUTTON
ROBERT D. MCALLISTER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be colonel

ROBERT L. BELL
DANIEL J. BROWN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 716:

To be major

GABRIEL R. BULTZ

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 7064:

To be major

CORA L. ALLEN

ORLANDO AQUINO SEGARRA
 JOHN A. ARCHITZEL
 IAN G. AUCCOIN
 SHANE G. BAGWELL
 SARAH H. BAILEY
 THOMAS J. BARONI
 PAULA F. BARR
 JASON R. BART
 REILLY G. BAYER
 BRYANNA M. BEAUCHAMP
 CYNTHIA M. BERNSTINE
 JOSHUA R. BIDWELL
 DAVID A. BLUM
 TIMOTHY A. BOWMAN
 ALEX L. BRINK
 EDWARD BRODY
 GARRETT G. BROOKS
 ZECHARIAH R. BRORING
 LINDSEY M. BROWN
 MICHAEL J. BROWN
 KYLE D. BURDETTE
 JESSE P. BURNETT
 MICHAEL K. CASWELL
 KIAHN L. J. COOPER
 STEFANIE M. CORTESEBIANCHI
 DANIELLE L. COWAN
 ANDREW R. DIESELMAN
 KRISTEN L. DORFMAN
 MATTHEW S. DOYLE
 ROBERT W. DUFFIE
 ANDREW J. EDELMAN
 DAVID M. ENGSTROM
 KARSTON E. ERICKSON
 KEVIN T. FARRELLY
 CHELSEA B. FINNEGAN
 BARRY J. FITZGERALD
 KATHARINE L. FITZPATRICK
 CHRISTOPHER W. GILL
 CATTLIN E. GRIEVE
 SCOTT D. GRONSKY
 HANNAH J. HADLAND
 GRAHAM M. HADLEY
 KENNETH B. HAESLY
 AMIR R. HAMDOUN
 TREVOR J. HARRIS
 GABRIELLE S. HEIM
 JARED W. HESLOP
 CHRISTOPHER M. HOBOLTH
 JORDAN A. HUFFMAN
 BRANDON A. HUNSAKER
 KIMBERLY E. HURT
 MICHELE L. ISGETT
 JARON R. JANSON
 KEITH A. JAWORSKI
 LANCE M. JOHNSON
 ROBERT A. JONES
 LYNN A. JUREK
 HAMZAH KHAN
 MARGARET E. KOTLIK
 ADA LACEVIC
 JONATHAN T. LACKOVICH
 PHILIP W. LAKIN III
 DAKOTA S. LEE
 RICHARD B. LEIPER
 ADAM N. LICHTENAUER
 CURTIS W. LITTLESUN
 CHRISTINA L. LOWRY
 CAITLIN A. MARCHAND
 KIARA Y. MARTINEZBENTLEY
 CAITLIN C. MARTINS
 JULIA M. MCCORMICK
 STEPHEN R. MILLWOOD
 DAVID G. MORGAN
 BENJAMIN S. NEWHOUSE
 VY D. NGUYEN
 VY T. NGUYEN
 JERRY S. PARKS
 LEVI R. PAULEY
 MOLLY E. PHILLIPS
 JONATHAN E. PIVETZ
 AMMAR REHMAN
 JOHN U. REYES
 SOLOMON RHO

CAROL K. RIM
 MICHELLE C. ROSS
 CHRISTOPHER J. SALEMME
 MICHAEL A. SALVUCCI
 KAYLYN A. SANDS
 TARA A. SCANLON
 ANTHONY J. SCARPATI, JR.
 CHRISTOPHER A. SIMONSON
 TAYLOR D. SMITH
 TIFFANY C. SOMMADOSSI
 JACOB M. SPALDING
 RYAN C. SPERAY
 GORDON J. STOCK
 SERGIO M. TARIN
 JAMES D. TAYLOR
 ROBERT J. THOMAS
 KYLE E. TREUBERT
 BRENNAN A. VAZQUEZ
 JES'TYNE A. VENARDI
 JONATHAN D. WELK
 LAUREN A. WELK
 BRIAN D. WESKAMP
 THOMAS N. WHEATLEY
 SHANE M. WIEGERIG
 BRIAN C. WILSON
 THOMAS S. WISNIEWSKI
 AARON S. WOOD
 KYLE R. YOERG
 0002442772
 0003434384

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 7064:

To be major

RAFAEL J. KAPLAN

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 605:

To be captain

CHRISTOPHER D. CARAWAY
 THOMAS E. DIGAN, JR.
 ALEXANDER J. FRANZ
 DEREK M. GOEBEL
 MICHAEL C. GRAHAM
 KRISTINE Y. C. HIME
 CARL D. JAPPERT
 RANDALL J. LESLIE
 MICHAEL A. LILLEBERG
 LACY N. LODMELL
 ADAM M. MATTHEWS
 JOSHUA D. PETERS
 JEFFREY W. RANSOM
 MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ
 MICHAEL J. SIEDSMA
 TAYLOR J. SOUTH
 JOSEPH S. TURNER
 TERRY L. TURNER II
 KARI E. YAKUBISIN

To be commander

JAMES A. CAMERON
 BRIAN F. GOTTFRIED
 DANIEL J. HEMMER
 KEDISH O. HEMMINGS
 ALAN M. JANIGIAN
 KRYSTAL M. ROBERTS
 ANDREW SPILSBURY
 KEVIN P. TULLOCH
 STEPHEN E. WILLOUGHBY

To be lieutenant commander

MICHAEL W. ADAMS
 PERRY M. ARTZ
 RYAN P. BAILEY
 ANDREW N. BALHOFF

CHRISTOPHER J. BANKO
 RYAN T. BARKER
 JUSTIN D. BARNARD
 ERIK W. BIGGERS
 CHRISTOPHER H. BOBOD
 MICHAEL B. BYRNE
 FRANCIS N. CALICURA
 ERNESTO CASTANEDAROBLESGL
 ZACHARY A. CEROLI
 SIQI CHEN
 JORDAN D. CHOATE
 HYUNG J. CHOE
 MATTHEW D. CORNS
 KEVIN S. DEGROFT
 DANIEL S. FRICK
 ANSEL R. HARTMAN
 ROBERT J. HAUGH, JR.
 SEAN J. HIGGINS
 MICHAEL P. JENNING
 SHAWN R. KAVANAGH
 MATTHEW L. KEARNEY
 WILLIAM S. KINSLEY
 ROBERT H. MATHER
 KYLE J. MUKA
 JOSEPH E. MURRAY
 JAMIESON P. NEWMAN
 MICHAEL J. ORTON, JR.
 WILLIAM P. PARKER
 PATRICK A. PENA
 GERSON M. PEREZRIOS
 MARC A. PRATHER
 JAMES E. REYNOLDS
 NSOMBI J. ROBERTS
 JAMES M. ROBERTSON
 MICHAEL J. ROSS, JR.
 MISHA M. C. SANCHEZ
 SETH D. SCHAEFFER
 ANDREW C. SIMS
 THOMAS A. SIMS
 JOSEPH M. SOUTHGATE
 BRYCE A. THUMMEL
 AMY F. TRAMMEL
 RYAN J. TRICKEL
 GAVINO L. VALDEZ
 CRAIG P. WHITE
 BRADFORD M. WINKELMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be captain

ERIK C. HEDVAL

IN THE SPACE FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE SPACE FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

To be major

KENNETH N. WOOTEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

BRENDA L. BEEGLE

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate November 18, 2024:

THE JUDICIARY

EMBRY J. KIDD, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on November 15, 2024 as I had an immovable commitment. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 465 for H.R. 8932.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR VANCE CLARKE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Command Chief Master Sergeant Vance Michael Clarke of Rockwall, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. CMSgt Clarke honorably served in the United States Air Force.

CMSgt Clarke followed in his family's footsteps and joined the Air Force in 1980. For over twenty years, he specialized in material management and successfully managed inventory and supplies for our troops. After being promoted to Chief Master Sergeant, he led Supply Squadron nights and helped coordinate airlifts and other operations in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. For his meritorious service, CMSgt Clarke was awarded the Legion of Merit the Meritorious Service Medal with nine oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor Device with four oak leaf clusters, and many more.

In 2010, CMSgt Clarke retired from the Air Force, and he has continued to be actively involved in our community. He worked as a Program Manager for L3Harris's aircraft and logistics team to help source critical parts for the Air Force. In addition, CMSgt Clarke is the Northeast Chapter President of the Air & Space Forces Association, in which he assists with recruitment efforts to inspire the next generation of Airmen and Guardians to serve our Nation. He is notable for his extraordinary leadership at AFA, as he has transformed the Northeast Chapter into one of the best in the organization. I am proud of CMSgt Clarke's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent CMSgt Clarke in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING EAGLE-MATT LEE FIRE COMPANY NO. 1

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Eagle-Matt Lee Fire Company No. 1 and the dedicated service of its members. The Eagle-Matt Lee Fire Company No. 1's origins stem all the way back to 1815 and I am honored to recognize those who have served our community and passed on, as well as the Company's "Old Timers" who have given so much back to the community and possess over twenty-five years of service.

In 1815, the citizens of Ballston Spa gathered to build an engine house. Chimney fires, a top issue for the community, were addressed with the founding of the first fire company named Engine House No. 1 which was located on the southwest corner of Bath and Walnut Streets.

Engine House No. 1 eventually became known as the Eagle Fire Company in 1843. The expansion of the town saw the rise of yet another firehouse and in 1868, the J.A. Harvey Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1. Just one year later, they renamed the organization Matt Lee Hook & Ladder Company No. 1.

To serve the community better, these two houses merged and became known as the Eagle-Matt Lee Fire Company No. 1. in 1933. Charles Duffy was elected Captain of the house. and he passionately served in this capacity for the next twenty-five years. Since Charles' initial captainship, the Company has grown tremendously. It currently employs over 50 firefighters and has access to numerous firefighting tools including a ninety-five-foot aerial ladder truck, an ETA pumper, and an E-one Rescue truck.

The Eagle-Matt Lee Fire Company No. 1's service to their community is truly inspiring and we are immensely grateful for their work as firefighters in our district. On behalf of New York's 21st District, I am honored to recognize the incredible service and commitment to the community of the Eagle-Matt Lee Fire Company No. 1 for their years of service and solemnly remember their brothers who have lost their lives in service. I congratulate them on their incredible achievements and look forward to witnessing their future endeavors in the community.

HONORING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH PAMUNKEY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 250th anniversary of

North Pamunkey Baptist Church in Orange County, Virginia.

North Pamunkey Baptist Church has a rich history that is marked by resilience and courage. Formed in 1774, the church was created after two brave ministers, Elijah Craig and Aaron Bledsoe, were detained for preaching without the permission of the Church of England. Led by the ideals of religious freedom, North Pamunkey Baptist Church advocated for the religious freedom of all throughout the American Revolution. James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution," supported early American Baptist ministers in their fight for liberty—and North Pamunkey's founders implored Madison to enshrine religious freedom in the Constitution of the United States.

The congregation's unwavering commitment to their faith laid the foundation for the community that still thrives today.

Over the last 250 years, North Pamunkey Baptist Church has grown to be a sanctuary for spiritual nourishment. It is a gathering space for fellowship and support. As we celebrate this milestone, let us honor the legacy of those two early ministers and the countless individuals who have contributed to the church's mission over the years. Their dedication has built a thriving community that will continue to flourish for generations to come.

Today, the North Pamunkey Baptist Church congregation includes the Jones, Pierce, and Pugh families who are descendants of those who had the courage to fight for religious freedom during the church's early days. They are witnesses of its everlasting impact and the countless contributions of the North Pamunkey Baptist Church.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring and celebrating North Pamunkey Baptist Church on their 250th anniversary. I am honored to represent the families and individuals who make up this caring and loving community, and I look forward to celebrating their continued success for years to come.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN JOSEPH TOMANELLI

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud recognition of Stephen Joseph Tomanelli, a graduate of Operation Recognition Class of 2024. Operation Recognition is a program organized by the Riverside County Office of Education and Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services that presents diplomas to residents of Riverside County who were unable to complete high school due to military service in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or due to internment in World War II Japanese-American relocation camps. Operation Recognition provides a way to express our appreciation and gratitude for our veterans' significant contributions and sacrifices.

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

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

Stephen Joseph Tomanelli grew up in the Bronx, New York, and attended public schools in New York City. Economic challenges led him to leave Samuel Gompers Vocational High School after his sophomore year to support himself and his family. His technical skills and interests opened doors for employment in the emerging field of computers and technology. Facing the likelihood of being drafted during the Vietnam War, Stephen enlisted in the United States Navy, where he served from 1969 to 1973. His roles included serving as a ceremonial guardsman at Arlington National Cemetery and working as a fire control technician and ordnance mechanic aboard the USS *Massey*.

After his military service, Mr. Tomanelli earned his GED and pursued various professional opportunities, ultimately relocating to California. He utilized the GI Bill to develop his technical expertise in computers and to purchase a home in the Sunnymead area of Riverside County. His career in the technology sector has been marked by his contributions to providing early computer solutions to municipal and commercial clients in Riverside County. Since 1986, he has owned and operated a computer sales and service business. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Mr. Tomanelli has dedicated himself to public service. Since 2005, he joined the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as a Commissioner and has contributed to various non-profit organizations throughout the region. Mr. Tomanelli is a resident of the Poppet Flats area and remains active in his community, with one of his grandchildren attending public school in Riverside County.

On behalf of all Riverside County residents and a grateful Nation, I want to thank Mr. Tomanelli for his service to our country and congratulate him on being part of the Operation Recognition Class of 2024.

HONORING JAMES W. PUTNEY, JR.

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of James W. Putney, Jr., who passed away this September at 70 years old.

A Georgia native, James was a born and raised Savannah and is widely remembered for his passion for service and dedication to his community.

For over two decades, James served in the military specializing in information technology, and once said his favorite place he was stationed in was Panama, as it reminded him of his beautiful home of Savannah.

After retiring from active duty, James began working with fellow veterans in the American Legion, and served as the Commander of Post 500, the first African American Legion in the state of Georgia.

James also served as the chaplain on the Chatham County Veterans Council, which was another reason he was chosen as the grand marshal for Savannah's 2023 Veteran's Day Parade.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Putney family and the Savannah area, as we

mourn the loss of a truly impactful member of our community.

HONORING SPECIALIST FIFTH
CLASS MICHAEL ANTHONY
DEBONIS

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the United States Vietnam Veteran, Specialist Ffth Class, Michael Anthony DeBonis.

Michael was born on September 7, 1950, in Troy, New York, where he and his three siblings were raised by their parents, Michael and Josephine DeBonis. Michael attended St. Mary's Elementary School and later attended Troy High School.

Michael enlisted in the United States Army on February 24, 1970. Following basic training, Michael attended service school in Fort Eustis, Virginia, where he trained as an Airframe Repairman. He was later assigned to a year-long tour of duty in Vietnam, where he conducted maintenance and repairs on Army aircraft and equipment in challenging conditions, including jungle environments and remote locations.

On March 23, 1972, Michael was honorably discharged from the United States Army at Fort Meade, Maryland. For his honorable service, Michael was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, two Overseas Service Bars, the Sharpshooter Marksmanship Badge with Rifle Bar and M16 Bar, and the Expert Marksmanship Badge with Grenade Bar.

Upon returning to civilian life, Michael married Kathleen Agostine on May 4, 1973. Together, they had two children, Michael and Lindsay. Michael was incredibly talented, working in construction with Rocco Testa and as a carpenter at the Watervliet Arsenal to support his family.

In his spare time, Michael enjoyed hunting, playing darts, and excelled at a game of corks. He was an active member of the Disabled American Veterans, the North Greenbush American Legion Post 1489, and the Ciccarelli Rea Agar Bevevino Garrison Post 1954, where he cherished the camaraderie of his fellow members.

Michael passed away on March 22, 2005, but his legacy will always live on through the memories of those dearest to him. Michael DeBonis' dedication to service to the United States is truly remarkable. On behalf of New York's 21st district, I am honored to recognize his incredible life.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COM-
MENDATION FOR TRACY BREW-
STER

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Master Sergeant Tracy Brewster of

Rowlett, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. MSgt Brewster honorably served in the United States Air Force.

MSgt Brewster joined the Air Force in June 1982. Over the next two decades, he served as an Air Cargo Specialist and Air Transportation Craftsman to ensure that our troops were safely and efficiently resupplied around the world. MSgt Brewster completed two tours in South Korea and deployed in support of Operation Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom. For his meritorious service, MSgt Brewster received the Air Force Achievement Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and many more awards.

After he retired from the Air Force in 2003, MSgt Brewster has continued to serve our community in numerous ways. For many years, he worked in supervisory positions at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and concluded his public service career as an Immigration Services Analyst. In this role, MSgt Brewster led efforts to investigate and prevent immigration fraud. He is also a longtime contributor to charitable initiatives to support disabled veterans, churches, museums, and youth athletic programs across North Texas. Most importantly, MSgt Brewster is a devoted husband and father to two children and two grandchildren. I commend him for his selfless service and dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent MSgt Brewster in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

CELEBRATING MRS. CLAIRE
SEIFFER'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Claire Seiffer, who is celebrating her 100th birthday on November 21st of this year. Mrs. Seiffer has spent her entire life in the State of New Jersey, where she was a longtime public-school PE teacher. Her service to the state and nation was complemented by that of her husband, a World War II veteran. Mrs. Seiffer met her husband at the school that they worked at together after he returned from his military service. Mrs. Seiffer has fond memories of iceboating on their hand-built boat with her husband on New Jersey's famous Lake Hopatcong. Going into her 100th birthday, she continues to maintain an active lifestyle, and her friends and family enjoy her vivacious spirit and sharp mind.

It is my distinct pleasure to celebrate Mrs. Seiffer today, as she continues to be the embodiment of American and New Jerseyan commitment to public service, health, and prosperity.

HONORING MIAMI NORLAND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Miami Norland Senior High School Boys Basketball Team for their remarkable achievement in winning the 2024 Florida High School Athletic Association 5A Boys Basketball State Championship. This victory marks the seventh championship in the school's history, a testament to the enduring legacy of excellence at Miami Norland Senior High School.

It is my distinct privilege to recognize the dedication, perseverance, and excellence demonstrated by these young athletes. Under the exemplary leadership of Head Coach Lawton Williams, III and his outstanding coaching staff, the team has achieved the highest honor in Florida high school basketball. The Vikings completed the season with an impressive record of 21–10. Their dedication and hard work culminated in a thrilling championship game at the RP Funding Center in Lakeland, Florida, where they faced Blake High School. The Vikings showcased their skill and determination, defeating Blake with a decisive score of 61–48.

This championship victory is a testament to the hard work, discipline, and teamwork exhibited by each member of the team. The Miami Norland Vikings have not only brought pride to their school but have also inspired the local community through their commitment to achievement on and off the court.

I acknowledge the individual contributions of the 2024 Viking Championship team: Caleb Clarke, Isaiah St. Preux, Triston Wilson, Marcus Allen, Jamal Ware, Lorenzo Major Jr., Kalanji Taylor, Racari Garland, Marquis Siggers, Kendrick Preston, Karon Hill, Emerson Felicien, Chad McDonald, O'Neal Norleus, and Saige Alcin.

Additionally, I commend the invaluable support provided by the team's trainers, whose dedication behind the scenes ensured the athletes were in peak condition: Yahlonnie Church, Ariyel Haynes, Ti'ira Hill, Ro'niyah Mathis, Tatiana Macklin, and Chamia Brown.

I also recognize the essential contributions of the assistant coaches, who played a crucial role in guiding the team to victory: Anthony Johnson, Kelvin Farrington, Brandon Williams, and Cleveland Roberts.

The unwavering support from Principal Mrs. Rhonda Gaines-Miller and Athletic Director Mr. Tyrone Johnson has also been instrumental in the team's success. Their leadership and commitment to fostering a thriving athletic program have provided the foundation for these young athletes to excel.

The Vikings' victory in the state championship is more than a reflection of their athletic prowess; it is a celebration of the values of hard work, perseverance, and unity. These young men have set a high standard for future generations and have brought great honor to Miami Norland Senior High School and the wider community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the Miami Norland High School Boys Basketball Team. May their success in sports continue to inspire greatness in all their future endeavors.

HONORING CORPORAL KENNETH M. WILSON

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible life and service of U.S. Army Veteran Corporal Kenneth M. Wilson.

Kenneth was born on October 8, 1921, in Dobbs Ferry, New York. He was the son of Harold and Frances Eschbach Wilson and grew up in Upstate New York with six siblings: Miriam, Dorothy, Gertrude, Harriet, Peggy, and Harold. Kenneth graduated from Van Rensselaer High School in 1941 and enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduation on February 6, 1942.

Kenneth's service took him to Europe and Africa at the onset of the Second World War. Earning the rank of Corporal, he heroically fought in the Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Southern France, and Rhineland campaigns, serving as a light machine gunner in the 143rd Infantry Regiment, Company D. For his bravery and sacrifices, Corporal Wilson was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the World War II Victory Medal. He was honorably discharged on June 12, 1945.

After returning to civilian life, Kenneth married Mary Cornell on October 8, 1949, in Rensselaer, New York. Together, they had three children: Karen, Keith, and Diane. Kenneth's professional career began with Norman's Kill Dairy in 1955, and he remained with the Farm until 1962. He then entered public service that same year, working diligently for the U.S. Post Office until his retirement on July 3, 1984.

Kenneth was an active and lifelong member of his community. He coached for the East Greenbush Little League, the Girls Softball League, and the Babe Ruth League. He was also a proud member of the Elks Lodge 2073 and Melvin Roads American Legion Post 1231, where he cherished the camaraderie and fellowship of his fellow veterans. In his spare time, Kenneth enjoyed camping, gardening, and reading.

Corporal Kenneth M. Wilson's stalwart commitment to service was a testament to his character and dedication to his family, country, and community. On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, I am honored to recognize his extraordinary life and legacy.

HONORING FORMER FLORIDA CONGRESSMAN ANDY IRELAND

HON. SCOTT FRANKLIN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the remarkable life and legacy of Andrew Poyzell Ireland, known to many as Andy—a distinguished former Member of Congress from Central Florida. He was a banking executive, beloved community leader, and someone I had the privilege of calling a mentor and friend. Andy passed away peacefully in Sara-

sota, Florida, at the age of 94, leaving behind a legacy of service, leadership, and a profound commitment to others.

Born on August 23, 1930, in Cincinnati, Ohio, Andy Ireland's journey was marked by distinction from the very beginning. His early years at Cincinnati Country Day School revealed his spirited nature, and his education at Phillips Academy and Yale University solidified his reputation as a man of intelligence, curiosity, and drive. Andy's career began in banking, where his innovative approach and leadership quickly earned him success. Rising through the ranks, he eventually became Chair and CEO of American National Bank in Winter Haven, Florida. He not only transformed the banking industry but also helped shape the community he loved, bringing the Boston Red Sox to Winter Haven for their winter home and later contributing to the creation of the Center for Elephant Conservation in Polk County.

Andy's professional success was rivaled only by his commitment to public service. He entered politics as a Winter Haven City Commissioner before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976. During his 16 years in Congress, Andy served with distinction on the Foreign Affairs, Small Business, Armed Services, and Intelligence Committees, a tireless advocate for national security, small businesses, and fiscal responsibility. He was one of the rare individuals appointed by President Ronald Reagan to represent Congress at the United Nations General Session—a testament to his deep understanding of global issues and his unwavering dedication to his country.

Perhaps one of the most defining moments of Andy's political career came in 1984 when he made the principled decision to switch from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. It was a move that exemplified his integrity and courage—qualities that endeared him to colleagues on both sides of the aisle and to the constituents he faithfully served.

Beyond politics, Andy was a passionate conservationist, serving as a Trustee of Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium and as President of the Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Association. He cherished his retirement years in Boca Grande, where he found joy in his family, friends, and the beauty of Florida's natural landscapes.

On a personal note, Andy played a pivotal role in my life. He nominated me to three service academies, ultimately leading to my acceptance at the United States Naval Academy. That nomination set me on a path of service and leadership, culminating in the honor of representing the very district Andy once served in this esteemed body. Andy and I also shared the same birthday, a connection that further deepened the bond I felt with him—a bond rooted in gratitude, respect, and admiration.

Andy Ireland's life was one of purpose and impact. He was a devoted husband to his beloved Nancy, a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and a cherished friend to many. His warm smile, gentle heart, and welcoming spirit left an indelible mark on everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

Mr. Speaker, as we remember Andy Ireland, let us celebrate a life well-lived and honor a

man whose legacy will continue to inspire future generations. May we carry forward his example of integrity, service, and love for community. I thank Andy for everything. He will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR JACK ASHMORE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Captain Jackie King "Jack" Ashmore of Reno, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Capt. Ashmore honorably served in the United States Navy during the Korean War and Vietnam War.

As a young man, Capt. Ashmore sought to follow in his family's footsteps and serve his country. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1947 after graduating from Paris High School and was determined to pursue a military career that included his longtime passion for aviation. In 1950, Capt. Ashmore completed aviation school and later participated in numerous combat flights over Korea while stationed in the Sea of Japan. During the Vietnam War, he took part in the 1968 Tet Offensive and flew 254 combat missions. For his outstanding service, Capt. Ashmore received numerous awards, including the Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars, the Legion of Merit, and many more. His final duties as a naval officer was with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where he briefed senior elected officials on national security matters.

After retiring in 1973, Capt. Ashmore continued to fly planes as a community volunteer and even taught friends and family how to fly. He also serves as the treasurer for the Paris Junior College Friends and Alumni Board, a position he has held for over twenty years. In recognition of Capt. Ashmore's distinguished career and selfless service, he received the Distinguished Student Award from Paris High School and a position on Paris Junior College's Wall of Honor. He is a man of faith and serves as a lay reader at his episcopal church. Above all, Capt. Ashmore is a devoted husband of over 57 years and compassionate friend to all who know him.

I am honored to represent Capt. Ashmore in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, had I been present during November 12 to November 15, 2024, my votes for Roll Call Numbers 456, 457, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, and 465 would have been cast as such: YEA on Roll Call No. 456, Bill Number: H.R. 82; NAY on Roll Call No. 457, Bill Number: H.R. 5342; NAY on Roll Call No. 459, Bill Number:

H. Res. 1568 (PQ); NAY on Roll Call No. 460, Bill Number: H. Res. 1568 (Rule); YEA on Roll Call No. 461, Bill Number: H.R. 8446 (MTR); YEA on Roll Call No. 462, Bill Number: H.R. 8446; YEA on Roll Call No. 463, Bill Number: H.R. 7409 (MTR); YEA on Roll Call No. 465, Bill Number: H.R. 8932.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark an important anniversary. This month, the Daughters of Penelope, an international woman's organization and affiliate organization of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), celebrated its 95th anniversary on November 16. Founded in San Francisco, the Daughters of Penelope originally worked to improve the status and well-being of women and their families. They also sought to provide women with the opportunity to make significant contributions to their communities and country. After successfully achieving many of their early goals, the Daughters of Penelope now promote the ideals of ancient Greece: philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence, achieved through community service and volunteerism. I am a proud Greek-American. As a young boy, my grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles instilled in me an appreciation for our beautiful Greek culture, which focuses on family, community, and faith. As Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, it is with great pride that I see these values shine through the Daughters of Penelope today, across all its 250 chapters worldwide. Through the exceptional Penelope House in Mobile, Alabama and Penelope's Place in Brockton, Massachusetts, the organization vigorously supports efforts to combat domestic violence in Greece, as well as the United States. The development of these shelters brought renewed hope to many areas with suffering families who previously did not have access to the same level of care. As a member on the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I am impressed with the organization's efforts to provide financial support and raise awareness for medical research on treatments for breast cancer, Thalassemia (Cooley's anemia), muscular dystrophy, and Alzheimer's disease. The Daughters of Penelope are also a leading sponsor of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Housing for the Elderly Program, which offers affordable housing to senior citizens in Alabama, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Texas. Recently, the Daughters of Penelope has also demonstrated support for senior nutrition and isolation with support for Meals on Wheels of America. In addition to helping the elderly, the Daughters of Penelope Foundation, Inc., supports the educational objectives of the Daughters of Penelope by providing tens of thousands of dollars annually for scholarships, sponsoring educational seminars, and donating children's books to schools, shelters and churches through the

"Penelope's Books" program. After ninety five meaningful and productive years, it excites me to see what the Daughters of Penelope will accomplish and how they will help our country and our culture in the next century.

CONGRATULATING MR. FRANK QUIS ON HIS LONG CAREER OF PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mr. Frank Quis on his retirement after 26 years as a civil servant for the people of Moore County. Frank comes from a long line of public servants with his mother and father both being involved in local governance. Frank Quis started his career in community service as a member of the Southern Pines Town Council before becoming mayor in 1997, a position he would hold for 10 years. In 2016, Frank was elected as Commissioner of Moore County and has a long list of accomplishments to reflect on with pride. One of his proudest achievements as Commissioner was the construction of four new elementary schools, he also confidently and successfully led Moore County through a hurricane and a global pandemic.

Along with serving as an elected official to the community, Frank has also served by lending his time and efforts to many organizations across the sandhills, to include the Moore Coalition for Human Care, Moore Free and Charitable Clinic, the Central Pines Regional Council, and the Boys & Girls Club of the Sandhills.

Frank credits all of his success to the support of his wife, Missy, who has been with him every step of the way since he decided to run for town council back in 1989. Together they owned and operated Quis Machinery, Inc. for more than 35 years. Once he retires, Mr. Quis plans to spend more time with his children and grandchildren and hopefully play some more golf.

While we will miss him dearly on the commission, I know we will be seeing him around. I wish Mr. Quis and his family all the best as he begins his well-deserved retirement and thank him for his commitment to the folks of Moore County.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Frank Quis on his retirement after a 26-year career in public service.

HONORING THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF FORT EDWARD HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the centennial anniversary of Fort Edward High School in Washington County, New York. This institution has stood as a beacon of learning, progress, and community spirit for 100 years and I look forward to seeing its continued success in its next century.

The story of Fort Edward High School's creation is one rooted in the village's unwavering commitment to education beginning early in the 20th century. During this period, the New York State Department of Education conducted inspections of the previous Broadway School building, which was found to be inadequate for proper high school work. These reports led to a strong push for a new, modern facility. In 1924, the present Fort Edward High School was established as one of the best high school facilities in the country.

As the school celebrates 100 years, it remains a vital part of the Fort Edward Union Free School District, serving over 550 students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Fort Edward High School's long-standing tradition of academic excellence and community engagement has shaped generations of students, empowering them to excel in higher education, their careers, and civic life.

This centennial milestone is not only a celebration of the school's history but also an opportunity to look forward to the continued success and innovation that will define its future. The school's dedication and perseverance ensure that it will remain a cornerstone of education and a source of community pride for the next 100 years.

On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the students, faculty, alumni, and the entire Fort Edward community for reaching this historic achievement.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR JOANNE SCHUMM

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief Petty Officer Joanne Schumm of Frisco, Texas, and award her a Congressional Veteran Commendation. CPO Schumm honorably served in the United States Navy.

From a young age, CPO Schumm knew she wanted to serve our Nation and contribute to a greater cause. From 1978 to 1983, she served as a Cryptologic Technician and Intelligence Specialist in the Navy to provide timely communications and intelligence briefs for Commanders. CPO Schumm later joined the Navy Reserves and completed her military service in 2002. For her outstanding service, she was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with gold star, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze stars, and many more.

After retiring from the Navy, CPO Schumm has continued to be an active member of our community to advocate for important issues. She serves as the Commander of American Legion Post 178 and is a member of a military affinity group with State Farm Insurance. In these roles, she works diligently to bring awareness to veteran issues and support fellow veterans in need. Moreover, CPO Schumm works closely with the Frisco Veterans Advisory Committee to help ensure that the City of Frisco is always welcoming and ready to support all veterans. I am proud of her contributions to our community and her dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent CPO Schumm in Texas' 4th Congressional District. It is a pleasure to award her the Congressional Veteran Commendation for her service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING ALBERTO GUTIER

HON. GREG STANTON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a respected public servant, Alberto Gutier, the former Director of the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Serving under seven Arizona Governors, Alberto worked tirelessly to protect the Arizona travelers and law enforcement officers on our roadways. He passed away on November 2, 2024, at age 84.

Born and raised in Havana, Cuba; Alberto Gutier spent his young adulthood fighting back against communist regimes before emigrating to Florida in the late 1950's. There, he attended the University of Florida and later moved to New Jersey to start his career and his family with his beloved wife, Miryam. In 1968, Alberto became so inspired by the work of U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater that he moved the Gutier family to Phoenix, Arizona, where he would continue to live out the American Dream.

A long-time figure in Arizona politics and policy, Alberto was widely respected by leaders on both sides of the aisle, and he championed the importance of a good compromise. He served as a Republican Party committeeman for 50 years and was a delegate to five national conventions. In addition, he founded the Gutier Group, a lobbying and political consulting firm, and served as state personnel director and administrative services officer for the Department of Administration, acting driver licensing program administrator for the Arizona Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Division, and Chairman of the Maricopa Merit System Commission. Alberto was also an active leader in our community—joining the Arizona DUI Abatement Council, the Phoenix Police Chief Interview Panel, the Legislative Oversight Committee on School Safety, and more—and a frequent contributor to FOX 10 and other local broadcasts.

Over his twenty years as Director of the Office of Highway Safety, Alberto led many successful safety campaigns that minimized the risks of wrong-way crashes, drunk driving, and distracted driving—and was a stalwart supporter of police officers and first responders, particularly in fighting for fair overtime compensation for law enforcement. His commitment to public safety, and his sense of humor, is still often projected to drivers across Arizona on the Arizona Department of Transportation's famous highway safety messages—especially his signature phrase, "Drive Hammered, Get Nailed!"

His dedication to keeping Arizonans safe on the roads will never be forgotten, and his many contributions to our state will be greatly missed. Arizona owes a debt of gratitude to Alberto for his years of service to our community.

HONORING ST. CLOUD RESIDENT
BECKY CARLSON

HON. TOM EMMER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Becky Carlson from St. Cloud, Minnesota, who is in Washington this week to receive a prestigious award from the U.S. Department of the Air Force.

Since 2003, Becky has been working tirelessly to send care packages to our brave men and women overseas, through her non-profit Becky's Troop Care Packages. Becky started this endeavor to pay tribute to her brother, who passed away during the Vietnam War.

Becky stated, "It took me a lot of years to figure out what I could do to give back. And I wondered and wondered and wondered. And some of the soldiers coming home and stuff told me how bad it was over there, how the food was so horrible. You know, I thought, 'Well, why can't I send a package or two?'"

Despite health challenges over the years, Becky's resolve has never been stronger. Fueled by the support of local businesses, community groups and volunteers, Becky sends dozens of care packages to service members per month and several hundred during the holiday season. These care packages often include snacks, magazines and personal letters from family, friends and volunteers.

In addition to her work with her non-profit, Becky is a part of several Family Readiness Groups which help support soldiers and their families as these heroes transition from their military careers back into civilian life.

Becky's lifelong commitment to support our military heroes has not gone unnoticed. She was previously named the Woman of the Year by the St. Joseph American Legion Auxiliary Post 328. This week, she is in Washington, D.C. to receive the Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award at the Pentagon.

I thank Becky for her years of service to our veterans and community. She makes St. Cloud and the State of Minnesota proud.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR STANLEY SCOTT

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Captain Stanley Bernard Scott of Heath, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. Capt. Scott honorably served in the United States Marine Corps and the United States Navy.

Capt. Scott joined the Marine Corps in 1952, where he served as a motor vehicle operator and rose up the ranks to become a Sergeant. He served for eight years in the Marines, but felt that God called upon him to return to service once more. In 1967, Capt. Scott joined the Navy during the Vietnam War and served as a Chaplain in combat. His military service continued for many years through

Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield. For his outstanding service, Capt. Scott received the Purple Heart with one star, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, and many more awards.

In 1993, Capt. Scott retired from military service, but he has continued to make a positive impact on the world around him. He served as an Assistant Pastor at his Methodist Church and led weekly Bible studies for over 25 years. Additionally, he led mission trips to India in support of several ministries and helps homeschool his grandchildren and great grandchildren. I am proud of Capt. Scott's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent Capt. Scott in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING THE COMMUNITY
SERVICE OF BELLA ROMANO

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the remarkable contributions of Bella Romano, a senior at Broadalbin-Perth Jr./Sr. High School, for her steadfast dedication to the Broadalbin-Perth backpack program. Through her work in this program, Bella has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to fighting hunger in her community.

The Broadalbin-Perth backpack program, in partnership with the Northeast Regional Food Bank and the Broadalbin Presbyterian Church, provides food products for 35 to 45 students during weekends and school breaks in the Broadalbin-Perth Community. Bella's efforts have been central to the success of this initiative.

Since her freshman year, Bella has raised over \$3,000 to support the program with a portion of the funds coming from a can and bottle drive that she organizes at Wally's Driftwood Park in Mayfield. Through this project, Bella has not only raised vital resources for local children in need but also promoted environmental responsibility.

In addition to her work with the backpack program, Bella has dedicated the past seven years to volunteer efforts throughout the community. She will soon begin her annual work with the Salvation Army Christmas Toy Drive, continuing her legacy of service. Her unwavering dedication has not gone unnoticed as she was named Miss Upstate New York's Outstanding Teen in 2022.

Bella Romano's commitment to the well-being of her fellow students and the greater community is an inspiration to all, and I am proud to recognize her efforts on behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District.

COMMEMORATING THE 45TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE AIR ZOO

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Air Zoo Aerospace & Science Museum as it celebrates its 45th anniversary. This achievement represents their dedicated years of service since their doors first opened in 1979.

In 1959, Air Zoo founders Pete and Suzanne Parish unknowingly began curating the world-renowned collection of aircraft the Air Zoo possesses today. The first step in assembling the Air Zoo's collection was Pete's purchase of a single-engine 35C Bonanza, later, the Parish's purchased a partially assembled P-40 Aircraft, the same combat plane Suzanne had dreamed of flying throughout her service with the Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP). Twenty years after Pete purchased the 35C Bonanza, the Air Zoo opened its doors for the first time on November 18, 1979.

Today, the Air Zoo offers educational programs and exhibits, displays over 100,000 artifacts and archives, flight simulators, maintains an aircraft restoration program through the Air Zoo's Flight Discovery Center, and processes the world's only SR-71B Blackbird. Mr. Parish's single purchase laid the foundation for the Air Zoo's world-class facility that thousands of visitors enjoy each year.

For the last 45 years, the Air Zoo has been a community leader in inspiring a new generation of aviators, engineers, and all those interested in STEM fields. As we look forward to the next 45 years, the Air Zoo will be a place that fosters curiosity, innovation, and education.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Parish Family, staff, and all those who enjoy the Air Zoo as they celebrate their 45th Anniversary.

REMEMBERING DOROTHY TRUITT
WALK

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a respectful tribute to Dorothy Truitt Walk whose 1960 sit-in at Memphis' Cossitt Library began a transformation of my hometown for the better. Ms. Walk passed in October at the age of 88. Typical of her public-mindedness and humor, she donated her body to the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, the medical school in Memphis, telling her family it would make her a Tennessee Volunteer. Ms. Walk was a civic dynamo, raising the money to build the Orange Mound Community Center and riding in the parade on the day it opened. She also helped preserve and protect our city's monuments and landmarks. But it was the sit-in at the downtown library and her arrest that began her storied career in public life. Memphis had a segregated library for African Americans and a lawsuit to end segregation was pending when she, then a 24 year-old student at LeMoyné College, and 34 oth-

ers, grew impatient and staged the March 16, 1960 sit-in. Months later, the city integrated its libraires, but her arrest meant she could not work in the city schools, and she got a job teaching across the river in Arkansas. Ms. Walk often wrote to me with ideas, and I was fortunate to receive her thoughts and support. She also wrote thoughtful letters to the editor and to city officials, raising important issues. In response to her suggestions, then-Mayor Dick Hackett asked her to serve on a city board or commission, and she chose the Memphis-Shelby County Landmarks Commission and served there for 10 years. She also worked at International Harvester, the farm-equipment company, and retired when the Memphis plant was moth-balled. Ms. Walk was a lifelong member of the Beulah Baptist Church in Orange Mound. In addition to her civic work, she read the daily newspapers for 14 years on the public radio station WYPL, the Memphis Public Libraries' non-commercial station. St. Mary's Episcopal School named her a Memphis Woman Who Made a Difference in 2001. I extend my condolences to her son Calvin and his wife Christy Walk; her sister Janiece Williamson; stepsister Claudette Flowers; brother Jeff Harrison; and her extended family, friends and many admirers. Ms. Walk truly made a difference and made Memphis a better place. Hers was a life well-lived.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, November 15, 2024, I was absent for Roll Call No. 465. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on the FAFSA Deadline Act.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COM-
MENDATION FOR CLARENCE
JORIF

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Chief Warrant Officer 3 Clarence Leadore "CJ" Jorif of Rockwall, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. CW3 Jorif honorably served in the United States Army.

CW3 Jorif joined the Army in 1983, where he served as a military policeman and special agent for criminal investigations. He was inspired to join to serve his country and make a difference in the lives of those around him. As a result of his hard work and leadership, CW3 Jorif quickly rose up the ranks to become a Staff Sergeant in the Military Police Corps within four years. He was deployed to Honduras, Panama, and the Middle East as part of Operation Just Cause and Operation Desert Storm. As a Warrant Officer, CW3 Jorif successfully performed protective missions for the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during wartime and peacetime without any incidents. For his outstanding service, CW3 Jorif received the Army

Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Army Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with bronze star, and many more awards.

After retiring from the Army Reserves in 2003, CW3 Jorif has continued to be an active member of our community and dedicated law enforcement officer. From 1996 to 2016, he served as a Senior Special Agent for the U.S. Secret Service to provide critical protections for the President, Vice President, and other top officials from foreign nations. CW3 Jorif currently serves as a Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Rockwall. On top of his public service career, he is involved in numerous volunteer activities throughout North Texas to promote youth development and advocate for senior citizens. I am proud of CW3 Jorif's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent CW3 Jorif in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING NAVY VETERAN
ANDREW "ANDY" McTAGUE

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Navy veteran Andrew "Andy" Scott McTague. Andy was a cherished member of his community in Thurman, New York, and his life was marked by an unwavering dedication to his country and loved ones.

Andy was born on July 29, 1979, in Glens Falls, New York. He was raised in Thurman, where he attended Warrensburg Central School, graduating in 1997. Andy embodied a spirit of service and followed in his grandfather's footsteps by enlisting in the United States Navy post-graduation. After completing bootcamp at the Great Lakes Regional Training Center, he began his distinguished service in a Naval Construction Battalion, known as the Seabees, where he traveled across both the Pacific and the United States and took part in special projects of all forms.

After his military service, Andy transitioned to a successful civilian career and worked for a variety of companies and institutions in Upstate New York which included Echo Lake Camp Maintenance, Donnelly Construction, Verizon, Warren County, and the New York State Department of Transportation. He also started his own company, Adirondack Services and Maintenance, which allowed him to work with his family members on various projects. Despite his success in civilian life, his commitment to service remained strong and in 2017, he re-enlisted in the Seabees as a reservist and rapidly rose through the ranks and earned recognition as Sailor of the Year in 2022. In September of 2023, Andy was proudly promoted to Chief Petty Officer and left behind a legacy of leadership and dedication that will continue to inspire future generations of sailors.

Beyond his military service, Andy's life was filled with a deep love of his family. He mar-

ried his soulmate, Kaitlyn Witz, in 2016, and together they welcomed their daughter, Lyla Mae, a source of immense pride and joy. As a devoted father, Andy cherished the time spent with Lyla, sharing his love for the outdoors, hunting, hiking, and enjoying the beauty of the Thurman countryside.

Andy's work ethic extended into every aspect of his life, from his career as a lineman for Verizon to the many local projects he undertook through his own business. Whether it was through his military service or the impact he left on those in his community, Andy's commitment to leadership, humor, and dedication was an inspiration to all, and I am proud to honor his achievements on behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District.

HONORING DR. ENID PINKNEY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Enid Curtis Pinkney, a trailblazing leader, educator, and historic preservationist whose tireless dedication to her community and to preserving the rich cultural heritage of Miami has left an indelible mark on our Nation.

Enid Curtis was born the third of four children on October 15, 1931 in Miami's Overtown neighborhood to Lenora and Henry Curtis. She graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1949 and later earned degrees from Talladega College and Barry University, along with three honorary doctorates.

Her professional journey began as a social worker and educator, dedicating nearly four decades to the Dade County Public School System, where she retired, in 1991, as Assistant Principal of South Miami Middle School. However, her retirement marked the beginning of another chapter of service, as she turned her attention to historic preservation.

In the mid-1980's, Dr. Pinkney joined the Dade Heritage Trust and, in 1998, broke barriers by becoming its first Black president. She was the driving force behind the creation of the African American Committee, which sought to highlight and preserve the contributions of Black Americans in Miami. Among her many successes was leading the effort to save the Miami Circle, an ancient archaeological site, from demolition, preserving an irreplaceable piece of history.

Dr. Pinkney's commitment to preservation extended across Miami. As president of Natives of Dade, president of the Brownsville Neighborhood Civic Association, and a member of the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust, she was instrumental in preventing the commercialization of historic sites, including the "Colored" Beach at Virginia Key, safeguarding its legacy for future generations.

One of Dr. Pinkney's most significant achievements was her work as the Founding President and CEO of The Historic Hampton House Community Trust, Inc. Through her tireless advocacy, she saved the Historic Hampton House Motel, a landmark of Miami's Black history, from demolition, ensuring its restoration and continued presence as a vital cultural site.

Her passion for history also led her to preserve the Lemon City Cemetery, an abandoned Black cemetery, where she worked to ensure that the stories of those interred there were not forgotten.

Dr. Pinkney was not only a preservationist but also a prolific writer and producer, contributing to books, documentaries, and television programs that showcased Miami's rich African American heritage. Her contributions earned her numerous awards including induction into prestigious Halls of Fame, recognition from various organizations, and the Peter H. Brink Award for Individual Achievement in Historic Preservation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Not to mention being honored by: The Bahamian Government, and being named by Congresswoman Frederica Wilson as one of the twenty outstanding Bahamian Americans in Miami.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life and legacy of this remarkable woman, whose impact will be felt for years to come. Dr. Pinkney's legacy is a reminder of the power of one individual to make a profound difference in the world.

TRIBUTE TO FREDERICK P.
KESSLER

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary life and service of Frederick P. Kessler. It is with a heavy heart that I share the news of his passing on November 12, 2024. I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, and the many people in our community whose lives he touched.

Fred's remarkable career began in this very chamber, where, as a high school student, he acted as a Page in the United States House of Representatives. By the time he was 20 years old, Fred had been elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly. Throughout this time, he played a pivotal role in achieving compromise during Wisconsin's redistricting battles of the 1960s. Fred used his position to advocate for equal education, election reform, civil liberties, and fair housing. In the midst of his public service, he earned both a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Following the end of the legislative session in 1972, Fred was appointed to a judgeship in Milwaukee County. After working on the Wisconsin Legislative Council Committee on Court Reorganization in 1978, Fred was appointed as a circuit judge for Milwaukee County. He served with distinction for 10 years, upholding the law and administering justice to the people of Milwaukee.

In 2004, Fred returned to the Wisconsin State Assembly for 14 more years. During this period, Fred once again championed critical reforms in Wisconsin's criminal justice system, elections, and federal relations. Fred's dedication to justice will be dearly missed. His unwavering commitment to public service fills me with honor in recognizing his incredible career and passion for creating a more equal and just nation.

I have long admired Fred's dedication to improving the world around him. His legacy is one of selfless service, a steadfast pursuit of justice, and a profound care for others. Fred's life was defined by his compassion, his integrity, and his unwavering belief in the power of public service to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Fred was always a voice for the voiceless, a champion of fairness, and an advocate for those who needed it most.

Mr. Speaker, for all these reasons, I am proud to pay tribute to Frederick P. Kessler today. He has changed the lives of so many people, including my own constituents. The people of the 4th Congressional District, the State of Wisconsin, and the United States join me in thanking him for his legacy of service and commitment to the public good.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR CLAYTON MCGRAW

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant First Class Clayton McGraw of Sulphur Springs, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. SFC McGraw honorably served in the United States Army during the Korean War.

During the Korean War, SFC McGraw was drafted into the Army. In one incident, he successfully rescued a fellow soldier from drowning during a dangerous river crossing and was recognized for his quick thinking and bravery. For distinguishing himself through an act of heroism, SFC McGraw was awarded the Soldier's Medal.

After retiring from the Army, SFC McGraw continued to make a positive impact in our community. He is the founder and Chairman of the Hopkins County Veterans Memorial Committee to advocate for and support veterans across North Texas. SFC McGraw also served for eight years on the Sulphur Springs Planning and Zoning Board and was a member of the First Baptist mission team in Longview, Texas. His outstanding leadership has undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of so many people throughout the years. I am proud of SFC McGraw's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent SFC McGraw in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING CHIEF ALLEN D. ALDENBERG

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the impressive and impactful career of Manchester Police Chief Allen Aldenberg as he retires.

Throughout his life, Chief Aldenberg dedicated his efforts to serving others.

In a military career spanning 30 years, he commanded from the company to the brigade level and deployed in support of key operations to combat terrorism and protect our Nation after 9/11. He was awarded a Bronze Star medal for his service in Iraq from 2009 to 2010.

As a law enforcement officer for 27 years, including the last four years as Manchester Police Chief, Chief Aldenberg has worked with officers, department staff, city leadership, and community members to make Manchester safer and stronger. His commitment to public safety and securing a bright and safe future for the Queen City is evident through his investment toward improving the Manchester Police Department.

Through his leadership, Chief Aldenberg spearheaded the Manchester Police Department's strategic goals to focus on data-driven approaches to public safety, invest in high-quality training and development, put more well-trained officers on the street, and enhance community engagement. Under his leadership, Chief Aldenberg also strengthened the Manchester Police Department's Mental Health and Wellness Program, which serves as a standard bearer across New Hampshire for other departments to emulate.

On behalf of my constituents in New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I want to extend my gratitude to Chief Allen Aldenberg for his exceptional service in New Hampshire as a law enforcement officer. I join all Granite Staters in thanking Chief Aldenberg for his leadership, professionalism, and contributions to making the community safer. I wish Allen, his wife Emily, and his children all the best as he retires from a career in law enforcement.

I congratulate Chief Aldenberg on a job very well done.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARC OF WARREN COUNTY

HON. THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Arc of Warren County for its 70 years of service to the 7th Congressional District of New Jersey. By assisting families in addressing the challenges associated with the lifelong care of relatives with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc of Warren County has created an environment where those they serve are accepted and respected in the community. Currently serving over 1,100 individuals annually, The Arc strives every day to ensure that all those associated with the program are able to achieve independence, make friends, and contribute to society. I am honored to have such an amazing organization working to strengthen the lives of New Jersey residents, and I look forward to seeing all that they will achieve in the future.

HONORING REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER PRIVATE JOHN ADAM STROBECK

HON. ELISE M. STEFANK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Private John Adam Strobeck, a Soldier of the American Revolution and stalwart patriot whose family resides in the Mohawk Valley of New York.

John was born on September 7, 1763, and was a devoted husband to his wife Sophia Merkel Strobeck. He was the proud father of five children: Sophia, John, Paul, Adam, and Catharina. On April 1, 1781, John enlisted as a Private in the Revolutionary War where he first served under Colonel Marinus Willett's Regiment of Levies under Captain Lawrence Gros.

During the Battle of Sharon, John's back and left arm were wounded, but these injuries did not deter him from continuing to fight for our country's independence. He recovered and fought in the Battle of Johnstown before receiving an honorable discharge in December 1781. John went on to reenlist in April 1782 with Colonel Willett, where he served for nine months before his final discharge in December 1782.

After the war, John settled in the Town of Seward and established a tavern where neighbors gathered for horse races and lively outings. He was affectionately known in Seward as "Honorable Adam" for his charitable spirit, always extending kindness to those in need. He was renowned for horseback riding and leading adventures while transporting grain to Albany where friends would join him in spirited competitions.

John passed away on June 16, 1845, and was laid to rest on his property, which was inherited by his son Paul. It was on this land that the "Strobeck Family Cemetery" was discovered more than a century after his passing. John is the only Revolutionary Soldier buried there, joined by generations of his descendants.

In October 2024, the Seward community came together to commemorate John's service and sacrifice. The Patriot Burial Marker on Rhinebeck Road serves as a testament to his contributions to American freedom and a reminder of the values for which he fought. On behalf of New York's 21st Congressional District, I am honored to recognize John Adam Strobeck.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR GERALD NELSON

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Ray "Chappie" Nelson of Frisco, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. LTC Nelson honorably served in the United States Army.

As a young man, LTC Nelson was inspired to serve our country and the Lord, and he joined the Army in 1995. He served as a Chaplain during the Global War on Terror and oversaw other Chaplains to ensure all soldiers' spiritual needs were met. For his outstanding service, LTC Nelson received the Legion of Merit, the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three bronze stars, the Army Commendation Medal, and many more awards.

After retiring from the Army in 2008, LTC Nelson has continued to be an active member of our community. He has presided over events as a chaplain for the Frisco Gold Star Family Monument and served as a member of the Frisco Veteran Advisory Council. LTC Nelson also serves on Frisco Lakes Veterans' leadership team to assist homeless veterans and provide scholarships for students throughout North Texas. Over the past four years, he has managed a food bank in Little Elm to help feed families in need. I am proud of LTC Nelson's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent LTC Nelson in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

HONORING LOVE'S SEAFOOD & STEAKS

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Love's Seafood & Steaks in Savannah, Georgia, as it celebrates its 75th anniversary.

Since 1949, this family-owned establishment has been a cornerstone of our community, offering exceptional coastal cuisine and Southern hospitality.

Under the dedicated leadership of Donna Love and her husband, Fulton, Love's Seafood has thrived, becoming a cherished gathering place for residents and visitors alike.

Their commitment to quality and tradition has made Love's a beloved institution that is sure to deliver the very heart and soul of Savannah to anyone who steps into its doors.

I congratulate Donna, Fulton, and the entire Love family on 75 remarkable years, and may their legacy continue to flourish for generations to come.

CELEBRATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

HON. JONATHAN L. JACKSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week and celebrate the Workforce Innovation Network Consortium. This week is an opportunity to honor the incredible apprentices, graduates, employers, and workforce partners that make the American workforce the greatest and most skilled in the world.

In my home state of Illinois, there are over 400 Registered Apprentice programs and over 21,000 registered apprentices. I am proud of these members of our community and thankful for the opportunity they have available to them through Registered Apprentice programs.

As the Representative of Illinois's 1st Congressional District, I am proud to lend my voice and support to these life changing programs and to raise awareness throughout National Apprenticeship Week.

National Apprenticeship Week was established by the U.S. Department of Labor to showcase and promote high quality, inclusive, and in demand career pathway opportunities through Registered Apprentice programs.

This nationwide celebration allows employers, apprentices, graduates, workforce partners, educational institutions, and Federal, State, and Local governments to showcase the success and value of Registered Apprenticeships. These opportunities strengthen our economy, create pathways for career seekers to land good jobs while advancing racial equity.

Apprenticeships play a vital role in developing our workforce and creating opportunities for Americans from every walk of life. Over the last 10 years, apprentices and graduates of apprentice programs have played a key role in modernizing our country's infrastructure, building clean energy technology, and addressing cybersecurity threats. Their skills and expertise continue to move our country forward and they rise to meet the needs of our growing and evolving national needs.

As we look to the next 10 years of apprentice programs and beyond, we should continue to provide the support necessary to continue providing these vital opportunities.

As the American economy continues to be the envy of the world, Apprentice programs will continue preparing the next generation of American workers to face the challenges of tomorrow. This week is a reminder that there is no task too large that we cannot accomplish through diligence and hard work. I am proud to support Registered Apprentice programs that prepare our workforce to face these challenges together while building solidarity and unity among people of all backgrounds.

I ask that my colleagues join me in providing this support and recognizing and thanking all apprentices, graduates, and workforce partners who continue to move our country forward.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR PRESTON RICH

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Staff Sergeant Preston Bernard Rich of Frisco, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. SSgt Rich honorably served in the United States Air Force during the Gulf War.

SSgt Rich joined the Air Force in July 1986, where he was responsible for conducting Personnel Management during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Desert Shield. For his meritorious service, he received the Air Force Longevity Award with one device, the South-

west Asia Service Medal with one device, the Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon with one device, and many more awards.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1997, SSgt Rich has continued to make a positive impact in our community. Since 2013, he has served as Quartermaster for Frisco Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8273. In this role, he leads efforts to improve veteran outreach and support veterans no matter where they are located. SSgt Rich has gone above and beyond his duties to ensure that no veteran is left behind during their time of need. He is also a devoted father and outstanding educator and speaker on the topic of cybersecurity. His outstanding leadership and guidance has helped many veterans, students, and peers improve their lives and reach their full potential. I am proud of SSgt Rich's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent SSgt Rich in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM DANIELS

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud recognition, of William Daniels, a graduate of Operation Recognition Class of 2024. Operation Recognition is a program organized by the Riverside County Office of Education and the Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services, that presents diplomas to residents of Riverside County who were unable to complete high school due to military service in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, or due to internment in World War II Japanese-American relocation camps. Operation Recognition provides a way to express our appreciation and gratitude for the significant contributions and sacrifices made by our veterans.

William Daniels was born on September 18, 1935. Shortly after he was born, William Daniels' brother and mother passed away and he was raised by his grandmother in Long Island, New York. In 1952, at the age of 17, Mr. Daniels decided he would find a way to join the U.S. Army and follow in the footsteps of the father. His father, whom he never met, served during World War II as part of the first Black parachute infantry battalion, the historic "Triple Nickel" 555th Parachute Infantry Company of the United States Army. After Daniels joined the Army, he was deployed, to fight in the Korean War and jumped out of planes as part of the 187th Regimental Combat Team in the 11th Airborne Division. He served as a medic and surgical technician, among multiple roles that included the motor pool and multiple military occupational specialties. He received the Purple Heart for injuries received while in combat. After the war, Daniels earned his GED and continued his service to veterans in his role with Kaiser Permanente—which included providing home health care to veterans. As recently as 1998, he was still known to jump out of planes as a skydiver. Mr. Daniels is 89 years old and has been married to

his wife, Sylvia, for 31 years. They currently reside in the community of Lake Elsinore.

On behalf of all Riverside County residents and a grateful Nation, I want to thank Mr. Daniels for his service to our country and congratulate him on being part of the Operation Recognition Class of 2024.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT
BRIAN S. GENIER

HON. ELISE M. STEFANIK

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Master Sergeant Brian S. Genier for his exemplary military service and subsequent community service to veterans in New York's 21st Congressional District.

Master Sergeant Genier was born on August 26, 1961, in Mineville, New York. At 19 years old, Brian enlisted in the United States Air Force and served admirably until his retirement in 2000. During his time in the Air Force, Master Sergeant Genier was a member of the 89th Security Squadron and deployed to Panama in support of Operation Just Cause. Following his service in Panama, Brian was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base where he continued to serve his fellow Americans. Master Sergeant Genier was honorably discharged from the Air Force after completing twenty years of honorable service.

Throughout his years of service, Brian earned numerous medals including the Joint Service Achievement Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with 5 devices, Air Force Commendation Medal with 1 device, Meritorious Service Medal with 2 devices, Air Force Longevity Service Award with 3 devices, Air Force Training Ribbon, Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with device, Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Military Education Ribbon with 1 device, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 4 devices, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with 5 devices, and the Short Tour Overseas Ribbon.

After retiring from the Air Force, Master Sergeant Genier retired in Chazy, New York. Today, he serves his community as a member of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association providing complimentary motorcycle escorts for local North Country Honor Flights dedicated to World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Cold War veterans.

Master Sergeant Genier has also been a member of the American Legion Post 912 in Rouses Point, New York, for the past 18 years. He participates in fundraising, membership drives, and activities which honor and support North Country veterans including the annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony each December.

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I am honored to recognize the incredible service and commitment to community of Master Sergeant Brian S. Genier.

HONORING ANNIE R. NEASMAN

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the remarkable career and contributions of Annie Ruth Miles Neasman, MS, RN, upon her retirement from more than five decades of dedicated service in the healthcare industry.

Throughout her illustrious career, Annie R. Neasman has exemplified unwavering commitment and leadership in healthcare, touching the lives of countless individuals in Miami-Dade County and beyond. In 2004, she took the reins as the President and CEO of the Jessie Trice Community Health System, Inc. (JTCHS), and for the following 20 years she led the successful operation of eleven comprehensive community sites, a women's residential substance abuse treatment facility, and numerous school-based health facilities.

Since its establishment in 1967, JTCHS has been a beacon of healthcare excellence in Miami-Dade County, recognized as Florida's first Federally Qualified Health Center and the fifth in the Nation. Governed by a deeply committed Board of Directors, with over half benefitting from its services, and supported by a diverse and talented team, JTCHS embodies steadfast dedication to community well-being and healthcare equity.

Ms. Neasman's journey in healthcare leadership extends far beyond JTCHS. Her tenure as Deputy Secretary of Health and Chief Public Health Nurse at the Florida Department of Health showcased her exceptional leadership acumen and dedication to public health initiatives. During pivotal moments such as Hurricane Andrew and the aftermath of 9/11, her steadfast leadership played a crucial role in the state's response efforts, ensuring the safety and well-being of countless individuals.

Annie Neasman's influence extends beyond her professional roles. She has been a tireless advocate for health equity, addressing the social determinants of health and championing healthcare as a fundamental right for all. Her commitment to fostering partnerships and collaboration with community organizations has been instrumental in advancing public health initiatives and improving access to quality healthcare services.

Throughout her career, Ms. Neasman has been a trailblazer and a mentor, inspiring and guiding countless healthcare professionals. Her impact has been recognized through numerous awards and accolades, including the National Association of Community Health Centers Grassroots Advocacy Hall of Fame Award and the Miami Chapter Black Nurses Association Lifetime Achievement Award, among many others.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognition of Ms. Annie Neasman and her outstanding contributions to healthcare and her unwavering commitment to the well-being of communities. As Ms. Neasman embarks on the next chapter of her journey, her legacy of compassion, dedication, and leadership will continue to inspire us all. We extend our deepest gratitude for her exemplary service and wish her a fulfilling and joyous retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF OMAR
GALLARDO

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON to honor Omar Gallardo who passed away on October 23, 2024. Omar was a lifelong community activist, organizer, and leader in outdoor education in Sonoma County.

Born in 1975 in Michoacan, Mexico, Omar's early years were spent in Sonoma County, California and Mexico. He attended Geyserville High School, where bilingual staff and educators encouraged his interest in his Chicano culture, including his participation in Ballet Folklorico.

From a young age, Omar was an active community organizer. He offered translation services with the United Farmworkers Union and led a trip to Delano, California in 1993 for a widely attended memorial march honoring leader Cesar Chavez. In 1994, he organized student marches protesting California's Proposition 187, an initiative to prohibit undocumented immigrants from accessing important benefits. Omar also participated in high school programs offered by Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University designed to mentor Latino students. He later attended both institutions and earned a bachelor's degree in history.

Following college, Omar joined California Mini-Corps as a teacher and spent eight years working with immigrant students in outdoor education. He then spent four years working as a student counselor in Santa Cruz County before returning to Sonoma County to be a site coordinator for the Graton Day Labor Center. In 2012, he was recruited to LandPaths: a Sonoma-based environmental education and conservation organization.

Omar became an integral pillar of the LandPaths leadership team, guiding the organization's approach to community outreach and engagement. He helped predominantly Spanish-speaking youth access Sonoma open spaces and inspired the next generation of environmental stewards through outdoor programs. Omar's efforts were also critical in the development of Santa Rosa's Bayer Farm, a six acre urban farm that is the product of collaboration between LandPaths and the city. He was known for his gentle heart, treating others with dignity, and credited for expanding LandPaths' reach and impact. In 2015, Omar was aptly honored by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board with a Spirit of Sonoma Award.

Omar was also a dedicated Aztec dancer and established his own group, Danza Azteca Xántotl de Santa Rosa, which performed at local events.

Mr. Speaker, Omar Gallardo was a tireless community advocate and champion of environmental stewardship whose life ended too soon. He is survived by his wife Norma Lazaro Hernandez; his two young sons Tandeé, age 13, and Erandi, age eight; his mother Maria Luisa Gallardo; and his sisters Marilu Gallardo, Olga Gallardo, Blanca Gallardo, and Merlinda Gallardo. His enduring legacy in Sonoma County and with future generations cannot be understated. We respectfully ask

that you join with us and his many friends and family in expressing our deep appreciation for his decades of leadership and community service.

CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR CORBETT HOWARD

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize First Lieutenant Corbett Howard of Celina, Texas, and award him a Congressional Veteran Commendation. 1LT Howard honorably served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War.

As a young man, 1LT Howard was inspired to follow in his family's footsteps and serve his country. In December 1968, he commissioned into the U.S. Army serving in Military Intelligence. After completing Combat Intelligence school, 1LT Howard deployed to Vietnam in the following year and served as an Intelligence Officer in Kien Giang Province. He was one of thirty four American advisors to the South Vietnamese Army and was responsible for training its troops. During the war, he also flew 108 combat missions in a Huey helicopter and participated in numerous Swift boat operations against the enemy. For his outstanding service, 1LT Howard was awarded the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with bronze star.

After he retired from military service in 1970, 1LT Howard has continued to be an active member of our community through his public service and volunteer efforts. Since 2012, he has served as a board member for the Military Warriors Support Foundation to help provide homes to wounded veterans and Gold Star families. Under 1LT Howard's exceptional leadership, they have given over 930 homes and 175 vehicles for veterans in need. Moreover, he has helped raise hundreds of millions of dollars for the organization to support veterans and ensure they can keep their homes for many years to come. I am proud of 1LT Howard's contributions to our community and his dedication to serving our great Nation.

I am honored to represent 1LT Howard in Texas' 4th Congressional district. It is a pleasure to award him the Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to our Nation and the people of North Texas.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF BARRY MELANCON

HON. STEVE SCALISE

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of my fellow Louisianian, Barry Melancon, who is retiring after 30 years from his role as President and CEO of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and CEO of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants.

Barry Melancon has dedicated his 41-year career to the accounting profession, Mr.

Melancon began his role in 1995 at the age of 37, which made him the youngest CEO in the organization's history and now the longest serving CEO of AICPA. Mr. Melancon's professional career began in Louisiana where he practiced as a CPA, eventually leading the Society of Louisiana CPAs before beginning his leadership role at AICPA.

Mr. Melancon achieved an impressive number of accomplishments for his work on behalf of the accounting profession. In addition to testifying before Congress, Accounting Today named Barry Melancon the Most Influential Person in Accounting for 17 consecutive years, as well as the National Association Executive of the Year. Mr. Melancon has served as a member of AICPA's delegation to the International Federation of Accountants, board member of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness, board member of the Center for Audit Quality, chair of XBRL-US, and board chairman of the Global Accounting Alliance. Barry Melancon also received an Honorary Doctorate of Commerce from his alma mater, Nicholls State University, and was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the 2023 International Accounting Forum and Awards.

It is my honor to recognize Barry Melancon for his passion, longstanding dedication, and leadership in the accounting profession. I am proud that a fellow Louisianian has played such a nationally prominent role in advancing innovation in his industry and mentoring a new generation of leaders. I commend Barry Melancon for his many years of dedicated service and wish him the best in his retirement.

OPPOSING CRITICAL MINERAL CONSISTENCY ACT (H.R. 8446) AND HARNESSING ENERGY AT THERMAL SOURCES ACT (H.R. 7409)

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2024

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, the Critical Mineral Consistency Act (H.R. 8446) and the Harnessing Energy At Thermal Sources (HEATS) Act (H.R. 7409) would both limit the ability of the American public to have a say in protecting our public lands and determining how our natural resources are used.

H.R. 8446 gives cover for the copper industry to gain access to tax credits and expedited permitting processes. Only critical minerals on the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) list can access these federal supports, and we should not be playing politics with that process.

Foreign-owned mining conglomerates stand to benefit the most from this legislation, as they seek to fast-track copper mines like those that threaten the watershed of the Boundary Waters Wilderness in Minnesota, or the sacred site of Oak Flats in Arizona. These companies will have no obligation to contribute to our domestic supply with the minerals they pull out of our public lands. But our surrounding communities will bear the costs of pollution that all copper mines create. The least we can do is ensure the public and our federal government has the full opportunity to review these mines.

The American public should also not be subsidizing new copper mines when we have secure supply chains that meet our needs, as determined by the USGS. The USGS list of critical minerals intentionally differs in important ways from the Department of Energy's list of critical materials. Minerals only make it on to the USGS list if their supply chain is at risk of disruption. The tax credits that Congress passed to encourage the development of at-risk critical minerals should not go to support the copper industry, when the U.S. is already a global top-five producer and a top-ten exporter of copper.

The other bill under consideration today, the HEATS Act, would completely exempt certain geothermal projects that impact subsurface federal resources from the environmental review process if less than half of a geothermal project is non-federal. That means that if a project starts on private land but drills underground into publicly owned areas, it would not have to abide by the federal regulations.

I want to be clear that geothermal is an important renewable energy source, and that advancing geothermal energy is a worthy goal. That is why the House has already passed bipartisan legislation, and the Biden Administration has streamlined the process for certain categories of geothermal projects. I secured community project funding for a Geothermal Heat Pump to replace the inefficient natural gas-based system at St. Paul's Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. However, we must ensure that when geothermal projects impact our federal resources, they go through our federal review process. The Bureau of Land Management, who oversees our federal subsurface areas, is concerned that this bill would undermine their ability to ensure public safety, to uphold environmental laws, to consult with tribal nations, and to fulfill their core mission of managing our natural resources for multiple use.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing both these misguided bills and protecting public review of projects that impact our public resources.

FAFSA DEADLINE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 15, 2024

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8932, the FAFSA Deadline Act and a robust and efficient FAFSA application process. For many of our constituents, this process is the start of determining whether college is a reality or remains a dream. FAFSA can unlock critical financial aid that may make the difference between not only starting college, but also completing it.

As we've seen over the past two years, the FAFSA application process has been plagued by delays and technical issues as the Biden Administration worked to implement a new form. During the 2024 to 2025 processing cycle, processing delays resulted in families struggling to fill out the forms and delayed financial assistance packages being sent to students, causing unnecessary burdens and stress.

By standardizing the FAFSA application launch date on October 1, we not only ease

burdens on Department of Education officials tasked with processing these applications, but on families who rely on federal assistance to be able to afford college.

An efficient FAFSA application process is critical to making higher education more accessible and affordable. However, let's be clear: a better and more reliable timeline while we are cutting and gutting the federal programs that help provide support to students, like the Pell Grant and TRIO, isn't going to do much good for our constituents.

So, while we take this first step, let's not lose sight of all the other steps that we need to take to protect access to higher education for those who choose to pursue it. We must do what we can to improve the processing of these applications in a timely manner, which is why I am in support of this bill.

Rest assured, I will fight like hell in the next Congress to protect the federal programs and funding sources that help the students who will benefit from the FAFSA process stay enrolled and graduate, too.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the *Extensions of Remarks* section of the *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD* on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, 2024 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's *RECORD*.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

NOVEMBER 20

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 5310, to amend title 41, United States Code, to make changes with respect to the Federal Acquisition Security Council, S. 2315, to provide for the creation of the missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel Records Collection at the National Archives, to require the expeditious public transmission to the Archivist and public disclosure of missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel records, S. 2270, to establish and maintain a database within each agency for executive branch ethics records of non-career appointees, S. 5302, to amend title 5, United States Code, to address the responsibilities of the Administrator of General Services with respect to Federal advisory committees, S. 5312, to require agencies to create consistent organizational hierarchies, S.

5102, to require annual reports on counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations, S. 5313, to improve section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, S. 5315, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance border security by seeking to expand partnerships with appropriate law enforcement entities in Mexico and Central American and South American countries to combat human smuggling and trafficking operations in Mexico and such countries, S. 5321, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity Internship Program, S. 5317, to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a review of the Homeland Security Information Network, S. 5319, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct an annual audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct an annual audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department, S. 5028, to require Federal contractors to implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, S. 5019, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 340 South Loudon Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland, as the "United States Representative Elijah E. Cummings Post Office Building", H.R. 6972, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require an Executive agency whose head is a member of the National Security Council to notify the Executive Office of the President, the Comptroller General of the United States, and congressional leadership of such head becoming medically incapacitated within 24 hours, H.R. 7528, to amend section 206 of the E-Government Act of 2002 to improve the integrity and management of mass comments and computer-generated comments in the regulatory review process, H.R. 9592, to amend title 44, United States Code, to modernize the Federal Register, H.R. 3208, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity On-the-Job Training Program, H.R. 7832, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a plan to identify, integrate, and deploy new, innovative, disruptive, or other emerging or advanced technologies to enhance, or address capability gaps in, border security operations, H.R. 6231, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require a prioritized policy issuance review process for the Department of Homeland Security, H.R. 8631, to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from procuring certain foreign-made batteries, H.R. 255, to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collection and preliminary damage assessments, H.R. 9596, to amend title 41, United States Code, and title 10, United States Code, to provide best value through the multiple award schedule program, H.R. 5867, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 109 Live Oaks Boulevard in Casselberry, Florida, as the "Colonel Joseph William Kittinger II Post Office Building", H.R. 6162, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 379 North Oates Street in Dothan, Alabama, as the "LaBruce 'Bruce' Tidwell Post Office

Building", H.R. 6188, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 420 Highway 17 North in Surfside Beach, South Carolina, as the "Nancy Yount Childs Post Office Building", H.R. 6633, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9355 113th Street in Seminole, Florida, as the "Army SSG Ryan Christian Knauss Memorial Post Office Building", H.R. 6750, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 501 Mercer Street Southwest in Wilson, North Carolina, as the "Milton F. Fitch, Sr. Post Office Building", H.R. 8057, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9317 Bolsa Avenue in Westminster, California, as the "Little Saigon Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Post Office", and the nominations of Val Butler Demings, of Florida, William Zollars, of Kansas, and Gordon Hartogensis, of Connecticut, each to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service, and James Graham Lake, and Nicholas George Miranda, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

SD-342

9:45 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Matthew James Marzano, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Matthew Kaplan, of Maryland, to be Federal Chairperson of the Great Lakes Authority, and 53 General Services Administration resolutions; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the 50th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act, focusing on successes, challenges, and charting a path forward.

SD-406

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

To hold hearings to examine disaster funding needs.

SD-106

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine certain pending nominations.

SD-226

2 p.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Economic Policy

To hold hearings to examine tax policy in 2025, focusing on implications for the American economy.

SD-538

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

3 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To receive a closed briefing from the Secretary of State.

SVC-217

Committee on Indian Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 4643, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Zuni Indian Tribe in the Zuni River Stream System in the State of New Mexico, to protect the Zuni Salt Lake, S. 4998, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Navajo Nation in the Rio San Jose Stream System in the State of New Mexico, and the nomination of Patrice

H. Kunesh, of Minnesota, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

SD-628

NOVEMBER 21

10 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine threats to the homeland.

SD-342

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider S. 1306, to reauthorize the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, S. 2220, to amend title 35, United States Code, to invest in inventors in the United States, maintain the United States as the leading innovation economy in the world, and protect the property rights of the inventors that grow the economy of the United States, S. 2082, to make technical corrections relating to the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, and the nominations of Anthony J. Brindisi, and Elizabeth C. Coombe,

both to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of New York, Sarah Morgan Davenport, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico, Tiffany Rene Johnson, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, Keli Marie Neary, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and Miranda L. Holloway-Baggett, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Alabama, Department of Justice.

SD-G50

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S6589–S6614

Measures Introduced: Nine bills were introduced, as follows: S. 5333–5341. **Page S6612**

Measures Reported:

S. 465, to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–244)

S. 2783, to amend the Miccosukee Reserved Area Act to authorize the expansion of the Miccosukee Reserved Area and to carry out activities to protect structures within the Osceola Camp from flooding. (S. Rept. No. 118–245)

S. 2908, to assist Tribal governments in the management of buffalo and buffalo habitat and the reestablishment of buffalo on Indian land, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 118–246)

S. 3857, to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. (S. Rept. No. 118–247)

S. 4365, to provide public health veterinary services to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for rabies prevention, with amendments. (S. Rept. No. 118–248)

S. 4713, to amend chapter 11 of title 35, United States Code, to require the voluntary collection of demographic information for patent inventors.

Page S6612

Ali Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Amir H. Ali, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. **Page S6598**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Rebecca L. Pennell, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington. **Page S6598**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 48 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. EX. 265), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6597**

By 47 yeas to 36 nays (Vote No. 266), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S9598**

Sooknanan Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Sparkle L. Sooknanan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. **Pages S6598–99**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Amir H. Ali, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. **Page S6599**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. EX. 267), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6598**

By 46 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. 268), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Pages S6598–99**

Murphy Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Brian Edward Murphy, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts. **Pages S6599–S6600**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Sparkle L. Sooknanan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. **Page S6600**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. EX. 269), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6599**

By 46 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. 270), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Pages S6599–S6600**

Hwang Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Anne Hwang, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Pages S6600–01**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Brian Edward Murphy, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts. **Pages S6600–01**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. EX. 271), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6600**

By 46 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. 272), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S6600**

Dixon Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S6601**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Anne Hwang, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S6601**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 40 nays (Vote No. EX. 273), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6601**

By 46 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. 274), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S6601**

Henry Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Catherine Henry, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Pages S6601–02**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Cynthia Valenzuela Dixon, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California. **Page S6602**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 45 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. EX. 275), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Pages S6601–022**

By 46 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. 276), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S6602**

Wise Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Noel Wise, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California. **Pages S6602–03**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Catherine Henry, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Page S6603**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 45 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. EX. 277), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Pages S6602–03**

By 46 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. 278), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S6603**

Weilheimer Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Gail A. Weilheimer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Pages S6603–04**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Noel Wise, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California. **Page S6604**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 39 nays (Vote No. EX. 279), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6603**

By 46 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. 280), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S6604**

Desai Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Sharad Harshad Desai, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona. **Pages S6604–05**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition

of the nomination of Gail A. Weilheimer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Page S6605**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

By 46 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. EX. 281), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S6604**

By 46 yeas to 36 nays (Vote No. 282), Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Pages S6604–05**

Kasubhai Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, Senate resume consideration of the nomination of Mustafa Taher Kasubhai, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon; that the motion to invoke cloture with respect to the nomination ripen at 11:30 a.m.; and that if cloture is invoked on the nomination, all time be considered expired at 2:15 p.m. **Page S6613**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 49 yeas to 45 nays (Vote No. EX. 264), Embry J. Kidd, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Pages S6589–97, S6614

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Serena Raquel Murillo, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

11 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

18 Navy nominations in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Space Force. **Pages S6613–14**

Messages from the House: **Page S6610**

Measures Referred: **Page S6610**

Executive Communications: **Pages S6611–12**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S6612–13**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Additional Statements: **Pages SS6607–10**

Record Votes: Nineteen record votes were taken today. (Total—282) **Pages SS6597–S6605**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 3 p.m. and adjourned at 11:55 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2024. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S6613.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 14 public bills, H.R. 10151–10164; and 5 resolutions, H.J. Res. 222; and H. Res. 1577–1580, were introduced.

PageS H6076–77

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H6078**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 6951, to lower the cost of postsecondary education for students and families, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–739);

H.R. 8449, to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in motor vehicles, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 118–740, Part 1);

H.R. 3196, to provide for the appointment of the Architect of the Capitol, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118–741, Part 1);

H.R. 4507, to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to promote transparency in health coverage and reform pharmacy benefit management services with respect to group health plans, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–742, Part 1);

H.R. 2666, to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to codify value-based purchasing arrangements under the Medicaid program and reforms related to price reporting under such arrangements, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–743, Part 1);

H.R. 3293, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish an interagency strike force to ensure that certain Federal land management agencies, including the organizational units of such agencies, prioritize the review of requests for communications use authorizations, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118-744, Part 1);

H.R. 7513, to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from finalizing a proposed rule regarding minimum staffing for nursing facilities, and to establish an advisory panel on the skilled nursing facility workforce, with amendments (H. Rept. 118-745, Part 1);

H.R. 7687, to amend title 51, United States Code, to authorize the transfer to NASA of funds from other agencies for scientific or engineering research or education, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118-746, Part 1);

H.R. 4377, to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 with respect to extensions, additions, and revisions to the Barry M. Goldwater Range in Arizona (H. Rept. 118-747, Part 1);

H.R. 200, to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to provide that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior are not required to reinitiate consultation on a land management plan or land use plan under certain circumstances, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-748, Part 1);

H.R. 1380, to require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to issue guidance on climbing management in designated wilderness areas, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-749, Part 1);

H.R. 3396, to require the standardization of reciprocal fire suppression cost share agreements, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-750, Part 1);

H.R. 5665, to require a comprehensive assessment of certain Federal trails, campsites, boat docks, and outdoor recreation facilities to determine the accessibility options for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-751, Part 1);

H.R. 6070, to amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 to clarify the authority of Department of Defense to conduct certain military activities at the Nevada test and training range, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-752, Part 1);

H.R. 8811, to reauthorize the America's Conservation Enhancement Act, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118-753, Part 1); and

H. Res. 1576, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1449) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to increase the frequency of lease sales, to require replacement sales, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 9495) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to postpone tax deadlines and reimburse paid late fees for United States nationals who are unlawfully or wrongfully detained or held hostage abroad, to terminate the tax-exempt status of terrorist supporting organizations, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 118-754). **Page H6076**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Duarte to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H6029**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:02 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H6031**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:06 p.m. and reconvened at 4:01 p.m. **Page H6032**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Grant Transparency Act: H.R. 5536, to require transparency in notices of funding opportunity; **PageS H6032-33**

Vote by Mail Tracking Act: H.R. 5658, amended, to amend title 39, United States Code, to require mail-in ballots to use the Postal Service barcode service, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yea-and-nay vote of 396 yeas to 6 nays, Roll No. 467; **Pages H6033-34, H6071-72**

Banning Operations and Leases with the Illegitimate Venezuelan Authoritarian Regime Act: H.R. 825, amended, to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime; **Pages H6034-35**

Mark Our Place Act: S. 3126, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish or replace a headstone, marker, or medallion for the grave of an eligible Medal of Honor recipient regardless of the recipient's dates of service in the Armed Forces; **Pages H6035-36**

Keeping Military Families Together Act: S. 2181, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal the sunset on entitlement to memorial headstones and markers for commemoration of veterans and certain individuals and to repeal the sunset on authority to bury remains of certain spouses and children in national cemeteries; **PageS H6036-37**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the entitlement to memorial headstones and markers for commemoration of veterans and certain individuals and to extend authority to bury remains of certain

spouses and children in national cemeteries, and for other purposes”; **Pages H6036–37**

Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024: H.R. 7653, to amend title 38, United States Code, to update certain terminology regarding veteran employment; and **Pages H6037–38**

Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act: H.R. 8371, amended, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ ye-a-and-nay vote of 389 yeas to 9 nays, Roll No. 466. **Pages H6038–70, H6071**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:17 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Page H6070**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two ye-a-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H6071 and H6071–72.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Committee Meetings

COMMITTING LEASES FOR ENERGY ACCESS NOW ACT; STOP TERROR–FINANCING AND TAX PENALTIES ON AMERICAN HOSTAGES ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1449, the “Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act”; and H.R. 9495, the “Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act” [Rule Markup Only]. The Committee granted, by a record vote of 9–3, a rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1449, the “Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act”, and H.R. 9495, the “Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act”. The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 1449, the “Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act”, under a structured rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand

for division of the question. All points of order against the amendments printed in the report are waived. The rule provides one motion to recommit. The rule further provides for consideration of H.R. 9495, the “Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act”, under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit. Testimony was heard from Chairman Westerman.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to hold closed hearings to examine the activities of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, to be immediately followed by an open session in SD–G50, 3:15 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security, to hold hearings to examine protecting consumers from artificial intelligence enabled fraud and scams, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: business meeting to consider S. 254, to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to provide for the establishment of a Ski Area Fee Retention Account, S. 373, to modify the disposition of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues and to open Federal financial sharing to heighten opportunities for renewable energy, S. 482, to amend the Klamath Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2000 to provide the Secretary of the Interior with certain authorities with respect to projects affecting the Klamath Basin watershed, S. 620, to provide for the distribution of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues to the State of Alaska, S. 739, to clarify jurisdiction with respect to certain Bureau of Reclamation pumped storage development, S. 914, to establish an energy threat analysis center in the Department of Energy, S. 1553, to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing permits and

leases, S. 1764, to improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, S. 2132, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a pilot program for the establishment and use of a pre-fire-suppression stand density index, S. 2151, to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act, S. 2156, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to authorize additional entities to be eligible to complete the maintenance work on Bolts Ditch and the Bolts Ditch Headgate within the Holy Cross Wilderness, Colorado, S. 2160, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to authorize certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work for urban canals of concern, S. 2169, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out watershed pilots, S. 2620, to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park System, S. 2742, to establish the Fort Ontario National Monument in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, S. 2743, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area in the State of New York, S. 2784, to amend the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to adjust the boundary of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, S. 2867, to address the forest health crisis on the National Forest System and public lands, S. 2927, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to increase Tribal access to water conservation and efficiency grants, S. 2991, to improve revegetation and carbon sequestration activities in the United States, S. 3123, to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, S. 3195, to designate the General George C. Marshall House, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, S. 3241, to establish the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College as affiliated areas of the Natchez Historical Park, S. 3346, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain streams in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and Smith River system in the State of Montana as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 3474, to redesignate the Hulls Cove Visitor Center at Acadia National Park as the “George J. Mitchell, Jr., Visitor Center”, S. 3534, to authorize the Pines Foundation to establish the Fire Island AIDS Memorial, S. 3542, to amend the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Act to modify the boundary of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, S. 3543, to establish the Historic Greenwood District-Black Wall Street National Monument in the State of Oklahoma, S. 3544, to designate the visitor and education center at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine as the “Paul S. Sarbanes Visitor and Education Center”, S. 3593, to provide for economic development and conservation in Washoe County, Nevada, S. 3596, to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to amend references of gilsonite to asphaltite, S. 3617, to provide equitable treatment for the people of

the Village Corporation established for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, S. 3631, to require reports on critical mineral and rare earth element resources around the world and a strategy for the development of advanced mining, refining, separation, and processing technologies, S. 3985, to amend the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 to add certain land to the Sarvis Creek Wilderness, S. 4016, to amend the Boulder Canyon Project Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to expend amounts in the Colorado River Dam fund, S. 4129, to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota, S. 4164, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Cahokia Mounds and surrounding land in the States of Illinois and Missouri, S. 4209, to provide greater regional access to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the State of Maine, S. 4216, to establish the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the State of Georgia, S. 4218, to designate the visitor center for the First State National Historical Park to be located at the Sheriff’s House in New Castle, Delaware, as the “Thomas R. Carper Visitor Center”, S. 4222, to adjust the boundary of the Mojave National Preserve in the State of California to include the land within the Castle Mountains National Monument, S. 4227, to amend the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 to expand the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park, S. 4228, to redesignate the Cottonwood Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park as the “Senator Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center”, S. 4242, to extend the authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, S. 4245, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to reauthorize certain United States Geological Survey water data enhancement programs, S. 4259, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Lahaina National Heritage Area, S. 4347, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land at Swanson Reservoir and Hugh Butler Reservoir in the State of Nebraska, S. 4424, to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to encourage and expand the use of prescribed fire on land managed by the Department of the Interior or the Forest Service, with an emphasis on units of the National Forest System in the western United States, to acknowledge and support the longstanding use of cultural burning by Tribes and Indigenous practitioners, S. 4432, to allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification, S. 4451, to require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land, S. 4454, to provide for the establishment of an Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, S. 4457, to provide for conservation and economic development in the State of Nevada, S. 4576, to amend the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations

Act, 2015, to reauthorize the Colorado River System conservation pilot program, S. 4607, to designate the America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark, S. 4664, to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to promote the use of artificial intelligence to support the missions of the Department of Energy, S. 4851, to adjust the boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to include the Scarper Ridge property, S. 4932, to amend the National Quantum Initiative Act to provide for a research, development, and demonstration program, S. 4936, to require a study relating to the Minidoka National Historic Site, S. 4974, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, S. 4994, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, S. 4996, to amend Public Law 89-108 to modify the authorization of appropriations for State and Tribal, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, S. 4999, to amend the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act to clarify a provision relating to conveyances for aquifer recharge purposes, S. 5000, to prohibit the use of amounts from the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund to implement a certain record of decision, S. 5005, to authorize additional funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, S. 5011, to establish the Integrated Water Management Federal Leadership Committee, to provide for improved drought resilience and dam safety, S. 5012, to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, S. 5013, to make certain modifications to the repayment for the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the State of Colorado, S. 5125, to provide for certain improvements to the housing and workforce programs of Federal land management agencies, S. 5136, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island, H.R. 359, to establish Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón in Puerto Rico as an affiliated area of the National Park System, H.R. 3448, to amend chapter 3081 of title 54, United States Code, to enhance the protection and preservation of America's battlefields, H.R. 4984, to amend the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the Administrator of General Services and the leasing of the Campus to the District of Columbia for purposes which include commercial and residential development, H.R. 5443, to establish a policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction, and H.R. 6062, to restore the abil-

ity of the people of American Samoa to approve amendments to the territorial constitution based on majority rule in a democratic act of self-determination, as authorized pursuant to an Act of Congress delegating administration of Federal territorial law in the territory to the President, and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951, under which the Constitution of American Samoa was approved and may be amended without requirement for further congressional action, subject to the authority of Congress under the Territorial Clause in article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution, 9:30 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine breaking the Visa-Mastercard duopoly, focusing on bringing competition and lower fees to the credit card system, 10 a.m., SD-226.

Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law, to hold hearings to examine China's cybersecurity threat, focusing on big hacks and big tech, 2 p.m., SD-226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on the National Institutes of Health, 10 a.m., 2358-C Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security, hearing entitled "Impacts of Emergency Authority Cybersecurity Regulations on the Transportation Sector", 10 a.m., 310 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement; and Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability, joint hearing entitled "Trafficked, Exploited, and Missing: Migrant Children Victims of the Biden-Harris Administration", 2 p.m., 310 Cannon.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 6441, the "Ranching Without Red Tape Act of 2023"; H.R. 7666, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a means of wildfire risk reduction; H.R. 8182, the "Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act"; H.R. 8517, the "La Paz County Solar Energy and Job Creation Act"; H.R. 9062, the "Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program Act"; H.R. 9165, the "Public Land Search and Rescue Act"; H.R. 9528, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.; H.R. 10082, the "Oregon Owyhee Wilderness and Community Protection Act"; and H.R. 10084, the "Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act", 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on H.R. 7662, the "Critical Minerals Security Act of 2024"; H.R. 7807, the "Intergovernmental Critical Minerals Task Force Act"; H.R. 8952, the "Crow Revenue Act"; and H.R. 10005, the "Expedited Appeals Review Act", 2:15 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Federal Emergency Management Agency”, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, hearing entitled “In the Eye of the Storm: Oversight of FEMA’s Disaster Readiness and Response”, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Joint Meeting

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to hold hearings to examine 1000 days of Russia’s war on Ukraine, 2:30 p.m., 2358A–RHOB.

Joint Economic Committee: to hold hearings to examine the 2025 tax policy debate, focusing on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, 2:30 p.m., 210–CHOB.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of November 19 through November 22,
2024

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Mustafa Taher Kasubhai, of Oregon, to be District Judge for the District of Oregon, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 11:30 a.m.

If cloture is invoked on the nomination, Senate will vote on confirmation thereon at 2:15 p.m. Following disposition of the nomination, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Sarah French Russell, of Connecticut, to be District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Additional roll call votes are expected during Tuesday’s session.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Appropriations: November 20, to hold hearings to examine disaster funding needs, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Armed Services: November 19, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to hold closed hearings to examine the activities of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, to be immediately followed by an open session in SD–G50, 3:15 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: November 20, Subcommittee on Economic Policy, to hold hearings to examine tax policy in 2025, focusing on implications for the American economy, 2 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: November 19, Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security, to hold hearings to exam-

ine protecting consumers from artificial intelligence enabled fraud and scams, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: November 19, business meeting to consider S. 254, to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to provide for the establishment of a Ski Area Fee Retention Account, S. 373, to modify the disposition of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues and to open Federal financial sharing to heighten opportunities for renewable energy, S. 482, to amend the Klamath Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2000 to provide the Secretary of the Interior with certain authorities with respect to projects affecting the Klamath Basin watershed, S. 620, to provide for the distribution of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues to the State of Alaska, S. 739, to clarify jurisdiction with respect to certain Bureau of Reclamation pumped storage development, S. 914, to establish an energy threat analysis center in the Department of Energy, S. 1553, to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing permits and leases, S. 1764, to improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, S. 2132, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a pilot program for the establishment and use of a pre-fire-suppression stand density index, S. 2151, to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act, S. 2156, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to authorize additional entities to be eligible to complete the maintenance work on Bolts Ditch and the Bolts Ditch Headgate within the Holy Cross Wilderness, Colorado, S. 2160, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to authorize certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work for urban canals of concern, S. 2169, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out watershed pilots, S. 2620, to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park System, S. 2742, to establish the Fort Ontario National Monument in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, S. 2743, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area in the State of New York, S. 2784, to amend the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to adjust the boundary of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, S. 2867, to address the forest health crisis on the National Forest System and public lands, S. 2927, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to increase Tribal access to water conservation and efficiency grants, S. 2991, to improve revegetation and carbon sequestration activities in the United States, S. 3123, to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, S. 3195, to designate the General George C. Marshall House, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, S. 3241, to establish the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College as affiliated

areas of the Natchez Historical Park, S. 3346, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain streams in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and Smith River system in the State of Montana as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, S. 3474, to redesignate the Hulls Cove Visitor Center at Acadia National Park as the “George J. Mitchell, Jr., Visitor Center”, S. 3534, to authorize the Pines Foundation to establish the Fire Island AIDS Memorial, S. 3542, to amend the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Act to modify the boundary of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, S. 3543, to establish the Historic Greenwood District-Black Wall Street National Monument in the State of Oklahoma, S. 3544, to designate the visitor and education center at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine as the “Paul S. Sarbanes Visitor and Education Center”, S. 3593, to provide for economic development and conservation in Washoe County, Nevada, S. 3596, to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to amend references of gilsonite to asphaltite, S. 3617, to provide equitable treatment for the people of the Village Corporation established for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, S. 3631, to require reports on critical mineral and rare earth element resources around the world and a strategy for the development of advanced mining, refining, separation, and processing technologies, S. 3985, to amend the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 to add certain land to the Sarvis Creek Wilderness, S. 4016, to amend the Boulder Canyon Project Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to expend amounts in the Colorado River Dam fund, S. 4129, to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota, S. 4164, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Cahokia Mounds and surrounding land in the States of Illinois and Missouri, S. 4209, to provide greater regional access to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the State of Maine, S. 4216, to establish the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the State of Georgia, S. 4218, to designate the visitor center for the First State National Historical Park to be located at the Sheriff’s House in New Castle, Delaware, as the “Thomas R. Carper Visitor Center”, S. 4222, to adjust the boundary of the Mojave National Preserve in the State of California to include the land within the Castle Mountains National Monument, S. 4227, to amend the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 to expand the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park, S. 4228, to redesignate the Cottonwood Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park as the “Senator Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center”, S. 4242, to extend the authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, S. 4245, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to reauthorize certain United States Geological Survey water data enhancement programs, S. 4259, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Lahaina National Heritage Area, S. 4347, to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land at Swanson Reservoir and Hugh Butler Reservoir in the State of Nebraska, S. 4424, to direct the Secretary of the Interior and

the Secretary of Agriculture to encourage and expand the use of prescribed fire on land managed by the Department of the Interior or the Forest Service, with an emphasis on units of the National Forest System in the western United States, to acknowledge and support the longstanding use of cultural burning by Tribes and Indigenous practitioners, S. 4432, to allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification, S. 4451, to require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land, S. 4454, to provide for the establishment of an Operational Flexibility Grazing Management Program on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, S. 4457, to provide for conservation and economic development in the State of Nevada, S. 4576, to amend the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015, to reauthorize the Colorado River System conservation pilot program, S. 4607, to designate the America’s National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark, S. 4664, to require the Secretary of Energy to establish a program to promote the use of artificial intelligence to support the missions of the Department of Energy, S. 4851, to adjust the boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to include the Scarper Ridge property, S. 4932, to amend the National Quantum Initiative Act to provide for a research, development, and demonstration program, S. 4936, to require a study relating to the Minidoka National Historic Site, S. 4974, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, S. 4994, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, S. 4996, to amend Public Law 89–108 to modify the authorization of appropriations for State and Tribal, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, S. 4999, to amend the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act to clarify a provision relating to conveyances for aquifer recharge purposes, S. 5000, to prohibit the use of amounts from the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund to implement a certain record of decision, S. 5005, to authorize additional funding for the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act, S. 5011, to establish the Integrated Water Management Federal Leadership Committee, to provide for improved drought resilience and dam safety, S. 5012, to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, S. 5013, to make certain modifications to the repayment for the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the State of Colorado, S. 5125, to provide for certain improvements to the housing and workforce programs of Federal land management agencies, S. 5136, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island, H.R. 359, to establish Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón in Puerto Rico as an affiliated area of the National Park System, H.R. 3448, to amend chapter 3081 of title 54, United States Code, to enhance the protection and preservation of America’s battlefields, H.R. 4984, to amend the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to provide for the transfer of administrative

jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the Administrator of General Services and the leasing of the Campus to the District of Columbia for purposes which include commercial and residential development, H.R. 5443, to establish a policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction, and H.R. 6062, to restore the ability of the people of American Samoa to approve amendments to the territorial constitution based on majority rule in a democratic act of self-determination, as authorized pursuant to an Act of Congress delegating administration of Federal territorial law in the territory to the President, and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951, under which the Constitution of American Samoa was approved and may be amended without requirement for further congressional action, subject to the authority of Congress under the Territorial Clause in article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution, 9:30 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: November 20, business meeting to consider the nominations of Matthew James Marzano, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Matthew Kaplan, of Maryland, to be Federal Cochairperson of the Great Lakes Authority, and 53 General Services Administration resolutions; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine the 50th anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act, focusing on successes, challenges, and charting a path forward, 9:45 a.m., SD-406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: November 20, to receive a closed briefing from the Secretary of State, 3 p.m., SVC-217.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: November 20, business meeting to consider S. 5310, to amend title 41, United States Code, to make changes with respect to the Federal Acquisition Security Council, S. 2315, to provide for the creation of the missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel Records Collection at the National Archives, to require the expeditious public transmission to the Archivist and public disclosure of missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel records, S. 2270, to establish and maintain a database within each agency for executive branch ethics records of noncareer appointees, S. 5302, to amend title 5, United States Code, to address the responsibilities of the Administrator of General Services with respect to Federal advisory committees, S. 5312, to require agencies to create consistent organizational hierarchies, S. 5102, to require annual reports on counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations, S. 5313, to improve section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, S. 5315, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance border security by seeking to expand partnerships with appropriate law enforcement entities in Mexico and Central American and South American countries to combat human smuggling and trafficking operations in Mexico and such countries, S. 5321, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity Internship Program, S. 5317, to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a review of the

Homeland Security Information Network, S. 5319, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct an annual audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department, S. 5028, to require Federal contractors to implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, S. 5019, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 340 South Loudon Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland, as the “United States Representative Elijah E. Cummings Post Office Building”, H.R. 6972, to amend title 5, United States Code, to require an Executive agency whose head is a member of the National Security Council to notify the Executive Office of the President, the Comptroller General of the United States, and congressional leadership of such head becoming medically incapacitated within 24 hours, H.R. 7528, to amend section 206 of the E-Government Act of 2002 to improve the integrity and management of mass comments and computer-generated comments in the regulatory review process, H.R. 9592, to amend title 44, United States Code, to modernize the Federal Register, H.R. 3208, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity On-the-Job Training Program, H.R. 7832, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a plan to identify, integrate, and deploy new, innovative, disruptive, or other emerging or advanced technologies to enhance, or address capability gaps in, border security operations, H.R. 6231, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require a prioritized policy issuance review process for the Department of Homeland Security, H.R. 8631, to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from procuring certain foreign-made batteries, H.R. 255, to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collection and preliminary damage assessments, H.R. 9596, to amend title 41, United States Code, and title 10, United States Code, to provide best value through the multiple award schedule program, H.R. 5867, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 109 Live Oaks Boulevard in Casselberry, Florida, as the “Colonel Joseph William Kittinger II Post Office Building”, H.R. 6162, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 379 North Oates Street in Dothan, Alabama, as the “LaBruce ‘Bruce’ Tidwell Post Office Building”, H.R. 6188, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 420 Highway 17 North in Surfside Beach, South Carolina, as the “Nancy Yount Childs Post Office Building”, H.R. 6633, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9355 113th Street in Seminole, Florida, as the “Army SSG Ryan Christian Knauss Memorial Post Office Building”, H.R. 6750, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 501 Mercer Street Southwest in Wilson, North Carolina, as the “Milton F. Fitch, Sr. Post Office Building”, H.R. 8057, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9317 Bolsa Avenue in Westminster, California, as the “Little Saigon Vietnam War Veterans Memorial

Post Office”, and the nominations of Val Butler Demings, of Florida, William Zollars, of Kansas, and Gordon Hartogensis, of Connecticut, each to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service, and James Graham Lake, and Nicholas George Miranda, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, 9:30 a.m., SD-342.

November 21, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine threats to the homeland, 10 a.m., SD-342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: November 20, business meeting to consider S. 4643, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Zuni Indian Tribe in the Zuni River Stream System in the State of New Mexico, to protect the Zuni Salt Lake, S. 4998, to approve the settlement of water rights claims of the Navajo Nation in the Rio San Jose Stream System in the State of New Mexico, and the nomination of Patrice H. Kunesh, of Minnesota, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, 3 p.m., SD-628.

Committee on the Judiciary: November 19, to hold hearings to examine breaking the Visa-Mastercard duopoly, focusing on bringing competition and lower fees to the credit card system, 10 a.m., SD-226.

November 19, Subcommittee on Privacy, Technology, and the Law, to hold hearings to examine China’s cybersecurity threat, focusing on big hacks and big tech, 2 p.m., SD-226.

November 20, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine certain pending nominations, 10 a.m., SD-226.

November 21, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 1306, to reauthorize the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, S. 2220, to amend title 35, United States Code, to invest in inventors in the United States, maintain the United States as the leading innovation economy in the world, and protect the property rights of the inventors that grow the economy of the United States, S. 2082, to make technical corrections relating to the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, and the nominations of Anthony J. Brindisi, and Elizabeth C. Coombe, both to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of New York, Sarah Morgan Davenport, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico, Tiffany Rene Johnson, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, Keli Marie Neary, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and Miranda L. Holloway-Baggett, to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Alabama, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD-G50.

Select Committee on Intelligence: November 19, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

November 20, Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH-219.

House Committees

Committee on Appropriations, November 20, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Investigating the Crisis of Missing

and Murdered Indigenous Women”, 10 a.m., 2008 Rayburn.

November 20, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, hearing entitled “Assessing the Veterans Health Administration Fiscal Year 2025 Potential Shortfall”, 10 a.m., 2362-A Rayburn.

November 20, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing on the Social Security Administration, 10:30 a.m., 2358-C Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, November 20, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Oversight of Prudential Regulators”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, November 20, Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled “Meeting the Challenges of Global Brain Health: Diagnosis and Treatment for the 21st Century”, 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, November 20, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Worldwide Threats to the Homeland”, 10 a.m., 310 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, November 20, Subcommittee on Immigration, Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, hearing entitled “Oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement”, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, November 20, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries, hearing on H.R. 7642, to reauthorize the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 719 et seq.); H.R. 9514, the “Finish the Arkansas Valley Conduit Act”; H.R. 9515, the “Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2024”; and H.R. 9969, to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund, 3:15 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

November 20, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 390, the “Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Enhancement Act”; H.R. 1395, the “Delaware River Basin Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2023”; H.R. 1584, the “Plum Island National Monument Act”; H.R. 2685, the “Mining Schools Act of 2023”; H.R. 2687, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives or descendants of Alaska Natives from being used to determine eligibility for certain programs, and for other purposes; H.R. 3047, the “Apache County and Navajo County Conveyance Act of 2023”; H.R. 3173, the “Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2023”; H.R. 3971, the “Flatside Wilderness Additions Act”; H.R. 4338, the “Route 66 National Historic Trail Designation Act”; H.R. 4748, the “Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act”; H.R. 5401, the “9/11 Memorial and Museum Act”; H.R. 6127, the “Modernizing Access to Our Public Waters Act”; H.R. 6210, to designate the General George C. Marshall House, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other

purposes; H.R. 6489, the “Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2023”; H.R. 6994, the “ROUTES Act”; H.R. 7516, the “Purchased and Referred Care Improvement Act of 2024”; H.R. 7938, the “Klamath Basin Water Agreement Support Act of 2024”; H.R. 8012, the “Jackie Robinson Commemorative Site Act”; H.R. 8308, the “Nutria Eradication and Control Reauthorization Act of 2024”; H.R. 8665, the “Super-critical Geothermal Research and Development Act”; H.R. 8931, to redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park; H.R. 8946, the “Reversionary Interest Conveyance Act”; and H.R. 9516, the “Military Families National Parks Access Enhancement Act”, 10:30 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Accountability, November 20, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 9491, the “Presidential Library Donation Reform Act”; H.R. 10133, the “Timely Stock Disclosure Act”; H.R. 10132, the “Federal Agency Performance Act”; legislation on the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act; H.R. 9040, the “Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act”; H.R. 10134, the “Natural Disaster Resilience and Recovery Accountability Act”; H.R. 10062, the “Freedom to Petition the Government

Act”; H.R. 8690, the “Stop Secret Spending Act”; legislation on the Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act”; H.R. 8706, the “Dismantle DEI Act”; H.R. 8753, to direct the United States Postal Service to designate single, unique ZIP Codes for certain communities, and for other purposes; and several postal naming measures, 10:30 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, November 20, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Life After Limb Loss: Examining VA Amputee Prosthetics Care”, 2:30 p.m., 360 Cannon.

November 20, Subcommittee on Technology Modernization, hearing entitled “VA Cybersecurity: Protecting Veteran Data from Evolving Threats”, 10 a.m., 360 Cannon.

Joint Meeting

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: November 19, to hold hearings to examine 1000 days of Russia’s war on Ukraine, 2:30 p.m., 2358A–RHOB.

Joint Economic Committee: November 19, to hold hearings to examine the 2025 tax policy debate, focusing on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, 2:30 p.m., 210–CHOB.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, November 19

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, November 19

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Mustafa Taher Kasubhai, of Oregon, to be District Judge for the District of Oregon, and vote on the motion to invoke cloture thereon at 11:30 a.m.

If cloture is invoked on the nomination, Senate will vote on confirmation thereon at 2:15 p.m. Following disposition of the nomination, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Sarah French Russell, of Connecticut, to be District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Additional roll call votes are expected during Tuesday's session.

(Senate will recess following the vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Mustafa Taber Kasubhai until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Consideration of H.R. 1449—CLEAN Act (Subject to a Rule).

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