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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN W. HICKLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Lisa Wink Schultz of the Senate Chaplain's Office here in Washington, DC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You have given us this Nation for our heritage. Today, we ask that You keep us mindful of Your favor and glad to do Your will.

Use the Members of this body to labor for justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. Give them the wisdom to use their power for the healing of our land. Keep their goals high, vision clear, and minds keen. Lord, do for them more than they can ask or imagine, according to Your power, working in and through them.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, December 11, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, a Senator from the State of Colorado, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Lauren McGarity McFerran, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2029. (Reappointment)

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

NOMINATION OF LAUREN MCGARITY MCFERRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, later this morning, the Senate will vote to advance the nomination of Lauren McFerran to serve another term as a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

Ms. McFerran has served admirably on the NLRB for many years, where

she is known for her fairness, deep expertise, and guiding the Board to deal with the challenges of the contemporary workplace. She worked in the Senate for our former colleagues Tom Harkin and the late Ted Kennedy.

If you truly care about working families, if you care about fixing income inequality in America, then you should be in favor of advancing today's NLRB nominee. You can't say you are for working families and then go and vote no today, because the NLRB protects workers from mistreatment on the job and from overreaching employers.

HEARTS ACT

Mr. President, on the HEARTS Act passage, last night, in a great moment, the Senate finally reached the end zone of the HEARTS Act, a bill I have worked on for months with Damar Hamlin of the Buffalo Bills to better prepare schools against cardiac emergencies. The HEARTS Act is now on the way to President Biden's desk. By doing so, we are ensuring that every school has access to AEDs and the ability to teach CPR.

The HEARTS Act will save lives, plain and simple. God forbid a child goes into cardiac arrest while at school or a young athlete suffers an emergency on the field, but thanks to the HEARTS Act, there will soon be more AEDs nearby to save them like they saved Damar Hamlin.

I am so proud to have worked with Damar to get this bill passed. He is an amazing man. Together, I must say, Damar and I—unlikely as it may seem—have been a great team. After he suffered from cardiac arrest in the middle of a football game, Damar didn't just sit around; he came to visit me in Washington and told me he wanted to "make history" and ensure more kids in schools have access to the same AEDs that saved Damar's life. Last night, finally, history was made when we passed this bill that Damar and I proudly led.

So thank you, Damar Hamlin. You are both a strong and humble man. It

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



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is a rare combination. Thank you to the Buffalo Bills. Thank you to the NFL and Roger Goodell. Thank you to all the student athletes and great champions in Buffalo and everywhere who pushed for this bill. They all made it happen.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, later today, I will meet with the President-elect's pick to serve as the next Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick of New York. I look forward to a fruitful and positive discussion. I have known Howard Lutnick for many years. He is an intelligent and capable man.

I think it is very important for New York and every other State and for America that the next Commerce Secretary is willing to build on the progress of the last few years and help the United States outcompete the Chinese Communist Party on AI, chip manufacturing, and in many other areas as well. It is especially important for States like New York and many others where we are bringing manufacturing back from overseas to strengthen domestic supply chains and our national security.

I can assure Howard Lutnick and all of the President-elect's nominees that we will give them fair and thorough consideration in the Senate. As I said in my letter to Senator THUNE last week, it is important that everyone goes through the standard process nominees have always had, including access to full FBI investigation materials, hearings with questions, and a vote on the floor.

I look forward to my conversation with Howard Lutnick later today.

WATER RECOURSES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. President, on WRDA, last night, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the 2024 Water Resources Development Act, named this year in honor of our dear retiring friend Senator CARPER, who has been a champion of this bill for so long. WRDA is one of Congress's most important bills for water infrastructure projects carried out by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The bill passed with resounding bipartisan support—399 to 18—in the House, with all Democrats in favor.

This year's bill also includes reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration and several regional Commissions, making critical investments in infrastructure, workforce, and supply chains that will help the United States outcompete the rest of the world.

This bipartisan bill passed out of the EPW Committee earlier this year with unanimous support. The Senate is now working on a path to get WRDA and the EDA package cleared through this Chamber. It is my hope we can act on these bipartisan bills as soon as possible.

Reauthorizing WRDA opens the floodgates to authorize all sorts of water-related projects for our economy. It helps improve our ports and in-

land waterways. It helps communities protect against flood damage. It safeguards our delicate ecosystems, and it enhances access to public water.

WRDA is also critical for New York, where it improves, among other things, shoreline resiliency and flood protections from the Great Lakes all the way to New York City. The EDA authorization part of the bill will also direct more Federal investment to our most distressed regions and help them rebuild from economic hardship and from disasters.

WRDA and EDA are great examples of bipartisanship in action. So I hope we can reach agreement to get this important bill done as soon as we can.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS R. CARPER

Mr. President, about my dear friend Senator CARPER, this week, two of our longtime Democratic colleagues have delivered farewell addresses, Senators TESTER and CARDIN.

Today, another Senator, another dear friend, will deliver his farewell address: the senior Senator from Delaware—TOM CARPER. And when I say "dear friends" about these individuals, it is really true. It is not just verbiage. We are really friends as we have become in this caucus, and that is certainly true of TOM CARPER.

Last night was the annual Taste of Delaware event, one of my favorite events of the year, where everything that is amazing about Delaware is on full display. And if you spend just a few minutes there, you will notice something: The State of Delaware loves TOM CARPER, and TOM CARPER loves Delaware.

He hates being away from home, which is why half the time when I call him about all the issues that we care about together, he is on that Amtrak, hopping home to be with Martha and his family. He does it even on weekdays while we are in session.

Serving Delaware is all TOM knows. He did it first as State treasurer, then Congressman, then Governor, and then, for the last two decades, as Senator. If you put all these elected offices together, it means the people of Delaware have elected and reelected TOM a record 14 times into office, and he never lost an ounce of fight.

Here in the Senate, what a great ambassador he was for the First State. Our caucus relied on TOM's expertise, not just about Delaware, which, of course, we became quite familiar with due to his persistence but also on many different issues, especially when it came to the environment.

TOM is a climate warrior, plain and simple. Few Senators have fought as long or as hard to take action against the climate crisis as TOM has. As chair of the EPW Committee, he expertly negotiated many of the climate and clean energy investments we secured in recent years and had great input into the IRA, the Inflation Reduction Act.

And TOM was both idealistic and practical. When he worked on environmental issues, he knew how important

it was to maximize the amount of clean energy we produce, but at the same time, he knew how to talk to Members on the other side of the aisle, Members who might not agree with him on everything and get them to support a coalition that would support that legislation. He was amazing in action.

As the Senate's last Vietnam war veteran, TOM was also an unflinching champion for our servicemembers and their families. TOM will tell you that despite his time in elected office, his greatest privilege was serving in the Navy for 23 years. And not a day goes by when TOM isn't looking for ways to help our veterans in need.

He is an amazing guy. I even had a nickname for him. TOM and I love old lyrics from the fifties, sixties, and seventies, both songs, music, but TV shows, so his nickname, his initials, for me, were TC, Top Cat. He and I are among the few in this Chamber who remember the cartoon "Top Cat," but TOM CARPER was certainly a Top Cat in this body. Top Cat, you are great. I will miss you.

A final testament to TOM's willingness to go out of his way to help others, he was so enthusiastic about his successor, LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. She got her start in politics as an intern in TOM's office, and when he knew he wasn't going to run, one of the first things he said to me was: Make sure you help LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. She will be a great Senator. And we can begin to see that already.

So I can't think of a more appropriate way to conclude a long career in public service than by making sure your successor can continue your legacy. Senator Moynihan did that, in many ways, with me.

So to TOM, to Martha, the entire family, his two sons, thank you, thank you, thank you for your service. We will miss you very much.

And in the words a Navy man can appreciate: We wish you fair winds and following seas.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois.

TRIBUTE TO SHERROD BROWN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, on the floor, I thanked five of my colleagues in the Senate who will be leaving at the end of this Congress. Today, I would like to thank three more.

If you read any profile on Senator SHERROD BROWN of Ohio, there is a good chance you will see the word "rumpled" in the description of his presentation before the Senate. A rumpled suit has become his trademark. In

fact, George Will once wrote that SHERROD “radiates rumplessness, even in a well-pressed suit.”

Such characterizations have never seemed to bother SHERROD because, you see, he didn’t come here to be a clothes horse or pose for GQ. He wouldn’t know what to do with a custom-made, clean-pressed suit every day at work.

SHERROD BROWN has spent 50 years in public office—50—including the last 18 years in the Senate. He is the kind of person who comes to the Senate ready to fight for people who don’t have lawyers and lobbyists to speak for them.

SHERROD grew up in Mansfield, OH, a town hit hard and early by the decline in American manufacturing. His family was comfortably middle class, but many of his friends and seatmates in school weren’t so lucky. When a factory in the town closed, his friends’ families struggled and worried. SHERROD has spent his life trying to make those families, and others like them, in a position to get a fair shake.

It is a noble kind of service to feel the burdens of others and to work to ease their load, even when you don’t need help yourself. SHERROD’s solidarity with others who needed help was evident when, for years, he even refused to take congressional health benefits until we passed the Affordable Care Act, which made them available to almost every American. He didn’t think it was right to accept that benefit as long as tens of millions of Americans were unable to obtain quality, affordable healthcare.

SHERROD has spent his life working for an economy and government that cares about the working class and invests in towns, factories, healthcare, and the potential of working families. He has fought for fair trade deals and opposed trade agreements that he thought shortchanged American workers, even when his opposition put him at odds with the President of his own party.

He insisted that the historic bipartisan infrastructure bill include a “Buy America” requirement, and he helped save the pensions of 1.5 million union members and retirees, with the so-called Butch Lewis Act, which I was proud to join him on.

Today, two huge new Intel computer chip factories are being built in Ohio in New Albany because SHERROD BROWN helped pass the Chips and Science Act.

As a long-time member and, since 2021, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, he has worked to prevent the kinds of Wall Street recklessness and greed that crashed the global economy in 2008. He has fought for affordable housing and consumer protection, and against predatory lending and exorbitant junk fees. He has worked to hold executives of failed banks accountable and to make sure that AI and technology advances help consumers and aren’t misused to rig the system in favor of the wealthy.

He worked so hard and was so gratified by the child tax credit. I think it

was one of his proudest achievements, and he said as much.

In 2002, in the House, he voted against the Iraq war. I did, too, in the Senate. There weren’t many of us at the time, and it wasn’t a popular stand, but it was the right thing to do, and SHERROD knew it.

I am going to miss his gravelly, Tom Waits voice in this Chamber. I am going to miss the many stories he brought back about his wonderful wife Connie. She is a great writer and has been recognized beyond the United States in many places around the world for her insight and her writing. I wish the best to both of them. Their work here may be finished for the time being, but they have left a positive mark on America.

TRIBUTE TO JON TESTER

Mr. President, the big man from Big Sky Country, JON TESTER—before his election to the Senate, 18 years ago, Senator JON TESTER had never lived more than 2 hours away from his family’s wheat farm in Big Sandy, MT, the same farm his grandparents homesteaded more than a century ago.

JON started his campaign for the U.S. Senate traveling across the State on a farm tractor-trailer. And with his seven fingers, Roger Maris flattop, and scuffed size-12 cowboy boots, he has cut a singular figure in the Halls of Congress. He is a prairie pragmatist and a defender of programs that many rural Americans depend upon, such as market fairness for family cattle ranchers and rural community development efforts.

JON voted for the Affordable Care Act because it was right and because it is a lifeline to rural hospitals, to farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and others who need affordable, accessible healthcare coverage.

He has been a strong voice for Native Americans. Growing up, JON played “Taps” at the funerals of World War II veterans. It taught him, at an early age, that many veterans continue to pay a price for their service for the rest of their lives.

He gave a speech on the floor of the Senate, just a day or two ago. He pointed to that moment in the funeral service for former Senator Dan Inouye, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, where, in Hawaii, JON was called on to play “Taps” for Senator Inouye. He said it was one of his proudest moments, and I am sure that is true.

When I think of the giants of the Senate, like Dan Inouye, I think about those like JON TESTER who, in his own way, showed his courage time and again.

As chair of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, JON TESTER has worked to strengthen VA healthcare and protect disability benefits for all veterans. He pushed the Senate to pass the historic PACT Act to provide healthcare for veterans who were sickened by exposure to burn pits and other toxins and the survivor benefits

for their spouses and young children. As of last week, the VA has approved more than 1.3 million claims under the PACT Act, including more than 51,000 veterans in my State of Illinois.

By the way, you likely have been hearing about self-professed “efficiency experts” combing through the Federal budget. Some of them have even called for the elimination of the Veterans Health Administration. They are wrong. They should listen to JON TESTER, a patriot, who it has been an honor to work with and count as a friend.

And you can’t close with JON without mentioning Shar. His wife Shar has been his partner in life and in politics and in every step they have taken together. It is a wonderful, loving, caring, inspiring couple. I am going to miss their physical presence, but their memories will live on in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

Mr. President, it was the evening of January 28, 2017, in the early days of the first Trump administration. Airports in Chicago and throughout the Nation were filled with people protesting the administration’s early ban on travelers from majority-Muslim nations. Among more than 100 protesters at the Philadelphia International Airport, one man stood out. Dressed in a tuxedo and tails, he had just attended a black-tie function when he heard about President Trump’s decision. That man was Senator BOB CASEY. He went directly to the airport.

As we all know, Senator CASEY isn’t usually so flashy as to wear a tux, but his principles guide him in everything he does. BOB CASEY is one of the most decent people I have ever served in Congress with. He is a bridge builder. He is committed to creating dialogue and finding common ground. He is the only—the only—Pennsylvania Democrat ever to serve three terms in the U.S. Senate.

He has been a strong voice for working families struggling to get by. He has a great family himself with Terese. Poor mothers and children, coal miners at risk, and others finally had an advocate here standing up for them in the U.S. Senate.

As chair of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, he has protected Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He helped lower seniors’ cost for prescription drugs—a promise that was made years ago and finally kept, thanks to BOB CASEY. He has targeted scam artists who prey on seniors.

BOB’s father was a popular, two-term Pennsylvania Governor. And while Robert Casey, Sr., may have embedded the Casey name in Pennsylvania political life, ROBERT CASEY, Jr., through his decades of service, has added new honor to that name.

TRIBUTE TO MITT ROMNEY

Mr. President, finally, I want to say thank you to a departing Senator from across the aisle.

On the evening of January 6, 2021, many Senators in both political parties

denounced the violent assault on this Capitol. But I believe history will record that the truest, bravest words spoken that night were from Senator MITT ROMNEY of Utah. He said:

In light of today's sad circumstances, I ask my colleagues: Do we weigh our own political fortunes more heavily than we weigh the strength of our Republic, the strength of our democracy, and the cause of freedom?

Senator MITT ROMNEY is a man of deep faith and considerable accomplishments: a successful businessman, the rescuer of the 2002 Olympics, a Republican Governor in a deep blue State, and his party's nominee for President in 2012.

After he had been here a few months, I went up to him on the floor, and I said: The more I get to know you, MITT ROMNEY, the more I wonder why I said all those things about you in that Presidential campaign.

He laughed, and I did too.

He is a conservative, but he is a man of conscience and character. We would all do well to ponder his question and emulate his courage.

I will miss Senators BROWN, TESTER, CASEY, and ROMNEY, and our other departing colleagues, and I join a grateful nation in thanking them for all that they have given, sacrificed, and contributed to us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I actually rise to the floor to follow, I think, one of the Democratic leaders, my dear friend from Illinois, to probably make pretty similar comments about some of our retiring Members. And, you know, the work we do in this body sometimes is frustrating. Sometimes, it is inefficient. It is critically important.

But one of the things that makes it worthwhile is the relationships and friendships that we develop with colleagues all across the political spectrum, from both sides of the aisle. And I am sure I am going to echo some of the comments that have already been made by the senior Senator from Illinois. So let me talk about some of these comments. I want to highlight their accomplishments one by one.

TRIBUTE TO JON TESTER

So let's take a quick trip across the country and start in Big Sky Country, in Montana, where my friend JON TESTER oftentimes started his day as early as 2:45 a.m., just to make sure he would be able to get back to DC in time for votes.

Now, on many dark, freezing Montana mornings, he took an hours-long drive and then a plane and then another plane to get to the Senate to fight for Montanans and veterans across the country. Most times, it took 11 to 12 hours. And as the Presiding Officer knows, that was only the case when it wasn't snowing.

But week in and week out, he did it, and he fought hard for Montanans in the Senate. And then reversed that

same long commute at the end of the week to make it back to the farm with his wife Sharla.

And amongst all of it, I am not sure if there is anyone else in this body who still is operating as a citizen legislator and literally having another full-time job trying to farm his ranch in Montana.

I have been guilty, as I said the other day on the floor, of sometimes complaining about this job. I have to always take a deep breath and realize I am a guy who lives 20 minutes away and was lucky enough to come into the job with some financial resources—not totally dissimilar from the Presiding Officer.

When I think, though, about sacrifice, when I think of people who are here for all the right reasons—no matter how hard it is, no matter how long it takes—I think, first and foremost of my friend JON TESTER.

When I think of public servants—and I have had people ask me this, not dozens of times but hundreds of times: Whom do you most respect? How do you put up with this? All of the vagaries in this job—I always tell them the story about JON TESTER. He has done it. He is a man who has done it all to serve the people around him—a former band teacher; long before it was cool, an organic farmer; and an incredibly effective Senator. JON has lived a life of service and devotion to the country, all while having fewer fingers than many of us.

He helped us negotiate the infrastructure law. He single-handedly led the passage of the PACT Act, one of the most significant expansions of benefits to veterans ever. He did it all without complaint, without asking for much attention, and with enough time to travel home 12 hours at the end of the week, as I said, to be with family and continuing to produce food that feeds America.

JON is the consummate public servant. He is a phenomenal farmer and friend. And he will be deeply missed here in the Senate.

I can't think of anyone—as we think about the political activities these days, we often talk about, you know, who is authentic or not, the most outrageous criticism of JON TESTER never included any sense that he wasn't a real Montanan, that he wasn't authentic. And he never strayed from what brought him here in the first place.

TRIBUTE TO MITT ROMNEY

Mr. President, now, let's move slightly down from Montana to Utah, where the Senate is again losing an incredibly principled leader in MITT ROMNEY. In his 6 years in the Senate, when MITT ROMNEY gave his farewell speech, again, he acknowledged he is still just a freshman Senator.

MITT led with an unshakable, tireless adherence to his values. It is not too hard to stand up for what you know is right if you agree with the rest of your team. But if you are bucking your party—and I have done that more than

once—it requires tremendous bravery and sometimes enduring a deeply loneliness and isolation.

Even when it was hard, even when it was lonely, even when he endured harsh critique, MITT never backed down from his principles—and I say this with deep admiration, even for the times when I disagreed with him. And there were many.

We worked closely together on all of the bipartisan “gangs”—the effort to bring about the final COVID package under then-President Trump, the infrastructure bill, the CHIPS bill, the notion of the Electoral Count Act. Time and again, MITT was right there fighting for his values, but also realizing you have got to get to “yes” if you are actually going to make things happen.

The infrastructure bill, in particular, is an incredible achievement that is going to bring millions of homes in Utah to the broadband they deserve, the kind of road, rail, and other services that are essential. And during every step of these negotiations, as I said before, MITT never wavered from his strong conservative beliefs.

He can read a balance sheet. He is part of a very small minority—I will include the Presiding Officer, probably less than double digits in this Senate—who can read a balance sheet. I count myself as one of those. He knows when numbers don't add up. And he will fight to make it right.

Our Nation is stronger because of his smart, principled leadership. And, again, while I understand that he and Ann have got other things to do going forward, he will still be involved in our community. We are going to miss him here in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO KYRSTEN SINEMA

Mr. President, I am going to go a little bit further south, to MITT's southern neighbor, Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA. Senator SINEMA is also departing the Senate after a storied 6 years.

KYRSTEN also worked together on all of these bipartisan efforts, particularly the infrastructure bill, where she and her friend Rob Portman were the leaders of our group and on so many other notable compromises—yes, compromises—over time in Washington. KYRSTEN was a former social worker, an incredibly fast runner, and a tireless independent advocate for Arizonans. Senator SINEMA always made a splash and often, at the end of the day, won her battles.

But for all the ink spilled on KYRSTEN, what I think a lot of people failed to see is her incredible ability to talk and build relationships with everyone. There have been so many times—not just on the big bills, candidly not just at the behest of Democratic leadership, but candidly on the behest of some of our Republican friends, to say this Senator is being particularly challenging on this bill or on this issue. I think there was probably no one who got sent into those kind of negotiations or “Can you work to get this Senator or that Senator to release their hold?”

She has worked with folks all across the political spectrum. And when talks broke down, as they often do in these negotiations, she had an incredible ability to keep reaching out and engaging with everyone and anyone. I will deeply miss her ability to reach across the aisle and get things done for Arizonans.

TRIBUTE TO JOE MANCHIN III

Mr. President, now, while we are on the topic of reaching across the aisle, I would be remiss if I didn't speak on the incredible career of my great friend JOE MANCHIN and maybe the only person I can say that I had a direct role in personally bringing to the Senate.

JOE and Gayle and Lisa and I have been friends since we were Governors together. And I remember how when Senator Byrd had passed, to fill the vacancy and he thought about running, I encouraged him, like, come on up, JOE; we can get things done. And I knew, because of his incredible position of putting points on the board for West Virginians and his ability to stick to his guns, that he would get things done.

And much like MITT, JOE is also a tireless defender of what he believes in. Folks like to speculate how he would vote or what he would do. But I never thought it was all that hard to figure out what JOE MANCHIN was going to vote for or where he was going to come down. All you had to do was listen to what he said. And if he thought it was in the best interest of the folks in West Virginia, he would be for it, no matter how much grief he took. It was always as simple as that.

You know, it was a bit of a common refrain in this town for a while, the joke was JOE was one of the most powerful people in America. You know, it worked as a joke because it actually had a lot of truth to it. Bill after bill, JOE got a lot done on the infrastructure law and all these bipartisan deals. I remember his relentless fight for making sure that America would stand up and keep the promise made by Harry Truman to our miners in terms of their pensions. I was very proud of being one of his wingmen on that.

But what he is going to be, I think, at the end of the day, remembered for—and boy, did he get a lot of grief on this as well—was passing one of the most seismic energy laws in our country's history. Getting that bill done is not only about our energy in our country, but he literally helped move the rest of the world toward a cleaner, carbon-free environment.

Yes, he believes that there is going to be a transition. Yes, he believes you can't get rid of some of our existing sources. But without the IRA, the fundamental movement that is already going to generate a trillion dollars of activity wouldn't have happened, the Inflation Reduction Act. And, boy, he paid a price for this, in making sure that America becomes energy independent and moves to be more carbon-free and at the same time also finally put in place an ability to start negoti-

ating drug prices. That law would not be law without JOE MANCHIN.

I believe it is a transformative, once-in-a-century piece of legislation. It is saving money for seniors in West Virginia and for seniors across the country, and it all was due to JOE MANCHIN. I could go bill after bill. And Lord knows, there have been times I have disagreed with him.

And I hope, JOE MANCHIN, after all this, you will realize that, coming here to this Senate, you did make things happen; you got things done. And our country and West Virginia are better for it.

TRIBUTE TO SHERROD BROWN

Mr. President, I made a comment on this, this morning. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve on the Banking Committee with my friend SHERROD BROWN from Ohio. In SHERROD's long career in the Senate, he remained unchanged. He fought for the dignity of workers. He fought against special interests that hurt Americans. He fought always for Ohio. Deeply smart and principled, SHERROD built an incredible record standing up for working families and leading the Banking Committee with strength and a vision for revitalizing the middle class.

I particularly remember working with him back in 2016–2017 on a bitter fight to extend healthcare and pensions for thousands of miners—again, it is something I have talked about, we worked together with JOE MANCHIN—who were at risk of losing coverage. We had to threaten to block all bills being passed by unanimous consent to get it done. But we eventually secured a temporary fix and then a long-term one to protect the pensions and health insurance for American miners. Tens of thousands of miners secured lifetime coverage because of that bill.

I was always glad to fight alongside SHERROD on our shared priorities. But in addition to standing up for miners, there are other things we had in common. SHERROD's incredible wife Connie is a phenomenal writer and speaker, whom he brought down to be honored at one of our women's conferences down in Norfolk. I had the unenviable task of following her on the speaking lineup.

And let me tell you—and SHERROD probably knows—she is an impossible act to follow. She had a room of literally hundreds and hundreds of women of all races, ages, and background on their feet, literally hooting and hollering. And SHERROD, ever the supporter of Connie, was there to cheer her on. But then inspired by her performance, he brought that idea back to Ohio. And, I know, over the last 8 or 9 years, he has had his own women's conference.

With events like that and a long record of legislative accomplishments, both in the Senate and the House, a whole lot of working folks, SHERROD's legacy of work for the middle class and Ohioans and Americans will be a real tribute to him.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

Which brings me to SHERROD's neighbor, somebody who has worked on so many bipartisan deals as well, and that is BOB CASEY.

Mr. President, as the true embodiment and spirit of Pennsylvania, BOB CASEY arrived every day in the Senate ready to fight for teachers, kids, workers, seniors. He led the charge in the Senate to cut junk fees and fought the greediness that emptied the pockets of Americans.

As chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I have grown to know and see his steadfast work at protecting America's national security firsthand. BOB approached every hearing with a thoughtful and engaged perspective—never partisan or dominating or destructive. BOB CASEY asked decisive questions, advanced important priorities, and took on the work of seriousness and dedication. Our committee was stronger for that.

And, more than anything, BOB CASEY will be remembered for being a fundamentally decent guy. He approached every problem and every interaction every day with kindness and respect for every person he encountered, not just other Senators but staffers, support personnel. And you don't see that from a whole lot of us.

We will miss BOB greatly in the Senate, and I will miss him particularly on the Intelligence Committee. My only regret is we never got a chance to play basketball.

So for those Senators and some others, I know my time is expiring. I will come back and speak about other friends like BEN CARDIN and others who are leaving. The body will be lesser for that, but I am hopeful. This is a place where, after the elections, you can't bear grudges. You have got to go back and work with your new colleagues. I hope to develop the same kind of relationships as I have had with these Senators on both sides of the aisle. I respect them all. I will miss them, but those of us who remain need to continue and fight on.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes, followed by Senator THUNE for up to 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

DISASTER RELIEF FUNDING

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am going to be brief because you don't want to stand in the way of the majority leader-elect.

I come to the floor today because at 3 o'clock this afternoon in the house chamber in Raleigh, there is a veto-override. There was a veto by Governor Cooper for a disaster relief bill that the people of Western North Carolina need.

Now, I understand there are provisions in there that have to do with a legitimate disagreement about the scope and the role of the executive branch, but this is not the time for us to rethink whether or not we should be sending every signal we can to the people of North Carolina that help is on the way.

I am doing my part here in this Chamber to make sure that our Members stay focused on providing \$100 billion in relief before we get out of this Congress. I need my colleagues in Raleigh to vote to override that veto today so that we can be sure that North Carolina knows that every Republican and every Democrat—we are not Republicans or Democrats; we are North Carolinians trying to provide desperate help to a land mass the size of Massachusetts that has experienced more than 100 deaths, thousands of businesses impacted, thousands of people out of their homes.

So I just come to the floor today to encourage any member who may have one reason or another to not sustain this veto-override in the house chamber in Raleigh to set that aside today and go do right by the people of Western North Carolina.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday, President Biden delivered a speech on the economy—a last attempt to rescue his dismal economic record. Incredibly, during the course of the speech, he repeated a phrase that he has often used about growing the economy from the bottom up and the middle out. I am not sure how that phrase continues to get past White House fact checkers because if there is one thing that President Biden has failed to do, it is to build an economy from the bottom up and the middle out.

Thanks to President Biden's signature economic legacy—an inflation crisis of historic proportions—today, a typical family has to pay an additional \$13,375 per year to maintain the same standard of living it enjoyed when the President took office—\$13,375 per year, more than \$1,000 per month. And who do you think that affects the most? Not billionaire Democrat donors or Hollywood stars. No. It affects the bottom and the middle the most—the people who don't have a spare \$13,000 lying around and who have had to cut back on extras or, in many cases, essentials to survive in the Biden economy.

CBS News exit polling in November found that two-thirds of voters described the economy as bad, and 45 percent said their financial situations were worse than they were 4 years ago. And it is no wonder. President Biden likes to talk about giving families

breathing room, but his economy took away breathing room for a whole lot of Americans. Working Americans paying 22 percent more for groceries and 31 percent more for gas and 28 percent more for electricity and 23 percent more in rent than they were when President Biden took office are not seeing a lot of breathing room for their budgets.

The President likes to pretend, as he did in his speech yesterday, that he came in and saved the economy after COVID, but the truth is, the economy was already well on its way to a healthy recovery, and his massive, ill-advised, supposed COVID relief legislation helped kick off an inflation crisis whose reverberations are still being felt today in family budgets around the country. President Biden can give all the speeches he wants touting his economic record, but his economy has been the very opposite of a boon to lower and middle-income families.

The good news is that the days of President Biden's disastrous economic policies are numbered. In January, President Trump will take office, and Republicans will have control of the House and the Senate. Expanding economic opportunity and increasing growth and Americans' wages will be a top priority. That means taking action via reconciliation to preserve the tax relief that Republicans delivered during the first Trump administration—tax relief that improved take-home pay for millions of hard-working Americans. It also means targeting onerous regulations choking our economy, like the thousand-plus Biden-Harris regulations that have already cost Americans well over \$1.5 trillion. It means things like unleashing American energy and restoring American energy dominance, which will benefit both the economy and our national security.

President Biden's energy policies have jeopardized the future of our already shaky electric grid and set us up for future supply problems, but his war on American energy ends next month, and a better future is in sight. It won't take long now.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state. The bill 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. 783, Lauren McGarity McFerran, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2029. (Reappointment)

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Jeanne Shaheen, Martin Heinrich, Jon Tester, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Maria Cantwell, Gary C. Peters, Ben-

jamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Brian Schatz, Sheldon Whitehouse.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Lauren McGarity McFerran, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring December 16, 2029 (Reappointment), shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 320 Ex.]

YEAS—49

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

NAYS—50

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

NOT VOTING—1

Marshall

(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

(The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 50.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the cloture motion with respect to the Ditelberg nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Marzano nomination.

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

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Matthew James Marzano, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2028.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
DISASTER RECOVERY

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, we are running out of time. We have just over a week left before Congress goes home for the holidays, and we cannot leave town without passing long-term disaster relief.

People have waited and waited and waited and waited for help to arrive, and every day that we don't get this done is another day that survivors can't start to get back to life as they knew it—going to work, going to school, dropping their kids off at basketball practice, getting together with friends and neighbors.

For the people in Lahaina, help cannot come soon enough. Almost a year and a half after the tragic fires, it is as hard as ever to make ends meet. Housing is scarce. Prices are going up. Jobs are hard to come by. People are doing everything they can to get by and to help each other out. So it is not for a lack of trying; it is that they were never meant to confront this recovery alone.

When you have lost everything, when you are still mourning friends and loved ones, when you are 16 months into a recovery and normalcy still feels so far away, you need help, and getting that help is the difference between people being able to stay on Maui or leaving. People are leaving the only place they have ever called home. Those are the stakes. They are not theoretical. This is happening to hundreds of families in West Maui.

Lahaina is not the only community that has been devastated by a disaster. Communities in 40 States are building back from a disaster of some kind—a flood, a wildfire, a hurricane—and more than 25 States are relying on long-term Federal assistance to get survivors back on their feet. No one is asking for charity. What they are asking for is the kind of aid that has helped to restore so many communities across the country over many, many years. This is what Congress is supposed to do—Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina, New York and New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy, Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, California after the 2018 wildfires, and more than a dozen States nationally as recently as 3 years ago.

The Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program—known as CDBG-DR—works. It has supported millions of Americans struck

by disaster over the last 30 years by giving them flexible, long-term assistance. So to fail to do this now for people in Lahaina and across the country would be quite unusual and shameful.

We have a simple task here: to help our fellow Americans in their hour of need. I want to be perfectly clear. We cannot and we will not leave town without passing disaster aid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Indiana.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, it has been the honor of my lifetime to represent Hoosiers here in the U.S. Senate.

When I said I was going to do this back in 2017—I didn't have much of a political legacy—to leave my business that I had spent 37 years running and that I wanted to run for the U.S. Senate, everybody said: a fool's errand—it couldn't be done.

But there were a lot of Hoosiers wanting the system to be shaken up a little bit. When I interpreted, I think, what politics was doing back in 2015 and 2016, I crafted that unusual idea that it could be done even when you have made most of your life in the trenches in the real world.

I was told when I got here: Freshman Senators are not to be heard, may be seen. Sit back; learn the ropes.

Well, that wasn't going to work for me because I had already put myself into a corner because I said I wouldn't do it more than two terms. That is unusual. Everyone says it, they get amnesia, and then you know the rest of the story.

I have been so proud of what we have done here in these 6 years, what we have done for Hoosiers. And when I tell you about some of the things that can be done, I think you are going to be amazed.

I put together a staff that came here mostly from Indiana, and their goal was to get things done, to get it across the finish line. And, sure, I was proud to have been named the most effective first-term Republican Senator and the sixth most effective in our caucus, generally, in the last Congress, and probably close to that again in this one. But all of us here know that we get the credit for it and it is your staff that does all the heavy lifting.

This 2021 freshman Senate office got more bills across the finish line than any other—it is amazing—and 37 in the span of 6 years. Again, that is why the Center for Effective Lawmaking singled out our office as being most impactful in areas like healthcare, education, and agriculture—all the stuff I bumped into in so many ways in the real world before I got here.

I want to tell you about a few of those wins. Incoming Senators will hopefully get inspired by it.

Imagine, as a Republican, when one of your biggest pieces of legislation has the word "climate" in it. So I will get to how that happened in the first place,

but, being a conservationist, one who knows that is an issue that we, as Republicans and conservatives, have to be involved with, we actually crafted a bill called the Growing Climate Solutions Act, which was a landmark bill for farmers that matched up their good stewardship with offset markets that were already there but government was making it too difficult for them to take access of it, especially small farmers. Imagine it passing in the U.S. Senate 92 to 8. That is darn near a miracle.

How did that happen in the first place? I was here maybe 6 or 7 months, and Senator CHRIS COONS from Delaware had been trying to find one Republican to engage in the discussion, which we know how big a discussion that has been. Of course, we are always going to disagree on policy, but he had probably asked so many others over the last 2 years that he was going after a rookie Senator.

He didn't realize that he ran into somebody that had to think on his feet a lot in the real world and made decisions fairly quickly based on what you really know. And I said: I will do it.

I think the rest of the conversation was: Will it be more than a committee of two of us?

Give me a month.

I got six other Republicans. And it is still an issue of contention in terms of what it is about, where it is going. Some are absolutely certain about it; some have put no credence to it. Obviously, it is somewhere in between.

That, to me, was the first moment, being here after just 6 months, that said: If you do certain things and think out of the box, you can get a lot done.

And that has probably put me in front of more discussions now that energy is the biggest issue at the State level. Demand for it was flat up until 2 years ago. And now, in Indiana, one of the best places to have a business, all the data centers want to come there. And we only produce 20 gigawatts of electricity. Each one of them needs one gigawatt. And what is going to be the right mix between baseload, intermittent, green, traditional? I intend to have Indiana at the leading front of that discussion.

Veterans—that is an issue in many different ways. Those who serve our country still have trouble getting basic benefits, especially as it relates here in the Federal Government, where most of them come from. They told us back home in Indiana that to get claims information through the mail or driving to a regional location was clumsy, even through the mail, and logistically impossible when you had to travel sometimes 2 hours to get a basic checkup. That was a real burden for disabled veterans.

We wrote the Wounded Warrior Access Act to streamline the claims process with an online tool. It was signed into law last year.

I came here most proud of fixing healthcare back in my own business in

2008—a small business for half of the time I was there, over 37 years, 20 employees or so. By 2008, we had grown to 300 employees. You can't imagine how sick and tired I was of hearing how lucky I was it is only going up 5 to 10 percent this year.

Well, after hearing that for about 9 years, I got involved in the HR meeting back in 2008. Here was the first question I asked of the insurance company, since we had hardly any claims: What profit margin did you make on our plan?

I was thinking 10, 15 percent. They were honest: 25 percent.

I turned to the agent: What was your commission?

Seven percent.

We were stroking a million-dollar check back then. Do the math. That wasn't going to work for me.

I said: What can we do to fix it?

They said: Well, you could maybe self-insure.

I said: You didn't tell us that last year.

And I did that and self-insured and made it a cost center. But then the critical question was—and we need to all start asking these kinds of questions: How do you really lower costs and make Hoosiers and Americans healthier?

They said: We have got a broken system. It is built upon expensive remediation.

It sounded a little abstract. So I said: Let's flesh that out a little bit.

Well, you have got your deductible. I had to raise that each year to moderate the increases, change underwriters every 3 years. That was a pain in the rear.

So they said: If you really push wellness and prevention, it will be the start of how you lower healthcare costs.

And then they said something that really surprised me: Healthcare consumers are nonexistent because they aren't involved in actually shopping around for healthcare. You depend on the insurance company in your company or the government to do it. That is the driver in most markets.

I ended up, after that meeting, throwing every wellness tool and the kitchen sink at it, turned my employees into healthcare consumers, cut costs by over 50 percent, and haven't had an increase in 16 years.

I always ask the question: Raise your hand if that has been the case.

No one does. Those are the kinds of things we are going to have to do here and back home in the States.

Here, being on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, I told the chair of that committee, Senator SANDERS: If you want to lower healthcare costs, start incentivizing the industry to be competitive and transparent.

Well, that ended up creating what would be the most transformational bill, called the Health Care PRICE Transparency Act. And when you are getting someone like Senator BERNIE

SANDERS and MIKE BRAUN, the two loudest voices in the Senate, on healthcare reform, that is a modern miracle. And that bill is there as a template, already strongly bipartisan. Some of the features of it could be dropped into reforms that we do even this year.

During the pandemic, JOSH HAWLEY and I passed through a bill that would declassify all intelligence about the Wuhan lab and also prompted the President to direct the intelligence community to investigate the lab leak. As a result of that investigation, the FBI confirmed that they found a lab leak to be the most likely theory of origin.

And when the current administration announced the vaccine mandate for businesses that would have vaccinated every employee in all businesses if you had 100 or more employees, after it was in the rearview mirror, we dusted off an old law called the Congressional Review Act that hadn't been used in years, and we used that and got bipartisan support on it. And then, lo and behold, when the Supreme Court struck down the vaccine mandate, they cited our challenge as the most significant action in Congress that had weighed in on the mandate. You can get results if you stick your neck out, take a little risk.

Before I go to the other side of being a Senator—what you do back home called “constituent services”—I want to talk about a few of the lighter moments of being in the U.S. Senate.

I will never forget when I got here—and we have great lunches; kudos to the staff that prepares them. And it said lunchtime starts at 12:30; it is over at 2. Well, that seemed like a lot of time. I show up at 12:30. Even the staff wasn't fully—had the meal there ready to go. I said: What is going on? They said: Well, 12:30 is the official time. No one shows up until after 1. So there is Senate time and real time. You have to get adjusted to that.

The pace is maybe a little different when you come from the field of being a scrappy entrepreneur. The only other Senator that did the same thing was, of course, a guy named RICK SCOTT who ran a business, ran the State of Florida. We didn't make that mistake another time.

I was able to host a lunch. I am in the logistics business. You have to come up with something that is unique to your community. We are probably the most German Catholic community in the State of Indiana, so we wanted to have schnitzel and brats. Well, the plan was to drive them from Indiana to DC. I actually had a volunteer do that because, believe it or not, that was the only way that was practical and least expensive to host a lunch.

Here is one of the most unusual moments. We all get involved in media—probably far too much of it. But part of this job is having the pulpit to say what you believe, what you want to weigh in on.

I was actually doing an interview in the middle of COVID. I can't remember which network. But all of a sudden, a minute into about a 7-minute interview, the cameraman goes down, literally. I thought the camera or the light stand was coming at me. The interview continued. My wife was watching it at home and thought we had a mini earthquake here. So I remember one of the other cameramen said: I have never seen anything like that in the U.S. Senate.

The story wasn't over. About a minute before the interview was over, he starts to dust himself off. He had been out for 4 minutes. He grabs the camera stand or light, and I thought, This time, it is coming at me. I didn't know what I was going to do; although, he went down again, and we completed the interview. Of course, I was worried about what happened. An ambulance came. We were lucky in that case. It was dehydration.

Imagine being in a pickle like that. We got through it.

Other memories, after the first State of the Union Address, I was walking back. I live right east of the Supreme Court building. It was a starlit evening. The moon silhouetted the Capitol. I said to myself: How can you be so lucky?

Now, the other side of being a Senator is constituent services. Customer service was always my priority in my business. Believe me, you don't have to pay consultants for them to tell you what is wrong with your business. Just listen to your employees and to your customers—free advice. It doesn't cost a penny. If you get it fixed, you actually corrected an issue you have with your company.

So I told them I wanted to run constituent services back home, just like customer service in my business. We put together a team just as good there—when you listen to these stats—as the one that enabled me to do so much here on the legislative side—they closed 13,775 constituent cases in 6 years, assisting Hoosiers with problems that were really impacting their lives. There are many ways you can get entangled with the Federal Government.

My team returned \$21.6 million that were owed to Hoosiers back to them, mostly from the IRS. That money had an immediate impact. One woman in Columbus was at risk of losing her home, and we were able to recover \$10,000 that, again, was owed to her by the IRS.

My team handled 2,381,813 emails, phone calls. Believe me, there are a lot of ways, if people just do it, to get a hold of who represents you here in DC. But then what do you do with it? We put a metric in that if those weren't handled within a certain number of days, it set off an alarm. Unbelievable constituent services—1,500 hours of mobile office hours. When they reached out, we found the solutions.

One Hoosier's family reached out because their mother's ashes were lost at

a post office facility, couldn't be located. We secured an inspector general audit of the post office to make sure that never happens again.

A family of an Indiana soldier killed in Vietnam didn't get the Silver Star. It had been a long time. We recovered that for them. My team cut through the redtape and delivered that medal to his family. It had been 50 years they were trying.

As proud as I am of the legislation passed and the constituent services that we gave, I am also proud of sounding the alarm for what I think is our biggest issue impacting our country. To be honest, it has been like talking to the side of my barn back home. I learned what it was about to make ends meet because your tail was on the line running a small business.

I am optimistic since we do so many great things in this country. But the incentives have been so strong to go the opposite way that, hopefully, we can change the direction that, in my mind, will bankrupt the country, and it has been from both sides of the aisle. It has been where we just expected too much out of this place. We need to focus on doing a few things better.

To show you the magnitude, 6 years ago, we were \$18 trillion in debt. In 6 years, we have doubled it. We borrow \$1 trillion every 6 months, and that is the interest that we pay on our debt now every 6 months, as well. We actually borrow \$2 trillion a year.

This spending spree has had a real effect on the American people. We have inflation, rising interest rates, and a projected debt that is going to be \$56 trillion in 10 years. If you are good at math, that gets geometrically more difficult to get out of that hole being dug that deep.

I had a business, the first 17 years where the office was in a mobile home. I got introduced out here: Had his office in a double-wide. I said, it was a used single-wide. That was my first and only opportunity of doing what I wanted to do.

Well, the overhead was so low, you almost had to stoop to get in the door, figuratively speaking, but I learned a lot of valuable lessons. In the real world, you have to live within your means. Borrowing money from our kids and grandkids is not a business plan that is going to work.

How do we turn things around? The best thing, we are not flying blind here. There is an instruction manual called the Constitution, especially the 10th Amendment. As the Federal Government has struggled, the States have been a laboratory for how you fix things. That is where the innovation is going to come from in the next decade.

I am so excited to lead that charge back home in Indiana. It was so hard to get here in the first place. The question I get asked most: Why wouldn't you stay? I kind of explained that a little bit earlier that I believe in term limits. It was an either-or choice—either run for Governor or serve another term

here. I am not going to lose sight of what I have been a part of, but I do feel I made the right choice.

On this entire journey, I couldn't have done it without my life partner Maureen, married 48 years ago. I never get that number wrong, even if it is off by a year. On our wedding, I will never forget everyone as they passed me and got to her. I was trying to listen if anyone said that she was lucky because I was first and everyone, without exception, said how lucky I was. Well, I just couldn't resist; after we got out of the line there at the church—maybe later that evening—I said, "Dear, were there any people that told you, you were lucky?" And in a very diplomatic way, she said: "There were a few."

I have been blessed beyond all measure there. I have a family that has been great. Three of the four kids work and run the business I ran for 37 years. Three of my seven grandkids are right up there—Michael, Kate, and Julia; and Jason, one of my four kids. I have been blessed beyond measure when you look at all of that.

And then the thing I talk most often about is faith, family, and community—in that broader scope, how we were so lucky to be dropped into the place called Jasper, IN. That, to me, is something I will never figure out.

I am just thankful that when I ended up having one of the best MBAs in the country and was headed to Wall Street, we talked about, do we want to do it when we wanted to raise a family? I took the first entrepreneur's course there. She already wanted her own business. It didn't seem like Wall Street was going to work out.

Well, we moved back home. Best job I could find was over an 80-percent pay cut. If we hadn't done that, it is almost certain I wouldn't be here this afternoon doing a farewell speech in the U.S. Senate.

I tour all 92 counties each year. I have offered open office hours, scheduling into it on Fridays. Hoosiers, I will be doing that as your next Governor as well.

Hoosiers are some of the most good-hearted, hard-working people in the world. It has been my honor to serve you here.

To all my colleagues here in the Senate, thank you for your friendship and the honor of serving alongside you in this esteemed body, not to mention all the precious memories I will take back to Indiana.

I will part on this, because I spent so much time sitting in that seat as the Presiding Officer at the most inconvenient time each week, Thursday afternoon from 3 to 6. Well, you are pretty well the lone soldier by then. You are going to get in the wrap-up. RICK SCOTT was the only one who had poorer seniority than me. I will never forget. We were all interested in wrapping it up.

Well, the first thing I did was figured out a way to where I only had to do it every other week. It took a little risk. It paid off, so I didn't have to do it

every week. Then I found there were some Senators who liked to linger around a little later on Thursdays than maybe what they needed to. And there was one who did it every Thursday and had flexibility—my friend, Senator DAN SULLIVAN. You need to tune in because he does the Alaskan of the Week.

All I said was: Dan, could you move it up about an hour and a half? And he did, and that enabled me to get home late on a Thursday instead of a Friday. I was even doing some entrepreneurial work right there. You can ask anybody in the well now, we were all wanting to see that happen together.

Finally, I tried to bust the dress code here by not wearing a tie. There was a time or two where I barged in here without one and almost got tackled by Senator LANKFORD once, but I got in and out. But that is one thing I am not going to change. I keep a tie in the Cloakroom. Thank you, again, for keeping me dressed correctly when I need to be on the floor on occasions like this.

It has been quite a run; it will be bittersweet to leave the place; and thank you all for the enjoyment I have had here.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, I wanted to address Senator BRAUN's family, members of his staff, and others who may be watching these proceedings today. Congratulations to Senator BRAUN for a great run here. To his family, just wonderful people, I see Maureen in the Gallery and other members of the family. I know they are incredibly proud of MIKE at this moment, and they are looking forward to the next step in his professional journey and, therefore, their journey, so thank you for your service.

I know that this is every bit as much of a sacrifice and a period of service for members of one's family as it is for us. Sometimes, it is more challenging for family members because we lose all control over what people are saying and whatnot but great to visit with you, and I am looking forward to this next step.

And then members of the team, I think it was right and appropriate that Senator BRAUN spent so much time talking about your great work on behalf of the people of Indiana.

The bills that he has shown leadership on, multiple bills, and successes would not have happened, as he said, but for your work, the phone calls received, and the emails responded to, all the meetings. I mean, it is really important. Many people call their U.S. Senator only once. Most people don't call, but they will talk to someone who has talked to a U.S. Senator, and those interactions are just so essential.

They shape people's views of what government can be, and they help people be reassured during times like these that they are represented. And so

I appreciate you very much. For many of you, I know you will return to the great Hoosier State and keep working in some sort of service capacity, and I will look forward to working together.

MIKE, I have to say, the Senate's loss is Indiana's gain. You have certainly served with distinction here, but I know you have always prided yourself, appropriately so, on your executive responsibilities and achievements over the years. Now, the people of Indiana will benefit from a different type of service, and we are all very much looking forward to seeing what is next. It has already started, I know.

I have to say, the hunting is better. The hunting is a heck of a lot better, whether you are a hunter hunting things with faces or mushrooms, and there is no better place to do that kind of thing than southern Indiana, Dubois County, preferably.

You know, this is Indiana's win, this moment right here—remembering the great service and achievements—but when you reflect on the experience you bring to this next step, building and running a large organization, and yet you still have exposure to and experience in government between the local school board levels, State legislature for a brief period of time, and then the U.S. Senate, what better perspective could an incoming chief executive of a State have?

So I am really excited about this step. Your commitment, I know, will be enduring to fiscal responsibility and economic freedom. Those have been hallmarks of your service here. They are, frankly, expectations that people have of you and of our State. Carrying on that tradition of fiscal responsibility and effective management is, I think, one of the reasons you were elected, despite some strong and talented opponents you faced in that recent election.

So here we are. Here we are parting ways in the U.S. Senate. But as we leave this Chamber, I will have an opportunity to call you Governor-elect, and then we can keep working together on veterans' issues, on budgetary issues, on expanding healthcare access to more people, on ensuring that Hoosiers and others across the country have access to affordable, quality housing near where the jobs are. All of these issues that make normal life possible in this country. Government can be maddening; government can be inefficient; government can be unresponsive; but government is necessary. And if it is necessary, let's make it good government. Let's do what we can to instill some measure of confidence in this system, as imperfect as it may be.

I think that this is something in this new capacity that you can help deliver at a time when so many people are pessimistic about the state of affairs. Again, you are the guy to make this happen.

So Godspeed, Senator BRAUN. Godspeed to members of your team and to your beautiful family. I am looking

forward to helping make you successful in this next step because if you are successful, Senator, then the State of Indiana is successful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise today to discuss a fundamental question: Who is a citizen of the United States?

My comments are inspired by an interview given recently by the President-elect in which he announced that he would try to end birthright citizenship on day one of his Presidency.

In the same interview, he claimed that the United States was the only nation on Earth offering birthright citizenship. What is birthright citizenship? Is the United States the only nation that has it?

Let's start with the Constitution. The 14th Amendment enacted by Congress in 1866 and ratified by the States in 1868 contains a clear definition of citizen.

Section 1 states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

A very straightforward definition. If you are born in the United States or naturalized by law—and that is covered in article I of the Constitution that Congress may set up a process for naturalizing—you are a U.S. citizen so long as you are subject to the jurisdiction of this country. And there is no equivocation, "all persons" in either category are U.S. citizens.

The Constitution was first adopted, as we all know, in 1787. Why was this definition of citizen added to the Constitution in 1868—90 years later?

Surprisingly, there was no definition of citizen in the Constitution as originally issued. The word "citizen" was used once without definition. Article II defines the qualifications to be President as follows:

No person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States . . . shall be eligible to the Office of President.

But the word "citizen" was not defined. The records of the Constitutional Convention show that the Framers considered defining the term "citizen," but they had disagreements. And they couldn't reach a definition that satisfied them, and so they left the term "citizen" undefined in the Constitution as originally promulgated.

This definition was added in the 14th Amendment in 1868 to fix a problem, a grievous problem: America's embrace of slavery.

Dred Scott was born enslaved in Virginia in 1799. His parents were also enslaved, and his family had likely resided in this country for generations. Scott's owner took him first to Alabama and then to St. Louis and finally sold him to Army surgeon John Emerson when he was about 31 years old in 1830.

Dr. Emerson then took Dred Scott first to Illinois, a free State, and then to the Wisconsin Territory, where slavery was prohibited. Dred Scott worked as an enslaved laborer for the Emerson family for 16 years after they had purchased him. And he had attempted, over the course of those years, to purchase his own freedom and also the freedom of his wife Harriet. But the Emerson family refused to allow him to purchase his own freedom.

So he eventually filed a freedom suit in St. Louis, seeking to be released from slavery on the grounds that when he resided in Illinois, a free State, and then in the Wisconsin Territory, a free territory, that residence extinguished his slavery and rendered him a freedman.

The trial court in St. Louis ruled in his favor, granting him his freedom. But the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. The matter was then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court: Was Dred Scott free or enslaved?

The U.S. Supreme Court rendered one of its most notorious decisions, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, in 1857. Under the guidance of Chief Justice Roger Taney, the Court didn't simply confront the lower court issue, whether an enslaved person traveling to a free State or territory thereby gains freedom; instead the Court went much further, finding that no person of African descent, free or enslaved, no matter how long they or their family had lived here, could ever be considered a citizen of the United States.

And without being a citizen, Dred Scott did not even have the right to seek relief in an American court. The heart of the *Dred Scott* opinion is very, very chilling. Justice Taney, in writing about African descendants living in the United States, said this:

We think . . . that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none [none] of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States.

Even though the Constitution contained no definition of citizen, the Court declared broadly that no one of African descent could ever—could ever—attain that status.

The *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision was immensely controversial. It went far beyond Dred Scott's situation and held that all 4 million enslaved Black Americans in 1857, as well as hundreds of thousands of free men and women, were not and could not nor ever be citizens of the only country they had ever known.

Two of the Justices of the Court dissented from the ruling, and one resigned partially to protest it. The backlash over *Dred Scott v. Sandford* was so severe that it became one of the precipitating causes of the Civil War a few years later.

As the Civil War came to a close, with hundreds of thousands dead, with

much of the South in ruins, with President Lincoln assassinated, and with slavery abolished by the 13th Amendment, the reunited Nation realized it needed to fix the damage done by the Dred Scott case, and to do so, it needed to finally add a definition of citizen to the American Constitution. And that is what Congress and the States did in adopting section 1 of the 14th Amendment.

All persons—all persons—either born in the United States or naturalized by law are citizens so long as they are subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

This sentence, this one sentence, turned the formerly enslaved and all free African-Americans born here into citizens.

The 13th Amendment rendered them not slaves, and yet they were not yet citizens so long as Dred Scott was the law of the land. This sentence was what turned liberated slaves and free African-Americans into U.S. citizens: If you are born in America, citizenship is your birthright.

In the 1890s, the notion of birthright citizenship was tested in the Supreme Court. A man by the name of Wong Kim Ark was born in San Francisco to Chinese parents who were not U.S. citizens. He traveled to China, and then, in traveling back to the United States, his birthplace and home, he was denied reentry into this country based on the Chinese Exclusion Act, an egregious law of the time attempting to bar Chinese immigration. He sued to overturn the congressional ban, and the Court ruled in 1898 that he was a U.S. citizen based on the plain language of the 14th Amendment, and the Chinese Exclusion Act could therefore not apply to bar him entry into this country.

Lawyers in the case attempted to argue, as some do today, that Wong Kim Ark, although born in the United States, was not subject to the jurisdiction of this country, but the Court dispatched this argument quickly by finding that Wong Kim Ark was clearly subject to the laws of the land of his birth.

This ruling from 1898 has been the clear understanding of American law ever since. Birthright citizenship means that you are a U.S. citizen if you are born in America. Your right to citizenship does not depend upon the status of your parents. Dred Scott, Wong Kim Ark, and Donald Trump all meet that test.

This birthright was only guaranteed following incalculable bloodshed, the centuries-long depravity of slavery, and the mass slaughter of the Civil War. The citizenship clause in the 14th Amendment was meant as an atonement for and a repair of that suffering.

Anyone who wants to reverse or curtail birthright citizenship is acting directly contrary to the plain meaning of the Constitution, and they are attempting to move the United States back to a pre-Civil War mentality where certain kinds of people, although born in and long residing in the United

States, are viewed as subordinate and unequal because of their parents' status or their ancestry.

One additional point is important: The President-elect's claim that only the United States recognizes birthright citizenship. This statement is either ignorant or willfully deceptive. Thirty-three nations—many in the Americas, including Canada and Mexico—grant full birthright citizenship to all born within their borders. The United States is not alone in embracing birthright citizenship. In fact, I would argue that the United States has been the leader of a global movement to embrace birthright citizenship.

I have described the painful history of how America reached the conclusion that all born here are entitled to citizenship so long as they are subject to the jurisdiction of this country. In future weeks, I will return to the Senate floor to describe the many benefits that birthright citizenship has bestowed on our Nation, and I will do so by telling the stories of Americans born to immigrant parents, whose contributions have enriched this country and even enriched the place we stand today—the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Florida.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE BRAUN

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, it is my distinct opportunity to talk about my good friend Senator MIKE BRAUN from Indiana.

Senator BRAUN and I came up here at the exact same time. He was 99th in seniority and I was 100th in seniority 6 years ago. We both have very similar backgrounds. Both of us had built businesses. Both of us have very similar backgrounds in how we got started. Neither of us started with any money. We got to build successful businesses. We had to figure out how to control our costs because, you know, you are not going to succeed if you don't figure out how to control your costs. He had a very similar experience as I did on how you control healthcare costs: You make your employees consumers of healthcare. You make them be the ones that make the decision on how they are going to spend healthcare dollars.

He also is very focused on the problems of Federal debt, the problems of Federal spending. From the time he got up here, he was a champion of fiscal sanity.

With our wives, we had the opportunity to travel to Israel—I think our first summer here; I think it was our first summer—and spend a week there just learning everything we could about Israel. Senator BRAUN has a wonderful family, a wonderful wife—also an entrepreneur like he is. So I am going to miss him a lot.

He talked about the fact that we were so naive when we first came up here. They were supposed to have lunch from 12:30 to 2 o'clock, and the business guys would show up on time, and there were only two of us there. The food

wasn't out. So we were told that it doesn't really—they say it starts on time, but it never did.

We both saw the difficulty in trying to get things accomplished here and the difficulty in trying to control spending here. But his voice has been very important on the fight for fiscal sanity here, and his voice has been very important on the ability to try to figure out how we get our healthcare costs in line so people can afford it—not just government affording it but individuals can afford it.

So I am going to miss him. We both have—we had the worst times together. I think he had the 3 to 6 and I had the 6 to whenever we finished on Thursday. Every Thursday, we were here. So he was very—he was smart. He put it together so that at least every Thursday, one of us could go home a little bit earlier, which was smart.

He did talk to DAN SULLIVAN, who does a great job with—if you haven't had the opportunity to listen to DAN's Alaskan of the Week, talking about an Alaskan, he does a great job with that. He got him to move it up so we could get out of here earlier.

He is just a great person. We served on the Aging Committee together and the Budget Committee. He is just a wonderful person to serve with.

He is going to love being Governor. I had the opportunity to be Governor from 2011 to 2019. It is a great job. If you care about families, if you want to help people get a job, if you want to help people get a better education, if you want to keep people safe, that is exactly what you get to do.

I think Senator BRAUN is going to be the best Governor in the country soon. He is going to make sure that Indiana is a State where people can get a great-paying job, their kids get a great education, and people feel safe. It is still a little cold for me. Florida is a little bit warmer than Indiana.

I just want to say I am very appreciative of MIKE's friendship. I am very appreciative of his hard work. I appreciate his tenacity.

I can tell you that they are always going to live within their means because MIKE will not waste a dime. Indiana will have probably the best budget in the country, and all their debt, if they have any, will be paid off quickly.

I just wanted to say to MIKE, thank you for your friendship. I look forward to working with you, and I am going to miss you up here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I just wanted to note first that I really appreciate Senator MIKE BRAUN's support on our effort to protect American's privacy and take on the rapid expansion of TSA use of facial surveillance. Stopping the establishment of a national surveillance system is very important to freedom and privacy in America, and I much appreciate his partnership in undertaking this topic

and wish him all the best in his return to be Governor of Indiana.

STOP INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I rise to say a few words about S. 1351 and ask for its passage, as amended. But before I formally ask, I just want to know what this is all about; and that is, across our country, there are institutions that say they will help with your troubled teen. In fact, this has become known as the troubled teen industry.

Now, some of these institutions are long established, huge amounts of oversight, the best practices and the best results, and we certainly need these types of places to assist families when they are challenged in the family setting by the difficulties experienced by their children. But we also have a whole series of companies that have sprung up, whether for-profit or non-profit, without the expertise, and saw an opportunity to make a lot of money and jump into a space without the proper foundation for actually being beneficial to teens. We had an experience with one of our Oregon children who died at just such a facility.

One of the individuals—really the individual who proceeded to draw attention to this largely unregulated troubled teen industry is Paris Hilton. Paris wrote a memoir, and she shared in it, as summarized by, well, the summary of her book, that her childhood was shattered by 2 years of strip searches, isolation, beatings, restraints, and brainwashing in this troubled teen institution. Her story is not alone. There are multiple stories of broken bones, of sexual assaults, of solitary confinement, even stories, as with our child in Oregon, of them dying in these institutions.

We found that there really is a lack of detailed information about what is going on across America, so 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans have come together to sponsor this bill to say: We need to understand and therefore have recommendations on how to avoid the horrendous outcomes at some of the institutions. So this bill calls for just such a study.

This bill proceeds to say: We want our kids safe. We want our kids respected. We want our children to have the very best care.

I am struck by the tragedy that occurs when parents searching for help for their children strive to send them to a safe place and end up sending them to a very dangerous place. This is unacceptable.

This bill says: Let's get a complete map of these institutions. Let's understand where they are and what they look like and what they cost and how long kids are staying there and how children are treated, how they are treated in ways that are inappropriate, and how, in some institutions, the gold-star institutions, how their best

practices should be shared across the Nation, and how we should inform decision makers and policymakers across the country with the findings.

So that is the simple story of this bill, and I am pleased that I am able to come to the floor now with a lot of support: Senator JOHN CORNYN, a lead on the Republican side, and a lot of help from TOMMY TUBERVILLE. Senator CASSIDY, who is ranking member of HELP, was involved in helping this bill go forward.

I am thankful for the information we received from the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches, an institution that is highly respected and that has been in operation since 1957, providing support and help to literally thousands of young boys. Actually, that is the type of information we want collected—institutions that are working well, that have those best practices.

So, Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 1351 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1351) to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Merkley-Cornyn substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 3316), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (S. 1351), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I failed to mention my appreciation for the conversations I have had with Senator RICK SCOTT, who helped facilitate dialogue with the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches and their contributions to how we should go forward.

With that, I am really excited that we are getting this bill done. Thank you. Hopefully, the House will be able to expedite it, and we will start to understand an industry that we need to understand and America needs to understand so children are helped, not hurt.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ELECTRIC VEHICLE SUBSIDIES

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, the new Senate Republican majority begins on January 3, 2025. So our day one starts in 3 weeks. Republicans are going to enter the next Congress with a long "fix it" list on behalf of the American people. And at the top of the list is an agenda to lower costs and to restore American energy dominance.

Prices today, we know, are 20 percent higher than they were 4 years ago, and, just this morning, we learned, once again, that prices have gone up in November. And we know the culprits, the problem behind the high prices: wasteful Washington spending. And we have seen a lot of it the last 4 years. The other reason, of course, is the Democrats throttling American energy production.

Republicans are going to fix the fiscal insanity of the last 4 years. We will put Americans—not Washington bureaucrats—back into the driver's seat.

We are going to start by repealing the Biden car bribe. This is something that President Trump strongly supports, and he is supporting what we are promoting. He has asked for it. He has campaigned on it. Eliminating this car bribe by the Biden administration—it is one of the most wasteful policies we have seen from this administration over the last 4 years. It is the Democrats' \$7,500 subsidy for people buying electric vehicles. It was included in their reckless tax-and-spend legislation. It received zero—zero—Republican votes, not a one.

It is an attempt by the Democrats to bribe the American people to go along with their unpopular climate fantasy. It is a welfare check for wealthy elites and for green corporations. It is a giveaway to communist China, which controls key parts of the EV supply chain.

We were initially told by the Joint Committee on Taxation that these subsidies would cost about \$14 billion. Well, the pricetag has continued to tick up since then. Today, there have been some revised estimates, and they have ballooned to projected costs of way over \$300 billion. That is right, over \$300 billion. And that is for vehicles that most Americans don't want, can't afford, and don't work for them or their families.

The auto dealers in Wyoming tell me it takes much, much longer to try to sell these things compared to the traditional gas-powered vehicles. They say they can't even sell them at a loss, and they are stockpiling them on the lots.

Less than 10 percent of the new car sales in America last year were EVs. The sale figures have been abysmal. EVs lost market share. It is hard to believe. They actually lost market share in 2024.

So you have these carmakers from around the country who are hemorrhaging cash. They are losing tons of money. And we have autoworkers who have lost their jobs.

The CEO of Ford says his company is projected to lose \$5 billion this year on their EV market. Stellantis, which owns Chrysler, is also in the ditch. In August, it announced plans to lay off thousands of autoworkers at its plants in Michigan. Yet, last week, it won a \$7.54 billion loan—a loan, an additional loan—from the Biden administration, over \$7.5 billion for something that is failing.

Joe Biden is leaving the White House the same way he led it: by doubling down on failure.

America now has fewer manufacturing jobs today than it did last year. And do you want to know the dirtiest secret of Democrats in terms of the Biden car bribe? It sends taxpayer money to communist China. But the original law was clear. It said, if your EV was made with Chinese batteries or used their critical minerals, it would then be ineligible—not eligible—for taxpayer-funded subsidies. Chinese batteries, Chinese components can't get any of the subsidy benefits.

Senator MANCHIN actually wrote that provision into that bill. Republicans still voted against the entire bill. We thought it was a waste of taxpayer dollars. Joe Biden signed it, and then EV sales stalled out.

So what did the Democrats do? They double-dealed. They could have made it easier to mine more critical minerals in America, to use our own supply chain. But, no, President Biden decided to overrule the China ban.

The Department of the Treasury came out with lax rules on sourcing materials, meaning that communist China will benefit from American tax dollars. It also means that American workers will pay a higher price for a policy and for vehicles they don't want.

We need to go back to a consumer-driven, free-enterprise system. This is the United States of America. We should never be dependent on dictators and despots, like those that we have in communist China.

Electric vehicles make sense for some people, but they are not an option for all people. Consumers have legitimate anxiety about the range of these vehicles, about costly repairs, and about extremely expensive insurance, because, often, a minor ding on one of these electric vehicles, with damage done, well, they call it a total and complete loss of the vehicle, not something that can be repaired. That is

why the insurance is much higher on electric vehicle than traditional vehicles.

And, frankly, if EVs were better options, then government wouldn't need to bribe Americans all across the country to buy them or to bribe businesses to build them.

Electric vehicles are a luxury item. They are toys with severe limitations. They are not must-have means of transportation. Taxpayers shouldn't be forced to pay for the cost of luxury vehicles. It is wrong for taxpayers, tax dollars, and for working American families to subsidize the car purchases of the wealthy elites.

The American people have proven that they refuse to be force-fed these electric vehicles. They can't be pushed into buying, can't be bribed into buying them. "No, thank you," said the American consumer.

But that is exactly what the Democrats have been trying to do—to ban traditional vehicles and to bribe people to buy electric vehicles. Democrats want to pick what you can drive. They want to punish everyone who doesn't want to do it—all as a result of their smug, moral superiority.

Well, I have a message for my colleagues. It is the same message that Americans sent in November. When taxpayers and voters went to the polls, they said: Government—big government, Democrat government—does not know better than we the people. Senate Democrats don't know better than we the people. We the people have a right to decide what is best for us, what is best for our families.

The incoming Trump administration and the Republican Senate majority will get rid of the Biden car bribe and the Biden car ban. We are going to embrace free enterprise and fiscal responsibility. We will lower prices for the American families and restore America's energy independence and dominance.

We are going to strengthen our manufacturing. We are going to bring back good-paying jobs. We are going to put Americans back in the driver's seat.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, our farm economy is headed in a dark and scary direction. I hope all of my colleagues here in the Senate and

on the other side of the Capitol recognize that.

It is time for Congress to deliver meaningful assistance to our agricultural producers. They have been devastated by unprecedented market conditions and natural disasters over the last 2 years, and they need help recovering from both, not one or the other.

I rise today to urge my colleagues to take action and to support those who support you.

The economic landscape for farmers is looking more like the farm crisis of the 1980s every day.

That is pretty scary.

There is not a farm crisis looming—it is already underway—but it is not too late to keep it from snowballing out of control if Congress acts.

The farm crisis of the 1980s—I remember so well—was one of the worst economic disasters since the Great Depression that decimated rural America and took years for many communities to recover from. Some never did. What caused the crisis? Inflation, high interest rates and production costs, low farm income, depressed crop prices, declining exports, and inadequate Federal price support policy.

Does that sound familiar?

The U.S. farm income has dropped \$41 billion over the last 2 years—the worst decline we have ever seen. Our trade deficit is expected to reach a record high of \$45.5 billion for fiscal year 2025. Input costs and interest rates are close to an alltime high; commodity prices are low; and the Federal farm safety net is not providing any support because the Price Loss Coverage Program's reference prices haven't been updated since the 2014 farm bill. These are unprecedented market conditions. Believe me, I know.

To break this down in greater detail, market losses suffered by producers for the 2024 crop year alone are estimated at \$31 billion—\$31 billion with a "b."

I have a breakdown of the market losses by State and commodity. I ask unanimous consent that they be printed in the RECORD.

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

2024 CROP YEAR ECONOMIC LOSSES BY CROP AND STATE

(Based on December 10, 2024 USDA Economic Research Service World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates)

LOSSES BY CROP

	Income	Acres	Per Acre
Corn	-\$11,587,099,785	90,249,239	-\$128.39
Soybeans	-\$8,466,196,505	86,433,859	-\$97.95
Wheat	-\$5,064,654,335	49,912,825	-\$101.47
Cotton	-\$4,172,067,751	11,160,633	-\$373.82
Sorghum	-\$1,488,653,367	7,924,270	-\$187.86
Oats	-\$498,889,253	1,887,016	-\$264.38
Rice	-\$406,659,904	3,109,021	-\$130.80
Peanuts	-\$355,451,528	1,791,997	-\$198.36
Barley	-\$77,624,589	2,269,061	\$34.21
Total	-\$31,962,047,840	254,737,920	-\$125.47

LOSSES BY STATE

State	Income	Acres	Per Acre
Alabama	-\$265,107,707	1,293,451	-\$204.96
Alaska	-\$128,507	6,939	-\$18.52
Arizona	-\$75,936,100	345,260	-\$219.94
Arkansas	-\$841,638,036	6,001,897	-\$140.23
California	-\$219,322,020	1,421,295	-\$154.31
Colorado	-\$548,024,342	4,548,087	-\$120.50
Connecticut	-\$2,863,060	22,686	-\$126.21
Delaware	-\$38,944,855	362,936	-\$107.30
Florida	-\$78,354,721	366,381	-\$213.86
Georgia	-\$655,552,293	2,580,379	-\$254.05
Idaho	-\$152,349,049	2,096,381	-\$72.67
Illinois	-\$2,488,705,171	22,030,884	-\$112.96
Indiana	-\$1,266,272,910	11,284,636	-\$112.21
Iowa	-\$2,647,228,187	22,875,285	-\$115.72
Kansas	-\$2,760,825,257	22,494,643	-\$122.73
Kentucky	-\$419,290,092	3,836,529	-\$109.29
Louisiana	-\$317,998,366	2,416,125	-\$131.62
Maine	-\$8,663,525	58,142	-\$149.01
Maryland	-\$115,388,280	1,057,847	-\$109.08
Massachusetts	-\$1,803,441	14,125	-\$127.68
Michigan	-\$540,530,356	4,768,756	-\$113.35
Minnesota	-\$1,936,041,618	16,963,514	-\$114.13
Mississippi	-\$525,894,150	3,625,930	-\$145.04
Missouri	-\$1,270,655,699	10,595,754	-\$119.92
Montana	-\$523,794,385	7,490,193	-\$69.93
Nebraska	-\$1,993,881,047	16,757,010	-\$118.99
Nevada	-\$4,134,247	35,350	-\$116.95
New Hampshire	-\$1,460,631	11,506	-\$126.95
New Jersey	-\$20,568,724	188,047	-\$109.38
New Mexico	-\$132,802,196	937,462	-\$141.66
New York	-\$180,960,392	1,488,202	-\$121.60
North Carolina	-\$489,778,764	3,422,175	-\$143.12
North Dakota	-\$1,895,876,988	18,320,934	-\$103.48
Ohio	-\$964,359,752	8,794,146	-\$109.66
Oklahoma	-\$1,011,975,433	8,308,441	-\$121.80
Oregon	-\$87,829,632	870,665	-\$100.88
Pennsylvania	-\$193,378,507	1,666,045	-\$116.07
Rhode Island	-\$143,641	1,114	-\$128.98
South Carolina	-\$190,898,594	1,102,584	-\$173.14
South Dakota	-\$1,607,348,165	13,692,375	-\$117.39
Tennessee	-\$410,768,542	3,135,575	-\$131.00
Texas	-\$3,853,459,576	18,844,789	-\$204.48
Utah	-\$22,223,186	198,356	-\$112.04
Vermont	-\$12,217,118	97,361	-\$125.48
Virginia	-\$162,548,033	1,251,628	-\$129.87
Washington	-\$243,251,731	2,541,423	-\$95.71
West Virginia	-\$9,137,771	78,887	-\$115.83
Wisconsin	-\$745,506,014	6,236,965	-\$119.53
Wyoming	-\$26,227,031	283,318	-\$92.57
Total	-\$31,962,047,840	256,822,415	-\$124.45

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, every single State in the United States suffered market losses this crop-year. The Office of Management and Budget recently submitted a disaster supplemental request to Congress asking for \$21 billion in ad hoc support for producers impacted by natural disasters in 2023 and in 2024, and I certainly support that because many producers across the country deserve it.

However, OMB's request failed to mention anything pertaining to market losses. How can we ignore \$31 billion in market losses this year alone and expect to keep U.S. agriculture afloat? We shouldn't, and we can't. Farmers need market loss assistance, too. We need an additional \$15 billion for market losses.

The House and Senate Agriculture Committees have been working on a proposal that would cover market losses on top of natural disaster losses. It is estimated to cost about \$15 billion. Congress should support that, whether through supplemental appropriations or a farm bill extension, in addition to what has been proposed for natural disasters. Producers should be eligible for both.

State farm bureaus from all 50 States have sent letters to Congress asking for both market and disaster assistance—both, not one or the other. Further, every major agricultural organization across the country—the American Farm Bureau Federation, American Soybean Association, National As-

sociation of Wheat Growers, National Barley Growers Association, National Cotton Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Sorghum Producers, National Sunflower Association, U.S. Canola Association, U.S. Peanut Federation, USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council, USA Rice, and Western Peanut Growers Association—have endorsed market legislation, introduced in the House, focused on market losses.

If Congress fails to recognize the importance of providing market loss help and only focuses on natural disaster, my fear is that, one, farmers and farm groups across the country are going to be very angry that Congress decided to address only half the problem while ignoring every farmer across the country impacted by record input costs and depressed prices, and, two, we are going to have a farm crisis in this country worse than the 1980s crisis.

I will leave my colleagues with this question: Are we going to learn from lessons of the past and take appropriate action or take the path of least resistance today and be required to pay hundreds of billions on the back end after it is too late?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

STOP INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ACT

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, a little while ago, my colleagues were successful in passing the Stop International Child Abuse Act by unanimous consent.

I want to thank Paris Hilton for her great work on this legislation. You know, I applaud her for using her position of influence as a force for good. She has worked hard to make sure no child has to go through what she went through in her earlier life.

America's kids and young adults will decide the future of this country. I dedicated my life to mentoring young people because they are the most precious commodity that we have. If we get everything else right but neglect our young people, our country has no future.

You know, I have seen some of these residential treatment facilities with my own eyes, and I know they need reform. Right now, there is not enough oversight in some of these schools. Some States are trying to regulate them, but we need to do more on a national level. We don't know where the Federal money is going or who is making money off looking after our kids. We don't understand the regulations and whether they benefit our children or not. This bill authorizes a study of these facilities and looks at them nationwide. It can cost about what it takes to go to Harvard for a kid to be in one of these institutions. It is very expensive, but a lot of them look like something out of a Charles Dickens movie.

There is an old saying that sunlight is the best disinfectant. We need some more sunlight on these facilities so we can put a stop to the waste and the

fraud and the abuse in this system. I am proud to support this bill, and I stand with our kids.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Madam President, now I would like to remind you of a vote that President Joe Biden took in 1983, as a Senator, to tax your Social Security. That is right. Joe Biden is responsible for your Social Security money today being taxed. It is a scam.

One of the big reasons the American people elected President Trump to be the next President of the United States is because they are tired of being scammed by the Federal Government. They are tired of seeing their hard-earned money evaporate into thin air because of inflation, which is caused by Joe Biden and Democrats spending money that we don't have.

They are tired of having their tax dollars sent to fund foreign wars where America's interests are really not at stake. They are tired of the Federal Government using taxpayer dollars to put illegal immigrants up in fancy hotels instead of building a wall to secure our Nation's sovereignty. But what the American people have been tired of for years—decades even—is how they have been getting scammed out of their retirement money, the money that they pay into this government.

Here is the sad truth: The American people don't have any confidence that they will see all the money they paid into Social Security over the years.

Since being signed into law in the 1930s by President Roosevelt, Americans' money has been going in the front door of the Federal Government and then out the back door. It is a big Ponzi scheme, and everyone is forced to participate in it. You have no choice. It doesn't matter if you are 16 or 76, a little over 6 percent of your paycheck is taken out to pay for this retirement.

Americans have been paying into Social Security for years, only to see a fraction of what they were promised to be returned to them. And that is not all. After decades of having Social Security taken out of their paychecks, millions of Americans have to pay taxes on what they do get at the end of the day. That is right. The money that is owed to them—the taxpayers' own money that has been held for years by the Federal Government—is taxed again as if it is new income.

Withdrawing money from your paycheck every week or month for Social Security is already a tax to begin with. The money taken out of your pocket and your paychecks isn't put into an account that gains interest like a mutual fund. It doesn't even gain interest like a savings account. It actually has a lower rate of interest than the rate of inflation. And that is not the worst of it.

The pot your Social Security money sits in isn't left alone by the Federal Government. No, your money that you pay into Social Security is being used like a debit card by the Federal Gov-

ernment. So the money you are paying into, it is effectively a tax. Then what little money you do get back is taxed again.

We have got people who are getting ready to retire in this country who are going to try to live off \$2,000 a month after paying Social Security all their life.

In this day and age, \$2,000 is impossible to live off of, totally impossible. We better start figuring this problem out because one of these days, millions of people are going to come to DC and say: Where is my money? And I don't blame them. I don't blame them one bit.

We are \$36 trillion in debt, and there is no sign of that slowing down. Let me repeat that: \$36 trillion in debt.

We seem to be spending all we can on everything but retired American workers. We have sent over \$200 billion to Ukraine. Just yesterday, the Biden administration announced they are giving \$20 billion more to Ukraine in the form of a loan. Well, that is interesting. We are never getting that money back. It is another scam.

Over \$400 billion in COVID relief money was wasted, misspent, or stolen. And I just saw on TV before I just came down here on a news report that President Biden just gave Iran 10 billion more dollars.

The Biden administration set aside billions of dollars to build EV stations across this country, plug-ins. Up here, we toss money around like it is nothing, and then we turn around and tax Americans' Social Security checks. It is unfair for the millions of Americans who paid into Social Security to have to suffer for their government's incompetence.

My two sons ask me all the time if they are ever going to see the money they have paid into Social Security. At this rate, they have got a better chance of seeing world war III than ever seeing that 6 percent that was taken out of their paychecks since they started working. How bleak is that?

That is why when President Trump says he wants to fight for Social Security to protect it and preserve the retirement age, it resonates with people. People listen because it sounds like somebody is going to help somebody.

The American people aren't dumb. They know there has been funny business going on at the Social Security Administration for many, many years and that they may never see a dime of the money that they are owed.

Americans aren't dumb. Every election year, you hear our Democratic colleagues saying Republicans want to cut Social Security benefits or raise the retirement age. Yet it was Joe Biden who voted to tax your Social Security check. As usual, our Democratic colleagues just keep throwing money at other programs, projects, and wars, neglecting one of the biggest problems facing our country.

With President Trump coming to town, we are finally going to make

sure the government is serving the people, not bleeding them dry. President Trump is going to make sure the government is accountable to all American taxpayers. At the very least, he is going to give it to you straight, not just tell you what you want to hear.

The Department of Government Efficiency—or what we are calling now DOGE—will play a big role in solving this problem. Elon and Vivek will make sure the American people know exactly what is going on in Washington. There will be no secrets.

The bottom line is this: We need to get bureaucrats' and politicians' hands out of the mess that they made with their Social Security money. We need to make sure Americans get what they were promised.

President Trump's pick to be the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration is a great choice to get Social Security cleaned up. If he doesn't, we will change him. Frank has an excellent track record as an executive in business and finance. He is not a politician. As President Trump said, Commissioner Frank will deliver on the Agency's commitment to the American people for generations to come.

It is about time Washington, DC, starts working for the people we are supposed to represent—what a thought—not to special interests, not for career politicians and entrenched bureaucrats or the liberal pet projects or foreign wars that don't deserve our interest.

Instead of spending money we don't have on things we don't need, let's put it back in the pockets of the Americans who have worked and paid for this. Not only is it in America's best interest to do this, it is the right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

(Ms. ROSEN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The Senator from Tennessee.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last week, I spoke in this Chamber about President Trump's excellent picks to lead our Nation's Federal law enforcement Agencies. Those were Pam Bondi as Attorney General and Kash Patel at the FBI. And, today, I would like to take a moment to discuss President Trump's picks to oversee our Nation's national security.

Across the board, these selections prove that President Trump is prepared to restore American strength after 4 years of the Biden-Harris failures in our Nation's national security. Look no further than the President's outstanding choice for Defense Secretary. That is Tennessean Pete Hegseth. As a Bronze Star recipient who deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Hegseth knows exactly what our servicemembers need to defend our freedoms. He knows what the men and women in uniform need to carry out their mission.

Under President Biden, this administration has demoralized our soldiers,

sailors, marines, and airmen—from anti-American DEI programs to weakness and appeasement abroad. Under Mr. Hegseth, this assault on our military will come to an end as he works to restore the Defense Department to its core mission: securing peace through strength.

Joining him in this fight are three talented congressional colleagues: our colleague here in the Senate, Senator MARCO RUBIO of Florida, as Secretary of State; Congressman MIKE WALTZ as the National Security Advisor; and Congresswoman ELISE STEFANIK as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. All three are proven leaders who have stood up to our adversaries, strengthened relationships with our allies, and defended U.S. interests.

To restore American strength, we also need intelligence Agencies that are focused on protecting the American people, not targeting them. Thankfully, President Trump's pick for Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, has demonstrated the leadership needed to restore accountability at the DNI. As a lieutenant colonel for over 20 years in the U.S. Army Reserves, she has seen firsthand the critical role of intelligence in national security. She handled highly classified information, led troops on deployments, and understands the gravity of safeguarding American lives.

But what sets Ms. Gabbard apart is her willingness to challenge the status quo. For years, she has been an outspoken critic of abuses within the intel community, especially under the Biden-Harris administration. Under her leadership, though, the intel community will return to its rightful purpose: defending the American people and upholding our constitutional freedoms.

America shines as a beacon of freedom in our dangerous world because of the powerful sacrifices our Active-Duty servicemembers and veterans have made to preserve freedom. Last week, I had the pleasure of meeting with our next VA Secretary, former Congressman and Air Force veteran Doug Collins, who will ensure that no veteran is left behind and that all veterans receive the benefits and timely access to quality care that they deserve.

With all of President Trump's picks, he is making one thing clear, and it is this: Starting in January, his administration is committed to supporting our troops, restoring military readiness, and making America stronger than ever before.

KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT

Mr. President, I am so pleased to spend a few minutes on the floor and just really so honored that my colleague Senator BLUMENTHAL is joining me on the floor, because we are at crunch time for the Kids Online Safety Act.

As the Presiding Officer knows, this is a piece of legislation that Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have worked on for about 4 years. And we are so honored that 72 Members of this Chamber stand

as cosponsors of this legislation, and it passed out of this Chamber in July on a vote that was 91 to 3. So it is time to hold that final vote on this legislation in the House.

Now, there is a lot of misinformation that is out there about the Kids Online Safety Act. And if we can get this passed in the remaining few days, what you will have is, for the first time since 1998, there will be legislation passed to protect our children in the virtual space and provide safeguards for minors.

You know, when you look at product design and product safety, nearly every product—every product—that is sold in this country has some kind of safety design attached; that is, every product except what you are seeing in the virtual space. And, of course, while we have laws in the physical space that protect children from the harms of alcohol, tobacco, and firearms and protect them from cyber bullying and protect them from exposure to sexual exploitation or pornography, in the virtual space, we do not have those laws.

KOSA has been in the House, as I said, since July, and it has stalled over there because there are blatant falsehoods that are being peddled by the Big Tech lobbyists about this legislation, including one that they have made up—a falsehood. They keep saying: Well, KOSA would lead to censorship. Nothing is further from the truth because this is not a content bill; it is a product design bill.

So to put this false narrative to rest, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I worked with Elon Musk and X CEO Linda Yaccarino to update the bill's text to make clear that KOSA will safeguard free speech while protecting children online.

To be clear, no one is probably more qualified to speak on the issue of free speech than Elon Musk.

Among the changes in language that reaffirms that KOSA does not permit the government to penalize platforms based on users' viewpoints or alter existing protections for third-party content under section 230. These are protections that have been put in place.

With the new changes, both Elon Musk and Donald Trump, Jr., are now publicly calling on the House to immediately pass the bill, which is also supported by tech companies like Microsoft and Pinterest—and for good reason.

Every day—every day—that goes by without passing the Kids Online Safety Act, more children are being put at risk, more children are losing their lives. And for years, my colleagues and I on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Commerce Committee have heard heartbreaking stories from parents across the country who have lost their children to social media harms. I could read through these stories today. They are heartbreaking. We know from working with these parents, from listening to these parents, and also listening to young people, listening to pe-

diatricians and principals—we know what is happening in the virtual space. We know that Big Tech looks at these children as the product.

We know that they are so invested in keeping kids endlessly scrolling. Meta has even assigned a dollar value to what a child in the virtual space is worth to them as they look at profits. That is \$270 of profit per kid. That is what they consider.

Children, grandchildren are important to each and every one of us, and it is disgusting that you have corporate executives who have done so much work and so much surveying and so much review of how their platform is used, they can tell you what that user is worth.

These companies should be better than that. They should agree that in the physical space, we have those laws to protect children, to protect them from exposure. They do not exist in the virtual space.

And for the naysayers and the falsehood spreaders that are out there saying this would compromise free speech, as I said, we have addressed this; we have amended language; we have brought it forth; and you now have X CEO Linda Yaccarino, you have Elon Musk, and others who are tweeting in support and are saying to the House Republicans: It is time to pass this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, let me begin by expressing my profound thanks to Senator BLACKBURN for her leadership as a champion of the Kids Online Safety Act.

We have worked together over these years—yes, it has been years—through the hearings, the drafting, the redrafting, the revisions on the redraft. Tirelessly, she has been a partner—and a true bipartisan partner—as have been Senator SCHUMER and Senator THUNE, Senator MCCONNELL and Senator CRUZ.

I want to give my thanks to colleagues on both sides of the aisle for bringing us to this truly momentous and historic point in advocating for the Kids Online Safety Act. I am grateful to them and to Chair MCMORRIS RODGERS on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Representatives BILIRAKIS and CASAR, and to all who have joined us from the tech community, including supportive companies like Microsoft and Pinterest. Their leaders have endorsed this legislation.

I express my appreciation as well to Elon Musk and Linda Yaccarino.

Over the weekend, we negotiated a redraft that clarifies what we have said all along: This bill is about product design. It is about protecting kids from toxic content driven at them by products designed specifically to addict them, to take them down dark rabbit holes, to drive toxic content about bullying and eating disorders, self-harm, even suicide—a scourge that every parent in the United States recognizes must be stopped and stopped now—not

next session or the session afterward—because children are dying.

They are literally in peril every day, as we know, because we are parents, we are grandparents, we are public officials who visited schools where young people, elementary school students, tell us about how their companions, their friends, their family members are harmed day in and day out and resort to suicide because no one is protecting them.

We are saying the Kids Online Safety Act will give you protection. It will give you tools and safeguards so you can take back your online lives and so that the bullies can't follow you, literally, into your bedroom at night. They are not confined to the schoolyard anymore but free to follow kids wherever they go because they are in jeopardy everywhere.

What we clarified is that there is no censorship in this bill. There is no content moderation. There is no blocking of specific content. It is about choice—giving young people choice and their parents safeguards, tools to protect their children, and imposing a duty of care, which other producers of any kind of product know they have. They have a duty of care to stop harm when they know or should know it is going to cause physical or emotional harm to people they should protect.

We are now one step away. We are so close to the Kids Online Safety Act becoming law. This measure passed in this body 91 to 3. How many measures pass the U.S. Senate these days by 91 to 3? Major steps forward in legislation passing with that kind of bipartisan support is virtually unheard of.

And today, in the House of Representatives—let me just be very blunt—it will pass by the same overwhelming bipartisan majority if it is given a vote. Let them vote. Let them do their job. I call on the House leadership to simply enable the democratic process to move forward.

We based this legislation on the kind of process that is the ideal here. We started with a recognition that the United States of America faces a mental health crisis. We can all give speeches. We can all recite the rhetoric about the mental health crisis in America that afflicts teens and preteens—a dramatic increase in anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicide. We can all agree—we do all agree—that social media is exacerbating and, indeed, fueling that mental health crisis in America.

Senator BLACKBURN and I have worked over years through hearings to demonstrate that kids' online safety is an idea whose time has come now. We heard from young people and parents across the country who have shared their experiences. They have come forward. They are our strongest supporters and advocates.

We received documents from whistleblowers demonstrating that Facebook—now known as Meta—consciously knew its products were harm-

ing people, and they continued because it made money. They knew that they were attracting more eyeballs for longer periods of time and, therefore, more advertisers collecting more data. It is all about the money.

They decided to put profits ahead of young people. And that is not from us; it is from their own documents that we can draw those conclusions. We brought in the Big Tech executives, and we grilled them on their appalling business practices. They said to us: Yeah, we know regulation is necessary. And they repeated it as a mantra when we had hearings: Regulation is important, just not that regulation.

Let me just say, bluntly, I challenge Meta, Facebook, and Google to support this legislation as Microsoft and Pinterest and now Elon Musk have done. Don't tell us it is a censorship measure. Don't tell us you are defending the First Amendment or free expression. Listen to Elon Musk, the champion of First Amendment free expression among tech executives, who now supports this bill because the arguments that you have given to us about censorship and free expression, the money that you have spent to fight this legislation, the armies of lawyers and lobbyists that still you use against us, simply cannot overcome the voices and faces of young people who have been harmed.

I want you to meet some of them. You know, there is a saying that every good story has a villain, a victim, and a hero. Our heroes are the young people and parents who have come forward to watch this moment. The world is watching us in the U.S. Congress at this moment. And the victims are young people and parents—parents who suffered losses of their children. Some of them are with us here today in spirit to demonstrate the cost of congressional delay and inaction, the cost that every parent should fear and feel today.

That is what happened to Mason Edens, who is here in this picture. Mason loved football and loved making other people smile. He wanted to serve his country when he grew up. He talked about becoming a police officer.

In 2022, Mason experienced his first heartbreak. Quickly after, Microsoft's algorithms inundated him with messages promoting self-harm. He even sought help on TikTok. But instead of providing that help, TikTok sent him more suicidal messages. He was trapped in a rabbit hole.

Depressed, having lost control, in November of 2022, Mason—this young man—took his own life at the age of 16.

I have four children. They are a lot older than 16 now, but every one of us knows a 16-year-old. We know how vulnerable young people are at that age.

TikTok is delighted to addict kids at all costs. What happened to Mason is a consequence of their business model. It is not some random occurrence. It is the direct result of a business model that is unconscionable.

And his death was preventable. He is just one of a dozens of deaths and horrific harms that we know happened while Congress waited—we waited and we waited—to pass the Kids Online Safety Act.

Another one of those victims is T'Saya Yapuncich. T'Saya was a Native American girl, young woman. Her name means eagle woman, one with Earth, and little huntress.

Her parents did what they could to set rules around her use of social media, but they didn't know that TikTok and Snapchat began to connect T'Saya with sexual predators. They exploited her trust. By age 11, T'Saya was experiencing self-harm and suicidal ideation—again, fueled by social media. No matter what help her parents tried to get her, T'Saya sank deeper into depression.

This Saturday, T'Saya would have reached 16 years old. Instead, she took her life last March—again, one of a dozen, like Jesse Harrington.

Jesse is here. He wanted to be a firefighter when he grew up. He wanted to save lives. He didn't get his first phone until last Christmas, at age 15. That is a pretty late age to be getting a phone these days.

He became addicted, unable to sleep, unable to look away from endless scrolling, unable to look away from the nudges of Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. And he began having trouble in school, getting into conflicts with others.

Now, that part of the story, I think, occurs thousands and millions of times in America today—the distraction, unable to look away, the addictive impact.

On October 29 of this year, Jesse took his life. That part of the story, fortunately, is not common to as many children. But for Jesse, it was the end. Police found his device open and streaming when they arrived.

Mason, T'Saya, and Jesse were all horrific experiences. They didn't need to happen. They were preventable. We have examples and examples. I could spend the rest of the day into tomorrow with more specific examples: suicide, self-harm, bullying, eating disorders, fentanyl poisoning, sexual exploitation. All of it happens right now, right here in America, in realtime, to our young people.

That is not the message we want to send to America as a Congress. Senator BLACKBURN and I have addressed every single issue that Big Tech has thrown in our way. There are no excuses for delay. Anybody saying, "Let's wait until next session so we can get it really right," that is saying they are OK with more kids dying. They are, in effect, with all due respect, playing political games with those lives that are at risk today in realtime in America—more families shattered, like Mason, T'Saya, Jesse. When I say shattered, I mean shattered.

I want to finish by quoting another mom, someone who has been a fierce

advocate for this legislation. I have come to know her from this fight. I greatly respect her and admire her courage and strength: Deb Schmill.

Deb told me, and I am quoting:

Letting it go to the next legislature means children are going to die. It means another year of children dying. And who wants to be accountable for that?

We can't wait another year. We need this now.

Now, we can't bring back her daughter Becca, a beautiful young woman, or Mason or T'Saya or Jesse, but we can prevent other families from suffering the worse loss imaginable. We have it within reach to do it. Passing the Kids Online Safety Act is not some convenient step we can take to make people feel good. It is real action.

We don't often, here in this body, have an opportunity to save lives, to save futures, to save young people. We have that opportunity now.

I challenge the House of Representatives to do the right thing. Pass the Kids Online Safety Act.

I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, at 5:15 today, I ask the Chair to execute the order of November 20 with respect to the Wise nomination.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. CARPER. As you know, we have a term called "seatmates," and, for years, this man has been my seatmate, and I have never been prouder of him for all that he does.

It is wonderful to be your friend and colleague.

Well, thank you very much to the Presiding Officer and to our colleagues who are coming in to join us.

In just a few weeks, I will be stepping down as one of Delaware's two U.S. Senators, ending a half century of service in the U.S. Navy and in elective office.

God willing, in the weeks that follow, Martha, my bride of 38 years, who is sitting right up there, and I will turn the page and hit the road together, visiting family members near and far and exploring parts of America that we have yet to see, before beginning to look for new ways to serve the people of Delaware and our country.

Recently, a friend told me that I have lived a charmed life. And do you know what? He is right. I have been truly blessed. Although, truth be known, it didn't start that way.

My sister Sheila and I were born in a coal-mining town in West Virginia. We didn't have much, but we had the good fortune of being raised in a home by parents who instilled in us a strong work ethic, along with a deep faith that embraced the Golden Rule: to treat other people the way that we want to be treated. Our parents also instilled in us an abiding love for our

country and for this planet that we call home. Our father and most of our uncles served in World War II or in Korea or both.

My mother's youngest brother, Bob Patton was killed at the age of 19 in a kamikaze attack on his aircraft carrier in the Pacific, in 1944. His body was never recovered. Our grandmother was a Gold Star mother.

This life-size—bigger, actually; bigger than life-size—picture of him in his dress blues still hangs in my Senate office here on Capitol Hill. He was my hero when I was a kid growing up, and, truth be known, he still is.

Our parents never went to college, but they wanted us to go, and they expected my sister and I to figure out how to pay for it. Fortunately, in my senior year in high school, I won a Navy ROTC scholarship, and with the help of that scholarship, I was able to work a couple of jobs at Ohio State, including washing pots and pans, in order to keep from starving.

And I graduated at the height of the Vietnam war and would go on to complete three tours of duty in Southeast Asia as a naval flight officer and eventually as a Navy P-3 aircraft mission commander.

The best days of the week for us on those 6-month deployments were the days that the mail came, bringing cards, care packages, newspapers, and magazines. And following the 1972 election, the issues of both Time and Newsweek included stories of a stunning upset in Delaware, where a 29-year-old upstart named Joe Biden defeated an icon—a Delaware icon—named Caleb Boggs.

I remember over, literally, on the other side of the world, thinking: I would like to meet that young guy some day and see what he is made of. And then, one day, that is what I did.

Later on, after I fulfilled my military obligation, I enrolled in the University of Delaware's M.B.A. program. Within a week of enrolling, I affiliated with the Reserve Navy P-3 aircraft squadron in nearby Pennsylvania, and I found a place to live in Delaware.

Shortly thereafter, I had just a chance meeting with a professor at the University of Delaware, on campus there, who was planning to run for Congress, and I got to know him. And later—not much later—he asked me to be his campaign treasurer, and I agreed. I think I had been in Delaware for like a couple of months, and I found myself as a campaign treasurer all of a sudden.

Miraculously, I was invited, a month or two after that, to join a pep talk and a strategy session at the home of none other than Delaware's junior Senator, Joe Biden. And that day, he could not have been more gracious, more helpful. After learning of my military service in Southeast Asia, he embraced me and welcomed me to Delaware, marking the beginning of a friendship that has lasted for 50 years.

Following the completion of my M.B.A. studies, I went to work in eco-

nomics development for the State of Delaware. Less than a year later, when no Democrat volunteered to run for State treasurer, I offered to run and was elected State treasurer at the age of 29, on the same day that Republican Pete du Pont was elected our State's Governor.

When I called my parents in Florida and told them that I had been elected State treasurer at 29, they said: You don't even know how to spell "cash management." How are you going to do that?

And 2 months later, in his very first State address in the legislative hall, Governor Pete du Pont announced that the State of Delaware was bankrupt, and, later that week, Delaware's credit rating fell to the lowest of any State in America.

There I was, 29 years old, and I thought: What do I do now?

Well, as it turned out, even though I didn't know a lot about cash management, the end of the story is a pretty good one. And we may not have known a lot in those days about cash management, but what we did have, fortunately, on our side was a new Governor who quickly put together a talented team to turn our State around. And he invited me, a Democrat of all things, to become part of that team. And remarkably, it worked. It worked, and less than 4 years later, Delaware's credit rating was about to be raised to a respectable AA, after it had been literally at the bottom. We were ready to go to AA within a couple of years, and the Governor asked me, of all people, to announce to the world that our credit rating was being raised to AA.

And following that announcement—I did make the announcement—I got a lot of attention. But in the regularly scheduled election, a week later, the people of Delaware elected me to serve as their lone Congressman, unseating the incumbent Republican. And the rest, as they say, is history.

So what lessons might we all take from this? For me, one lesson was that our elected leaders surrounded themselves with the best people they could find. Another key lesson was that in adversity lies opportunity. I have probably said that about a million times: In adversity lies opportunity.

The third lesson was the importance of job creation, and the realization is that, while our elected leaders don't create jobs, we help create a nurturing environment that supports job creation.

In addition, I learned from Joe Biden that all politics is personal and that all diplomacy is personal.

And I learned that just because someone is your adversary one day, they don't have to become your enemy. They don't have to become your enemy.

And I also learned an ancient proverb that some of you have heard along the way, and it goes something like this: If you give a person a fish, you can feed them for a day. If you teach a person to

fish, they can feed themselves and their families for a lifetime.

Since announcing, over a year ago, that I would not be running for reelection, I have had a number of interviews, and among the questions that have been asked of me are a lot that you might have been asked yourselves, but one of the questions is: Why did you decide not to run for reelection?

And I tell them tongue-in-cheek—only partly in cheek—that I was following the advice of singer-songwriter Kenny Rogers, whom I met my senior year at Ohio State, trying to get him and his group to come to a concert at Ohio State, and I would meet him again as Governor of Delaware, 30 years later. He was the second best male recording artist in history.

Then I met him again at the State fair, 30 years later. He did not remember me from Ohio State, but he asked me if there was a song that I would like for him to sing and dedicate to me that night at the State fair, with like 10,000 people in the stands. I said that would be great. And I asked him to sing “The Gambler”:

You've got to know when to hold'em; [got to] know when to fold'em.

And when I announced, with Martha by my side, years later, those words—I announced that I wasn't going to run. I gave a little tribute to Kenny Rogers, and he is getting another shout-out here today.

But among the questions that I have also been asked of late is: What are you proudest of in your 24 years in the Senate? And one of them is building a trusting partnership on the Environment and Public Works Committee with Ranking Member SHELLEY CAPITO, who is seated right over there, whose father was the Governor of West Virginia when my sister and I were born in West Virginia. And SHELLEY, like me, is a native West Virginian. Our committee enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a workhorse committee and one whose members consistently work across the aisle. Our relationship has enabled us, among other things, to craft a comprehensive 2-year Water Resources Development Act, which includes the reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration.

We have also learned to and worked to advance a package of critical recycling bills to confirm important nominations and to enact transformational legislation like the bipartisan infrastructure law, the most transformational infrastructure law in the history of our country—And she and I managed this bill right out here on the floor—and also to pass significant nuclear legislation like the ADVANCE Act and major legislation to reduce powerful greenhouse gas emissions known as HFC, hydrofluorocarbons. And that is just a few.

And we have demonstrated time and time again that bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions; that even in today's polarized environment, it is still possible to accomplish a great deal for

our country, for our planet, and for our citizens.

There is a lot that we have helped accomplish in this Senate, but there remains unfinished business, as you know, that I want to encourage our colleagues to continue once I weigh anchor—that is a Navy phrase, “weigh anchor”—and sail off into the sunrise.

Almost daily, I am asked here in DC and in Delaware: How do you like being retired? How do you like being retired?

I tell them: I am not retired, and I hope I am never truly retired. And I smile and tell people: I hope—I want to find other ways where I can continue to make a difference for as long as I live.

In truth, I have spent many years helping to lead the effort to combat global warming, as some of you know, and many of you have been partners in that important effort. In Delaware, we are especially aware of the effects of climate crisis, and our State is sinking. Our State is sinking, and the seas around us are rising. That is not a good combination. Like much of our country, we are experiencing intensifying storms and scorching heat waves.

My wife spent part of last month in North Carolina, Western North Carolina, and just saw the devastation that has been wreaked on our hometown many weeks ago.

And that is why I worked so hard to help pass the Inflation Reduction Act with some of you, which is a prime example of a package that reduces, on the one hand, the cost of prescription medicines while also helping us to fight the climate crisis and, just as important, creating hundreds of thousands of new American jobs, good paying American jobs. The night that we voted here in this Chamber on that bill, we stayed up all night. We finished up at about 6 in the morning. As many of you will recall, it passed by one vote, and that one vote was cast by our Vice President, KAMALA HARRIS, who was presiding over the Senate.

About 6 in the morning, I walked back to my office, headed down to the train station to catch a train and go back to Delaware. I got there about 7:30, got off the train. I thought on my way home, Maybe I should just go by Wawa. And for the people who don't have an idea who Wawa is, it is convenience stores up and down the East Coast people have just a great affection for. And I went by Wawa to pick up a cup of coffee before, kind of to celebrate before I went home. And it is about 7, 8 in the morning. The lady who was the cashier, I got a small cup of coffee and went to pay for it. And she said—I will never forget—she said: Your money is no good for a small cup of coffee. That is what she said: Your money is no good for a small cup of coffee.

And I said: Could I get a bigger cup of coffee?

(Laughter.)

She said: No. Your money is no good for a small cup of coffee. So I made do

on a small cup of coffee. Then she went on to say, she said: You have been up all night, haven't you?

I said: Yes.

She said: I know what you have been doing, haven't you?

I said: Yes, ma'am.

She said: I have a son and a daughter, and I want to make sure that they have a planet to grow up on and a planet to grow old on.

And for all of us who have children or maybe nieces or nephews or grandchildren, the idea to make sure that—we want to make sure that they do have a planet to grow up on and a planet to grow old on.

We also want to make sure that they have jobs, good jobs, so they can support themselves and their families.

Now, this says I am supposed to conclude. I am not finished.

(Laughter.)

This is crazy. In any event, let me conclude—I am almost done, but I am not quite done, but let me conclude with a couple of thoughts relating to a date that just passed, and that was December 7. That is a date that in our State is well-known. It is called Delaware Day, and it is a celebration of December 7, 1787, the day that the people of Delaware ratified, through their 25 representatives, the Constitution. Before anybody else had, Delaware ratified the Constitution. We became the first State, and I hope that years from now we will continue to celebrate Delaware Day in my home State and, frankly, in other places, too. And I hope that people across our Nation will continue to be inspired by the words of our Founding Fathers.

As many colleagues have heard me say here on this floor in the past, Ben Franklin, as he was exiting the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, was asked: Mr. Franklin, what have you brought here? What have you created here? He said famously:

A Republic, if you can keep it.

A Republic, if you can keep it. The brevity of that response should not cause us to undervalue its essential meaning. Democratic republics are not merely founded on the consent of the people, but they are absolutely dependent upon the active and informed involvement of the people for the continued health of our democracy.

And while there were many things that our Founding Fathers disagreed upon, the one thing that they all agreed on, as you know, is that they didn't want America ever to be ruled by a king. They wanted to make sure that never happened. And you know what? We still feel that way today.

When we pledge allegiance to the flag or take an oath to defend the Constitution against its enemies, foreign and domestic, we don't pledge our allegiance to a person or to party. We pledge our allegiance to the country and the Constitution under which we were established.

Let me just close, if I can. I want to thank all of my current and former

staff members for joining. Probably have a bunch of them today, and a lot are watching as well.

Somebody came up with the word "Carpertown." I don't know who, but I love it. And it refers—it is kind of like, remember the song by the Eagles, "Hotel California"? "You can check out, but you can never leave." Carpertown is like that. And there are a lot of people in Carpertown. And for people that worked with me in the Navy and State Treasurer, Congressman, Governor, Senator, to today.

But I want to ask unanimous consent that all of the names of my Senate staff here and back in Delaware be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

Jake Abbott, Jessica Abramovich, John Afordakos, Meeran Ahn, William Albanese, Wendy Anderson, Deirdre Armstrong, Janay Austin-Carlson, Landon Bailey, Rony Baltazar, Portia Bamiduro, Missy Banashak, Alexandra Barchuk, Sean Barney, Janine Barr, Gabby Batkin, Jordan Baugh, Sylar Bayer, Cody Baynori, Christina Baysinger, Lauren Beam, Christopher Bell, Bradford Belzak, Roberto Berrios, Sonceria Berry, Elizabeth Berry, James Berryhill, Jan Beukelman, Tanner Bielefeld Pruitt, Marjorie Biles, Giulia Bisconti, Sandra Bodeau, Lora Bonicelli, Mayley Boyce, Latisha Bracy, Alan Bradley, Layla Brooks, Carl Brown, Jeffrey Bullock, Taylor Burnett, Kevin Burris, Jeddiah Bush, Brian Bushweller, Kristin Butler, Cerron Cade.

Brian Cahill, Jacqueline Cameron, Son-Djerry Cameus, Anne Canning, Victoria Carle, Italo Carrieri-Russo, Timothy Casey, Ann Marie Chaney, Rachit Choski, D'Andrea Church, Rachel Chute, Richard Colley, John Collins, Nicole Comisky, Arthur Connolly, Kenneth Connolly, Laura Coogan, Susan Corbin, Egan Cornachione, Carly Covio, Troy Cribb, Megan Cullen, Emily Cunningham, Cecily Cutbill, Natasha Dabrowski, Annie D'Amato, Vijay Das, Bryer Davis, Olivia Davis, Jeffrey Dayton, Heather Dean, Joan DelFattore, Thomas Dessoire, Evelyn Diaz, Krista DiEleuterio, Moira Dillon, Greg Dotson, Matthew Dougherty, Avery Douglas, Gary Downes, James Drueckhammer, Ashley Duffy, Robin Dutta, Susan Edwards, Brian Eiler, Joel Elliott, Tierra Evans.

Jillian Farquharson, Courtney Fillmore, Jared Fish, Owen Fournier, Michal Freehoff, Edward Freel, Maureen French, Natasha Frosina, Imani Games, Susan Gardiner Kimball, Stephen Gardner, Harlan Geer, John Gentile, Laura Gentile, Shahram Ghasemian, Bill Ghent, Lane Giardina, Evan Giesemann, Laura Gillam, Joseph Goffman, Sheila Grant, Katherine Grasso, Kristin Gray, Tamara Green, Heather Guerke, Luke Guidinger, Lauren Gutierrez, Alexander Hackett, Jessica Hafer, Lindsey Hall, Nick Halstead, Beth Hammon, Eric Hanson, Ellen Harrington, Courtney Harris, Stuart Harris, Anaya Harrison, Diane Hastings, Olivia Hayden, Christine Hennessey, Gregory Hershman, Deborah Hersman, Stephen Herst, Rebecca Higgins, Michael Hill, Brian Hockin, Samuel Hodas.

Dylan Hoff, Tyler Hofmann-Reardon, Elwood Holstein, Erik Hopkins, Rebecca Huang, Lisa Hubbard, Kristine Iannelli, Holly Idelson, Amir Ingram, Lori James, Brenna James, Nicolas Jenner, Paige Jennings, Hilary Jochmans, Charles Jones, J. Jonathon Jones, Tyrone Jones, Caroline Jones, Isabel Jones, Andrea Jones, Gary Jones, Helen Kalla, Jennifer Kane, John

Kane, Kajol Kapadia, Katherine Kenna, Mary Scott Kennedy, Peter Kenny, Saadia Khan, Nabeel Kibria, Natasha Kieval, Lauren Killian, Jessica Killin, John Kilvington, Daniel Kim, Susan Kimball, Trevor Kincaid, Olivia Kirchberg, Steven Klausner, Agatha Kotani (Gucyski), Stephanie Kotin, Jennifer Kramer, Tara Kroft, Mark Lally, Trevor Lalonde, Trey Lambert, Jamaal Lampkin.

Grant Lane, Thomas Lawler, Alexandra Lemieux, Jack Levine, Rachel Levitan, Sarah Lewis, Elizabeth Lewis, William Lewis, Pamela Lilly, Elizabeth Mabry, Bryan Mack, Carolyn Mack, W MacPherson, Jacqueline Maffucci, Ian Magarik, Laurence Magill, David Mapp, Lena Marceno, Joseph Marinelli, Matthew Marshall, Jordan Marshall, Kenneth Martin, Isabelle Martire, Matthew Marzano, Laura Matthews, Eric McBride, Aidan McDonald, Sean McGinty, Karen McGrath, Margaret McIntosh, Charles McLeod, Brooke Meadowcroft, Mark Mendenhall, Kusai Merchant, Lillie Moller, Kaitlyn Montimurro, Mason Moore, Emily Moore, Ashley Morgan, Ethan Morgan, Anne Morgan, Noah Moss, Yasmeen Moten, Brooke Mulhearn, Avery Mulligan, Kiley Mulligan, Jonas Munson.

Sheila Murphy, Maryrose Myrtetus, Diana Naylor, Curtis Newman, Blas Nunez Neto, Paul O'Brien, Asi Ofosu, Noah Olson, Latisha Omeruah, Elizabeth Osborne, Amy Overton Hunt, Patricia Pace, Anthony Panicola, Victoria Panzera, Brian Papp Jr, Tony Park, Evan Park, Laura Pastre, Meghan Pennington, Colin Peppard, Elizabeth Phelan, Joseph Pika, Zach Pilchen, Anna Podmaniczky, Laura Poppiti, Christopher Prendergast, Edward Prettyman, Kaitlyn Pritchard, Kathryn Pumphrey, Laura Quinter, Judy Rainey, Jessica Ramos-Velazquez, Madeline Ranalli, Meghan Raychaudhuri, Madge Reed Farooq, James Reilly, Mary Frances Repko, Roland Reynolds Jr., Frank Rich III, Chad Robinson, Marcus Robinson, Jaida Rodrigues, Andrew Rogers, Meredith Rosenthal, David Rostker, M Rouse, Houston Ruck.

John Runyan, Wali Rushdan, Racquel Russell, Morgan Russum, Linnea Saby, Sanika Salim, Ian Sams, Michael Santora, Victor Santos, Paul Schmid, MaryBeth Schultz, Kelly Scully, Jim Secreto, Gohar Sedighi, Brian Selander, Lynn Sha, Claire Shanklin, Abigail Shenkle, Andrew Shine, Lauren Sills, Sarah Silverstein, Margaret Simmons, Cathryn Simon, Bradley Simon, Rachel Skaar, Amanda Slater, Jahliah Smallwood, Monisha Smith, David Smith, Andrew Smith, Alex Smith, Ryan Smith, Robert Snowberger, Sarah Soviak, Emily Spain, Garth Spencer, Rachel Spruill, Donametrina Stallings, Mackenzie Stamp, David Starr, Noah Steimel, R Stokes, Jake Strickland, Angelina Strobach, Stephanie Swain, Alistair Swank.

Julianne Sweeney, Hanna Sweet, Kata Sybenga, Sophia Tarabicos, Katharine Targett, Courtney Taylor, Layne Taylor, Alexandra Teitz, Alex Terr, Mischa Thompson, Emily Tucker, Christophe Tulou, Kaylyn Turner, Kimberly Turner, Peter Tyler, Kathleen Valentine, Jazmin Vargas, Kyle Victor, Alyssa Villanueva, Stephen Vina, Michael Wagers, Campbell Wallace, Erin Walls, Xzaquoinett Warrick, Lydia Wehrley, Richard Welsh, Matthew Wes, Jymayce Wescott, Jennie Westbrook Courts, Emma Wethered, Abram White, Sylvia Whitlock, Melissa Wier, George Williams, Lawrence Windley, Timothy Winstead, Stefan Wirth, Andrew Wishnia, Laura Wisler, Amber Withrow, Raymond Wittlinger, Alexander Wood, Cassandra Worthington, Duane Wright, Bonnie Wu, Lucy Xiao, Jason Yanussi, John Young, and Naomi Zeigler.

Mr. CARPER. I just want to take a moment, if I could, to thank my family

Martha, who is seated right up here to my right. And over the years, I have spoken with members of the Armed Forces who are married, and I have not only thanked them for their service, but I have also thanked their spouses for their service. You know, I have got the person in the uniform; the spouse is not wearing a uniform, but that spouse has served just as much as the person in uniform.

And I want to just say that during the years that I have been privileged to serve as a naval officer, as a Congressman, as a Governor and treasurer, and Senator and all, my wife Martha has served as well as I have, and we are in her debt. And God knows I am in her debt.

Martha, thank you. I love you.

I am also proud to have helped raise three boys who have gone on to become terrific young men that any parent would be proud to call their own, and I also want to salute those who served alongside me representing Delaware, including Members of the Delaware congressional delegation, over the years—people like Ted Kaufman. I am sure our leader here remembers Ted who succeeded Joe Biden; and Mike Castle, who was a House Member, Governor of the State; John Carney, our Governor, former Congressman, and gone on to be mayor of Wilmington pretty soon; and Joe Biden. Those are just some of the people I have gotten to serve with in the House and the Senate.

But I especially want to note my fellow Senator CHRIS COONS, sitting over to my right. How are you doing, bud?

We call each other a lot of things, but I call him "wingman." And he is my wingman, and I am his as well. He has always had my back, and I will always have his. CHRIS is one of the smartest people and brightest people I think I have ever worked with. He surrounds himself with terrific people as well. He is the senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee. He has traveled the world, and he knows the world's leaders like I think none of us ever have. He calls Delaware home, and I know he will continue to represent our State very, very well.

And now let me just mention our Senator-elect. I don't know if she is here today.

Hi, LISA. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER. LISA is a beloved Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where she serves as a highly effective member of a much sought-after committee, and that is the Energy and Commerce Committee. But many years ago, she joined my congressional team as an intern. And from that humble beginning, she went on to become a two-time cabinet member when I was Governor of the State of Delaware. She is smart, is a caring daughter, sister, mother, and now a grandmother, too. She leads an excellent staff and has a can-do attitude, as well as a deep faith. She is also a great dancer, for what it is worth.

For when my Senate colleagues said to me: TC—a lot of people here call me TC. Some call me other things.

(Laughter.)

But when they say: TC, we are really going to miss you in the Senate, I say to them: 2 weeks after LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER joins you in the Senate, you won't remember my name.

(Laughter.)

And they said: Oh, yes, we will. Yes, we will. I don't know that I believe them, but it is nice of them to say that.

In closing, just once again let me thank the people of Delaware for entrusting in me the responsibility of serving them for all of these years. It has been a privilege. It has been a source of great joy that I will always cherish.

I want to say to our leader, before I close, thank you very much for your kind words earlier in the morning. One of the things I understand he mentioned is our love for music and music lyrics. So with that in mind, let me close with this—with apologies to Neil Young of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, let me end with this:

Keep on rockin' in the free world. Keep on rockin' in the free world.

It has been my joy to be your colleague, and I am looking forward to getting to know all of you and working with you in Delaware, if we can ever be of help or support in any way at all. God bless you all. Thank you so much.

(Applause. Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Delaware.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS R. CARPER

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise to speak in thanks and in recognition of my dear friend and colleague, the senior Senator from the great State of Delaware, TOM CARPER.

All of us have had a chance to hear his farewell speech, but I get a chance to add just a little bit here on the end.

You know, when folks have said to Senator CARPER: What do you plan on doing in retirement at home? He has repeatedly said: I don't plan on retiring.

And this has a history to it. As you know, in the arc of his decades of service in our Senate and in our State, he was our Governor. And he has described himself many times as a "recovering Governor" who never really recovered. He never stopped being intimately interested in and engaged in every detail of our community.

And I cannot thank you enough, TC, for your more than five decades of service to our Nation, to our State, to our party, to the world. I have a lot of remarks, and I will try not to use all of them, but I think you are the alltime champion, having been elected 14 times statewide: State treasurer, Congressman, Governor, Senator. You are frugal. I have had the experience of your having made a modest contribution to a very early campaign of mine, and I failed to timely deposit the check, and

not long thereafter, you accosted me and said: You never cleared this check. It is in my checkbook.

Everybody knows that you drove a fabulous minivan more than 400,000 miles. And you took that passion for frugality and for reasonableness and for attention to details to being the State treasurer, as you shared with all of us, to restoring our triple A bond rating.

When I first became county executive, nothing was more important than that lesson: Protect your bond rating. And you did a great job as State treasurer.

You also are someone who as Governor had a saying you were very fond of: Figure out what works; do more of that.

Figure out what works; do more of that.

Everybody here knows he makes you say important things twice.

And so as an active member of the National Governors Association, as a mentor to other Governors, as a mentor to young county elected officials, TC did a great job with figuring out what worked well in other States around the country and then applying it both at home and making sure that other Governors had a chance to learn from that around our country.

I can't neglect Senator CARPER's remarkable commitment to our Nation's military.

As you saw, of all the people he could have chosen to honor in his farewell speech, his Uncle Bob, his family, service and sacrifice anchors him. Having gone on a naval ROTC scholarship to Ohio State and having served three tours in Vietnam and then for decades in the Navy Reserve, Senator CARPER is the last Vietnam veteran to serve in this body. That is a long and proud legacy that stretches from Senators McCain and Kerry to Hagel to Harkin.

But Senator CARPER, in our State, has done more to fight for the VA, to fight for veterans, to fight for a veterans cemetery, to fight for a veterans home, and to personally engage on Memorial Day with the families of every Delawarean who has fallen in combat in living memory. The decency, the commitment, the passion for those who put their life on the line for our Nation is unmatched in our State's history. And we and our Nation are grateful to you for that.

As the chair of two different committees, HSGAC and EPW, you worked tirelessly to build relationships, even with some of the most famously difficult of our colleagues. I make no reference to a former Senator from Oklahoma. I am just saying, that when you tackled postal issues, many of us wished you all the best. And you put your optimism and your positive spirit to the wheel and made real progress.

Along with Senator CAPITO, of your native State of West Virginia, you have made amazing things happen, from WRDA to the Inflation Reduction Act to the bipartisan infrastructure law.

Your passion for air quality and for clean air and for making sure that we preserve the blessings of our natural environment will be remembered fittingly by having the Bombay Hook Visitor Center named for you.

We talk in Delaware about something called the Delaware Way, which I really principally learned from how you led as Governor. You cleaned up our party. You worked across the aisle. You balanced the budget. You managed a State of great complexity and importance. But you found it by building personal connections by being kind and respectful to others and by building a remarkable community that served alongside you.

I don't know either where the term "Carper Town" came from, but it is an amazing network of alumni that includes people of all different ages and backgrounds, skills, and traditions who have been brought together to join your passion for public service.

When asked at your retirement announcement what you would most miss about being a Senator, TC answered: "My staff," which is a reminder that you have built an incredible community dedicated passionately to service.

When I first got here to the Senate, my senior Senator was the one who literally showed me the ropes. He gave me the combination to the gym. He urged me to go to weekly Prayer Breakfast or Bible study and to learn from codels overseas and from time spent over meals together here in the Senate.

We have been guided by our shared faith, our shared commitment to family, a commitment to bipartisanship, and a deep and abiding love of Amtrak. I will never forget a night where we were stuck for 7 hours in the bracing cold as two power lines shut down the Amtrak line north. Senator CARPER remained cheerful, upbeat, and optimistic about the possibility that we would someday get off that train and be warm again. And the Newark Amtrak station is named in his honor, appropriately.

TOM, you are a grounded man. Your childhood dreams for playing for the Detroit Tigers may not have been realized, but you as a native son of West Virginia have made an incredible mark on your adopted, beloved home State of Delaware. You have made a lasting mark: as State treasurer and Governor, as Congressman, and Senator.

I will never forget when as a very, very young man I had just returned from South Africa and a member of my church arranged an opportunity for me to have lunch with you in the House dining room. I was 25. You gave me your undivided attention, your enthusiasm, your passion. You made me feel like the center of the world, and it had an enormous impact on my commitment to service.

And when I ran for county council president—a long-shot bid that I should not have won in a four-way primary—and you were running for the U.S. Senate, an important and difficult race,

you didn't just call me once and wish me well; you didn't just send me a \$50 check. You agreed to stand beside me at football games, at Wawas, at community picnics, and to introduce me to thousands of Delawareans.

You have given Annie and me a gift we can never repay. I am so grateful for your service, your leadership, and your compassion.

You are anchored in your family.

And, Martha, thank you so much for being an incredible partner, not just to Tom but also to our State, for having been the first lady and for having been someone with an incredible career of accomplishment at DuPont and around the world. To the two of you for raising Christopher and Ben and Greg and for sharing them with us as well, thank you.

You are rooted in your faith: II James teaches us, "Faith without works is dead." And St. Francis once said: "Preach the Gospel always; when necessary, use words."

By your acts, we have known your faith. And it has made all the difference. And you have changed me, our delegation, our State, and our world.

Captain CARPER, Bravo Zulu. Well done, sir. Thank you.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on May 22, 2023, TOM CARPER told a crowd of admirers in Delaware that he would not seek a fifth term in the Senate, bringing to a close nearly 50 years in public service. Two days later, he delivered a keynote address at a reunion of 200 Vietnam war former POWs, which was held at the Nixon Library in California.

Those two events speak volumes about the character and commitment of my valued colleague and good friend TOM CARPER. From State treasurer to Governor to Congressman and Senator, TOM has been elected to statewide public office a record 14 times. In every way, he has justified the trust the people of the First State have placed in him.

That remarkable accomplishment came after TOM served three tours of duty as a naval flight officer in Vietnam. He is the last veteran of that conflict in the Senate and a powerful and effective voice for those with whom he served.

In 1991, then-Congressman CARPER led a bipartisan delegation of Vietnam veterans back to Southeast Asia. Thanks to TOM's leadership, that trip helped lay the groundwork for ongoing efforts to account for Americans listed as missing in action. He exemplifies the ethic of the U.S. military that no one is left behind or ever forgotten.

In the Senate, TOM's priorities have included improving our healthcare system, protecting our environment, investing in infrastructure, and strengthening our national security. And I feel so fortunate to have had the pleasure to work with TOM on many issues. As a

member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee following the 9/11 attacks, TOM and I were strong allies in supporting America's first responders. He has been a champion for the SAFER and AFG Programs that help provide our firefighters with the equipment, training, and support they need. In fact, TOM and I serve as cochairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus.

TOM and I have also had a long partnership in strengthening the U.S. Postal Service. Twenty years ago, we introduced legislation that became law to reform the Postal Service—the first overhaul in nearly three decades to ensure universal service, affordable rates, and community access.

Another issue that brought us together is protecting the environment and public health from mercury contamination, a particular threat to children and pregnant women. The Comprehensive National Mercury Monitoring Act we have championed would allow the United States to take a leadership role in generating a long-term mercury monitoring program that would benefit not only our Nation but also the world.

And I think it would be a great tribute to Senator CARPER if we passed that bill and got it signed into law before the end of this Congress.

From Southeast Asia to Wilmington to Washington, Senator TOM CARPER has served with great distinction. Our Nation is grateful. And I wish him and Martha all the best in the years to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I want to thank the Senator from Maine for her great words of serving so long with our friend and colleague TOM CARPER.

First of all, I want to say to TOM, I appreciate the very kind words that he mentioned about me and us in our work together on the committee. As we have said, he has dedicated nearly his entire adult life to the service of our country in many different ways and to the home State of Delaware.

But don't let the "Delaware" next to his name fool you. All those good family values, all those good sturdy qualities of honesty and service, steadfastness were rooted in his birth in the great State of West Virginia. Anytime I tried to get anything over on him and say, "Yeah, but I'm from West Virginia," he would always say, "I am too." So he is always very proud of his West Virginia roots. He had a couple of family reunions there during our time of service together.

Then, in 2021, we had the opportunity to have an EPW field hearing in his birthplace of Beckley, WV, and I will tell you, at that particular—not one relative of mine was there, but Tom had his relatives there to cheer him on. So I know it was a very special occasion for him, and it certainly was for me as well.

As the ranking member of the EPW Committee, serving alongside my chairman, Senator CARPER, over the last 4 years, I have had the distinct pleasure to work in tandem with him on things he has mentioned, most especially infrastructure and energy and the environmental challenges our country faces. We don't always see eye to eye, but we have developed a relationship that is centered on trust and respect.

We do talk every Thursday afternoon, and I want to tell you that I told your successor that I think this is something we need to continue because we kept that valuable relationship going through times when we might not have agreed and couldn't get to the same place.

But I think it is essential that the relationship we created really did give us these bipartisan achievements: the surface transportation reauthorization legislation, the drinking water and wastewater infrastructure legislation. Those bills became the foundation of the bipartisan infrastructure law. Had they not been there, I am not sure we would have ended up as well as we did as a body. It is paying dividends in my State, in his State, in Senator COLLINS' State—all across the country.

Additionally, we led the charge by offering the ADVANCE Act, which is the Advanced Nuclear Act. That bill, which is now law, I think will maintain America's nuclear energy leadership by encouraging more innovation and investment right here in our States. It sets the stage for the proliferation of reliable and safe nuclear power.

We also just recently crafted our—I think it might be our second or third Water Resources Development Act. It is pending. Hopefully, we will get it across the floor here in the next day or two, and it is my hope that we will soon pass this. But I did name this bill, so everybody is going to listen to this. Get down here and vote for the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act. Hopefully, we will do it tomorrow.

But outside of Chairman CARPER the legislator and the native West Virginian I have known, I have gotten to know the person as well. He is just a very kind man. He is always advising people.

We call them in our office—I don't know that I have ever told you this, but we call his sayings Carperisms. We have many Carperisms. I am skipping a few, but I am telling you the one that always, I think, embodies you, and that is to follow the Golden Rule and treat others as you would like to be treated. He has always shown respect to my staff, to our committee's witnesses, and to all of those who have worked together through the years.

He is also a very pragmatic leader, obviously being elected numerous times in Delaware in all different kinds of posts, guided by his mantra of—here is another Carperism—figuring out what works and doing more of it. It is

a pretty simple thing. And he is a self-proclaimed recovering Governor, but he is well-versed in the art of getting things done.

Above all, Chairman CARPER is a true American. He served his country bravely overseas in wartime, and he has given the last 23 years of his life to the service of this Chamber. Chairman CARPER has consistently dedicated himself to making our country as strong as it can be and delivering for the people he represents. His character, compassion, and, yes, dogged determination will certainly be missed in the U.S. Senate, but the impacts of his work will continue to make a difference for generations to come.

Chairman CARPER—my friend TOM—it has been an honor to work with you, alongside you, and deliver for our country and for the people we both love so very, very much. So I wish you the best—you and Martha the best.

I will tell you what. That man loves his wife Martha.

The way he talks about you in such a venerated way is the way we should all be talking about our loved ones. I have a deep appreciation for that.

So I wish you all the best. Thanks for your years of service, your friendship, and thanks for giving me a little part of your heart over these last several years because it has really helped me, and it has helped us work together so well.

Thank you.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Noel Wise, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

NOMINATION OF NOEL WISE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Noel Wise to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

Born in Cherry Hill, NJ, Judge Wise earned her B.S. at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1989; her J.D., cum laude, from Nova Southeastern University Law School in 1993; and her J.S.M. from Stanford Law School in 2002. After graduating from law school, Wise served as a law clerk to Justice Harry Lee Anstead on Florida's Fourth District Court of Appeals.

Between 1994 and 2002, Judge Wise served in various roles at the Department of Justice, including as a trial attorney in the environmental enforcement section from 1999 to 2002 and the environmental crimes section from 1998–1999; on detail as an assistant U.S. attorney from 1997 to 1998; and as an honors trial attorney from 1994 to 1997.

From 2002 to 2004, Judge Wise worked as of counsel at Stoel Rives, LLP, advising clients on civil and criminal environmental law, land use, energy, and grand jury inquisitions. She also litigated and settled civil and criminal

cases in State and Federal court. From 2004 to 2006, Judge Wise worked first as in-house counsel and later as the acting director/manager renewable power generation at Pacific Gas and Electric Company, PG&E. Before her judicial service, Wise ran her own law firm—Wise Gleicher—from 2006 to 2014.

Since 2014, she has served as a judge on the Superior Court of California in Alameda County. During this decade of service, she has held several additional roles in the California judiciary, including working as a judge and supervising judge in the family law division; being a panel judge and supervising judge in the appellate division; and holding those same roles in the State's civil division.

Judge Wise has issued at least 10,000 written decisions that are substantive orders or appealable judgments. In addition, she has conducted approximately 500 settlement conferences, presided over thousands of hearings, and issued approximately 290 decisions while serving on the appellate division.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Wise as “well qualified,” and her nomination is strongly supported by her home State Senators, Mr. PADILLA and Ms. BUTLER.

Judge Wise's judicial experience, coupled with her experience in public service and private practice, have prepared her to serve the Northern District of California honorably as a district judge.

I am proud to support her nomination.

VOTE ON WISE NOMINATION

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

Mr. COONS. 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 senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 321 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—3

Marshall	McConnell	Vance
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The nomination was confirmed.

(Ms. HASSAN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). 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 Senator from Vermont.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as the holiday season approaches, it is an appropriate time to talk about our national priorities, where we are as a nation, and where we should be going into the future.

Right now, tonight, as we assemble here in Washington, DC, there are thousands of people in this city and in the surrounding areas who are sleeping out on the streets. And that is not just Washington, DC, it is almost every major city in the country.

When we talk about the housing crisis, it is not just homelessness, it is a reality that millions of people in Vermont and throughout this country are paying 40, 50, 60 percent of their limited incomes for housing. We have a major housing crisis. We need to invest in low-income and affordable housing.

Today, in the United States, in the richest country in the history of the world, which today has more income and wealth inequality than it has ever had, while the very rich become much richer, 60 percent of our people are living paycheck to paycheck and millions of workers are earning starvation wages, barely enough to stay alive.

The time is long overdue, when we talk about our national priorities, that this Congress pass a livable minimum wage. Raise that minimum wage to a livable level so that no worker in this country who works 40 hours a week lives in poverty—not a radical idea.

In the United States today, we have a broken and dysfunctional healthcare system whose major function is not to provide quality, affordable care to our people but to make billions in profits for the insurance companies and the drug companies.

The truth is that while 85 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured, while 60,000 die each year because they don't get to a doctor in time, the insurance companies and the drug companies make tens of billions of dollars a year in profit.

The time is long overdue for the United States to do what every other major country on Earth does, and that is to guarantee healthcare to all people as a human right. In my view, the most efficient way to do that is to pass a Medicare for all single payer program.

Unbelievably, in this wealthy Nation in which three people on top own more wealth than the bottom half of our society, we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any developed country on Earth, and on top of that, millions of parents, working-class parents, cannot find affordable or quality childcare. We need to make quality childcare available for all.

In America today, unbelievably, in my view, 25 percent of senior citizens in our country are trying to survive on \$15,000 a year or less—\$15,000 a year. I don't know how anybody in America, no matter where you live—let alone if you are a senior citizen with additional healthcare and other needs—I don't know how anybody survives on \$15,000. We need to expand Social Security benefits by lifting the cap on taxable income so that every senior in this country can retire with dignity and security.

Those are just a few of the things that, in my view, we should be doing in Congress if we are representing the needs of all Americans and not just wealthy campaign contributors in the top 1 percent.

But tonight I want to say a few words about something that we should not be doing, and that is, in the coming days, with almost no debate, we should not be passing the National Defense Authorization Act, which provides some \$900 billion for the Department of Defense—a little bit less than that—\$895.2 billion. When spending on nuclear weapons and emergency defense funding is included, the United States will spend this year close to \$1 trillion on the military—\$1 trillion on the military, and a few blocks away from here, people are sleeping out on the streets.

While middle-class and working-class families are struggling to survive, we supposedly just don't have the financial resources to help them. We just cannot afford to build more housing. We just cannot afford to provide quality childcare to our kids or to support public education or to provide healthcare to all. We just can't afford to do that. But when the military-industrial complex and all of their well-paid lobbyists come marching into Capitol Hill, somehow or other, there is more than enough money for Congress to provide them with virtually everything they need. The military-industrial complex speaks, and Congress responds.

Of that nearly \$1 trillion that will be voted on in the next few days, about half will go to a handful of hugely profitable defense contractors. The Pentagon accounts for about two-thirds of all Federal contracting, obligating more money every year than all civilian Federal Agencies combined—com-

pared. Yet the Pentagon remains the only major Federal Agency that cannot pass an independent audit.

The Department of Defense still cannot accurately account for their finances more than 30 years after Congress made it a requirement under Federal law. In the most recent failed audit attempt, the Department of Defense still could not fully account for huge portions of its more than \$4 trillion in assets. The GAO—the Government Accountability Office—reports that the Defense Department cannot accurately post transactions to the correct accounts each year. Auditors find billions of dollars the Pentagon didn't even know it had. In fiscal year 2022, Navy auditors found \$4.4 billion in untracked inventory. They just lost it. Hey, what is \$4 billion among friends when you have \$1 trillion to play with?

I don't often agree with Elon Musk. I agree with him very, very rarely. But he is right when he says the Pentagon "has little idea how its annual budget of more than \$800 billion is spent." That is Musk.

The inability to track taxpayer dollars has allowed, within the Defense Department, massive fraud, massive amounts of waste, and unbelievable amounts of cost overruns. Defense contractors routinely overcharge the Pentagon by 40 percent and sometimes much higher than that.

For example, just one example, in October, a few months ago, RTX—formerly Raytheon—was fined \$950 million for inflating bills to the Department of Defense as they lied about labor and material costs and as they paid bribes to secure foreign business. They were fined \$950 million.

In June, Lockheed Martin was fined \$70 million for overcharging the Navy for aircraft parts—the latest in a long line of similar abuses.

The F-35—the most expensive weapon system in history—has run up hundreds of billions of dollars in cost overruns. GAO now estimates that it will cost more than \$2 trillion to develop, maintain, and operate this fighter jet through its lifetime.

Today, as a result of massive consolidation in the defense industry, a large portion of the Pentagon budget now goes to just a handful of huge defense contractors like Lockheed Martin, RTX—formerly Raytheon—General Dynamics, and Northrop Grumman. That consolidation has been extremely profitable for the industry.

Since 2022, these four contractors have brought in over 600 billion in revenues, including 353 billion in U.S. taxpayer funds and recorded 57 billion in profits. During that same period, they have spent 61 billion on dividends and stock buybacks to make their wealthy shareholders even wealthier. That is just four companies, over less than 3 years, taking 353 billion in taxpayer money and handing 61 billion back to wealthy shareholders.

It is worthwhile listening to what Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said

earlier this year to a defense industry convention. This is the Secretary of the Navy speaking to defense contractors:

Many of you are making record profits, as evidenced by your quarterly financial statements. . . . You can't be asking for the American taxpayer to make greater public investments while you continue to goose your stock prices through stock buybacks . . . and other accounting maneuvers.

That is the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, and he is quite right.

It is not only fraud and cost overruns that drive up military spending. The major defense contractors also provide their CEOs with exorbitant compensation packages. In the last 3 years for which information is available, the top four defense companies paid their CEOs more than 257 million combined. These companies are all significantly reliant on the U.S. taxpayer. Yet they pay their CEOs about 100 times more than the Secretary of Defense receives. CEOs, defense industry, receive more than 100 times greater compensation than the U.S. Secretary of Defense and 500 times more than the average newly enlisted servicemember.

Now, how does that happen? How does it happen that the Defense Department can't pass an audit? How does it happen that every one of the major defense contractors ends up paying fines for fraud? How does it happen that we have massive cost overruns, and yet we give the military industrial complex pretty much what they want. And, by the way, there will be virtually no debate on that issue here on the floor. It is only a trillion dollars. Hey, what is a trillion dollars among friends?

People sleeping out on the street; people can't afford healthcare; children going hungry; elderly people can't afford to heat their homes. Got a trillion bucks, no questions asked, for the military industrial complex.

So how does all of this happen? And I think most Americans now know the answer. It ain't complicated. These companies—just like the drug companies, just like the insurance companies, just like Wall Street and the big banks, just like the fossil fuel industry—they spend millions and millions of dollars on campaign contributions and lobbying. In the recent election cycle, the one we just came through, defense contractors spent nearly \$251 million on lobbying and contributed almost 37 million to political candidates.

And surprise, surprise, aren't we all shocked that they end up getting what they want with almost no debate?

The waste and fraud in the defense industry is not just, interestingly enough, costing American taxpayers huge amounts of money, it is also costing lives. So let me tell you what I mean by that. Take a look at the war in Ukraine. The United States is providing tens and tens of billions of dollars to help defend Ukraine from Putin's horrific invasion of that country.

Despite their recordbreaking profits, many defense contractors said that they couldn't ramp up production of key weapons without more taxpayer support. So the U.S. Government wanted to support, with my vote, Ukraine against Putin's invasion. Ukraine needs weapons. And the defense contractors said: Hey, if you want us to help Ukraine, get them weapons, we need to ramp up production. We need more Federal aid.

And so, as part of that process, Congress repeatedly appropriated emergency funding with roughly 78.5 billion going to buy equipment and services from the major defense contractors for Ukraine.

And how did, with all of that money, these patriotic defense contractors respond? Did they say: "Well, thank you. We are going to do everything we can, get all of the weapons we can at a reasonable price to Ukraine, which is fighting for its life"? Not quite.

What the defense contractors did is jack up the prices they were charging us in order to help Ukraine. RTX increased prices for Stinger missiles from \$25,000 in the 1990s to \$400,000 in 2023. Even accounting for inflation and improvements in technology, that is an outrageous price increase.

But it wasn't enough for RTX. A recent NATO contract reveals RTX is now charging approximately \$745,000 per Stinger. Lockheed Martin and RTX raised the price of the Javelin missile system from about 263,000 per unit just before the war to 350,000 this year.

The United States has provided more than 10,000 Javelins to Ukraine. Similar price hikes took place for Patriot missiles and other weapons systems.

And make no mistake, every time a contractor pads its profit margins, fewer weapons reach the frontlines. The greed of these defense contractors is not just costing American taxpayers huge amounts of money, it is killing Ukrainians. They are getting less weapons than they should, given the amount of money that we are spending.

And there is a name for all of this. It is called war profiteering, and this is not a new problem. During World War II, then-U.S. Senator from Missouri Harry Truman was shocked by the profits made by military contractors while American boys were getting killed in Europe and in the east. And he appointed a special commission—it is called the Truman Commission—to investigate war profiteering, and they found massive amounts of fraud.

In my view, that is exactly what we should be doing now. We should be instituting a Truman Commission, or call it whatever you want, to take a hard look at the prices that the defense industry is charging us for the weapons they provide.

We should also consider other ideas to reduce waste and fraud in the military industrial complex, such as wider use of the Defense Production Act, significant penalties for audit failures, and a windfall profit tax on hugely profitable defense companies.

Most Americans would agree that we need a strong military, and I agree that we need a strong military. But we do not need a defense system that is designed to make huge profits for a handful of giant defense contractors while providing less of what the military needs. We do not need to spend almost a trillion dollars on the military while half a million Americans are homeless, while children go hungry, and while elderly people have difficulty heating their homes.

Let me conclude by saying something, which I think is one of the more profound statements ever made by a President, and that is that Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was a former five-star general and a Republican President from 1952 to 1960—he warned us about everything that I am talking about in his farewell address in 1961, and it would be very wise for us to remember what President Eisenhower said, and this is the quote. I quote President Eisenhower:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

What Eisenhower said was true in 1961. It is even more true today.

I intend to vote against this inflated military budget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

ENDING IMPROPER PAYMENTS TO DECEASED PEOPLE ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today are two of my colleagues from my Senate office, Mr. John Lowery and Mr. Jackson Bewley. I am grateful for their good judgment, counsel, and advice.

I am delighted to see so many Members of Congress—and I mean this sincerely—so many Members of Congress embrace the call for a less wasteful Federal Government, for a more efficient Federal Government. We spend a little over \$6 trillion a year, as Senator SANDERS so eloquently pointed out. When you spend \$6 trillion a year, somebody is getting \$6 trillion a year.

Every penny in our budget has a constituency, and that constituency will fight us. They will fight us. And I recognize that, and it is something that as we go about downsizing government, we have to be mindful of. However, there is one constituency that is not going to be able to fight us in our quest to scrutinize Federal spending, and I am referring to dead people, and that is what I want to talk about today. I want to talk about dead people and the fact that they are getting money from the Federal Government.

In fiscal year 2023 alone—this is just 1 year—our government sent \$1.3 billion—not \$1.3 million—we sent \$1.3 billion in checks to dead people. Those aren't my numbers. Those numbers come from the Office of Management and Budget. That is just 1 year.

Not only is the Federal Government sending checks to dead people, those checks are being cashed. Now, I have heard of dead people voting, but cashing the checks? You don't have to be God's perfect idiot to realize that there is fraud happening with respect to all this money.

Here is how this problem arises. When you die in America, your name is sent to the vital records office in your State. And at that point, the Social Security Administration pays each State to give an ongoing list of deceased Americans in that State. So far, so good.

The Social Security Administration takes this down, this list of deceased people, and they compile on an ongoing basis a list called the Death Master File. The Death Master File. That is just a list of everybody, updated daily, of people in the United States who are deceased.

Why does the Social Security Administration do this? Well, so the SSA, the Social Security Administration, can stop sending people who have died checks. So far, so good.

There is just one problem. I discovered this about 7 years ago. The Social Security Administration refuses to share that list with anybody else in the Federal Government. They won't share it with any other Federal Agencies, many of which send out checks.

The Department of the Treasury, for example, sends out checks. SSA won't share the information with them. The Small Business Administration sends out a lot of checks. The Social Security Administration has a list of all deceased Americans, but SSA will not share that information with the SBA.

I will give you some examples. You remember when we were in the coronavirus crisis, and we had an economic meltdown. We sent stimulus checks to Americans to try to keep the economy on its feet. We paid \$1.4 billion to dead people, and they cashed the checks.

The Paycheck Protection Program, which was a part of our stimulus program, paid out \$38 million in loans to dead people. These were people who were using—live people, obviously—who were using dead people's Social Security numbers to collect payments.

The COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loans fund—another culprit—was involved in sending checks to dead people.

The Department of Veterans Affairs—and I am not blaming them. In many respects, it is not their fault. A couple of years ago, a scam artist stole the Social Security number of a deceased person—a deceased veteran—and received about \$825,000 in checks from 1997 to 2024.

Now, the person committing this fraud was just quietly accepting the checks. Somehow, the Department of Veterans Affairs, for some reason, stopped sending that person the checks. So the fraudster just picked up the phone and called the Department of

Veterans Affairs, impersonated the dead person, and convinced them to start sending the checks again.

Again, it was not necessarily the fault of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA didn't know that the Social Security number belonged to a deceased person.

Another example: A person in Ohio was able to collect her deceased mother's Veterans Affairs benefits for 48 years—48 years. Of course, she was caught.

The truth is, it is sort of like being asked: You didn't go fishing on Saturday; how many fish do you think you didn't catch?

We don't know how much money we are sending out every year to dead people.

Let me give you an example of how screwed up the data is. This is a strong indicator of what is wrong.

The Social Security Administration, if you asked them, will tell you that there are, according to their records, 6.5 million Americans living today in America who are 112 years of age or older. They say there are 6.5 million Americans who are at least 112 years old or older.

Now, I don't know about you, but I don't know anybody who is 112 years old. And I checked. At any given time, there are about 40 people on an ongoing basis in the world who are fortunate enough to live to be 112. The data is so screwed up. According to SSA, 6.5 million people are 112 years old.

A number of years ago—7 years ago—I started working with Senator TOM CARPER, a fine American if there ever was one. I started working with TOM on this issue. I went to Social Security, and I said: Look, this problem is easily solved. Just share the Death Master File with other Agencies and especially share it with the Department of the Treasury.

I don't want to confuse anyone, but the Department of the Treasury has a "Do Not Pay" list of people who aren't supposed to receive checks for a variety of reasons that other Agencies consult. But I said to my friends at Social Security: Why don't you just give the Death Master File to other Agencies?

They said: We can't. It is illegal. The way we construe our enabling statutes, we don't have the authority.

Well, I said, OK, I am not going to argue with them; we will just go pass a law. It was harder than I thought. But we did. In 2020, Senator CARPER and I passed a bill. The bill was called Stopping Improper Payments to Deceased People Act, and it gave the Social Security Administration permission and, indeed, directed the Social Security Administration to start sharing its list of dead people with other Agencies in the Federal Government.

I don't want to get down in the weeds, but—believe it or not—we had people oppose the legislation, and many people within the Federal Government. So in order to get our bill passed, we had to compromise. We had

to agree to only implement this requirement that Social Security share the list of dead people with everybody else—we could only get them to agree to do it for 3 years, in a trial program.

This clock started ticking on our 3-year period in December of 2023. So, obviously, 3 years is right upon us. And if we don't make this program permanent, it is going to expire in 2026.

So Senator CARPER and I have introduced another bill. It does basically the same thing as the 2020 bill, but it makes the program permanent. This new bill is called Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act, and we need to pass it.

There has been a lot of squabbling back and forth. I don't want to do anything to step on too many toes to jeopardize my bill, about how much the States are going to be paid and who is going to pay Social Security for sharing their dead persons list with the rest of the government. I think we have a lot of it worked out. But we need to go pass this bill.

I mean, this makes no sense whatsoever. I can understand if we talk about changing the Medicaid Program, for example—what is fair, what is unfair. I can understand debating that, and I can understand reasonable people disagreeing over what changes, if any, we ought to make to the Medicaid Program. I get it.

I just listened to Senator SANDERS, once again, speak very eloquently about the waste at the Department of Defense. That is something that reasonable people, all of whom agree that we ought to have a strong defense—but reasonable people—can disagree over how to achieve that.

But, my God, you don't have to be Euclid to figure out that this is just fraud. It is abuse. It is low-hanging fruit, and it is so easily solved. All we have to do is direct the Social Security Administration, on a permanent basis—not a 3-year trial basis, on a permanent basis—to start sharing the list of dead people with the Department of the Treasury and everybody else in the Federal Government who wants it. And then everybody is on the same page, and we know who is deceased. And we can stop sending the money to dead people who cash the checks.

Now, I am talking about this now—I have talked about it before on the floor. I am not going to try to pass the bill this year. I am not. We are running up against a clock, and we have the NDAA. We have a CR to pass, and we have to keep government open. We have to renew the flood insurance program. And you know all that. But I am going to be back. I am like "The Terminator." I will be back as soon as the new Congress is sworn in.

Many of my colleagues have said to me: You know, it is time we stop talking about who needs to pay more in taxes and start talking about and asking the question with respect to "What the hell happened to the money?" And I agree with that. I can't think of an easier place to start.

Let's just pass this simple bill. Let's stop sending money to dead people. Again, we can debate about the wisdom of dead people voting. We all know it happens. But cashing checks is a bridge too far.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8413 AND H.R. 8219

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I come before you today to discuss a grave situation that is unfolding in the southwestern part of my State.

Two Nebraska communities—one at Swanson Reservoir and the other at Red Willow—are at risk. Over the past 50 years, residents of these two communities have built friendships. They have started and supported businesses, and they have enjoyed the recreation that the local area offers. But in just 2 months, these Nebraskans will be forced to leave. They will be forced out of their homes over a disagreement between the Federal Government and local stakeholders on how the land should be managed.

The good news is, there is a simple solution to this problem. In working with the rest of the Nebraska delegation as well as the Bureau of Reclamation, I have introduced legislation that benefits all parties. It transfers the ownership of this land from the Federal Government to local officials.

I want to thank Congressman ADRIAN SMITH, especially, for introducing companion legislation in the House.

Once the counties control the land around these reservoirs, the residents of Red Willow and Swanson can work with local authorities to chart a better path forward—one that preserves the communities and one that also improves the recreation areas.

Since I introduced this bill, I have heard from over 1,000 Nebraskans about how urgently they need this land transferred. I have received numerous letters of support from local communities and businesses. Everyone—everyone—involved supports this bill. The residents and their local government officials support this bill. Our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have offered no objection to this bill. The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources passed this bill on a voice vote. We also worked with the Bureau of Reclamation on this solution. Everyone—everyone—agrees that my bill offers the best future for the hundreds of Nebraskans who call these areas home. It is time to do what is right and to save these communities.

I yield to the Senator from Hawaii.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, today, I rise in support of H.R. 8219, the Lahaina National Heritage Study Act. I also want to lend my support to the bill that is proposed by my esteemed colleague from Nebraska.

H.R. 8219 requires the Secretary of the Interior to study the potential of Lahaina to be designated as a National Heritage Area. The August 2023 wildfires brought to the forefront how special Lahaina is to Maui, to Hawaii, to our country, and, indeed, the world. The National Heritage Area designation could bring important Federal resources to help protect and manage the historic natural and cultural resources that are unique to Lahaina.

I thank Senator FISCHER for her partnership in supporting this measure, and I ask my colleagues to join me in passing this bill today so that the President can sign it into law, and the National Park Service can begin working with local partners on this effort.

I just want to mention that it is very clear that both Senator FISCHER and I have worked very closely with our communities in garnering support for these two bills, and no one is raising any substantive objections to these measures. So as we rush to finish the work of the Senate, I think it would be a very positive decision on our part to support these bills that nobody substantively objects to. So I hope that we can UC these bills.

I yield to the Senator from Nebraska.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate en bloc consideration of H.R. 8413 and H.R. 8219, which were received from the House. I further ask that the bills be considered read the third time and passed and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, in reserving the right to object, I have no substantive concerns with these bills. However, we have dozens and dozens of other bills that have been reported out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator BARRASSO and I have been very clear about our intentions to put together and pass a public lands bill, which consists of about 150 bills. All of these reported bills have gone through the same process in a weighted package. These two bills would be part of that. This week is our last chance to reach agreement on and to finalize that package.

I cannot, in good conscience, start deconstructing this package that so many of our colleagues have worked so hard on for so long and have waited for today while we are continuing to negotiate on it. We have just finished large meetings, and we will continue the meetings throughout tonight and tomorrow.

So, for now, I have to preserve the option to get a package agreed to, and I object to both Senators' unanimous consent requests.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I would just like to note that I certainly recognize that the esteemed chair of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is working very hard to put together a bill that contains dozens of these kinds of bills that have been worked through the committee as well as by the proponents. However, the reality of time is that there are serious concerns as to whether or not we are going to be able to get the kind of agreement that the chairman seeks.

Therefore, here we are with the actual two bills. And, believe me, if all of the other people who have similar kinds of legislation come to this floor and ask for unanimous consent, I will be happy to give it. That is all we are asking at this point—that these two bills are ripe today. Whether or not the chair is able to succeed in putting together this massive legislation that he referred to, I think, is very problematic, and I think we should, at least, take positive action on the bills that the Senator from Nebraska and I have worked very hard on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, this really is outrageous. My legislation cannot wait. As I have said, it passed the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on a voice vote. Last week, it passed the full House of Representatives unanimously.

The bill is different from the rest of the package that my colleagues are negotiating. Nebraskans are watching this bill—they are watching my bill—because Nebraskans will be kicked off their land starting in February—2 months from now—if it is not signed into law.

I have been working with the chair. I have been working with his team for over a year—over a year—on this legislation, incorporating feedback from them and continuously emphasizing the urgency with my legislation. None of my colleagues are objecting to policy in this bill. They know it is the right thing to do. In fact, my colleague objecting has already voted in favor of the bill in committee. Rather, objecting to this legislation is choosing to use these people, their homes, and these reservoirs and the small businesses as political leverage for unrelated matters.

I have heard from over 1,000 constituents who are in support of this legislation. They know that it will chart a better path forward for that local community and the Federal Government. They did not ask to be used as political leverage.

I hope my colleague will reconsider his objection. Otherwise, I will con-

tinue coming to this floor, day after day this week, asking for unanimous consent; although, I have been told by our cloakroom that there is no time available tomorrow for any action like this on the floor. It needs to happen now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam 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 KATE KÄUFER

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Kate Käufer, who is retiring after serving on the Senate Appropriations Committee for 20 years and who has left her fingerprints on so much of the crucial legislation to keep our country safe and improve the lives of our servicemembers and their families.

Kate Käufer first started on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in December 2004 when Senator Stevens was chair and served under Chairs Inouye, Cochran, Durbin, Shelby, and TESTER. Colleagues from each era can attest she has always been an invaluable member of the team—so valuable in fact, that, in March 2022, she was asked to take over as clerk of the subcommittee.

Through times of immense global change, instability, and uncertainty, when the investments we make in our military have had huge implications—not just for families today and not just for our own country, but for the world—Kate Käufer has worked tirelessly to help the Senate solve problems, address threats, and ensure Congress makes critical strategic investments in our servicemembers and our national security.

It is impossible to sum up two decades of Kate's leadership and smart analysis on the subcommittee. When Kate started in the Senate, individual appropriations bill were routinely debated and passed on the Senate floor. More recently, much of that work is done off the Senate floor, and she has remained steadfast in her loyalty to the deliberative processes of this body and tirelessly advocating for the well-being of our troops and the security of this country.

Over her 20 years of service, Kate handled almost every single appropriations account and military service. Those include several classified accomplishments for which there is no public record. But publicly, from firsthand experience, I can say that she was instrumental in providing for our men and

women in uniform and their families, protecting our national security workforce, and preserving the national security investments over the last several years.

We all owe Kate Käufer a debt of gratitude for working through many long nights and hard negotiations in service of our Nation. As Appropriations chair this Congress, I have leaned on Kate's expertise and counsel; and it is clear to all that her expertise, dedication, and ability to work across the aisle to make progress have made our country stronger. She will be deeply missed.

On behalf of all the past chairs—and all the Senators and staff—who have worked with Kate over the years and who know firsthand just how important her counsel has been, I would like to thank you, Kate, for your service. You will be missed, and we wish you all the best for what lies ahead. Thank you.

PEPFAR

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, early this month, we commemorated World AIDS Day, and so I come to the floor today to speak about the need for America to stay the course in the fight to end HIV/AIDS.

Two decades ago—when the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was established under George W. Bush—an HIV/AIDS diagnosis was a death sentence in many parts of the world. Today, the possibility of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic is no longer a dream; it is a realistic prospect. And it should not be a partisan issue.

Let's remember that it was President Trump who signed the PEPFAR Extension Act of 2018. We need to set aside the manufactured allegations motivated by hyper-partisanship that have prevented the PEPFAR reauthorization and look at the facts.

First of all, PEPFAR is not only the most successful global health program; it is arguably the most successful foreign aid program since the Marshall Plan. It has earned the United States an enormous amount of goodwill around the world and distinguishes us from our strategic competitors. We launched this billion-dollar program because it was the right thing to do, not because we expected a quid pro quo.

Our adversaries have never engaged a program of such enormity and what little they do comes with strings attached. I would argue PEPFAR is one of the most effective soft power tools we have. So it is no wonder that countries around the world are looking to the U.S. for leadership in ending the deadly epidemic for once and for all.

Look at the numbers. Over the past 20 years, PEPFAR has saved 25 million people. Thanks to PEPFAR, more than 5 million children have been born HIV-free. PEPFAR also helps kids who are orphans because one or both of their

parents died from AIDS. It includes family-centered programming, nutritional support, access to education.

At the beginning of 2024, PEPFAR launched a 2-year initiative titled "Safe Births, Healthy Babies." The goal is to eliminate mother-to-child transmission and improve maternal and neonatal healthcare in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia. Within these three countries alone, PEPFAR is reaching over 200,000 pregnant women living with HIV, and potentially averting 7,000 new infant HIV infections.

These are the facts. And the incredible thing is, we may be on the verge of a further breakthrough.

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in July found that twice-yearly injections of lenacapavir—a drug used to treat HIV/AIDS—was 100 percent effective in preventing AIDS transmission in women—100 percent.

There is more work to be done to understand the long-term results. But we may be on the verge of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic as we know it over the course of the coming Trump administration.

Now, even if we passed PEPFAR today, we still have work to do. According to the Global Fund, in 2023, 210,000 new infections were estimated among girls and young women.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS among girls and young women is three times higher than boys and young men. In 2023, 44 percent of all new infections were among girls and women of all ages. These disturbing trends are the result of discrimination and violence preventing access to lifesaving care for girls and young women. UNAIDS reports that an estimated 1.3 million people became infected with HIV in 2023 alone.

Let me talk about one of the biggest problems we are facing: We have lately been reauthorizing this program on a year-to-year basis. This is undermining our progress and threatening our future. A year-to-year reauthorization sends the message to partner governments that HIV/AIDS is no longer a priority. This will impact not just HIV/AIDS prevention but overall health structures that grew out of vital HIV/AIDS programs.

We need a 5-year reauthorization. A 5-year reauthorization makes all the difference if we want to end the HIV/AIDS threat by 2030. Five years allows organizations implementing PEPFAR to plan their activities with predictable timelines. It allows more efficient procurement of commodities and supplies. It helps retain medical staff and assure clients that they will be able to obtain continuous care. Without a 5-year reauthorization, there are no guarantees. Without a 5-year reauthorization, we will be putting millions at risk of new HIV/AIDS infections and death.

I know that for many Americans, the HIV/AIDS epidemic can seem far away.

But let me end with this warning: This summer, a UN report found that for the first time, more than half of new HIV infections occurred outside of Sub-Saharan Africa. Preventing this spread isn't just the right thing to do, it isn't just the moral thing to do, it is in America's national security interest to do this.

And so, to my colleagues here in Congress, I urge you to support a 5-year reauthorization of the PEPFAR program. Let's end the scourge of HIV/AIDS once and for all.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO WADE PALMER

• Mr. DAINES. Madam President, today I have the distinct honor of recognizing Montana Highway Patrol State Trooper Wade Palmer of Ravalli County as Montanan of the Month for his bravery and sacrifice made in the line of duty.

Trooper Palmer's dedication to his fellow Montanans is nothing short of remarkable. Born and raised in Missoula, Wade grew up in a large family with a passion for helping others. From a young age, he felt a call to law enforcement, driven by the desire to serve and protect his community. Over the course of his career with the Montana Highway Patrol, Wade displayed unwavering bravery and commitment, earning numerous accolades, including two Medals of Valor, the VFW Trooper of the Year award, and the Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance.

Sadly, on March 15, 2019, Wade was ambushed and critically injured in the line of duty. Ever since that horrific event, Wade remains focused on his family—his wife Lindsey and their daughters Mia and Cierra—as he continues on his journey to recovery. Despite the hardships he has faced and wounds he bears, both visible and invisible, Wade's resilience and determination inspire us all. The countless men and women who serve on the frontlines each day to serve and protect are the best among us, and they deserve our thanks. May we always remain committed to supporting and honoring our first responders.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Wade Palmer for his selfless service to the Treasure State. May God bestow blessings upon you and your family as you continue healing. You make Montana proud.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREENBRIAR CHILDREN'S CENTER

• Mr. OSSOFF. Madam President, I rise to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Greenbriar Children's Center in Savannah.

Founded in 1949, Greenbriar Children's Center was established by members of the Gamma Sigma Omega chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., to start an orphanage for Black children in the Savannah area.

When the orphanage was founded, Black children who were homeless or without parental support were often placed in local work farms and penal institutions.

Today, Greenbriar serves children and families of all backgrounds and ethnicities, through childcare, early learning programs, family preservation and counseling services, and an emergency shelter for children and young adults.

As Georgia's U.S. Senator, I commend the faculty, staff, and families at Greenbriar for their 75 years of service and for their work to help our kids learn, grow, and thrive.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC HARRINGTON SCHOOL

● Mr. OSSOFF. Madam President, I rise to celebrate the Historic Harrington School, on St. Simons Island, GA, as we commemorate its 100th anniversary this year.

Formerly known as the Harrington Graded School, the Historic Harrington School functioned as the principal educational facility for three African-American communities on St. Simons Island until school consolidation in the 1960s, when students were either bused to the mainland in Brunswick, GA, or were sent to private schools for African-Americans in other parts of the State, such as Augusta and Cordele.

The Harrington community was settled by formerly enslaved families who had worked on the plantations of Georgia's barrier islands. Census data from 1900, 1910, and 1920 revealed an African-American community of sawmill workers and carpenters who, in 1924, built the one-room schoolhouse for the education of their children and grandchildren.

In the 1990s, pressure by developers caused many African-American homes and properties in the Harrington community to be sold and subdivided. Residents who did not want to sell their heritage put up yellow "Don't Ask/Won't Sell" signs in their yards.

In 2004, Ms. Isadora Hunter, who attended the school in 1928, donated her portion of family land to the St. Simon's Land Trust and Glynn County, so that the school would be preserved. That same year, Glynn County and the St. Simons Land Trust, Inc., acquired ownership of a 12-acre tract next to the schoolhouse that became a public park.

In 2011, the Historic Harrington School was selected as one of ten "Places in Peril" by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, identifying the schoolhouse as a significant historic site threatened by deterioration. In 2017, through the grassroots activism of the Friends of Harrington School Inc., the St. Simons African American Heritage Coalition, and members of the local community, funds were raised for the schoolhouse to be completely restored, and the school officially reopened with a ribbon cutting in August of that year. The

Harrington tract, acquired by the land trust and the county pursuant to the Georgia Greenspace laws and the Glynn County Greenspace Program, opened as the Harrington Park and is maintained by the county.

Today, the Historic Harrington School is a cultural center where residents and tourists learn about the Gullah Geechee heritage of St. Simons Island and coastal Georgia.

As Georgia's U.S. Senator, I join the St. Simons Island community and all Georgians in celebrating this momentous 100th anniversary and important heritage of the Historic Harrington School.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13818 OF DECEMBER 20, 2017, WITH RESPECT TO SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE AND CORRUPTION—PM 63

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13818 of December 20, 2017, is to continue in effect beyond December 20, 2024.

The prevalence and severity of human rights abuse and corruption that have their source, in whole or in

substantial part, outside the United States, continue to threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; undermine economic markets; and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.

Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13818 with respect to serious human rights abuse and corruption.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.

THE WHITE HOUSE, December 11, 2024.

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 14059 OF DECEMBER 15, 2021, WITH RESPECT TO GLOBAL ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING—PM 64

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to global illicit drug trafficking declared in Executive Order 14059 of December 15, 2021, is to continue in effect beyond December 15, 2024.

The trafficking into the United States of illicit drugs, including fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, is causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans annually, as well as countless more non-fatal overdoses with their own tragic human toll. Drug cartels, transnational criminal organizations, and their facilitators are the primary sources of illicit drugs and precursor chemicals that fuel the current opioid epidemic, as well as drug-related violence that harms our communities. International drug trafficking—including the illicit production, global sale, and widespread distribution of illegal drugs; the rise of extremely potent drugs such as

fentanyl and other synthetic opioids; as well as the growing role of Internet-based drug sales—continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 14059 with respect to global illicit drug trafficking.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, December 11, 2024.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 2781. An act to promote remediation of abandoned hardrock mines, and for other purposes.

S. 3613. An act to require Facility Security Committees to respond to security recommendations issued by the Federal Protective Service relating to facility security, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 6229. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize a program to assess the threat, vulnerability, and consequences of terrorism or other security threats, as appropriate, to certain events, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7365. An act to provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7673. An act to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from prescribing or enforcing energy conservation standards for clothes washers that are not cost-effective or technologically feasible, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8692. An act to require that the Amtrak Board of Directors comply with the open meetings requirements of section 552b of title 5, United States Code, and for other purposes.

H.R. 9668. An act to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a working group relating to countering terrorist, cybersecurity, border and port security, and transportation security threats posed to the United States by the Chinese Communist Party, and for other purposes.

H.R. 9689. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity Internship Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 9769. An act to ensure the security and integrity of United States critical infrastructure by establishing an interagency task force and requiring a comprehensive report of the targeting of United States critical infrastructure by People's Republic of China state-sponsored cyber actors, and for other purposes.

At 6:44 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 5009) to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 6229. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize a program to assess the threat, vulnerability, and consequences of terrorism or other security threats, as appropriate, to certain events, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 7365. An act to provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 7673. An act to prohibit the Secretary of Energy from prescribing or enforcing energy conservation standards for clothes washers that are not cost-effective or technologically feasible, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 8692. An act to require that the Amtrak Board of Directors comply with the open meetings requirements of section 552b of title 5, United States Code, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 9668. An act to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a working group relating to countering terrorist, cybersecurity, border and port security, and transportation security threats posed to the United States by the Chinese Communist Party, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 9689. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity Internship Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 9769. An act to ensure the security and integrity of United States critical infrastructure by establishing an interagency task force and requiring a comprehensive report on the targeting of United States critical infrastructure by People's Republic of China state-sponsored cyber actors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 82. An act to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

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-6768. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Updated Terminology for State Housing Agency Housing Assistance Payments Contracts" (RIN2502-AJ68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6769. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmit-

ting, draft legislation, styled the "Defense Production Act Reauthorization Act of 2025"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6770. A communication from the Senior Legal Advisor for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Investment Security, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Penalty Provisions, Provision of Information, Negotiation of Mitigation Agreements, and Other Procedures Pertaining to Certain Investments in the United States by Foreign Persons and Certain Transactions by Foreign Persons Involving Real Estate in the United States" (RIN1505-AC85) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-6771. A communication from the Executive Assistant, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rights of Way" (RIN1024-AE75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-6772. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of Categorical Reasonable Period of Time for Action on Requests for Water Quality Certification under Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act and Clarifying Types of Hydroelectric Project Proceedings that May Require Water Quality Certification" ((RIN1902-AG21) (Docket No. RM24-5-000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 23, 2024; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-6773. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on the Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers Act Medicare Secondary Payer Non-Group Health Plan Threshold for Current Year 2025"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6774. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary of Legislative Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report on the Taxation of Social Security and Railroad Retirement Benefits in Calendar Years 2015 through 2020"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-6775. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's fiscal year 2023 Nursing Workforce Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-6776. A communication from the Director of the Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Testing, Evaluation, and Approval of Electric Motor-Driven Mine Equipment and Accessories" (RIN1219-AB93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-6777. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Community Services Block Grant Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2022" and includes the "Community Services Block Grant Performance Measurement Report"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-6778. A communication from the Chair of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the

Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the six-month period from April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6779. A communication from the Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Endowment's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6780. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and a Management Report for the period from April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6781. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, two (2) legislative proposals intended to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations by providing OPM with the necessary authority to develop a new model to educate and elevate human resources professionals and allow OPM to be reimbursed for certain retirement processing costs; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6782. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report and the Management Response for the period of October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6783. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Performance Report for fiscal year 2024; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6784. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report and the Management Response for the period of April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-6785. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Attorney General's Fourth Quarterly Report of Fiscal Year 2024 on the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-6786. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "TWIC - Reader Requirements; Second Delay of Effective Date" ((RIN1625-AC80) (Docket No. USCG-2022-0052)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6787. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Corpus Christi Ship Channel, Corpus Christi, TX" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0967)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6788. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant

to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zone; Bahia de Ponce, Ponce, PR" ((RIN1625-AA00) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0923)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6789. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Draw-bridge Operation Regulation; Sacramento River, Rio Vista, CA" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0745)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6790. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Draw-bridge Operation Regulation; Wappinger Creek, New Hamburg, New York" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0845)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6791. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Draw-bridge Operation Regulation; Townsend Gut, Southport, ME" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0400)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6792. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Draw-bridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway, Jupiter, FL" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0745)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6793. A communication from the Legal Yeoman, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Draw-bridge Operation Regulation; Dutch Kills, Queens County, NY" ((RIN1625-AA09) (Docket No. USCG-2024-0392)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6794. A communication from the Fisheries Regulations Specialist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; 2024 Management Area 1A Possession Limit Adjustment" (RIN0648-XE470) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6795. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Trawl Gear in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area" (RIN0648-XY087) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6796. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National

Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska" (RIN0648-XY081) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6797. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska" (RIN0648-XY085) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6798. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Revisions to Red Snapper and Hogfish Management Measures" (RIN0648-BI39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6799. A communication from the Fisheries Regulations Specialist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2024 Commercial Closure for Snowy Grouper in the South Atlantic" (RIN0648-XE316) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6800. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; 2020 Red Snapper Recreational For-Hire Fishing Season in the Gulf of Mexico" (RIN0648-XS026) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6801. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region; Amendment 52" (RIN0648-BI98) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6802. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Re-Opening of Commercial Longline Fishery for South Atlantic Golden Tilefish" (RIN0648-XS027) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6803. A communication from the Fisheries Regulations Specialist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; General Category December Quota Transfer" (RIN0648-XE450) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6804. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Western Pacific Pelagic Fisheries; U.S. Territorial Catch and Fishing Effort Limits" (RIN0648-BD46) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6805. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Temporary Rule To Increase the Commercial Trip Limit for Atlantic King Mackerel" (RIN0648-BJ19) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6806. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pacific Island Pelagic Fisheries; 2019 U.S. Territorial Longline Bigeye Tuna Catch Limits" (RIN0648-XG925) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6807. A communication from the Acting Director of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region; 2019-2020 Commercial Hook-and-Line Closure for King Mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico Southern Zone" (RIN0648-XS025) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6808. A communication from the Attorney for Regulatory Affairs, Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Standard for Infant Bath Seats" ((16 CFR Part 1215) (Docket No. CPSC-2009-0064)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 2, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6809. A communication from the Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Fees for Services Performed in Connection With Licensing and Related Services—2024 Update" (Docket No. EP 542) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 6, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6810. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "In the Matter of Amendment of Section 73.622(j),

Final DTV Table of Allotments, Television Broadcast Stations (Lubbock, Texas)" (MB Docket No. 24-224) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6811. A communication from the Assistant Division Chief of Competition Policy, Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Call Authentication Trust Anchor" ((WC Docket No. 17-97) (FCC 24-120)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-6812. A communication from the Division Chief of Policy and Rules, Office of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Use of the 5.850-5.925 GHz Band" ((ET Docket No. 19-138) (FCC 24-123)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 10, 2024; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 5472. A bill to authorize peace officer standards and training agencies to access criminal history records, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5473. A bill to establish the Immersive Technology Advisory Panel to promote the use of immersive technology in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 5474. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to establish an interagency council on social determinants of health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Mr. KELLY):

S. 5475. A bill to amend the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 to provide producers with the option to confirm the absence of prohibited substances through testing, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO:

S. 5476. A bill to provide for Department of Energy and National Science Foundation research and development coordination, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 5477. A bill to establish Federal policies and procedures to notify the next of kin or other emergency contact upon the death, or serious illness or serious injury, of an individual in Federal custody, to provide model policies for States, units of local government, and Indian Tribes to implement and enforce similar policies and procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 5478. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the deduction for certain expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers and to allow an equivalent deduction for home educators; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5479. A bill to implement a 5-year pilot program establishing a performance-based pay structure for certain Federal employees in order to enhance productivity, accountability, and employee satisfaction in public service; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, Mr. LUJAN, and Mr. REED):

S. 5480. A bill to repeal the debt ceiling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 5481. A bill to clarify that agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services do not have the authority to regulate the practice of medicine; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5482. A bill to impose restrictions on Federal agencies with respect to appointments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5483. A bill to provide for across-the-board rescissions of nonsecurity discretionary spending of 5 percent; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5484. A bill to provide for across-the-board rescissions of nonsecurity discretionary spending of 1 percent; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5485. A bill to provide for across-the-board rescissions of nonsecurity discretionary spending of 2 percent; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 5486. A bill to establish a commission to study the relocation of certain agencies outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MARSHALL, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 5487. A bill to provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 5488. A bill to direct the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library to procure a statue of Benjamin Franklin for placement in the United States Capitol; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 5489. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to adjust the definition of "small impoverished community"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 5490. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to maintain a communications program to communicate with the general public about patterns and trends with respect to changing weather and climate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 5491. A bill to mobilize United States strategic, economic, and diplomatic tools to

confront the challenges posed by the People's Republic of China and to set a positive agenda for United States economic and diplomatic efforts abroad, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 5492. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payment for services of radiologist assistants under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. WARREN:

S. 5493. A bill to establish the obligations of certain large business entities in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 5494. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 802 North Tanchahua Street in Corpus Christi, Texas, as the "Captain Robert E. 'Bob' Batterson Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

S. 5495. A bill to cap the emissions of greenhouse gases through a requirement to purchase carbon permits, to distribute the proceeds of such purchases to eligible individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ROUNDS:

S. 5496. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish oversight mediation committees to help resolve property boundary disputes regarding National Forest System land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 141

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 141, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve certain programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs for home and community based services for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 399

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 399, a bill to place limitations on excepting positions from the competitive service, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 2277

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2277, a bill to increase the benefits guaranteed in connection with certain pension plans, and for other purposes.

S. 2421

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 2421, a bill to require the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to revise the terms of the Standard Reinsurance Agreement and the Livestock Price Reinsurance Agreement, and for other purposes.

S. 4040

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4040, a bill to establish a new non-immigrant visa for mobile entertainment workers.

S. 4297

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4297, a bill to repeal the Corporate Transparency Act.

S. 4436

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4436, a bill to improve the safety of infant formula through testing of infant formula for microorganisms and toxic elements, and for other purposes.

S. 4477

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4477, a bill to reauthorize the Second Chance Act of 2007.

S. 4630

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 4630, a bill to establish an interagency committee to harmonize regulatory regimes in the United States relating to cybersecurity, and for other purposes.

S. 5062

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5062, a bill to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes.

S. 5274

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 5274, a bill to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to include critical materials in the definition of critical mineral, and for other purposes.

S. 5392

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5392, a bill to prohibit discrimination based on political affiliation in granting disaster assistance.

S. 5408

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Minnesota

(Ms. SMITH), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) were added as cosponsors of S. 5408, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the life and legacy of Roberto Clemente.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3316. Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1351, to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3316. Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1351, to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE STUDY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall seek to enter into a contract with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (referred to in this section as the "National Academies") to conduct a study to examine the state of youth in youth residential programs and make recommendations.

(b) **STUDY COMPONENTS.**—Pursuant to the contract under subsection (a), the National Academies shall, not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act, and every 2 years thereafter for a period of 10 years, issue a report informed by the study conducted under such subsection that includes—

(1) identification of the nature, prevalence, severity, and scope of child abuse, neglect, and deaths in youth residential programs, including types of abuse and neglect, causes of abuse, neglect, and deaths, and criteria used to assess abuse, neglect, and deaths;

(2) identification of all Federal and State funding sources for youth residential programs;

(3) identification of Federal data collection sources on youth in youth residential programs;

(4) identification of existing regulation of youth residential programs, including alternative licensing standards or licensing exemptions for youth residential programs;

(5) identification of existing standards of care of national accreditation entities that provide accreditation or certification of youth residential programs;

(6) identification of existing barriers in policy for blending and braiding of funding sources to serve youth in community-based settings;

(7) recommendations for coordination by agencies of data on youth in youth residential programs;

(8) recommendations for the improvement of oversight of youth residential programs receiving Federal funding;

(9) identification of risk assessment tools, including projects that provide for the development of research-based strategies for risk assessments relating to the health, safety (including with respect to the use of seclusion and restraints), and well-being of youth in youth residential programs;

(10) recommendations to support the development and implementation of education and training resources for professional and paraprofessional personnel in the fields of health care, law enforcement, judiciary, social work, child protection (including the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect), education, child care, and other relevant fields, and individuals such as court appointed special advocates and guardians ad litem, including education and training resources regarding—

(A) the unique needs, experiences, and outcomes of youth with lived experience in youth residential programs;

(B) the enhancement of interagency communication among child protective service agencies, protection and advocacy systems, State licensing agencies, State Medicaid agencies, and accreditation agencies;

(C) best practices to eliminate the use of physical, mechanical, and chemical restraint and seclusion, and to promote the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, culturally and linguistically sensitive services, mental health supports, trauma- and grief-informed care, and crisis de-escalation interventions; and

(D) the legal duties of such professional and paraprofessional personnel and youth residential program personnel and the responsibilities of such professionals and personnel to protect the legal rights of children in youth residential programs, consistent with applicable State and Federal law;

(11) recommendations to improve accessibility and development of community-based alternatives to youth residential programs;

(12) recommendations for innovative programs designed to provide community support and resources to at-risk youth, including programs that—

(A) support continuity of education, including removing barriers to access;

(B) provide mentorship;

(C) support the provision of crisis intervention services and in-home or outpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment; and

(D) provide other resources to families and parents or guardians that assist in preventing the need for out-of-home placement of youth in youth residential programs;

(13) recommendations relating to the development, dissemination, outreach, engagement, or training associated with advancing least-restrictive, evidence-based, trauma and grief-informed, and developmentally and culturally competent care for youth in youth residential programs and youth at risk of being placed in such programs;

(14) recommendations on best practices regarding the health and safety (including reduction or elimination of use of seclusion and restraints), care, and treatment of youth in youth residential programs to convey to States;

(15) recommendations to improve the coordination, dissemination, and implementation of best practices regarding the health and safety (including use, reduction, or elimination of seclusion and restraints), care, and treatment of youth in youth residential programs among child welfare systems, licensing agencies, accreditation organizations, other relevant monitoring and enforcement entities, State child welfare agencies, State Medicaid agencies, State mental and behavioral health agencies, consumers, and State protection advocacy centers; and

(16) identification of aggregate data, including process-oriented data such as length of stay and use of restraints, and seclusion and outcome-oriented data such as discharge setting and ability to be safely maintained in school and community at least 12 months after discharge, including—

(A) recommendations on how such data should be shared across child-placing agencies and stakeholders, including individuals receiving services, families of such individuals, and advocates; and

(B) identification of barriers to sharing information across child-placing agencies.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the duties described in subsection (b), the National Academies shall consult with—

(1) child advocates, including attorneys experienced in working with youth overrepresented in the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system;

(2) health professionals, including mental health and substance use disorder professionals, nurses, physicians, social workers, and other health care providers who provide services to youth who may be served by residential programs;

(3) protection and advocacy systems;

(4) individuals experienced in working with youth with disabilities, including emotional, mental health, and substance use disorders;

(5) individuals with lived experience as children and youth in youth residential programs, including individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and individuals with emotional, mental health, or substance use disorders;

(6) representatives of State and local child protective services agencies and other relevant public agencies;

(7) parents or guardians of children and youth with emotional, mental health, or substance use disorder needs;

(8) parents of children and youth with intellectual disabilities and autism;

(9) experts on issues related to child abuse and neglect in youth residential programs;

(10) administrators of youth residential programs;

(11) education professionals who provide services to youth with complex needs in youth residential programs;

(12) State educational agencies;

(13) local educational agencies;

(14) Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations;

(15) State legislators;

(16) State licensing agencies;

(17) the Administration for Children and Families;

(18) the Administration for Community Living;

(19) the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration;

(20) the Department of Justice;

(21) the Indian Health Service;

(22) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services;

(23) the National Council on Disability; and

(24) others, as appropriate.

(d) REPORT SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION.—The National Academies shall submit to the Secretary for dissemination to relevant State agencies, and make publicly available, a report on the comprehensive review conducted under subsection (b), including the findings of the National Academies under subsection (b);

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.—The term “child abuse and neglect” has the meaning given such term in section 3 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 note).

(2) CULTURALLY COMPETENT.—The term “culturally competent” has the meaning given such term in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002).

(3) INDIAN TRIBE; TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The terms “Indian Tribe” and “Tribal organization” have the meanings given such terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(4) PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEMS.—The term “protection and advocacy system” means a system established by a State or Indian Tribe under section 143 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15043).

(5) STATE.—The term “State” means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(6) YOUTH.—The term “youth” means an individual who has not attained the age of 22.

(7) YOUTH RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “youth residential program” means each location of a facility or program operated by a public or private entity that, with respect to one or more youth who are unrelated to the owner or operator of the facility or program—

(i) provides a residential environment, such as—

(I) a program with a wilderness or outdoor experience, expedition, or intervention;

(II) a boot camp experience or other experience designed to simulate characteristics of basic military training or correctional regimes;

(III) an education or therapeutic boarding school;

(IV) a behavioral modification program;

(V) a residential treatment center or facility;

(VI) a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in section 472(k)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672(k)(4)));

(VII) a psychiatric residential treatment program that meets the requirements of subpart D of part 441 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations);

(VIII) a group home serving children and youth placed by any placing authority;

(IX) an intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual disabilities; or

(X) any residential program that is utilized as an alternative to incarceration for justice involved youth, adjudicated youth, or youth deemed delinquent; and

(ii) serves youth who have a history or diagnosis of—

(I) an emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorder;

(II) a substance misuse or use disorder, including alcohol misuse or use disorders; or

(III) an intellectual, developmental, physical, or sensory disability.

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term “youth residential program” does not include—

(i) a hospital licensed by a State; or

(ii) a foster family home that—

(I) provides 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State child welfare services agency has placement and care responsibility; and

(II) is licensed and regulated by the State as a foster family home.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I have three requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 2:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE
CALENDAR—H.R. 82

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

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 82) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

PROTECT OUR CHILDREN
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 5060 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5060) to reauthorize the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 5060) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 5060

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 "PROTECT Our Children Reauthorization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR CHILD EXPLOITATION PREVENTION AND INTERDICTION.—Section 101 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21111) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking "every second year" and inserting "every fourth year"; and

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"(c) REQUIRED CONTENTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The National Strategy established under subsection (a) shall include the following:

"(1) An analysis of current trends, challenges, and the overall magnitude of the threat of child exploitation.

"(2) An analysis of future trends and challenges, including new technologies, that will impact the efforts to combat child exploitation.

"(3) Goals and strategic solutions to prevent and interdict child exploitation, including—

"(A) plans for interagency coordination;

"(B) engagement with the judicial branches of the Federal Government and State governments;

"(C) legislative recommendations for combating child exploitation;

"(D) cooperation with international, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies; and

"(E) engagement with the private sector and other entities involved in efforts to combat child exploitation.

"(4) An analysis of Federal efforts dedicated to combating child exploitation, including—

"(A) a review of the policies and work of the Department of Justice and other Federal programs relating to the prevention and interdiction of child exploitation crimes, including training programs, and investigative and prosecution activity; and

"(B) a description of the efforts of the Department of Justice to cooperate and coordinate with, and provide technical assistance and support to, international, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies and private sector and nonprofit entities with respect to child exploitation prevention and interdiction efforts.

"(5) An estimate of the resources required to effectively respond to child exploitation crimes at scale by—

"(A) each ICAC task force;

"(B) the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including investigators, forensic interviewers, and analysts of victims, witnesses, and forensic;

"(C) Homeland Security Investigations, including forensic interviewers and analysts of victims, witnesses, and forensic;

"(D) the United States Marshals Service;

"(E) the United States Secret Service;

"(F) the United States Postal Service;

"(G) the criminal investigative offices of the Department of Defense; and

"(H) any component of an agency described in this paragraph;

"(6) A review of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, including—

"(A) the number of ICAC task forces and the location of each ICAC task force;

"(B) the number of trained personnel at each ICAC task force;

"(C) the amount of Federal grants awarded to each ICAC task force; and

"(D) an assessment of the Federal, State, and local cooperation with respect to each ICAC task force, including—

"(i) the number of arrests made by each ICAC task force;

"(ii) the number of criminal referrals to United States attorneys for prosecution;

"(iii) the number of prosecutions and convictions from the referrals described in clause (ii);

"(iv) the number, if available, of local prosecutions and convictions based on ICAC task force investigations; and

"(v) any other information determined by the Attorney General demonstrating the level of Federal, State, Tribal, and local coordination and cooperation.

"(7) An assessment of training needs for each ICAC task force and affiliated agencies.

"(8) An assessment of Federal investigative and prosecution activity relating to reported incidents of child exploitation crimes that include a number of factors, including—

"(A) the number of investigations, arrests, prosecutions and convictions for a crime of child exploitation; and

"(B) the average sentence imposed and the statutory maximum sentence that could be imposed for each crime of child exploitation.

"(9) A review of all available statistical data indicating the overall magnitude of child pornography trafficking in the United States and internationally, including—

"(A) the number of foreign and domestic suspects observed engaging in accessing and sharing child pornography;

"(B) the number of tips or other statistical data from the CyberTipline of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and other data indicating the magnitude of child pornography trafficking; and

"(C) any other statistical data indicating the type, nature, and extent of child exploitation crime in the United States and abroad."

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL ICAC TASK FORCE PROGRAM.—Section 102 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21112) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) by inserting ", Tribal, military," after "State"; and

(B) by striking "and child obscenity and pornography cases" and inserting "child obscenity and pornography cases, and the identification of child victims";

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking "consult with and consider" and all that follows through "track record of success," and inserting "evaluate the task forces funded under the ICAC Task Force Program to determine if those task forces are operating in an effective manner";

(B) in paragraph (3)(B)—

(i) by striking "establish a new task force" and inserting "establish a new or continue an existing task force"; and

(ii) by striking "state" and inserting "State"; and

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking "may" and inserting "shall";

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B); and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(c) LIMITED LIABILITY FOR ICAC TASK FORCES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a civil claim or criminal charge against an ICAC task force established pursuant to this section and sections 103 and 104, including any law enforcement agency that participates on such a task force or a director, officer, employee, or agent of such a law enforcement agency, arising from the prioritization decisions with respect to leads related to Internet crimes against children described in section 104(8), may not be brought in any Federal or State court.

“(2) INTENTIONAL, RECKLESS, OR OTHER MISCONDUCT.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a claim if the ICAC task force or law enforcement agency, or a director, officer, employee, or agent of that law enforcement agency—

“(A) engaged in intentional misconduct; or

“(B) acted, or failed to act—

“(i) with actual malice;

“(ii) with reckless disregard to a substantial risk of causing physical injury without legal justification; or

“(iii) for a purpose unrelated to the performance of any responsibility or function under section 104(8).”

(c) PURPOSE OF ICAC TASK FORCES.—Section 103 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21113) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “, and the identification of child victims of those crimes” before the semicolon at the end;

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting “and prioritizing investigations that task force personnel, through the background, training and experience of those personnel and the consideration of all relevant circumstances, determine to be most likely to result in positive case outcomes and in the rescue of children” before the semicolon at the end;

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking “and local law enforcement” and inserting “Tribal, military, and local law enforcement”; and

(B) by inserting “, including probation and parole agencies, child advocacy centers, and child protective services,” after “enforcement agencies”;

(4) in paragraph (8), by striking “and” at the end;

(5) in paragraph (9), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(6) by adding at the end the following:

“(10) educating the judiciary on—

“(A) the link between intrafamilial contact offenses and technology-facilitated crimes; and

“(B) characteristics of internet offenders, including the interest of online offenders in incest-themed material, sadism, and other related paraphilias or illegal activity.”

(d) DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF TASK FORCES.—Section 104 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21114) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by inserting “conduct digital” before “forensic examinations”; and

(B) by inserting “engage in” before “effective prosecutions”;

(2) by striking paragraph (8) and inserting the following:

“(8) investigate, seek prosecution with respect to, and identify child victims from leads relating to Internet crimes against children, including CyberTipline reports, with prioritization determined according to circumstances and by each task force, as described in section 102(3);”

(3) by striking paragraph (9); and

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (10) and (11) as paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively.

(e) NATIONAL INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN DATA SYSTEM.—Section 105 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21115) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “shall establish” and inserting “may establish”;

(2) in subsection (b) by striking “continue and build upon Operation Fairplay developed by the Wyoming Attorney General’s office, which has established a secure, dynamic undercover infrastructure that has facilitated” and inserting “facilitate”; and

(3) in subsection (g)—

(A) by striking paragraph (3);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (8) as paragraphs (3) through (7), respectively; and

(C) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated, by striking “1 representative” and inserting “2 representatives”.

(f) ICAC GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 106 of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21116) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)(ii)(II), by striking “Operation Fairplay.”; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

“(A) Not less than 20 percent of the total funds appropriated to carry out this section shall be distributed to support the ICAC Task Force Program through grants to—

“(i) provide training and technical assistance to members of the ICAC Task Force Program;

“(ii) maintain, enhance, research, and develop tools and technology to assist members of the ICAC Task Force Program;

“(iii) provide other support to the ICAC Task Force Program determined by the Attorney General;

“(iv) conduct research;

“(v) support the annual National Law Enforcement Training on Child Exploitation of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and

“(vi) provide wellness training.”; and

(2) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking “, including” and all that follows through “such crime under State law.” and inserting “; and”; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) the number of child victims identified.”;

(B) by striking subparagraph (D); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraphs (E) through (G) as subparagraphs (D) through (F), respectively.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 107(a) of the PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21117(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (9), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (10), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(11) \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;

“(12) \$80,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

“(13) \$90,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.”

(h) ADDITIONAL REGIONAL COMPUTER FORENSIC LABS.—The PROTECT Our Children Act of 2008 (34 U.S.C. 21101 et seq.) is amended by striking title II.

(i) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF PROVIDERS.—Section 2258A(c) of title 18, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting “and all supplemental data included in the report” after “each report made under subsection (a)(1)”.

ELIMINATE USELESS REPORTS ACT OF 2024

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5301 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5301) to amend title 31, United States Code, to require agencies to include a list of outdated or duplicative reporting requirements in annual budget justifications, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 5301) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

STOP CAMPUS HAZING ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5646, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5646) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to disclose hazing incidents, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MANCHIN. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 5646) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 12; 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 Marzano nomination; further, that the cloture motion with respect to the Marzano nomination ripen at 11:30 a.m.; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday’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. MANCHIN. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 10 a.m.

IN THE ARMY

CONFIRMATION

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601, AND FOR APPOINTMENT AS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 711:

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate December 11, 2024:

NOMINATIONS

THE JUDICIARY

Executive nomination received by the Senate:

To be lieutenant general

NOEL WISE, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

MAJ. GEN. BRETT G. SYLVIA