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No. 188

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. STRONG).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 18, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DALE W. STRONG to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

HONORING HINSDALE VILLAGE PRESIDENT CAULEY ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the president of the Village of Hinsdale, Illinois, Thomas Cauley, Jr., who will be retiring at the end of this year.

President Cauley is currently serving his fourth term, and he previously served on the Village of Hinsdale's board for 2 years.

He is a graduate of the University of Illinois' College of Law. As a lawyer, he has had a successful career representing numerous entities and is now head of his own law firm.

As president of Hinsdale, he has played an essential role in ensuring its residents have a local government connected to the community and responsive to resident needs.

Mr. Speaker, I thank President Cauley for the critical work he has done to transform lives and honorably represent the Village of Hinsdale.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DAVID C. PERRY

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, I lost a friend, mentor, and man who cared about making Chicago and Chicagoland a better, more livable location, Dr. David C. Perry.

David was an urban planner who spent the last 12 years of his life leading the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois-Chicago and bridging the gap across academia, community, and practice.

When I enrolled in the master's in urban planning program at UIC, Professor Perry was one of my favorites. His belief in involving and informing communities to help address the problems they faced had an important impact on my professional development, and it is a concept I have consistently practiced as an elected official.

Professor Perry was a prolific writer who addressed topics such as economic development, race, politics, urban violence, and public infrastructure in American cities.

Professor Perry will be sorely missed. My wife and I are thinking about his wife, Judy, his children, and his grandchildren during this difficult time.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRED LEE ADAMS

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of a great friend and community activist, Fred Lee Adams, who passed away on November 24.

Fred was born in segregated Mississippi in 1934 and later moved to Chicago. Having experienced the worst of Jim Crow growing up, Fred became an organizer looking to improve the conditions of his community in Chicago.

He became part of the Corkery Elementary School's Men's Club, a group of mentors who organized sports teams in the school in my neighborhood of Little Village in North Lawndale.

In 1982, Fred joined my friend and community leader Rudy Lozano and me as a member of the 22nd Ward Independent Political Organization, and he remained one of its core members. The following year, together, we worked to elect the first Black mayor of Chicago, Harold Washington.

Fred continued working to help elect Presidents, mayors, Governors, State senators, aldermen, and Congressmen until his death.

I believe some of the strongest brotherhoods are forged in the heat of fighting for our communities and in the struggle for social justice.

Fred L. Adams was my brother, and he will live in my memory forever.

HONORING PACE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, today, I celebrate the 40th anniversary of Pace, the public transportation agency that provides bus and paratransit services in the Chicago metro area. For many in the suburbs, it is the only mode of transportation.

For four decades, Pace has been a vital part of our public transportation network in the region, offering safe and efficient services that connect communities, reduce traffic, and promote environmental sustainability.

As ridership surges to its highest levels since the pandemic, reaching more than 2 million riders in October, Pace is expanding service hours and frequency in Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties.

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

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



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As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and co-founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus, I believe that riders have the right to affordable and environmentally responsible transit options like Pace to get to their jobs, schools, and homes.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Pace's future innovations, improvements, and expansion of services, and I congratulate them on their 40th anniversary.

RECOGNIZING MEMBERS LEAVING HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a few of my distinguished colleagues on the House Committee on Agriculture. These colleagues have been invaluable teammates in our fight for America's farmers and ranchers, but they are also colleagues who will be moving on to other adventures next year.

First, the gentleman from Missouri, MARK ALFORD, representing the Fourth District, is a former news anchor and now the host of "MARK ALFORD's America" radio show. Congressman ALFORD is a megaphone for Missouri's number one industry, agriculture.

I was fortunate enough to visit the Missouri State Fair with Mr. ALFORD last year, and I know that he will continue to be a fighter for America's farmers and ranchers.

Next is Congresswoman LORI CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR from Oregon's First District. Congresswoman CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR graciously hosted the Agriculture Committee in her district for one of our farm bill listening sessions, which provided us with critical producer input crucial to the drafting of the committee's farm bill.

Tapped by President Trump to serve as the next Secretary of Labor, I know she will do great things, and I wish Congresswoman CHAVEZ-DEREMÉR the very best.

Congressman JOHN DUARTE brought his firsthand experience as a California farmer to our committee in a pivotal year for our Nation's farmers and ranchers. In what some have called a perfect poster child for the regulatory issues we need fixed, Mr. DUARTE came in the crosshairs of the Obama administration's regulatory state due to the overreaching "waters of the United States" definition.

In a way only possible in America, Mr. DUARTE ultimately earned a spot in Congress and a seat on the Agriculture Committee, where he was able to vote to rescind the Biden administration's flawed WOTUS rule. We will miss having him on our committee, and I wish him the best.

Next, Congressman MAX MILLER has been a real fighter for Ohio's agricultural industry. During his time on the committee, we traveled to listening

sessions together, and I joined his agricultural advisory board calls. He has been a constant champion for our producers. He even became a father.

As he leaves the Agriculture Committee, I know Mr. MILLER will continue to advocate for the Buckeye State's farmers through his work on the Ways and Means Committee.

From upstate New York's 19th District, Congressman MARC MOLINARO immediately brought a unique perspective to the Agriculture Committee. Too often, the Halls of Congress seem stuck in the ways of the past, but Mr. MOLINARO taught us to think differently. He was a fierce advocate for the farmers and producers from New York, and we will miss having him behind the dais.

I can't forget my friends on the other side of the aisle, either. The Agriculture Committee has a rich history of bipartisanship that started long before my chairmanship and will hopefully continue long into the future.

Congresswoman CARAVEO from Colorado's Eighth District, Congresswoman SLOTKIN from Michigan's Seventh District, and Congresswoman SPANBERGER from Virginia's Seventh District are bidding farewell to the Agriculture Committee. Each represented their diverse communities with distinction on our committee, and I want to wish each of them the very best.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my friend and brother in Christ, the current ranking member, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT), who is not retiring but rather stepping down as ranking member.

Since 2021, Congressman SCOTT has led the Democrats on the Agriculture Committee with distinction.

Agriculture really is not and never should be a partisan issue. In fact, it is one of the few that still unites Members from very different political backgrounds.

I am proud of the fact we have been able to find common ground on so many issues over the years. I look forward to continuing to work across the aisle with Mr. SCOTT, and I thank him for his service to the Agriculture Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of our colleagues for their contributions to American agriculture and wish them good luck in their next chapters.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE EARL BLUMENAUER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, for many people across the country, their first introduction to Portland, Oregon, was the sketch comedy show "Portlandia." Like any parody, it exaggerates reality. Contrary to popular belief, most Portlanders don't spend their time asking about a chicken's backstory at a farm-to-table restaurant and sorting their recycling into 50 bins.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you firsthand that the City of Roses is a place where people care about the environment, where their food comes from, sustainable transportation, and inclusive communities. There is no better advocate and no truer representative of Portland than my good friend, colleague, and mentor, Congressman EARL BLUMENAUER.

EARL has been in public service for more than 50 years, 28 years here in Congress and 25 years in State and local government. He has devoted his career to making Oregon and the country more livable so individuals and families can be safe, healthy, and economically secure. As he has said, it is in his DNA to care about the community and to bring people together to accomplish a goal.

EARL came to Congress after a special election in April 1996 when RON WYDEN moved to the Senate in one of five special elections that year. On the Hill, people know EARL by his bow ties, bike pins, and annual comedy events, but to those of us who know him well, he is so much more.

EARL has a wide breadth of knowledge and extensive expertise gathered through his years in State and local government and now in Congress. When I went on a tour of the Library of Congress several years ago, I noticed how quiet and empty it was. When I asked if any Members of Congress actually use the Library, my tour guide asked: Do you know EARL BLUMENAUER?

That is EARL. As former Congressman Peter DeFazio remarked, EARL goes to people with facts, and he goes back to them with facts, and he tries to wear them down.

EARL can be very convincing. He is a long-term thinker, a skill that is sometimes in short supply in the policymaking arena, and a quintessential policy wonk.

EARL's vision and tireless work have made real, game-changing progress for his hometown of Portland and for our State, for the region, for the Nation, and, in fact, around the world. He has been a key part of promoting curbside recycling; investing in bike and pedestrian infrastructure; advocating for animal welfare, transit, and water infrastructure; supporting Afghan interpreters; changing the regulatory structure of cannabis; reimagining food policy; and more.

EARL always seeks to share what he knows. As a Portland city commissioner, EARL wanted to provide a way for Portland residents to engage constructively with the transportation system, so he created an evening class to give people the opportunity to learn about the system and suggest changes, a program that continues to this day at Portland State University.

When new Members come to Congress, EARL welcomes them with a gift, a very thorough, multipage letter sharing some of his lessons and some of the knowledge that he has absorbed throughout his service. I came back to

that letter, and to EARL, for guidance as I found my way. Even Snoop Dogg asked EARL for advice on how he could help with cannabis legislation.

Yes, EARL has friends everywhere, and I know many of us in Congress will miss him tremendously when he retires at the end of the 118th Congress, but for those of us who live, work, and visit Portland, EARL is not going anywhere. In his next role in Portland State's metropolitan studies program, he will continue to make things better for Oregonians with his typical thoughtful, methodical, and data-informed approach.

□ 1015

As the incoming dean of the Oregon delegation, I acknowledge that I have big shoes to fill, but EARL has charted a good and worthy path, and I know he will be around for advice when we need his wisdom, his sense of humor, and his sincerity about creating a better future.

We wish EARL BLUMENAUER well, and I know he will appreciate his additional time with his wife, Margaret, and his children and grandchildren.

Congress will not be the same without Congressman EARL BLUMENAUER.

FAREWELL FOR NOW

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

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, imagine winning a war for a country that didn't yet exist and had no government. That was our beginning.

What our Founders did have was freedom-loving people who believed that our rights come from God. There were 13 independent Colonies that united for a common purpose to form the United States of America. Eventually, they formed three branches of government: the executive, judicial, and legislative. Here we are in this beautiful Chamber right now.

Growing up, I watched "Superman," and each show began with the motto: Fighting for "truth, justice, and the American way." I bought in, and I truly believe that most of America does, as well.

At a young age, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor. I didn't imagine that that would lead to military and legislative careers as well. That is my version of the American Dream, I suppose.

I have loved every chapter, not knowing that they all would overlap, and, on occasion, God would put me right where I could serve best. Sometimes he would perform miracles: Long live Majority Leader STEVE SCALISE, an American hero.

When one chapter ends, another chapter begins. With the priorities of God, family, and country in mind, I will return home to further elevate my roles as husband, father, coach, and provider, while God, family, and country are all still priorities.

I cherish all the great Americans who I have served with along the way.

Thanks for keeping me company. I have been blessed.

My wife, Monica; and my children, Brad and Sophia, are my blessings, as well.

Farewell for now. God bless all of you, and God bless the United States of America.

END PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING ONCE AND FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. NICKEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NICKEL. Mr. Speaker, as my term in Congress ends, I express my heartfelt gratitude to those who made it possible: the people of North Carolina. Representing North Carolina's 13th District has been the honor of a lifetime.

I am proud of the impact our office has had over the past 2 years. We have helped more than 1,600 constituents resolve issues with Federal agencies, returning nearly \$2.8 million to my constituents in the process. We have hosted and attended nearly 300 public events, including 16 townhalls, to connect with our neighbors and make their voices heard in Washington.

We responded to over 70,000 pieces of correspondence, ensuring that every constituent knew that their voice mattered, and we brought back millions through the Federal budget to North Carolina's 13th District.

Legislatively, we have worked to make life better for the people we served. I introduced 13 bills and cosponsored over 450 pieces of legislation, fighting for affordable healthcare, safer schools, better infrastructure, and an economy that works for everyone. I took to this floor 70 times to advocate for my district's priorities and to share their stories with the American people.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a normal farewell speech. I am not giving this speech by choice. As someone who first came to Congress 30 years ago as an intern for Senator Dianne Feinstein, I can guarantee one thing: Nobody has truly loved serving in Congress more than me.

That is, in part, because we knew there was a good chance that my district would be erased by partisan gerrymandering and my time here would be short. I had a lot of work to do in a short amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here giving a farewell speech because I did a bad job or because my constituents voted for another candidate. I am here because of partisan gerrymandering by far-right extremists in the North Carolina General Assembly.

The fair, Republican-leaning district that sent me to Congress was erased last year with the stroke of a pen. The people of North Carolina and across the country deserve better. They deserve fair maps, a fair system, and a democracy that they can trust. People should choose their politicians, not the other way around.

I will continue to fight with every ounce of my energy for fair maps and an end to partisan gerrymandering.

Mr. Speaker, as we leave this week, we will be the least-productive Congress in our Nation's history going back to 1860, and that is because of extreme partisan gerrymandering. It provides no incentive to work together.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end partisan gerrymandering once and for all. I thank the people of North Carolina's 13th District for trusting me to be your voice in Congress. Serving has been the greatest honor of my life. I am not giving up or going out quietly, and I will always remain committed to working for a brighter future for North Carolina.

To my family, my wife, Caroline; and my kids, Prescott and Adeline, your love and support mean everything to me. Public service is never a solo effort. It is a family commitment. It is a team effort. I love you all so much, and I am so grateful for you. I am very excited to return back to Cary for Christmas.

I also thank my amazing staff. Their hard work and dedication ensured that we delivered for the people we served. I acknowledge their contributions by submitting their names to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Thank you so much to the best team in the business.

To my Democratic colleagues from North Carolina, it has been a true honor to serve with ALMA ADAMS, DEBORAH ROSS, and KATHY MANNING. While not with us in this Congress, David Price and G.K. Butterfield are absolutely part of the team for North Carolina in the House. I especially thank VALERIE FOUSHEE, DON DAVIS, and JEFF JACKSON for their partnership, friendship, and outstanding leadership for North Carolina.

Going back to our time serving together in the North Carolina Senate, all four of us served in the senate together and came here in this freshman class. It has been a true honor to serve with all of them.

I also mention the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) on the Republican side. He led the Financial Services Committee. We worked hard together in a bipartisan way on FIT 21, the first-ever crypto bill to be voted on in the U.S. Congress.

I am proud of the effort to bring 71 Democrats together. That is how legislation is supposed to work: working together in a bipartisan way. That, for me, was a bright spot for this Congress.

I thank my colleagues, especially my fellow freshmen, for their friendship and collaboration. Working alongside them has been a true honor.

We ended this term with an amazing dinner together last night. Their passion and determination remind me of why we do this work, and I am grateful for the lifelong friendships we have built.

I know I am leaving the future of the U.S. Congress in very good hands. Public service is about making a difference. It is about putting others first

and leaving things better than you found them. As I leave this Chamber, I do so with a full heart and hope for the future.

There is a lot of work that I still want to do, and I plan to continue in public service. North Carolina's working families deserve elected leaders who will serve their best interests, not the interests of special interests or the interests of Donald Trump. I am not giving up in that fight.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless the United States of America.

STAFF NAMES TO BE ADDED TO
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Abigail Atkins, Shawntay Anthony, Miles Beasley, Owen Berman Woodard, Scotty Bryan, Amanda Campos, Jennifer Cárdenas, Wade Chapman, Rachel Curtis, Brady Cusick, Harry Davis Jr., Jennings Dean, Robert Erwin, Kate Ferland, Elizabeth George, Jacob Glasser, Henry Goodwin, Caroline Kenney, Cameron Kidder.

Rachel Kline, Matt Landini, Richard Lin, Abner Martinez-Padilla, Abby May, Priya Moran, Margaret Murphy, Nalani Noonan, Quinn O'Connor, Alyssa Olbrys, Jennifer Popa, Kevin Porter, Laurin Potter, Freedom Fox Richardson, Siyona Shah, John Sloop, Maddie Smith-Russell, Alicia Speedy, Fallon Strickland, Nia White, George Willets, Mariam Wolk.

CELEBRATING DON POSTLES'
RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a true Buffalo legend, Don Postles.

For nearly five decades, Don has been a trusted voice and a constant presence in the lives of western New Yorkers, guiding us through the news that shapes our community.

Don Postles' journey began in 1976. Since then, he has been a cornerstone of journalism in western New York. From his early days at Channel 7, to his time at Channel 2 and his remarkable 31 years at WIVB Channel 4, Don has been there for us through every significant moment. He has brought clarity to chaos, steadiness in uncertainty, and heart to every story he has told.

Don embodies the very best of journalism: honesty, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to the truth. At a time where trusted media is more important than ever, and more elusive, Don has been a beacon of credibility. Whether reporting on the tragedy surrounding the crash of Flight 3407 or sharing the joy of a Buffalo Bills victory, Don Postles delivered the news with professionalism, respect, and care for the community that he loves and serves.

Don Postles' legacy goes beyond the anchor desk. He has always been more than a journalist. He is a devoted member of this community. His presence at charity events, his support for local causes, and his role as an advocate for

western New Yorkers have made him an integral part of our region.

Mr. Speaker, western New York will not be the same without Don Postles on our screens each and every evening. His departure from Channel 4 marks the end of an era, but his impact will endure. He has set the gold standard for journalism and community service, leaving behind a legacy that will inspire generations to come.

On behalf of the people of western New York, I thank Don for his dedication to our community, his commitment to the truth, and the grace with which he has handled his role as our trusted voice.

As Don enters retirement, I hope he finds time to enjoy everything that he loves about Buffalo: spending time with his beautiful wife, Anne, and his gorgeous family; boating on Lake Erie; and savoring the pride of the community that he has helped to shape over the last five decades.

I congratulate Don. He has earned this next chapter and has left behind a legacy of excellence that will not be forgotten. We wish him and his family nothing but happiness and success in his years to come.

RECOGNIZING GRAND RAPIDS
MAYOR ROSALYNN BLISS ON
HER RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SCHOLTEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHOLTEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the extraordinary career of Mayor Rosalynn Bliss of Grand Rapids, Michigan, my mayor and my friend.

Born in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, Mayor Bliss moved to Grand Rapids after graduating from the University of South Alabama. She then attended Michigan State University—go green—where she earned a master's in social work and then set forth on a career characterized by compassion and service.

In 2005, Mayor Bliss was first elected to the Grand Rapids City Commission, where she displayed her passion for improving Grand Rapids' beautiful parks and public spaces.

She had a vision for Grand Rapids and the experience and willingness to act. After laying out her ambitious plans for the city, then-City Commissioner Bliss was elected by her friends and neighbors to become the first woman mayor of Grand Rapids, which is Michigan's second largest city, and the youngest mayor in over 130 years.

Mayor Bliss' tenure in Grand Rapids was defined by bold, compassionate leadership. She strengthened community-police relations through community-centric law enforcement initiatives, mental health response teams, and a first-of-its-kind crisis stabilization unit.

Amidst a nationwide housing shortage, she expanded affordable housing opportunities and prioritized sustain-

able development through projects like the Grand River Greenway and an ambitious carbon-neutrality goal.

She also shepherded the city through the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing our west Michigan community to bounce back even stronger.

Thanks to Mayor Bliss, our economy is booming with over \$11 billion in private investments, a new soccer stadium, many new sports teams, and 9 million annual visitors. Our limitless growth potential is, in large part, due to her forward-thinking vision and her bold action.

After two incredible terms in our city's highest office, I am confident that Mayor Bliss will leave an impactful legacy that sets a high bar for public service in west Michigan and across America's great cities.

Mr. Speaker, once more, I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Mayor Bliss for her decades of service to the great city of Grand Rapids.

I wish my dear friend the greatest happiness in her retirement.

RECOGNIZING MARK CURTIS ON
HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I recognize one of West Virginia's most impressive reporters and a good friend of mine, Mark Curtis.

For four decades now, Mark has devoted his career to broadcast political journalism. From local government races to Presidential elections, Mark has consistently delivered fair and thorough reporting.

Despite his line of work taking him across the country, Mark chose to stay and finish his career in West Virginia, and his love of our State and its people shine through his reporting.

I am grateful for our friendship, and I have always enjoyed coming on his show to discuss the important issues that are happening in our State and around the country.

□ 1030

I remember as if it was yesterday when I sang happy birthday to him on the House floor in the West Virginia House.

Mr. Speaker, time certainly does fly by. I thank Mark so much for his years of service to our wild and wonderful State. I wish him a happy and well-deserved retirement.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF LISA MURRAY McGOVERN

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the contributions of a dedicated, generous, and kindhearted person, Lisa Murray McGovern.

Lisa volunteers for many causes. As the chair of the Democratic Spouses Forum, Lisa welcomes and helps spouses understand how to navigate the unique dynamics of the life of a Congress Member's spouse.

My wife, Norma, met Lisa 12 years ago and has benefited from Lisa's wisdom and friendship. Lisa works hard behind the scenes and is someone who does not seek credit or praise. She just does things out of the kindness of her heart.

Congressman JIM MCGOVERN is Lisa's husband. JIM has represented Massachusetts' Second Congressional District since 1996. For nearly three decades, many of us have come to count on Lisa's knowledge, experiences, her compassion, and friendship. Her enormous heart extends beyond just helping us, the Members and the spouses, she has made it her life's work to take the fight to cancer.

Her fight is personal as Lisa lost her mother to lung cancer in 1996 and has given every effort to the cause.

Lisa McGovern is the executive director of the Prevent Cancer Foundation's Congressional Families Program. She has spent two decades cultivating relationships with many national political leaders, encouraging them to use their platforms to promote cancer prevention and early detection.

Her tireless work has been very fruitful. Lisa has put together high-profile Capitol Hill events to raise awareness about the foundation's work and has brought out some high-level personalities and popular celebrities to help.

Mr. Speaker, Lisa's work and care have not gone unnoticed.

On behalf of my wife, Norma, I extend my deep gratitude and sincere appreciation for every single thing that she has done for us. From the bottom of my heart, I thank her for sharing the love, mentorship, and friendship to so many of us.

HONORING CHRISTINA WINTERS FOR HER
INCREDIBLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a successful, self-made businesswoman, a philanthropist, a motivator, a luminary, and a great friend, Christina Winters, for her incredible accomplishments.

Christina Winters, a factory worker's daughter, comes from a simple blue-collar household that taught her critical principles and the values that shaped her unique character and life's work.

She grew up in the household with very little money where she managed to learn the value of a hard-earned dollar, and applied her knowledge and experiences into a long and successful career helping others manage their finances in order to enjoy a prosperous life.

Today, Christina Winters is the president and CEO of Creating and Managing Wealth, CMW, LLC. Based out of Irving, Texas, CMW is a business dedicated to looking out for the very best interests of people. This business is the

very reflection of Christina's very essence.

I had the pleasure of working for Christina very early on in my life. As my boss, Christina was always so generous with her time and her knowledge. Christina is the kind of boss that everyone would be blessed to have. Christina has been a lifelong mentor and friend to me.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand Christina's commitment to help and uplift others. She has become a very influential leader in the world of finance and life planning, and has evolved to become a successful leadership builder.

She has successfully navigated and overcome our male-dominated corporate environment. Christina has stepped up into positions of leadership and power. Today, she is sharing her stories and invaluable advice to help empower women and people of color to step up into their leadership roles.

In addition to her professional accomplishments, Christina Winters has had a long track record of volunteering and taking on numerous philanthropic causes. We could spend countless hours going through each and every one of her community service accolades because she has dedicated her life to giving back. For this reason and many more reasons, I honor her today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Christina for being a loving, caring mentor to many of us. She has touched and changed the trajectory of many of our lives, including my own. I encourage her to continue on this great path of sharing and giving of herself for many, many more years to come.

CONCLUDING MY SERVICE IN CONGRESS WITH GRATITUDE AND HUMILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with gratitude and humility as I conclude my service to New York's 19th Congressional District. Representing the people of upstate New York in this historic Chamber has truly been the honor of a lifetime.

This journey has been guided by the values, aspirations, and resilience of the families, farmers, and small businesses that are the backbone of our district, from the Massachusetts-New York border, across the Hudson River Valley, through the Catskill Mountains, to central New York, and into the Southern Tier.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the people of this amazing upstate New York District for their trust, their support, and their unwavering belief in me. Representing them was never just a job; it was a deeply personal mission.

Their faith in me inspired every decision we made, every vote cast, every moment spent advocating for our shared future.

Together, we focused on what truly matters: delivering results for the people and places that make our district extraordinary, and we met challenges head-on.

Together, we tackled the fentanyl and mental health crisis, securing Federal funding to expand stabilization centers in Broome and Sullivan Counties. These efforts remind us that no one should have to face their struggles alone. We championed the ThinkDIFFERENTLY initiative on the national stage, breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities and creating new opportunities for employment, education, and social services.

We worked to safeguard the Hudson River, preserve farmland, and protected our most precious natural resources for generations to come. Amid inflation and border crises, we sought solutions that would make a tangible difference for everyday Americans. Through tireless bipartisan collaboration, we passed over 40 pieces of legislation, earning recognition as New York's most bipartisan lawmaker.

This work was only possible because of the extraordinary team we assembled, individuals whose dedication and heart I will not soon forget.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my chief of staff, Jeff Bishop; deputy chief of staff, Dan Kranz; district director, Caitlin Daly; legislative director, Connor Torossian; scheduler, Maddie Bruno; legislative assistants, Kaitlyn Mullen and Doug Gordon; legislative correspondent, Nick Urbin; field representatives, Nicole Leonard and Alex Horton; constituent caseworkers, Michelle Speech and Sean Lisk; press assistant, Hannah Benfield; outreach coordinator, Ciano Briga; constituent services representative, Ben Straebl; staff assistant, Noelle Dana; and other members of team Molinaro: Jessica Akshar, Caroline Doxsee, Tyler Gutches, Alex Holderith, Kate McKan, Maddy Minahan, and Rick Yackel for their hard work and selfless dedication. It has been the cornerstone of all of our achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I say to my colleagues and friends who serve and represent the State of New York, Republicans and Democrats alike, their friendship and support has been so gratifying, and it has been a pleasure these last 30 years to work with most of them.

Finally, let me thank my family. My wife, Corinne, is a superhero, filled with strength, love, and patience, and I am grateful to her and my children: Abigail, Jack, Elias, and Theo, each amazing and accepting and wonderful in their own special way. I am thankful to my mother, Dona, who instilled in us a desire to pursue truth, work hard, and serve others.

They are all my foundation, my heart, my greatest source of strength. They stood side by side with me every step of the way, and this journey was ours together. I am endlessly grateful for their love and sacrifice.

As my time in Congress comes to an end, let me be very clear: Public service is not just something I do; it is who I am. From America's youngest mayor to Congressman serving upstate New York, this for me is not a good-bye. It is the start of a new chapter. I will continue to fight for the values we share, advocate for the communities we love, and work tirelessly to make our country better, stronger, and more united.

Perhaps I will be blessed with the opportunity to again serve here in this most fundamentally American deliberative House.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by thanking the people of New York's 19th Congressional District, upstate New York, for the privilege of serving them. May God continue to bless them, upstate New York, and the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today full of gratitude for having had the incredible privilege of representing New Hampshire's Second Congressional District for the past 12 years.

New Hampshire doesn't have a national sports team. I have long said politics is our pastime, and it has been such a joy to advocate for my friends, my family, neighbors, and our State in this arena.

My time in these Halls has been many things: rewarding, inspiring, challenging, and, yes, at times, frustrating. However, more than anything, it has been truly the greatest honor of my life.

When I was first elected, I promised to bring a new approach to Washington, to reach across the aisle, and to build bridges whenever possible. As I look back at the end of my time in Congress, I am immensely proud of that record.

Over the past 12 years, I have seen Congress at its most and least efficient. With the clarity of hindsight, I can say that our government really, truly does work best when Republicans and Democrats come together to solve our Nation's greatest challenges.

I grew up in a Republican household. My father, Malcolm McLane, served as the mayor of Concord and on our State's Executive Council, and my mother, Susan McLane, served for 25 years in the House and Senate in the New Hampshire State Legislature, and

she even ran for the seat that I am now retiring from.

I know that they would be proud of my and many of our colleagues' efforts to restore bipartisanship, to reach across the aisle to pursue pragmatic solutions, particularly during times of deep political division.

There will always be new challenges and new opportunities for Congress to address. The work here is never truly finished, but thanks to the support of my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, we have made meaningful progress on a number of issues that don't always go viral or generate the most clicks online.

I founded the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force with my Republican colleague, Frank Guinta, and continued the work with BRIAN FITZPATRICK and DAVID TRONE, to bring Democrats and Republicans together to tackle the addiction and overdose epidemic that has impacted every community across our country.

Thanks in part to the task force's tireless advocacy in providing resources for communities and making smart policy changes, we are finally beginning to see overdose deaths decline throughout the Nation. I am proud that one of my final votes in this Chamber will be for vital opioid response legislation to increase access to treatment included in this year's government funding package.

I also started the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence, which has helped shed light on the pervasive culture of sexual violence that has flourished for too long in our schools, our universities, our military, and even here in Congress.

It was in this very Chamber that I first shared my own story of sexual assault publicly and fought to reform how Congress responds to sexual misconduct among Members and toward staff.

Through respectful conversation and honest dialogue, my Bipartisan Ski and Snowboard Caucus helped bridge the divide between our parties on the need to respond to the environmental and economic threats posed by climate change.

As chair of the New Democrat Coalition, my colleagues and I have repeatedly prioritized country and duty over party and politics, providing the votes to prevent a devastating default on our debt and a costly government shutdown not once, not twice, but three times.

Thanks to our focus and commitment to pragmatic solutions to improve the lives of hardworking families in our country, our New Democrat Coalition will be the largest it has ever been in the 119th Congress and will make it more than half of the Democratic Caucus.

□ 1045

In each of these endeavors, we made progress—incremental at times, but

progress nonetheless. We didn't always agree on how to tackle the challenges, but we listened to each other, debated the ideas on the merits, and focused on the mission of delivering for our constituents.

Sadly, my time in these Halls in recent years has been defined more and more by extreme partisanship. As lawmakers, we must reject the cynicism and the notion that Congress and our institutions are destined for dysfunction and disorder. We must not lose sight of our purpose and why we are here—to fight for our communities, to lead by example, and to tackle the biggest challenges facing our country, not create them.

Now, at the end of my tenure, a little older and hopefully a little wiser, I urge my colleagues and the incoming Members of the 119th Congress to lead with courage in the face of division and recommit to building bridges, not tearing them down.

I thank my husband, Brad, and my sons, Zach and Travis.

I remind my colleagues: Be bold, be brave, but most importantly, be kind.

MY BROTHER, MY INSPIRATION

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor my brother, Mike Pence. Michael has been my Congressman, my Governor, and our Nation's Vice President. While serving my constituents, he has been my inspiration.

Everyone has their own preconceived notions of who my brother is. The real Mike Pence, the man I have known his whole life as his oldest brother, is one of the best, most honorable people I know, and he has always done the right thing.

Michael is devoted, kind, and generous, and he loves his family very much. He is humble and gentle, but he is the bravest and boldest of my siblings. His mettle is iron tested. His character is unimpeachable. These are the qualities that made him the leader that he is.

It has been my honor to follow in his footsteps and represent the Hoosiers of the Sixth District of Indiana.

As I stand here so proud of the man Michael is today, it is a gift to be his brother. He has been a gift to our country, and he has been a gift to our Constitution.

May God bless Michael R. Pence and continue to prosper him and not harm him, give him hope and a future.

DELIVERING ON PROMISES FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say it has been my greatest honor serving Maryland's Sixth District.

Over the past 6 years, I have met and listened to thousands of Marylanders and worked across the aisle to pass legislation that has improved and will continue to improve the lives of all Americans.

I didn't do it alone. I am forever grateful to my wife, June, and my four children, Michelle, Julia, Natalie, and Rob. During my time here, I have become a grandfather to two grandchildren, with a third on the way. Nothing reminds me more of how important our future is as when you see it through the eyes of children and grandchildren.

Many of you know that I chose to run for Congress because I lost my 24-year-old nephew to a fentanyl overdose in 2016. In 2021, I cofounded the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force with ANNIE KUSTER to bring Democrats and Republicans together to fight the mental health and opioid epidemic, and we did.

Together, we passed dozens of bipartisan bills, delivered billions of dollars to communities to fight this crisis on the front lines, and united hundreds of our colleagues annually during National Recovery Month for Congress Goes Purple.

This past year, our State and country saw the first decline in overdose deaths. I would like to think that the work of our task force had a small part in that.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have stood by my mission to lead with compassion, civility, and competence and put people over politics. I was proud to deliver \$53 million in community project funding, Federal funding going directly to where it is needed most in my district. By working as a team, we were able to make life-changing impacts in our communities.

In the last 6 years, I also led 30 bills that were signed into law, bills on issues that we can't afford to ignore—mental health, addiction, and criminal justice reform.

Suffice it to say, our work is not done. I leave Congress knowing that countless lives have been and will be changed as a result of what we have accomplished. I have served during a time in which Congress, like our Nation, has grown increasingly divided, and many Americans fear for their future.

We must all remember that what unites us is greater than what divides us. Despite our differences, I developed productive, meaningful relationships with many of my colleagues across the aisle. The sheer number of chili cheese dogs I have eaten in the Republican Cloakroom to get bipartisan support is one I will take to my grave.

Through it all, I remain certain that the path forward for progress lies in common ground. I thank my Republican friends for their partnership, for putting country over party to work together. I urge all of my colleagues to look to their counterparts on the other side of the Chamber and commit to

fighting together, not against each other, to empower America to reach its full potential. If that is not why we are here, we don't deserve to be.

I am thankful for the privilege of representing my constituents, and I wish for all to have a safe holiday season.

ADVOCATING FOR WESTERN AND RURAL CAUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FONG). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on my 4 years serving as chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus. It has been a tremendous 4 years, filled with memories and accomplishments that certainly will last a lifetime.

The caucus' work on behalf of the issues impacting Western and rural America is invaluable, and it has been a great honor to be a part of this effort. From supporting the multiple use mandate for public lands to upholding the rights of private landowners, supporting American farmers and ranchers, and pushing for American energy and mineral dominance, the caucus advocates for a stronger and more prosperous West and America.

While I could reminisce for hours about the caucus, I want to highlight some of my favorite memories and achievements over the past 4 years.

For the first time in its history, the caucus reached 100, actually 110, members. What once started out as a group small enough to literally meet in a closet is now the second largest caucus on Capitol Hill.

Last year, we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of the caucus, a noteworthy milestone. We have participated in numerous field tours hosted by our members over the years to connect our policymakers and staff with Westerners to learn firsthand about the issues impacting the region, bringing the voices of the people back to Washington, D.C.

We have visited miners from northern Minnesota, cattle ranchers in Fort Worth, park officials in Yosemite and Yellowstone, and those who use and benefit from the Columbia River system, all to get a better understanding of policy issues in these communities.

We have supported many pieces of legislation to unleash the full potential of domestic energy, support American farmers and ranchers, and end the assault on multiple use mandates for public lands.

I thank my colleagues who have joined and worked hard for the caucus over the past 4 years. It has been my pleasure to serve as your chairman.

I also thank the staff, who have made hard jobs easier and have accomplished much. I also want them to know that our successes on behalf of rural and Western America would not have been possible without their dedication.

Lastly, I congratulate my good friend, DOUG LAMALFA of California, on

his election as chairman for the next Congress. I am excited for the future of the caucus and know it is in good hands.

While I no longer will be serving as chairman, I will continue to be a strong advocate for Western and rural America.

THANKING AMANDA BIHL

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to extend one more thank-you to my chief of staff, Amanda Bihl, for her leadership and service to my office and the people of Washington's Fourth District.

Rising through the ranks over the years, Amanda has been a strong leader who has delivered on our priorities and been an incredible mentor to my staff. I am fortunate to have had her by my side and will certainly miss her dearly.

Joan and I wish Amanda the best as she continues her journey with her husband, Peter, and her growing family, and we remind her that she will always be a member of Team Newhouse.

FOCUSING ON THE GOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I dedicate these remarks to my wonderful community in Pennsylvania-Seven and to my mother and father, who didn't live long enough to see me elected.

I grew up in a true bipartisan household, with a father who was an old-school Republican Air Force officer and a mother who was a Quaker pacifist liberal. It was an interesting childhood, as you can imagine.

You hear a lot of bad about Congress, but I am going to choose to focus on the good, what we can actually get done for the people.

My district office should, first and foremost, be thanked. My district office back home is often the closest contact that any constituent has with the Federal Government. They hear from our local voters, our local constituents, sometimes with frustration, sometimes with happiness when there is a good result, and sometimes with anger. They treat every single person in Pennsylvania-Seven as though they are family. I have been told that multiple times.

Legislatively, here in Washington, I have to speak of some of my proudest moments. I was sent to Congress with a mandate to work on reducing prescription drug prices. I heard from so many people on the campaign trail about the struggles that they had, and I am so proud to have been part of a Congress that passed the IRA, which was the first time that we have ever managed to get prescription drug prices down.

That effort continues and every year will increase. I beseech my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to please keep that intact.

I am proud of having raised awareness of mental health issues and suicide prevention. I am so proud of the work done to pass the CHIPS Act,

which has benefited my industrial and manufacturing district so very much.

I am most proud, I think, of having put the greater Lehigh Valley on the radar of folks here in D.C. because Pennsylvania is not just Pittsburgh or Philadelphia, although some would say it comes down to the Eagles and the Steelers. We in the greater Lehigh Valley are the third largest region in Pennsylvania and the fastest growing region in Pennsylvania. I am proud to say that my team and I did just that: We put Pennsylvania-Seven on the radar of people here in D.C.

I am proud to have had huge returns for the greater Lehigh Valley during the past 6 years. The bipartisan infrastructure law alone brought \$395 million to my community. Our local airport has constructed a whole new TSA terminal. It was the first completed project under the bipartisan infrastructure law.

I was able to bring \$50 million over the past 6 years in community project funding, ranging from funding for food pantries and grocery deserts, Head Start, wastewater treatment plants, bridges long in disrepair, and all kinds of things. There have also been countless thousands of dollars returned to the people of Pennsylvania-Seven through the work of my district office team.

There is a lot to be worked on in the future, and I hope that Congress will work on the issue of childcare. It is such an important issue. We must do something about childcare, and I hope that universal pre-K will be part of our future.

Most of all, we need to work on campaign finance reform—please. This past election, in my district alone, the race cost a total of \$38 million for one congressional race. That is obscene. It wasn't even the most expensive in the country. It was the 10th most expensive in the country. Imagine that, and imagine all the good that could be done with that.

□ 1100

All of this work doesn't happen because of one elected official. It is the team that you have behind you. My wonderful, caring, intelligent team that never forgot that our mission was to serve the wonderful people of Pennsylvania-Seven, I thank them.

To the voters of Pennsylvania-Seven, I thank them for the greatest privilege and honor of my life in representing you.

Finally, my amazing kids, Clay and Adrienne. They are my rocks, the center of my universe. I am so glad they were here by my side for this incredible journey, and I could not have done it without them. I love them. Then there's my sidekick, Zoey, the Congress dog.

Mr. Speaker, I will miss this place.

HONORING MAYOR MARVIN JOHNSON

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

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor one of the longest-serving mayors in the Nation, Marvin Johnson, as he retires after 45 years of leading the city of Independence in Minnesota.

Marvin was actually my inspiration to run for office. When my wife, Jacquie, and I were starting out, our city public works department marked 400-year-old trees on our property, two oaks and two maples, and they were to come out the next day for a new road.

I called Marvin. He showed up at my house at 10 o'clock at night. He looked at the trees, he looked at the road, and he took out his "brick phone" that some of us remember from 30 years ago, and he called the public works director. He said, Danny, move the road 50 feet, we are not going to take these trees.

Since that time, I have never seen a government official as effective as Marvin. His council meetings were models of efficiency and respect, even as I rocked my newborn children in their car seats under the table during late-night evening sessions.

He is a true public servant and has been an outstanding mentor and friend over the years. As his career in public service comes to an end and he looks ahead to his 90th birthday this spring, we wish him all the best in whatever comes next. I thank him for his support over the years and his leadership on behalf of the city of Independence.

REMEMBERING MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE DICK BORRELL

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Minnesota State Representative Dick Borrell who passed away suddenly earlier this year.

Dick was not just a loving family man, but also a successful businessman and a true patriot. Raised in Waverly, Minnesota, he went on to serve our Nation in the Marine Corps and earned his degree from Minnesota State, Mankato.

Dick had a Midas touch when it came to business. Everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. He ran his business for over 20 years and was often found working overtime or on weekends shoulder-to-shoulder on the production lines with his employees. In fact, Dick was at his warehouse working just 3 days before he passed away.

When not at work, Dick loved flying and sharing countless adventures with his wife, Patty, usually from their backyard runway, which he used for his plane. He even spent time flying around the State with me during my campaign for Governor, which I will never forget.

Dick was passionate about politics and preceded me in the Minnesota House of Representatives. He was an active member of the Wright County Republicans and was never shy about

sharing his thoughts about what is coming out of Washington.

He was a leader in our community. Dick Borrell touched the lives of thousands in Minnesota. To his wife, Patty, and the rest of the Borrell family, we offer our most sincere condolences, and we will always remember our friend, Dick, and a life well-lived.

RECOGNIZING CONGRESSMAN DEAN PHILLIPS

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge my Minnesota congressional colleague, Congressman DEAN PHILLIPS, as he concludes his service in the House of Representatives.

Outside of Congress, DEAN has proven to be a shrewd businessman, owning and starting several successful companies, and helping run his family's business.

During his tenure here in Washington, DEAN worked across the aisle with the same tenacity to help Minnesotans. From ensuring small businesses received the financial flexibility they needed during COVID to working with all of us in the Minnesota delegation to strengthen the Department of Veterans Affairs for our veterans, we found ways to put our political differences aside and get results for our constituents.

As we saw over the last year, DEAN is never afraid to pursue common ground for the common good and fight to restore Americans' faith in our institutions, regardless of the political ramifications.

I thank DEAN for his service. We wish him all the best in his next chapter.

HONORING RALPH RONALD GRIFFIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Brigadier General Ralph Ronald Griffin, known as Ronnie back home.

Ronnie's life of dedication, military service, and leadership has left a mark on both our country and eastern North Carolina.

He began his military career by enlisting in the United States Marine Corps. Ronnie later received his commission from the North Carolina Military Academy and rose up the ranks, eventually pinning on the rank of brigadier general. He spent over 38 years in a military uniform.

His career took him to Vietnam, not once, but twice. Ronnie was inducted into the North Carolina Military Academy Hall of Fame, and he was awarded our State's high honor of The Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Governor Hunt and Governor Easley for his exceptional contributions to our State.

Beyond his military service, Ronnie loved his family. He stood at his late wife, Annalee's, side. I will never forget our conversation. He shared with me how her passing was difficult for him.

Ronnie loved his children, and he especially loved his grandchildren.

Serving in the military, he developed lifelong friends. Ronnie had many friends that served with him, and one in particular was Mike, who was more like a brother. They shared so many stories and laughed together, even their children call each other uncle. It was Uncle Mike and General Uncle Ronnie.

Mr. Speaker, Ronnie was a humble person, and he came from humble beginnings. He was driven by faith and his deep love for our country. We owe a great deal of gratitude and respect to Brigadier General Ronnie Griffin and his family.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to honor a true American hero and one that I just so happen to call my friend, Ronnie. God speed.

ALWAYS ON WATCH

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, my community lost three brave Palm Beach County Sheriff's Deputies in a very tragic crash: Deputy Ignacio "Dan" Diaz, Deputy Ralph "Butch" Waller, and Corporal Luis Paez.

I did know these men. I can't pretend that I knew them well, but we shared a handshake at various Veterans Days parades throughout the years, nods as we were in the same motorcade routes, and camaraderie as we fired up our Harleys and hit the road on motorcycle runs during times like the holidays, just like now.

These men, they were always present. They were always on watch because it was their calling to protect every person in our community from danger, whether they knew them well or not. They knew the hazards of their chosen profession. All day, every day, they patrolled inches away from death.

Yet, these men, they never hesitated. They never stepped aside and asked somebody else to face the danger. Each day, they woke up, they put on their badge, their body armor, they holstered their pistols, they left their families, and they went to work.

Courage for them was as natural as breathing. Plain and simple, they were warriors, strong, selfless, committed to protecting others. We thank God for these men. We thank God for their families who shared these patriots with us each and every day, and we thank God for their dedication to duty, which was a beacon of selflessness.

I ask that my colleagues rise and join me in a moment of silence to honor these brave men for their sacrifice. I would ask that the gallery rise as well since they are here listening and let us honor these deputies in a moment of silence. I ask that my colleagues rise to honor these deputies in a moment of silence.

IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL WORKERS

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

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of more than 2.3 million dedicated civil servants that make up our Federal workforce, including nearly 30,000 Federal employees who work in my own congressional district.

As a former union president of Iron Workers Local 7, I am also proud to stand in solidarity with the American Federation of Government Employees, the National Treasury Employees Union, our postal employee unions, and over 30 other labor organizations that tirelessly advocate for fair wages, safe working conditions, and quality healthcare and pensions for our Federal workers.

With less than 40 days until the Presidential Inauguration, the new Trump administration has already announced its intent to target and scapegoat Federal employees, all in the name of cost reduction while at the same time extending trillions of dollars in tax cuts for the richest Americans.

This reflects a blatant disregard for the sacrifices made by Federal workers at the VA and elsewhere and the critical services that they deliver to the American people.

According to President-elect Trump, America's Federal workforce is full of: deep-state rogue bureaucrats, crooked and dishonest people who are destroying this country and who are going to be held accountable.

To this end, he is seeking to revive schedule F, a punitive employment classification that will strip career Federal employees of their due process rights and other statutory civil service protections. This new category would also pave the way for the administration to fire these nonpartisan workers at will and replace them with political loyalists.

President-elect Trump has also recently announced the creation of a so-called Department on Government Efficiency, or DOGE, Commission, an unofficial advisory panel that would purportedly serve to dismantle the government bureaucracy.

The co-chairs of this alleged department are two billionaires, Elon Musk, and Vivek Ramaswamy, who have vowed to conduct mass layoffs and employee relocations in order to reduce the size of Federal Government. As they tell it, most Federal employees don't even show up to work anyway.

These unwarranted attacks against our Federal workforce only serve to perpetuate false narratives that greatly undermine the value of public service and undermine the morale and ability of Federal employees to deliver essential services to the American people.

As former chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations

and the Federal Workforce, I can attest that these Federal workers are not rogue bureaucrats or deep-state actors. Rather, many, many of them are patriotic military veterans.

In fact, our Federal workforce consists of nearly 650,000 U.S. armed service veterans, or more than 30 percent of all Federal employees. In fact, the vast majority of Federal employees work in service to care for 18 million veterans and their families who are served and cared for by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which employees nearly 490,000 doctors, nurses, medical staff, social workers, and other healthcare professionals, caring for our Nation's veterans.

□ 1115

Our Federal workforce also consistently shows up to work, even during national emergencies, as reported by the Partnership for Public Service. Frontline Federal employees are deployed in the field nationwide as Border Patrol agents, food inspectors, postal workers, TSA officers, forest firefighters, FEMA disaster response personnel, clinical biologists, and other jobs that support public safety in times of crisis.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, only 15 percent of Federal workers actually live in the D.C. area with 85 percent of Federal workers stationed in communities across our Nation.

In stark contrast to President-elect Trump and his billionaire DOGE co-chairs, Federal employees are not looking to get rich. The Federal Salary Council reports that in 2024, Federal workers earned nearly 25 percent less on average than their private sector counterparts. Recent strikes by the autoworkers, UPS Teamsters, Kaiser healthcare personnel, and other private sector workers have resulted in historic and well-deserved wage increases, in some cases more than 20 percent.

Meanwhile, to ensure the continuity of government services, Federal workers are expressly prohibited by statute from participating in a strike. They must stay on the job. Asserting the right to strike and even belonging to a union that asserts the right to strike against the Federal Government is a violation and a felony and punishable by imprisonment. In the interest of public safety, frontline Federal employees also stay on the job without pay for the duration of every government shutdown.

Nevertheless, every Federal worker proudly takes an oath of office that reflects their commitment to our Nation, to public service, and dedication to carrying out their agency mission on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, Elon Musk has even resorted to publicly naming Federal employees who he would like to fire on social media. Our Federal workforce deserves better. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in strong support of America's

Federal workers in the face of escalating threats on their service.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. STEEL) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. STEEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank my constituents, colleagues, and friends for the wonderful 4 years I have spent serving in the people's House. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve Orange and Los Angeles Counties in Congress.

From helping my constituents to passing life-changing legislation, the work we have done has truly mattered.

Only in America can a first-generation immigrant who speaks English as a third language rise to become a Member of this body.

When my parents fled communist North Korea for freedom in South Korea, they never would have imagined that their daughter would be standing here today.

On behalf of my beautiful, diverse district, my team and I have accomplished a great deal. We have delivered significant funding to improve our Orange County beaches through sand replenishment. We have also provided important infrastructure investments to our communities. We have expanded healthcare access by expanding telehealth coverage. We have led the fight for lower taxes.

Legislation I have sponsored on its way to becoming law includes legislation to expand language access in telehealth for non-English speakers and expand mental health support for youth in foster care.

I have been a strong advocate for defending human rights across the globe and taking on the communist regimes who abuse them.

These accomplishments are not mine alone. I want to give a heartfelt thank you to the members of leadership, committee chairs, and my colleagues who helped pave the way, and, of course, my wonderful staff.

Speakers KEVIN MCCARTHY and MIKE JOHNSON have ably led this body and supported me every step of the way. The same is true of STEVE SCALISE, TOM EMMER, and ELISE STEFANIK. My friend CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS has also been a great mentor to me and helped me along the way. My colleagues in the California delegation have likewise joined me in supporting causes important to our State.

I have been also blessed to serve on great committees. On the Ways and Means Committee, we have promoted an economy that benefits all Americans. Under the leadership of chairman JASON SMITH, Congress will reauthorize the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act with improvements that benefit American workers and job creators.

We have also done great work on the Education and the Workforce Committee to promote quality education for all students. This includes fighting

the rise of anti-Semitism on campuses, a fight that Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX has strongly championed. Dr. Foxx has been a partner for me in helping reduce Communist China's influence in education through my DETERRENT Act.

As we have talked about so much on the Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, the CCP is truly America's number one adversary.

I have passed legislation to ban our military from using seaports reliant on Chinese technology. I have also worked to strengthen Taiwan's military readiness through the TAIWAN Security Act.

Congress must keep their eye on the CCP and build on this progress.

For now, I will be heading back to my home in sunny California. While my time in Congress is ending, I will always look for ways to serve the country that I love. I will always treasure the friendships I have made both in Washington and Southern California. Like all journeys, this one is ending for a new one to begin.

AUTO INSURANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, my residents still pay the highest auto insurance rates in the Nation. Auto insurance discrimination continues to keep our residents in the cycle of poverty.

I want to ask the American people and the auto insurance industry: What does your education level, your marital status, your occupation, your employment status, your credit score, your ZIP Code, or your homeownership status have to do with whether or not you are a good driver?

Right now, the auto insurance industry is determining rates based on these nondriving factors, so I introduced the Prohibit Auto Insurance Discrimination Act with my good colleague Representative WATSON COLEMAN. One of the factors, again, to determine driving ability should not be these nondriving factors, yet my residents still see and face higher insurance rates.

University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions did a study showing somebody with a DUI, driving under the influence, was paying three times less than the person with no DUI violation. The difference was the person with the DUI had a higher credit score than the person that had a better driving record. Again, these factors should not be determining people's auto insurance rates.

Again, that is why it is important for us to be able to support the PAID Act to prohibit auto insurance discrimination. My colleagues must join me in passing this important critical bill to address these shameless practices by the auto insurance industry.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS VITAL

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, Social Security is a vital part of our social safety net in our country. It keeps more people out of poverty than any other governmental program, nearly 23 million people.

I wasn't surprised when the number one question and concern that was brought up in our telephone townhall throughout the district—over 9,000 people participated—was what is going to happen to Social Security. For most seniors, Social Security is their largest source of income.

Cutting Social Security would be a disastrous policy choice for our communities, and it would absolutely be a choice that is decided here, not a necessity.

We should be strengthening and expanding Social Security, not cutting it.

That is why I support the Social Security Expansion Act. It is very critical because it would increase benefits by \$2,400 annually and ensure that program is funded for the next 75 years.

We must protect Social Security. Every senior in our country deserves to retire with dignity, and every person living with a disability deserves to live with economic security. I won't let them cut Social Security on my watch.

WATER IS LIFE

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, we all know that water is life. Safe, accessible, affordable drinking water is a human right.

In 2021, I was proud to be able to work with the Energy and Commerce Committee and Congresswoman DINGELL to establish the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program where we helped establish a \$1.2 billion program to help many of our families pay off their water bills and debts and keep people's water connected, especially during the pandemic.

This program saved countless lives. Millions of Americans today are still struggling to keep up with their water bills and many have their water shut off.

We introduced the Half-Century Update for Water Access and Affordability Act to establish a permanent low-income drinking water assistance program within the EPA. Our program will dedicate funding every single year to keep people's water flowing. We do it for gas. We do it for electricity. Why don't we do it for water? The program will include reconnection assistance, but what I also love, it will help with water efficiency upgrades like plumbing repairs to many of our families that live in old homes.

We are going to set up a community advisory committee made up of residents, nonprofits, utilities, and other local stakeholders to help advise the EPA how to implement this program more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the H2O UP Act will ban the practice of water shutoffs as punishment for not being able to afford your bills. This is the richest country in the world, and we know it is just

simply inhumane to have many of our families not have access to water.

Watching a couple in their seventies in the city of Detroit after working all their lives retire to have to melt snow in a white bucket so they can flush their toilet is inhumane. Again, it is inhumane for us not to have a program to help people with their water bills.

Congress just approved nearly a trillion dollars for weapons in war. Please, for all of my colleagues, I don't want to hear that we don't have the money to help our families here at home. We must again ensure access to water. It is critical for public health. It is critical for our families.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

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

Mr. CARL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the House one final time. When I came to Washington, a former colleague of mine told our freshman class how fortunate we all were to be part of this body. I will never forget him saying he always felt humbled each and every time he saw the Capitol and when he walked on this floor. He warned us all: The day that you don't feel humbled walking on this floor or when you see the Capitol, it is time to retire and go home.

This comment stuck with me, and I still get chills every time I walk on this floor or I see this glorious Capitol at night.

In this very Chamber, so much of the history of our country and the history of the modern world has been made: The decision to start and end wars, the decision to end slavery, the decision to give women the right to vote, and much more debated and agreed upon in this very room.

I never thought that I would end up here. I spent most of my life building small businesses, growing my family, and doing what I could do to give back to my community. Then I got frustrated with the direction of our government and the decisions our leaders were making at that time, so I got involved and tried to make a difference.

If I could go back in time to when I was 25 years old and tell myself that I would be standing here on this floor today, I never would have believed myself. It is impossible to believe. In fact, all the odds are against me. In fact, I have better odds of starting on an NBA basketball team than I do to be a Member of Congress. Those are some pretty large odds.

□ 1130

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the accomplishments that my team and I have made over the past 4 years. We have written and passed legislation that has unleashed American energy, protected Alabama's resources, reduced the size and scope of the Federal Government, and returned millions of tax dollars back home for important projects.

We have also helped countless veterans get the benefits they earned, recovered millions of dollars from the IRS, expedited hundreds of passport requests, secured FEMA disaster relief after natural disasters, protected small businesses from unnecessary red tape, and on and on.

As any Member of this body knows, none of this would be possible without the countless hours of our hard-working, talented, and dedicated staff. To each of my current staff and to each of my former staff, I thank them. I thank them for their dedication to Alabama's First Congressional District and for being part of my team.

My hopes and prayers for this country are so positive knowing that we have a generation of young people like them and with their passion coming up behind us.

I lovingly give most all of them nicknames, like Junior, Little Bubba, Chilia, Cooper, Bogie Bogie, Chief, Busy, Jesus, and, yes, my favorite vegan, T-Bone. They are all forever part of Team Carl. I am proud to have played a role in each of their careers.

I also could not have done anything without the love and support of my wife, Tina, and our family. My family has always believed in me and supported me, and I look forward to spending more time with them very soon.

Tina, start your grinning because Big Daddy is headed home.

To the folks in the First District, I thank them for giving me the chance to represent them, to bring our shared values to Washington. I do not take lightly the job that each of them has entrusted me with, and I am grateful for the opportunity.

The future of south Alabama, our entire State, and our Nation is so bright. I truly believe our best days are ahead of us.

God bless Alabama. God bless the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Bible Week. I am proud to be able to stand up here and proclaim my own devotion and adherence to the Bible and Biblical principles.

I appreciate my colleague, Mr. DOUG LAMBORN of Colorado, who led a Special Order on National Bible Week last night here in this Chamber. I am sorry I wasn't able to take part at that particular time, but I wanted to continue that.

Mr. LAMBORN has been a faithful servant in making sure that National Bible Week is always proclaimed and recognized each year here, and I appreciate him as a colleague. Of course, we will miss him, as he has decided to go off to other pastures from this body. God's blessings on him and his family.

As we know, during this National Bible Week, throughout American history, the Bible has been a guiding light, shaping our culture, government, and moral foundations to the good.

We hear a lot of talk about separation of church and state. That isn't really a truism. It is more about the State shall not establish a particular religion, but it is certainly fine for the Founders and our leaders to use that as a guiding principle. Indeed, they did, from Washington all the way through.

As we reflect on this week, it is important to remember that the Word of God has always provided clarity, strength, and direction to this Nation. In Psalms 119:105, we are reminded: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

In a world filled with uncertainty and confusion, the Bible serves as a beacon of truth and wisdom. It calls us to live with integrity, to honor one another, and to acknowledge the divine responsibility we have to God. Indeed, the Bible is the inerrant Word of God.

As leaders, citizens, and people of faith, we must continually seek guidance from our Scripture. It is extremely important and a guide in my own life, as well as that of my family.

The Word of God is not just a historical document, although it has always been found to be proven historically accurate. It is also the foundation of our morals and the source of wisdom that has indeed shaped our country.

During National Bible Week, let us renew our commitment to uphold these principles to guide our actions with the truth of the Bible and to honor God in all we do.

On top of that, it will soon be Christmas as this body tries to complete its work for the end of the year. Let's remember the reason for the season, as it is put. That is the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amongst all the hustle and bustle of Christmastime, let's not lose sight of the fact that, indeed, that is why we celebrate.

Merry Christmas.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a national bestseller, a book that has changed the world and had a tremendous impact on my life, the Bible.

I regularly pray the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:9: "Whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him."

I want God to be glorified through every meeting I go to, every speech I give, and every vote I make. My husband and I strive to instill Biblical values in our seven children, and that foundation has provided them with the stability they need to weather life's storms, something they are passing on to our 20 grandchildren.

I firmly believe the Word of God is the answer to any problem we face in life, providing clear distinctions between good and evil.

Psalms 119:105 says: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Our Nation is floundering because we have neglected eternal truth. We no longer respect life, the distinctions between men and women, the beauty of marriage and family, the value of hard work, or the danger of falling into debt.

That is why following God's Word is essential to the success of our Republic. George Washington said: "It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible."

Psalms 18:30 says: "As for God, his way is perfect. The Word of the Lord is proven. He is a shield to all who trust in Him."

Whatever problems we face, political, professional, or personal, the answers are found in the Bible. Tyrants have tried to destroy it, but the Word of God endures forever.

I urge my colleagues to take a few moments each day to read a couple of chapters, a psalm, and a proverb. I am confident it will change their life and our Nation.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF JOHN WALDIE GULLEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of John Waldie Gullen, a lifelong Lewisboro resident and World War II veteran who passed away on December 1, less than 3 weeks after friends, family, and neighbors gathered to celebrate his 100th birthday.

John Waldie Gullen was born on November 12, 1924. He attended a one-room schoolhouse on Schoolhouse Road and graduated from Katonah High School in 1943.

After graduating, he joined the U.S. Army, eventually deploying and fighting in the European theater, where he served as a combat infantryman from 1944 until 1946.

He was a proud member of the 70th Infantry Division, known as the Trailblazers, and his heroic actions helped turn back Germany's last offensive operations of the war in northeastern France, earning him the Bronze Star medal.

Upon returning home, he married his high school sweetheart, Barbara Miller, with whom he was faithfully married for 72 years. He was the father of two sons, a grandfather of four grandchildren and great-grandfather of five.

John Waldie Gullen's life was marked by service on and off the battlefield. He continued to serve in the Army Reserves upon returning home from the European theater of World War II, and he was a member of the South Salem Volunteer Fire Department for 80 years.

A successful businessowner and real estate investor, Mr. Gullen helped found the Lewisboro Lions Club in 1958. His service to his country, community, and family spanned decades, and he was an inspiration to the many who knew him. I was proud to be among those blessed to have met him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that when the House adjourns today, it does so in the memory of John Waldie Gullen, a true hero of our Greatest Generation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MARIE LORENZINI

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Marie Lorenzini, a beloved leader and devoted public servant from Nyack, New York, whose passing is deeply felt by all who knew her.

Marie's service to the village of Nyack spanned decades, including her roles as trustee, deputy mayor, and liaison to the Nyack Parks Commission. In fact, she was the second longest serving trustee in the history of Nyack.

Even after leaving the village board, she continued her work as a parks commissioner, leaving an indelible mark on the community she cherished.

Known for her quick wit, warm smile, and big heart, Marie dedicated herself to serving others, whether through her commitment to her church, her work with the Nyack Soup Angels, or her unwavering advocacy for her neighbors. Her passion, humor, and friendship enriched the lives of all who had the privilege to know her.

Marie was truly one of a kind. While her loss leaves a profound void, her legacy of service and love for her community will live on in Nyack and beyond. May her memory always be a blessing.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JOSEPH WILLIAM COTTER

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Joseph William Cotter, a visionary leader and beloved father who passed away unexpectedly on October 25, 2024, at the age of 66.

Joe was a proud father to Lydia and William, a devoted partner to Jane Carroll, and a son of both Purdys and New York City.

□ 1145

A graduate of Williams College and NYU Stern School of Business, Joe co-founded National Resources in 1988, transforming urban and industrial sites into thriving communities. His innovative spirit and ability to see potential where others could not defined his life's work.

Joe was a man of many passions, an all-England rugby player at King's College, a basketball leader at Oxford, and an eternal optimist with a global perspective. His intellect, wit, and boundless energy brought people together, whether on the field, at home, or in his professional life.

Joe's legacy lives on through his family, his transformative projects, and the countless lives he touched with his warmth and vision.

May his memory inspire us to dream big and to find joy in every step of the journey.

Joe will be missed by all who knew him in our Hudson Valley community that he impacted so greatly for so many years.

RECOGNIZING CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize this year's Carmel High School football team, which won the California 5-AA State football championship.

It was not just the first time that a team from the central coast won 15-0, but also an amazing 48-7 win over El Capitan High School from the San Diego area, a high school that is more than double the size of Carmel High's 800 students.

Despite that small number, the Padres came up big on the gridiron, averaging 50 points a game in five postseason wins and holding El Capitan to a season low of one touchdown.

Now, I could highlight that the Padres have a player who got a full scholarship to the University of Alabama next year and who actually grew up playing youth soccer with my daughter, who I am sure if you know my daughter, Mr. Speaker, whipped that lineman into shape, but if you look closely at the entire team of the Padres, only a couple will go on to play at a 4-year college.

Coach Golden Anderson and the entire staff are very proud of the Padres, but they will be the first to tell you that they are a seasonal football program where 95 percent of the team are multisport players.

Coach Anderson will also tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when they started the season, they weren't thinking about a State title. They just wanted to win.

As someone who played football at Carmel High for all 4 of his high school years, I understand that attitude, but I admit that we didn't even come close to winning a league title, let alone a State title.

So, I stand here, Mr. Speaker, not just as the proud Representative of California's 19th Congressional District, but I am also a proud Padre, a proud Padre parent, and absolutely honored to say congratulations to Carmel High, to their State champion football team, and to all the Carmel Padre community.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GIMENEZ) at noon.

PRAYER

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

Immortal, invisible, and only wise God, in this season of darkening days and sober skies, Your light seems inaccessible, Your presence hidden from our eyes. Though we do not see You, we love You and call upon You to reveal yourself as light in our darkness.

Though we walk in life-quenching shadows and cannot see Your hand to guide us, yet we believe in You and trust You to lead us on paths of righteousness.

Strengthen our faith that, in the face of all that overwhelms and undermines our best intentions, we would be filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy that dispels all gloom and releases us from the grip of despair.

This day and always, cultivate in us the hope of salvation, that through us, Your light of love would shine.

In the name of You, O Lord, our redeemer, our sustainer, our guide, and our friend, we offer our prayers.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BUDZINSKI) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. BUDZINSKI led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

RECOGNIZING PHILIP REGULSKI ON HIS RETIREMENT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding commitment of Ridgway, Pennsylvania, volunteer fireman Philip Regulski.

Mr. Regulski has tirelessly served the Ridgway Fire Department for over 65 years.

Starting in March of 1959, Mr. Regulski has served as the department

treasurer, sat on the Ridgway Fire Department Board of Directors, was the representative of the Tri-County Firemen's Association, and enjoyed volunteering at the department's Tuesday-night bingo.

As a former volunteer firefighter, I understand how important Mr. Regulski's service to the community has been and how much of an impact he has had on so many people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank and congratulate Mr. Regulski on his 65 years of service to the community of Ridgway and the 15th Congressional District of Pennsylvania. I am proud to represent such incredible leaders and public servants like Mr. Regulski. I wish him all the best in his retirement.

INVEST IN BLACK WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

(Mrs. LEE CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LEE CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the contributions of Black women entrepreneurs.

Black women own approximately 2.1 million businesses, representing 52.1 percent of all Black-owned businesses. Despite challenges, they continue to drive innovation for communities and create lasting legacies.

Kim Roxie is the founder of LAMIK Beauty, which started with a \$500 investment and was inspired by her mother, who passed from breast cancer, to create natural, safe, paraffin-free makeup.

MELODRAMA Boutique is a pillar of empowerment and sisterhood in Houston, featuring local fashion and empowering local designers.

I also honor Kim Aitch, founder of Camera Ready, a beauty, fashion, and wellness lifestyle brand. She is a force in the industry and also president of the Citywide Beauticians & Barbers Association that uplifts entrepreneurs across Houston.

These are but a few examples of extraordinarily talented Black women in business who join the many who employ over 528,000 people and generate \$98 billion in revenue for our Nation.

There could be more. They lack access to capital, and they often are left out of venture capital funds, where less than 2 percent of those dollars go to Black women. Yet, still, with great determination, they carry on.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we continue to invest in Black women entrepreneurs.

HONORING DENISE KAREN PENCE

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my wife of 43 years tomorrow, Denise Karen Pence.

She is the mother of Nicole, Lauren, Emily, and John; the mother-in-law of

Jason, Chris, and Giovanna; and the grandmother of Emma, Andrew, Colin, Kate, Matthew, Mary, Luke, Gregory, Jack, and Vivienne.

She is the love of my life, and I thank her for all of her love and support over these last 43 years, particularly for the last 6 years as I have served here.

God has blessed me with Denise Karen Pence.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER AND SERVICE OF ADJUTANT GENERAL CHRIS CALLAHAN

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

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Rhode Island Adjutant General Chris Callahan, who is retiring at the end of this year after four decades of service to our State and country.

General Callahan joined the Army National Guard in 1984 and quickly ascended up the ranks. He served as headquarters commander for the First Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, brigade commander for the 56th Troop Command, and commander of the Task Force Dragonwing Aviation Battalion in Iraq.

In 2015, he was named the 44th Adjutant General of Rhode Island and commanding general of the Rhode Island National Guard.

Under his leadership, the Rhode Island National Guard deployed more than 3,000 soldiers and airmen on missions across the globe, ran point on Rhode Island's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing mass testing and administering hundreds of thousands of vaccinations. He also activated thousands of soldiers and airmen to respond to blizzards and hurricanes, establish warming shelters, and fight wildfires in Rhode Island, among many other missions.

General Callahan's exemplary service to our country was made possible by the support of his wife, Donna; and his children, Devin, Grace, and Katie.

Together, they kept Rhode Island National Guard's promise to be: Always ready, always there.

I thank Chris Callahan for his service to our country and our State.

CONGRATULATING IOWA STATE SENATOR CHRIS COURNOYER

(Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my heartfelt congratulations to my good friend, Senator Chris Cournoyer, on her appointment as Iowa's new Lieutenant Governor.

This is a historic moment, as Iowa now has two women in the top two executive positions for the first time. It

is a testament to the strength, leadership, and dedication of women across our State.

Governor Reynolds has made an excellent choice in appointing Chris to this important role. I had the pleasure of serving alongside Chris in the Iowa Senate and have seen firsthand the kind of leader she is.

Chris has been a tireless advocate for education, technology, innovation, conservative budgeting, tax cuts, and accountability in government during her time in the Iowa Senate. Her ability to roll up her sleeves and find practical solutions makes her uniquely qualified to serve our State in this capacity.

From her leadership on the school board of the Pleasant Valley School District, to her work in the technology sector, Chris has proven herself time and time again. I am proud to call her a friend and excited to see the continued success she will bring to Iowa in this new role.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Senator Cournoyer. Iowa is fortunate to have her.

CONGRATULATING ROBERT GAO, NATIONAL STUDENT POET

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

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Robert Gao from Champaign-Urbana on being selected as one of five National Student Poets.

The National Student Poet Program is one of our Nation's highest honors for youth poets presenting original work. It is an incredible accomplishment that reflects Robert's talent, artistry, and the power of his work to inspire others.

Robert says that his writing is influenced by his family and exploring his identity. He described that he fell in love with poetry because it allowed him to put his soul onto paper in a way that nonfiction writing couldn't.

Previously, Robert has been recognized by The New York Times, the National Young Artist Foundation, and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers.

We are all so proud of Robert and cannot wait to see him continue to grow as an author and an artist.

CONGRATULATING MACON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Macon County High School football team for securing their first State championship.

The Tigers advance to the playoffs often. They have done so 20 times in the last 55 years. This year, they captured the big Class 4A BlueCross Bowl title after defeating Melrose 45-15.

Twin brothers, Zach and Gabe Borders, are credited as standouts. Gabe ran for 117 yards and completed his team's only pass for a touchdown. His brother, Zach, earned MVP after his 250-yard performance, which included four rushing scores in the second half.

The Tigers were fortunate to have both brothers on the field, especially considering that Zach has undergone surgery and has pins after multiple breaks to his collarbone.

I congratulate all of the players, their families, and Coach Kyle Shoulders, and I congratulate all who prayed over the health of this senior class.

Go Tigers.

END GUN VIOLENCE IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a crisis in the Virgin Islands.

On December 13, a shooting claimed the life of another of my constituents. My deepest condolences go to the families and loved ones of each of the 42 victims who have died by homicide in 2024 in the Virgin Islands.

Throughout the Caribbean, gun violence, driven by unemployment and drug and human trafficking, is pervasive.

During a recent codel to Barbados, led by Leader JEFFRIES, we heard similar concerns from our Caribbean allies.

The Senate must pass the ONDCP Reauthorization Act, which includes my Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy Act, to combat the illegal trafficking of deadly drugs which traverse through American territories in the Caribbean.

In the Virgin Islands, 93 percent of guns recovered by law enforcement were trafficked illegally into the territory, and the homicide rate is nine times higher than the continental United States.

We need our Federal partners, especially ATF, to provide resources and maintain a presence in the territory.

MAKING AMERICA GREAT AGAIN

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, led by President-elect Donald Trump, House Republicans are looking forward to 2025 and the 119th Congress with great enthusiasm, advancing a conservative agenda.

With the new Republican majority in the Senate, we will work hard on behalf of American families to deliver solutions to drive down the crippling costs of inflation, eliminate regulations, lower energy prices, and provide for a reduction in Federal overreach in schools, and much more.

House Republicans are committed to securing the borders, promoting family values, supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and backing our allies while establishing peace through strength.

House Republicans, led by the leadership of Speaker MIKE JOHNSON, will resume, making America great again.

In conclusion, God bless our troops as the global war on terrorism continues. Open borders for dictators put all Americans at risk of more 9/11 attacks imminent as warned by the FBI. Trump will reinstitute existing laws to protect American families with peace through strength.

□ 1215

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MAYOR MARK MURPHY

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the life of my good friend, Mayor Mark Murphy, and to recognize his lifetime of service to the city of Orange.

Mark was a loving husband, a lifelong Orange County resident, and a committed public servant. He served our community for more than 30 years as the Orange County Transit Authority chairman, city of Orange councilmember, and then city of Orange mayor.

It is because of his love for his neighborhoods and his community that he earned the nickname "Mr. Orange."

Mark's passion was improving our community's parks and recreation centers. He oversaw the construction of Grijalva Sports Center, the expansion of the Orange library, and the acquisition of several park spaces.

While many know Mark for his strong advocacy, his voice as a singer is less known. He actively participated in his church choir and even sang on stage during park concerts.

Mark was also known as a Harley-Davidson bike rider.

Mr. Speaker, we love Mark and his legacy continues.

CALIFORNIA NEEDS A WATER STORAGE SUPPLY

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I can't emphasize enough how important it is for the ag economy and for the security of this country that my home State of California provides so many of these essential crops in high percentages. Many of these crops you see, 90 to 99 percent, even 100 percent, are grown in my home State.

What does that underline for you? It underlines the need for my home State to have a water supply to grow those crops. Each year it seems more and

more is being taken away regulatorily from farmers and given to environmental purposes.

We need to build more storage in my home State. We need to build what is called Sites Reservoir. We need to raise Shasta Dam. We need to look at other projects. We also need for the pumps at the delta to be running full blast at this time of year when we have this excess water running out to the ocean and filling up the San Luis Reservoir so we have that water supply for the southern part of the State in the San Joaquin Valley.

We need to do all these things in order to ensure that we have the crops to put the food on the table for Americans. At this time with the ag economy suffering so much across the country, we need to do everything we can to make their jobs easier.

MILITARY BOWL

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the East Carolina University Pirates will be taking on the North Carolina State University Wolfpack in what is sure to be an exciting 2024 Go Bowling Military Bowl at the Navy-Marine Memorial Stadium in Annapolis on December 28.

It will be an evening of incredible State pride, sportsmanship, and hard-hitting football by an intense in-State rivalry.

The Go Bowling Military Bowl matches top teams from the Atlantic Coast Conference and American Athletic Conference. Above all, it aims to benefit active and former servicemembers and their families. It will be fantastic to see two North Carolina teams in an excellent end to the season, especially for those players who are graduating.

It should not be any surprise who I will be cheering on, Coach Harrell and the ESU Pirates. Loyal and bold. We are purple and gold.

Aargh.

CONGRATULATING ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ AND KIONNE MCGHEE

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

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my dear friends and colleagues, Anthony Rodriguez and Kionne McGhee, the new chairman and vice chairman of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners.

I look forward to continuing our work together to deliver results for the people of Miami-Dade County.

With my colleagues on the commission, I worked to deliver the largest tax cuts in Miami-Dade County history when I was the mayor, and being mayor of Miami-Dade County has been

one of the highlights of my career in public service.

I understand firsthand just how effective both Chairman Rodriguez and Vice Chairman McGhee are, and I am confident in their ability to lead with conviction for the community that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, I thank both of them and wish them Godspeed.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF OF STAFF BETSY ARNOLD MARR

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

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my unbelievably talented chief of staff, Betsy Arnold Marr, as she retires from the House of Representatives after more than 25 years of service.

Betsy has worked in Congress through some of our Nation's biggest moments in recent history: September 11, passage of the Affordable Care Act, the pandemic, and January 6.

Through it all, she has been a thoughtful and dynamic leader who helped navigate it all with grace, talent, and intelligence.

Before her time in the House, Betsy developed her expertise in communications and press relations, working for the Minnesota Democratic Party on campaigns and then as a reporter.

Since coming to the House, she has worked for four Members, using her skills to help run each office and mentor her colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have worked for—I mean with Betsy for the last 10 years. We will miss her dearly and wish her and her husband, Charles, well in their next steps.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MAYOR MARK MURPHY

(Mrs. KIM of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life and legacy of Mark Murphy, who recently passed away. Known as "Mr. Orange," Mark was a lifelong resident of the city of Orange, born at St. Joseph Hospital, and graduating from Orange High School.

He served the city for decades on the City Planning Commission, the City Council, as mayor, and on the Board of Orange County Transportation Authority, all while working full time for over 33 years at Hewlett-Packard.

He was everywhere in Orange. He also was a talented musician, singing in the choir at First Presbyterian Church and playing guitar at concerts in the park.

Mr. Speaker, I send my deepest condolences to his wife, Vikki, and moth-

er, Lois. I join our Orange community in honoring his memory and a life very well lived.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF SAM PRITCHARD

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

Mrs. HINSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor my outgoing chief of staff, Sam Pritchard, and thank him for his service to Iowa's Second Congressional District.

Sam is a Cedar Rapids native and there is no one more passionate about serving their home State. He has been a trusted confidant for me since joining our team but has also become a dear friend, always offering steady advice with a good dad joke thrown in every now and then for good measure.

I also thank Sam's wife, Katie, and his children, Clare and John Thomas, for sharing Sam with us over the years. We couldn't be more thrilled for your family in this new chapter.

Mr. Speaker, even though Sam is leaving the Hill, we know he will always be a member of our team. I thank him for his service to Iowa and his service to our country.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

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

DETECTION EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION TO COUNTER THE THREAT OF FENTANYL AND XYLAZINE ACT OF 2024

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 8663) to require the Science and Technology Directorate in the Department of Homeland Security to develop greater capacity to detect, identify, and disrupt illicit substances in very low concentrations.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:
Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLES.

This Act may be cited as the "Detection Equipment and Technology Evaluation to Counter the Threat of Fentanyl and Xylazine Act of 2024" or the "DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. ENHANCING THE CAPACITY TO DETECT AND IDENTIFY DRUGS SUCH AS FENTANYL AND XYLAZINE.

Section 302 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 182) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (14), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(15) carrying out, in coordination with the Drug Enforcement Administration, research, development, testing, evaluation, and cost-benefit analyses to improve the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of equipment and the effectiveness and efficiency of reference libraries for use by Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies for the accurate detection of drugs, such as fentanyl and xylazine, including—

“(A) portable equipment that can detect and identify drugs with minimal or no handling of the sample;

“(B) equipment that can separate complex mixtures containing low concentrations of drugs and high concentrations of cutting agents into their component parts to enable signature extraction for field identification and detection; and

“(C) technologies that use machine learning or artificial intelligence (as defined in section 5002 of the National Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act of 2020 (15 U.S.C. 9401)) and other techniques to predict whether the substances in a sample are controlled substance analogues or other new psychoactive substances not yet included in available reference libraries.”.

SEC. 3. REQUIREMENTS.

In carrying out section 302(15) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 2, of the Under Secretary for Science and Technology shall—

(1) follow the recommendations, guidelines, and best practices described in the Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Framework (NIST AI 100-1) or any successor document published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology; and

(2) establish the Directorate of Science and Technology’s research, development, testing, evaluation, and cost-benefit analysis priorities under such section 302(15) based on the latest available information, including specific drugs identified as threats in—

(A) the latest Homeland Threat Assessment published by the Department of Homeland Security;

(B) the latest State and Territory Report on Enduring and Emerging Threats published by the Drug Enforcement Administration; or

(C) any successor documents.

SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed to limit the authority of agencies currently managing, overseeing, or otherwise involved in drug equipment and reference libraries.

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to require the Science and Technology Directorate in the Department of Homeland Security to develop greater capacity to detect and identify illicit substances in very low concentrations.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, once again, with a strong voice of support for H.R. 8663, the DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act of 2024. This critical piece of legislation will equip DHS S&T with the authority it needs to improve the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of drug detection equipment and reference libraries to protect frontline DHS personnel who seek to protect our Nation from the flow of illicit fentanyl and other drugs amidst the catastrophic mess at our southwest border.

I am glad that the Senate took swift action and passed this measure and concur with the amendment, which requires DHS to coordinate with the DEA and upholds the authority of other Federal agencies utilizing drug equipment and reference libraries.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for his diligent work on this legislation in the House, as well as the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

I also thank Senator CORNYN of Texas for working across Chambers and championing this important legislation through the Senate.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill so we can get it to the President’s desk as soon as possible, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 8663, the Detection Equipment and Technology Evaluation to Counter the Threat of Fentanyl and Xylazine Act of 2024 is an important piece of legislation that enables the DHS Science and Technology Directorate to improve the capabilities of law enforcement at every level in identifying and combating illicit substances.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates a strong commitment to equipping law enforcement with the tools needed to combat the proliferation of dangerous substances like fentanyl and xylazine.

The bill specifically directs DHS S&T to develop and evaluate advanced drug detection technologies like machines that can break down and analyze complex drug mixtures and AI systems to spot new drug threats.

These initiatives aim to enhance the precision and efficiency of drug detection, empowering law enforcement to respond effectively to evolving challenges.

Furthermore, H.R. 8663, prioritizes collaboration with agencies like the DEA and adherence to NIST’s artificial intelligence risk management framework, reinforcing the integrity and reliability of the technologies developed.

This bill is an important step in ensuring that DHS prioritizes the development and deployment of cutting-edge technologies to combat the growing threat of dangerous substances like fentanyl and xylazine so DHS will be better equipped to address emerging

drug trends, protect public safety, and support law enforcement efforts nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 8663 as we did in the past, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding. I was anxious about the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee yielding because his alma mater team, West Point, lost to my alma mater Annapolis this weekend 31-13 at the premier football game, so I appreciate the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the fight against fentanyl and xylazine is a battle that we cannot afford to lose, and right now the United States is at a crossroads.

Our communities are grappling with a devastating crisis as lethal drugs like fentanyl and xylazine continue to wreak havoc across our country.

Today, we have a chance to deliver solutions. The amended version of my DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act is back before us and it is a stronger, more comprehensive tool to tackle this epidemic.

Every year, over 100,000 precious American lives are lost to drug overdoses.

In 2023 alone, opioids were responsible for more than 81,000 deaths. Fentanyl, accounting for nearly 90 percent of synthetic opioid fatalities, claimed tens of thousands of lives, shattering families and leaving communities in mourning.

These numbers are tragic reminders of the lives we are losing every day.

□ 1230

Now, xylazine, a tranquilizer known on the streets as tranq, is being mixed with fentanyl, creating an even deadlier and harder to detect combination.

This toxic mix does not spare anyone. It claims lives regardless of age, race, or socioeconomic status. From suburban Long Island to urban centers and rural America, this crisis is everywhere, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this year, the House passed the DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. Since then, our Senate colleagues have worked to refine and enhance the legislation to better address the growing threat. Their amendments make a strong bill even stronger by ensuring our efforts are as coordinated and effective as possible.

The updated bill includes important improvements.

One, it mandates greater collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security and the Drug Enforcement Administration, ensuring that expertise and resources are shared in this fight.

Two, it prioritizes accuracy, efficiency, and innovation in drug detection technologies, including improving

reference libraries to ensure no deadly substance escapes detection.

Three, Mr. Speaker, it aligns research priorities with specific threats, incorporating not only DEA reports but also the latest Homeland Threat Assessment to address emerging challenges.

Finally, four, it preserves the authorities of Federal agencies managing detection equipment and reference libraries, maintaining a seamless response across departments.

These changes reflect the urgency and complexity of the crisis that we as a nation face.

This legislation will empower our law enforcement officers, public health workers, and communities by developing cutting-edge technology to detect and intercept dangerous substances; strengthening partnerships between Federal, State, and local agencies; and staying ahead of drug traffickers' tactics through innovation and advanced research.

This bill is more than just policy. It is a commitment to saving American lives.

Mr. Speaker, every overdose prevented means a family spared from grief, a child with a parent, and a community with hope.

I express my deep appreciation for my good friend, Congressman LOU CORREA, for joining me in championing this important legislation. His steadfast dedication to this cause along with Senators JOHN CORNYN, JON OSSOFF, and KYRSTEN SINEMA's thoughtful contributions are getting the bill over the finish line and onto the President's desk.

I also thank the many organizations representing law enforcement professionals, public health advocates, and local communities. Their input has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking, and lives are at stake. Let us come together once again to pass the amended DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act and send it to the President's desk.

Let us give our law enforcement the tools that they need, and let us stand with our communities. Let us take a giant leap toward ending this deadly epidemic.

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

Republicans and Democrats alike recognize the challenges facing law enforcement in the detection of dangerous drugs like fentanyl and xylazine.

H.R. 8663 is a step in the right direction, and we should send it to the President's desk today.

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

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

Again, I strongly urge my colleagues to concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 8663, and I appreciate the New Yorkers who contributed to this bill as well as Mr. CORREA. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 8663.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

BEAGLE BRIGADE ACT OF 2023

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 759) to authorize the National Detector Dog Training Center, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 759

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 "Beagle Brigade Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL DETECTOR DOG TRAINING CENTER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established a National Detector Dog Training Center (referred to in this Act as the "Center").

(b) DUTIES.—The Center shall have the following duties:

(1) Training dogs for the purpose of safeguarding domestic agricultural and natural resources from foreign and invasive pests and diseases.

(2) Training human handlers to successfully select and train dogs for the purpose described in paragraph (1).

(3) Collaborating with relevant Federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to safeguard domestic agricultural and natural resources.

(4) Collaborating with external stakeholders, including State departments of agriculture, local and county agricultural officials, private sector entities, and other relevant non-Federal partners.

(5) Ensuring the health and welfare of all dogs under the care of the Center, including by ensuring access to necessary veterinary care, adequate shelter, and proper nutrition.

(6) Providing opportunities for private adoption of retirement-age trained dogs and dogs that do not complete training.

(7) Any other duties necessary to safeguard domestic agricultural and natural resources from foreign and invasive pests and diseases, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, shall submit to Congress a report that contains—

(1) a description of current and emerging threats to domestic agricultural and natural resources from foreign pests and diseases within the purview of the operations of the Center;

(2) an examination of the role that the Center plays in the protection against foreign pests and diseases;

(3) a description of improvements needed in Federal programs to minimize threats from foreign pests and diseases within the purview of the operations of the Center, including strengthened coordination among the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other relevant Federal agencies;

(4) recommendations to strengthen the capabilities of the Center in protecting against foreign pests and diseases; and

(5) recommendations to improve—

(A) the dog procurement procedures of the Center; and

(B) private adoption opportunities for retirement-age trained dogs and dogs that do not complete training.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 759.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here to support this bill that we are now debating regarding the National Detector Dog Training Center.

This training center serves as an important line of defense in safeguarding America's agricultural and natural resources from harmful pests and diseases. The center in Georgia trains dogs and their handlers to detect prohibited agricultural items like fruits, vegetables, and meats.

These dogs and their handlers then serve at many of our border entry points to prevent such prohibited items from coming into our country and spreading dangerous pests and animal diseases that would have just devastating impacts on our domestic production, actually impacting our ability to feed ourselves, resulting in food insecurity, which affects national security.

While this bill simply codifies the training center that has been in existence since 1984, I am glad to see the center receive the recognition and prioritization it deserves.

I am happy to support this legislation that has been supported by Mr. SANFORD BISHOP. I also appreciate Representative FERGUSON's leadership on this bill in bringing it to the floor. I thank him for his service to Georgia's Third Congressional District.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am proud to rise in support of the Beagle Brigade Act, which is a bipartisan, bicameral bill, the companion of which I led in this Chamber with my colleagues Representatives DREW FERGUSON, DAN KILDEE, and ADRIAN SMITH.

The Senate version, which we consider today, was offered and advanced through the Senate by Senator WARNOCK from Georgia and Senator ERNST from Iowa.

The bill provides authorization for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Detector Dog Training Center, which is located in Newnan, Georgia, and is vital to the protection of American agriculture and helps keep foreign animal and plant pests as well as diseases out of our country.

The U.S. agriculture sector is a \$1 trillion industry constantly under the threat of foreign pests and diseases, such as African swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, or citrus greening disease that can be introduced through our Nation's ports of entry, including airports, harbors, and mail and cargo facilities. Some of these diseases could cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars to contain and eradicate if they are found to be in the country.

Agriculture detector dogs, known as the beagle brigade, are an important tool in preventing these threats and eradicating them in the event they overcome our safeguards. Our beagle brigade is at work every day at customs screening in the airports for flights after returning from abroad, standing by to alert their handlers of contraband food, live animals, or other products that could harbor foreign pests and pose a threat to domestic crops or livestock.

An ounce of provision is worth a pound of cure. The brigade is well worth its value.

In addition to authorizing the training center, this bill requires the facility to ensure the health and well-being of the dogs under its care and provide opportunities for private adoption of retirement-age training dogs and dogs that did not complete the training.

Detector dogs work their best when they are handled humanely, and establishing this requirement in law would ensure that the facility continues to uphold this expectation.

I am pleased to note that this bill has the support of 50 organizations, representing veterinarians, agricultural producers, and animal health groups.

On a final note, two of my colleagues who helped lead this bill in the House, DREW FERGUSON and DAN KILDEE, are retiring. I am pleased that we can enact this bill as they conclude their extraordinary tenure in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to vote in support of this bill to help protect America's agriculture and our economy, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON).

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. BISHOP, for those kind words. That was much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1480, the Beagle Brigade Act of 2023. I was proud to join Representative BISHOP in introducing the Beagle Brigade Act, which would provide permanent authorization for the National Detector Dog Training Center located in Newnan, Georgia.

The Beagle Brigade Act would permanently authorize the training center to ensure that America's food supply stays protected from potentially devastating foreign pests and diseases.

The National Detector Dog Training Center in Georgia's Third Congressional District does important work to properly train detector dogs to sniff out prohibited agricultural items in domestic and international trade.

I also thank Senator JONI ERNST and Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK from Georgia for their work on the Senate companion bill, S. 759. The bipartisan, bicameral effort in support of this legislation was important, and I look forward to the Beagle Brigade Act becoming law.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Representative BISHOP, for yielding and for his work on this legislation.

We do a lot of big, controversial bills. Sometimes, we can actually come together as Democrats and Republicans to get something done that serves the interests and needs of the American people. This is a good example of that.

The Beagle Brigade Act, which I introduced, as has been said, with Representative BISHOP, Representative FERGUSON, and Representative ADRIAN SMITH, will help protect our food supply from foreign pests and disease.

The bill authorizes the National Detector Dog Training Center. This center extensively trains detector dogs and their U.S. Customs and Border Protection handlers to sniff out prohibited agriculture items that could carry foreign plant or animal pests and diseases into our country.

As we have seen over the past year, it is critical that we have processes in place to protect our country and our agriculture system from those prohibited products that could introduce pests or disease.

Authorizing the United States Department of Agriculture's National Detector Dog Training Center ensures that the U.S. has a critical tool in the fight against foreign pests and diseases that have the potential to devastate all sectors of the agricultural economy.

As Representative BISHOP has said, over 50 prominent agriculture, veterinarian, and trade organizations support our legislation.

The center trains dogs, mostly beagles—hence, the name of the bill, our

nickname for it—and their handlers to detect prohibited fruits, vegetables, and meats in international passenger luggage, mailed packages, and vehicles entering the United States.

Dogs are selected from animal shelters, rescue groups, and private owners. Those that retire from the program or do not complete the training are offered for adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad we have come together to advance this important piece of legislation.

□ 1245

It has been said, the most likely path for these dangerous substances coming into our food supply is through those ports of entry. This legislation will have a positive impact in protecting not only public health, but also protecting the industry.

I am grateful to some of the organizations I have worked with on this back in Michigan: the Michigan Milk Producers, the Michigan Pork Producers, and the Michigan Farm Bureau.

I am especially grateful to my colleagues. This is one of the last couple of days that I will serve in the House of Representatives, as has been said. I have been pleased to have good friendships here, and those friendships have developed into the kind of work that we can do together to advance the interests of the American people.

Representative FERGUSON and I have become very good friends over the years. Representative BISHOP and I have a special bond. He helped me through one of my more difficult personal health challenges. I will always be grateful to him for that and grateful for the opportunity to serve with him.

I am particularly happy that we are able to put an exclamation point on our joint service together today by seeing this legislation come to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, once again, I am just very appreciative to all of the Members who provided the leadership on this piece of legislation. I think when folks hear the name of this bill, they wonder why Congress is dealing with this.

I mean, I kind of like the name actually, Beagle Brigade Act of 2023, but it is not a laughing matter. It is a serious matter. I appreciate the thought that it has and the due diligence that has been put into this bill and the construct of it in terms of really meeting the needs of our Nation.

I mean, it is worth repeating, the bill would officially authorize the existing National Detector Dog Training Center located in Newnan, Georgia. The center trains detector dogs, mostly beagles—not all beagles, but mostly beagles—and their U.S. Customs and Border Protection handlers to detect prohibited agriculture items like fruits and vegetables and meats that could carry foreign plant and animal pest and disease into the United States.

Once that happens, how rapidly those could spread can obviously seriously

impact commodities within the United States and our agriculture industry, and quite frankly, the health and safety of our citizens.

Dogs and their handlers inspect international passenger baggage, mailed packages, and vehicles entering the U.S. The dogs are selected from animal shelters, rescue groups, and private owners. Those that do not complete the training, as well as retirement-aged, trained dogs are offered for private adoptions. The dogs are well cared for from beginning to end.

The bill would also require the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, or APHIS, to prepare a report to Congress no later than 1 year after the date of enactment, including a description of current and emerging pest and disease threats, the role of the center in protecting against those threats, and any recommendations for strengthening that role and the overall center.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, it is a well-thought-out, comprehensive bill that is, I think, of strategic importance to our Nation.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am very, very proud to support the Beagle Brigade Act of 2023, and to have had the opportunity to work with my colleagues, Representatives DREW FERGUSON, DAN KILDEE, and ADRIAN SMITH, and to have the support of our Senators, Senator WARNOCK and Senator ERNST from Iowa.

This is a vital piece of legislation, which protects American agriculture and keeps foreign animal and plant pests, as well as other diseases, out of our country. I think we have done a good day's work today, and I commend my colleagues for their joint efforts.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank those who put this bill forward. I think this example of this piece of legislation illustrates why it is commonly said that a dog is a man's best friend. It really fills an incredible niche here.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on this bill, and I yield back balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 759.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1330

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATURNER) at 1 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

- Motions to suspend the rules and Pass S. 1351;
- Pass S. 3857;
- Concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 8663; and
- Pass S. 759.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

STOP INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1351) to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 373, nays 33, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 512]

YEAS—373

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Adams | Bishop (GA) | Case |
| Aderholt | Bishop (NC) | Casten |
| Aguilar | Blunt Rochester | Castor (FL) |
| Alford | Bonamici | Castro (TX) |
| Allen | Bost | Cherfilus- |
| Allred | Boyle (PA) | McCormick |
| Amo | Brown | Chu |
| Amodei | Brownley | Ciscomani |
| Arrington | Buchanan | Clark (MA) |
| Auchincloss | Bucshon | Clarke (NY) |
| Babin | Budzinski | Cleaver |
| Bacon | Burgess | Cohen |
| Baird | Bush | Cole |
| Balderson | Calvert | Collins |
| Balint | Caraveo | Comer |
| Banks | Carpajal | Connolly |
| Barr | Cárdenas | Correa |
| Barragán | Carey | Costa |
| Beatty | Carl | Courtney |
| Bentz | Carson | Craig |
| Bera | Carter (GA) | Crawford |
| Bergman | Carter (LA) | Crenshaw |
| Beyer | Carter (TX) | Crockett |
| Bice | Cartwright | Crow |
| Bilirakis | Casar | Cuellar |

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Curtis | Kildee | Posey |
| D'Esposito | Kiley | Pressley |
| Davids (KS) | Kilmer | Quigley |
| Davidson | Kim (CA) | Ramirez |
| Davis (IL) | Krishnamoorthi | Raskin |
| Davis (NC) | Kuster | Reschenthaler |
| De La Cruz | Kustoff | Rogers (AL) |
| Dean (PA) | LaHood | Rogers (KY) |
| DeGette | LaLota | Rose |
| DeLauro | LaMalfa | Ross |
| DelBene | Lamborn | Rouzer |
| Deluzio | Landsman | Ruiz |
| DeSaulnier | Langworthy | Rulli |
| DesJarlais | Larsen (WA) | Ruppersberger |
| Diaz-Balart | Larson (CT) | Rutherford |
| Dingell | Latta | Ryan |
| Doggett | LaTurner | Salazar |
| Duarte | Lawler | Salinas |
| Duncan | Lee (CA) | Sánchez |
| Edwards | Lee (FL) | Sarbanes |
| Ellzey | Lee (NV) | Scalise |
| Emmer | Lee (PA) | Scanlon |
| Escobar | Lee Carter | Schakowsky |
| Eshoo | Leger Fernandez | Schneider |
| Espallat | Lesko | Scholten |
| Estes | Letlow | Schrier |
| Fallon | Levin | Schweikert |
| Feenstra | Lofgren | Scott (VA) |
| Ferguson | Lopez | Scott, Austin |
| Finstad | Lucas | Scott, David |
| Fischbach | Luetkemeyer | Sessions |
| Fitzgerald | Luna | Sewell |
| Fitzpatrick | Luttrell | Sherman |
| Fleischmann | Lynch | Sherrill |
| Fletcher | Mace | Simpson |
| Flood | Magaziner | Slotkin |
| Fong | Malliotakis | Smith (MO) |
| Foster | Maloy | Smith (NE) |
| Foushee | Mann | Smith (NJ) |
| Fox | Manning | Smith (VA) |
| Fox, Lois | Matsui | Smucker |
| Frankel, Lois | McBath | Sorensen |
| Franklin, Scott | McCaul | Soto |
| Frost | McClain | Spanberger |
| Fry | McClellan | Spartz |
| Fulcher | McClintock | Stansbury |
| Garamendi | McCollum | Stanton |
| Garbarino | McCormick | Staubert |
| Garcia (IL) | McGarvey | Steel |
| Garcia (TX) | McGovern | Stefanik |
| Garcia, Robert | McHenry | Steil |
| Gimenez | McIver | Steube |
| Golden (ME) | Meeks | Stevens |
| Goldman (NY) | Menendez | Strickland |
| Gomez | Meng | Strong |
| Gonzales, Tony | Meuser | Suozi |
| Gonzalez, V. | Mfume | Swalwell |
| Gooden (TX) | Miller (OH) | Sykes |
| Graves (LA) | Miller (WV) | Takano |
| Graves (MO) | Miller-Meeks | Tenney |
| Green (TN) | Molinaro | Thanedar |
| Green, Al (TX) | Moolenaar | Thompson (CA) |
| Griffith | Mooney | Thompson (MS) |
| Guthrie | Moore (AL) | Thompson (PA) |
| Harder (CA) | Moore (UT) | Tiffany |
| Harshbarger | Moore (WI) | Timmons |
| Hayes | Moran | Titus |
| Hern | Morelle | Tlaib |
| Hill | Moskowitz | Tokuda |
| Himes | Moulton | Tonko |
| Hinson | Mrvan | Torres (CA) |
| Horsford | Mullin | Torres (NY) |
| Houchin | Murphy | Trahan |
| Houlahan | Nadler | Trone |
| Hoyer | Neal | Turner |
| Hoyle (OR) | Neguse | Underwood |
| Huffman | Nehls | Valadao |
| Huizenga | Issa | Van Drew |
| Issa | Ivey | Van Duyne |
| Jackson (IL) | Jackson (IL) | Van Orden |
| Jackson (NC) | Jackson (TX) | Vargas |
| Jackson (TX) | Jacobs | Vasquez |
| Jacobs | James | Veasey |
| Jayapal | Jayapal | Wagner |
| Jeffries | Jeffries | Walberg |
| Johnson (GA) | Johnson (GA) | Wasserman |
| Johnson (SD) | Johnson (SD) | Schultz |
| Jordan | Jordan | Waters |
| Joyce (OH) | Joyce (OH) | Watson Coleman |
| Joyce (PA) | Joyce (PA) | Weber (TX) |
| Kamla-Dove | Kamlager-Dove | Wenstrup |
| Kaptur | Kaptur | Westerman |
| Kean (NJ) | Kean (NJ) | Wied |
| Keating | Keating | Wild |
| Kelly (IL) | Kelly (IL) | Williams (GA) |
| Kennedy | Kennedy | Williams (NY) |
| Khanna | Khanna | |
| Kiggans (VA) | Kiggans (VA) | |

Wilson (FL)	Wittman	Yakym
Wilson (SC)	Womack	Zinke
NAYS—33		
Bean (FL)	Donalds	Hunt
Biggs	Dunn (FL)	Kelly (MS)
Boebert	Ezell	Massie
Brecheen	Good (VA)	Mast
Burchett	Gosar	Miller (IL)
Burlison	Hudson	Mills
Cammack	Grothman	Ogles
Cline	Guest	Rosendale
Cloud	Hageman	Roy
Clyde	Harris	Self
Crane	Higgins (LA)	Webster (FL)

NOT VOTING—23

Blumenauer	Granger	Peltola
Bowman	Grijalva	Porter
Chavez-DeRemer	Hudson	Rodgers (WA)
Clyburn	Kelly (PA)	Velázquez
Evans	Lieu	Waltz
Gallego	Loudermilk	Wexton
Garcia, Mike	Napolitano	Williams (TX)
Gottheimer	Pelosi	

□ 1401

Messrs. KELLY of Mississippi, MILLS, EZELL, and CLINE changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Messrs. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, GARCIA of Illinois, and COLLINS changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed a vote. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 512.

JAMUL INDIAN VILLAGE LAND TRANSFER ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3857) to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 369, nays 37, not voting 23, as follows:

[Roll No. 513]

YEAS—369

Adams	Balint	Blunt Rochester
Aderholt	Banks	Bonamici
Aguilar	Barr	Bost
Alford	Barragán	Boyle (PA)
Allen	Bean (FL)	Brown
Allred	Beatty	Brownley
Amo	Bentz	Buchanan
Amodei	Bera	Bucshon
Arrington	Bergman	Budzinski
Auchincloss	Beyer	Bush
Babin	Bice	Calvert
Bacon	Bilirakis	Caraveo
Baird	Bishop (GA)	Carbajal
Balderson	Bishop (NC)	Cárdenas

Carey	Hayes	Moore (WI)	Torres (NY)	Veasey	Wied
Carl	Hern	Moran	Trahan	Wagner	Wild
Carson	Higgins (LA)	Morelle	Trone	Walberg	Williams (GA)
Carter (GA)	Hill	Moskowitz	Turner	Wasserman	Williams (NY)
Carter (LA)	Himes	Moulton	Underwood	Schultz	Wilson (FL)
Carter (TX)	Hinson	Mrvan	Valadao	Waters	Wilson (SC)
Cartwright	Horsford	Mullin	Van Drew	Watson Coleman	Wittman
Casar	Houchin	Murphy	Van Dwyne	Weber (TX)	Womack
Case	Houlahan	Nadler	Van Orden	Webster (FL)	Yakym
Casten	Hoyer	Neal	Vargas	Wenstrup	Zinke
Castor (FL)	Hoyle (OR)	Neguse	Vasquez	Westerman	
Castro (TX)	Hudson	Newhouse			
Cherfilus-	Huffman	Nickel			
McCormick	Huizenga	Norcross			
Chu	Issa	Nunn (IA)			
Ciscomani	Ivey	Obenoltte			
Clark (MA)	Jackson (IL)	Ocasio-Cortez			
Clarke (NY)	Jackson (NC)	Omar			
Cleaver	Jackson (TX)	Owens			
Cohen	Jacobs	Pallone			
Cole	James	Palmer			
Collins	Jayapal	Panetta			
Comer	Jeffries	Pappas			
Connolly	Johnson (GA)	Pence			
Correa	Johnson (SD)	Perez			
Costa	Jordan	Peters			
Courtney	Joyce (OH)	Pettersen			
Craig	Kamlager-Dove	Pfleger			
Crawford	Kaptur	Phillips			
Crenshaw	Kean (NJ)	Pingree			
Crockett	Keating	Pocan			
Crow	Kelly (IL)	Posey			
Cuellar	Kelly (MS)	Pressley			
Curtis	Kennedy	Quigley			
D'Esposito	Khanna	Ramirez			
Davids (KS)	Kiggans (VA)	Raskin			
Davis (IL)	Kildee	Reschenthaler			
Davis (NC)	Kiley	Rogers (AL)			
De La Cruz	Kilmer	Rogers (KY)			
Dean (PA)	Kim (CA)	Rose			
DeGette	Krishnamoorthi	Ross			
DeLauro	Kuster	Rouzer			
DelBene	Kustoff	Ruiz			
Deluzio	LaHood	Rulli			
DeSaulnier	LaLota	Ruppersberger			
DesJarlais	LaMalfa	Rutherford			
Diaz-Balart	Lamborn	Ryan			
Dingell	Landsman	Salazar			
Doggett	Langworthy	Salinas			
Duarte	Larsen (WA)	Sánchez			
Duncan	Larson (CT)	Sarbanes			
Dunn (FL)	Latta	Scalise			
Edwards	LaTurner	Scanlon			
Ellzey	Lawler	Schakowsky			
Emmer	Lee (CA)	Schneider			
Escobar	Lee (FL)	Scholten			
Eshoo	Lee (NV)	Schrier			
Españolat	Lee (PA)	Schweikert			
Estes	Lee Carter	Scott (VA)			
Ezell	Leger Fernandez	Scott, Austin			
Feenstra	Letlow	Scott, David			
Ferguson	Levin	Sessions			
Finstad	Lofgren	Sewell			
Fischbach	Lopez	Sherman			
Fitzgerald	Lucas	Sherrill			
Fitzpatrick	Luna	Simpson			
Fleischmann	Luttrell	Slotkin			
Fletcher	Lynch	Smith (MO)			
Flood	Mace	Smith (NE)			
Fong	Magaziner	Smith (NJ)			
Foster	Malliotakis	Smith (WA)			
Foushee	Maloy	Smucker			
Fox	Mann	Sorensen			
Frankel, Lois	Manning	Soto			
Franklin, Scott	Massie	Spanberger			
Frost	Mast	Stansbury			
Fry	Matsui	Stanton			
Garamendi	McBath	Stauber			
Garbarino	McCaul	Steel			
Garcia (IL)	McClain	Stefanik			
Garcia (TX)	McClellan	Steil			
Garcia, Robert	McClintock	Stevens			
Gimenez	McCollum	Strickland			
Golden (ME)	McCormick	Strong			
Goldman (NY)	McGarvey	Suozi			
Gomez	McGovern	Swalwell			
Gonzales, Tony	McHenry	Sykes			
Gonzalez, V.	McIver	Takano			
Gooden (TX)	Meeks	Tenney			
Graves (LA)	Menendez	Thanedar			
Graves (MO)	Meng	Thompson (CA)			
Green (TN)	Meuser	Thompson (MS)			
Green, Al (TX)	Mfume	Thompson (PA)			
Griffith	Miller (OH)	Timmons			
Grothman	Miller (WV)	Titus			
Guest	Miller-Meeks	Tlaib			
Guthrie	Molinaro	Tokuda			
Hageman	Moolenaar	Tonko			
Harder (CA)	Mooney	Torres (CA)			

Biggs	Fallon	Moore (AL)
Boebert	Fulcher	Nehls
Brecheen	Good (VA)	Norman
Burchett	Gosar	Ogles
Burgess	Greene (GA)	Perry
Burlison	Harris	Rosendale
Cammack	Harshbarger	Roy
Cline	Hunt	Self
Cloud	Joyce (PA)	Spartz
Clyde	Lesko	Steube
Crane	Luetkemeyer	Tiffany
Davidson	Miller (IL)	
Donalds	Mills	

NAYS—37

Blumenauer	Granger	Peltola
Bowman	Grijalva	Porter
Chavez-DeRemer	Kelly (PA)	Rodgers (WA)
Clyburn	Lieu	Velázquez
Evans	Loudermilk	Waltz
Gallego	Moore (UT)	Wexton
Garcia, Mike	Napolitano	Williams (TX)
Gottheimer	Pelosi	

NOT VOTING—23

Blumenauer	Granger	Peltola
Bowman	Grijalva	Porter
Chavez-DeRemer	Kelly (PA)	Rodgers (WA)
Clyburn	Lieu	Velázquez
Evans	Loudermilk	Waltz
Gallego	Moore (UT)	Wexton
Garcia, Mike	Napolitano	Williams (TX)
Gottheimer	Pelosi	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1408

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 513.

DETECTION EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION TO COUNTER THE THREAT OF FENTANYL AND XYLAZINE ACT OF 2024

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 8663) to require the Science and Technology Directorate in the Department of Homeland Security to develop greater capacity to detect, identify, and disrupt illicit substances in very low concentrations, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 1, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 514]

YEAS—404

Adams DelBene Kean (NJ)
 Aderholt Deluzio Keating
 Aguilar DeSaulnier Kelly (IL)
 Alford DesJarlais Kelly (MS)
 Allen Diaz-Balart Kennedy
 Allred Dingell Khanna
 Amo Doggett Kiggans (VA)
 Amodei Donalds Kildee
 Arrington Duarte Kiley
 Auchincloss Duncan Kilmer
 Babin Dunn (FL) Kim (CA)
 Bacon Edwards Krishnamoorthi
 Baird Ellzey Kuster
 Balderson Emmer Kustoff
 Balint Escobar LaHood
 Banks Eshoo LaLota
 Barr Espallat LaMalfa
 Barragán Estes Lamborn
 Bean (FL) Ezell Landsman
 Beatty Fallon Langworthy
 Bentz Feenstra Larsen (WA)
 Bera Ferguson Larson (CT)
 Bergman Finstad Latta
 Beyer Fischbach LaTurner
 Bice Fitzgerald Lawler
 Biggs Fitzpatrick Lee (CA)
 Bilirakis Fleischmann Lee (FL)
 Bishop (GA) Fletcher Lee (NV)
 Bishop (NC) Flood Lee (PA)
 Blunt Rochester Fong Lee Carter
 Boebert Foster Leger Fernandez
 Bonamici Foushee Lesko
 Bost Foxx Letlow
 Boyle (PA) Frankel, Lois Levin
 Brecheen Franklin, Scott Lofgren
 Brown Frost Lopez
 Brownley Fry Lucas
 Buchanan Fulcher Luetkemeyer
 Bucshon Garamendi Luna
 Budzinski Garbarino Luttrell
 Burchett Garcia (IL) Lynch
 Burgess Garcia (TX) Mace
 Burlison Garcia, Robert Magaziner
 Bush Gimenez Malliotakis
 Calvert Golden (ME) Maloy
 Cammack Goldman (NY) Mann
 Caraveo Gomez Manning
 Carbajal Gonzales, Tony Mast
 Cárdenas Gonzalez, V. Matsui
 Carey Good (VA) McBath
 Carl Gooden (TX) McCaul
 Carson Gosar McClain
 Carter (GA) Graves (LA) McClellan
 Carter (LA) Graves (MO) McClintock
 Carter (TX) Green (TN) McCollum
 Cartwright Green, Al (TX) McCormick
 Casar Greene (GA) McGarvey
 Case Griffith McGovern
 Casten Grothman McHenry
 Castor (FL) Guest McIver
 Castro (TX) Guthrie Meeks
 Cherfilus-Hagamen Menendez
 McCormick Harder (CA) Meng
 Chu Harris Meuser
 Ciscomani Harshbarger Mfume
 Clark (MA) Hayes Miller (IL)
 Clarke (NY) Hern Miller (OH)
 Cleaver Higgins (LA) Miller (WV)
 Cline Hill Miller-Meeks
 Cloud Himes Mills
 Clyde Hinson Molinaro
 Cohen Horsford Moolenaar
 Cole Houchin Mooney
 Collins Houlihan Moore (AL)
 Comer Hoyer Moore (UT)
 Connolly Hoyle (OR) Moran
 Correa Hudson Morelle
 Costa Huffman Moskowitz
 Courtney Huizenga Moulton
 Craig Hunt Mrvan
 Crane Issa Mullin
 Crawford Ivey Murphy
 Crenshaw Jackson (NC) Nadler
 Crockett Jackson (CA) Neal
 Crow Jackson (TX) Neguse
 Cuellar Jacobs Nehls
 Curtis James Newhouse
 D'Esposito Jayapal Nickel
 Davids (KS) Jeffries Norcross
 Davidson Johnson (GA) Norman
 Davis (IL) Johnson (SD) Nunn (IA)
 Davis (NC) Jordan Obernolte
 De La Cruz Joyce (OH) Ocasio-Cortez
 Dean (PA) Joyce (PA) Ogles
 DeGette Kamlager-Dove Omar
 DeLauro Kaptur Owens

Pallone Schweikert Timmons
 Palmer Scott (VA) Titus
 Panetta Scott, Austin Tlaib
 Pappas Scott, David Tokuda
 Pence Self Tonko
 Perez Sessions Torres (CA)
 Perry Sewell Torres (NY)
 Peters Sherman Trahan
 Pettersen Sherrill Trone
 Pfluger Simpson Turner
 Phillips Slotkin Underwood
 Pingree Smith (MO) Valadao
 Pocan Smith (NE) Van Drew
 Posey Smith (NJ) Van Dуйne
 Pressley Smith (WA) Van Orden
 Quigley Smucker Vargas
 Ramirez Sorensen Vasquez
 Raskin Soto Veasey
 Reschenthaler Spanberger Wagner
 Rogers (AL) Spartz Walberg
 Rogers (KY) Stansbury Wasserman
 Rose Stanton Schultz
 Rosendale Stauber Steel
 Ross Stefanik Waters
 Rouzer Roy Watson Coleman
 Roy Steil Weber (TX)
 Ruiz Steube Webster (FL)
 Rulli Stevens Wenstrup
 Ruppertsberger Strickland Westerman
 Rutherford Strong Wied
 Ryan Suzzo Wild
 Salinas Swalwell Williams (GA)
 Sánchez Sykes Williams (NY)
 Sarbanes Takano Wilson (FL)
 Scalise Tenney Wilson (SC)
 Scanlon Thanedar Wittman
 Schakowsky Thompson (CA) Womack
 Schneider Thompson (MS) Yakym
 Scholten Thompson (PA) Zinke
 Schrier Tiffany

NAYS—1

NOT VOTING—24

Blumenauer Granger Peltola
 Bowman Grijalva Porter
 Chavez-DeRemer Kelly (PA) Rodgers (WA)
 Clyburn Lieu Salazar
 Evans Loudermilk Velázquez
 Gallego Moore (WI) Waltz
 Garcia, Mike Napolitano Wexton
 Gottheimer Pelosi Williams (TX)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1414

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. PELTOLA. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 512, YEA on Roll Call No. 513, and YEA on Roll Call No. 514.

BEAGLE BRIGADE ACT OF 2023

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 759) to authorize the National Detector Dog Training Center, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 381, nays 20, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 515]

YEAS—381

Adams DesJarlais Kennedy
 Aderholt Diaz-Balart Khanna
 Aguilar Dingell Kiggans (VA)
 Alford Donalds Kildee
 Allen Duarte Kiley
 Allred Duncan Kilmer
 Amo Dunn (FL) Kim (CA)
 Amodei Edwards Krishnamoorthi
 Arrington Ellzey Kuster
 Auchincloss Emmer Kustoff
 Babin Escobar LaHood
 Bacon Eshoo LaLota
 Baird Espallat LaMalfa
 Balderson Estes Lamborn
 Balint Ezell Landsman
 Banks Fallon Langworthy
 Barr Feenstra Larsen (WA)
 Barragán Ferguson Larson (CT)
 Bean (FL) Finstad Latta
 Beatty Fischbach LaTurner
 Bentz Fitzgerald Lawler
 Bera Fitzpatrick Lee (CA)
 Bergman Fleischmann Lee (FL)
 Beyer Fletcher Lee (NV)
 Bice Flood Lee (PA)
 Bilirakis Fong Lee Carter
 Bishop (GA) Foster Leger Fernandez
 Bishop (NC) Foushee Letlow
 Blunt Rochester Foxx Levin
 Boebert Frankel, Lois Lofgren
 Bonamici Franklin, Scott Lopez
 Bost Frost Lucas
 Boyle (PA) Fry Luetkemeyer
 Brown Fulcher Luna
 Brownley Garamendi Luttrell
 Buchanan Garbarino Lynch
 Bucshon Garcia (TX) Mace
 Budzinski Garcia, Robert Magaziner
 Burgess Gimenez Malliotakis
 Bush Golden (ME) Maloy
 Calvert Goldman (NY) Mann
 Cammack Gomez Manning
 Caraveo Gonzales, Tony Mast
 Carbajal Gonzalez, V. Matsui
 Cárdenas Gooden (TX) McBath
 Carey Gosar McCaul
 Carl Graves (LA) McClain
 Carson Graves (MO) McClintock
 Carter (GA) Green (TN) McCollum
 Carter (LA) Green, Al (TX) McCormick
 Carter (TX) Greene (GA) McGarvey
 Cartwright Griffith McGovern
 Casar Grothman McIver
 Case Guest Meeks
 Casten Guthrie Menendez
 Castor (FL) Hageman Meng
 Castro (TX) Harder (CA) Meuser
 Cherfilus-Harshbarger Mfume
 McCormick Hayes Miller (IL)
 Chu Hern Miller (OH)
 Ciscomani Higgins (LA) Miller (WV)
 Clark (MA) Hill Miller-Meeks
 Clarke (NY) Himes Mills
 Cleaver Hinson Molinaro
 Cline Horsford Moolenaar
 Cloud Cohen Houlihan Mooney
 Clyde Hoyer Moore (UT)
 Cohen Houchin Moran
 Cole Houlihan Morelle
 Collins Hoyer Moskowitz
 Comer Huizenga Moulton
 Connolly Courtney Ivey
 Correa Hudson Jackson (IL)
 Costa Huffman Jackson (NC)
 Courtney Huizenga Jackson (TX)
 Craig Hunt Neal
 Crane Issa Neguse
 Crawford Ivey Nadler
 Crenshaw Jackson (CA) Nehls
 Crockett Jackson (TX) Newhouse
 Crow Jackson (TX) Nickel
 Cuellar Jacobs Norcross
 Curtis James Norman
 D'Esposito Jayapal Nunn (IA)
 Davids (KS) Jeffries Obernolte
 Davidson Johnson (GA) Ocasio-Cortez
 Davis (IL) Johnson (SD) Omar
 Davis (NC) Jordan Owens
 De La Cruz Joyce (OH) Owens
 Dean (PA) Joyce (PA) Pallone
 DeGette Kamlager-Dove Palmer
 DeLauro Kaptur Panetta
 DeSaulnier Kelly (MS) Pappas
 Peltola

Pence	Sessions	Titus
Perez	Sewell	Tlaib
Peters	Sherman	Tokuda
Pettersen	Sherrill	Tonko
Pfleger	Simpson	Torres (CA)
Phillips	Slotkin	Torres (NY)
Pingree	Smith (MO)	Trahan
Pocan	Smith (NE)	Trone
Pressley	Smith (NJ)	Turner
Quigley	Smith (WA)	Underwood
Ramirez	Smucker	Valadao
Raskin	Sorensen	Van Drew
Reschenthaler	Soto	Van Dуйne
Rogers (AL)	Spanberger	Van Orden
Rogers (KY)	Spartz	Vargas
Rose	Stansbury	Vasquez
Ross	Stanton	Veasey
Rouzer	Stauber	Wagner
Ruiz	Steel	Walberg
Rulli	Stefanik	Wasserman
Ruppersberger	Stell	Schultz
Rutherford	Steube	Watson Coleman
Ryan	Stevens	Weber (TX)
Salinas	Strickland	Wenstrup
Sánchez	Strong	Westerman
Sarbanes	Suozzi	Wied
Scalise	Swalwell	Wild
Scanlon	Sykes	Williams (GA)
Schakowsky	Takano	Williams (NY)
Schneider	Tenney	Wilson (FL)
Scholten	Thanedar	Wilson (SC)
Schrier	Thompson (CA)	Wittman
Schweikert	Thompson (MS)	Womack
Scott (VA)	Thompson (PA)	Yakym
Scott, Austin	Tiffany	Zinke
Scott, David	Timmons	

NAYS—20

Biggs	Good (VA)	Perry
Brecheen	Harris	Posey
Burchett	Lesko	Rosendale
Burlison	Massie	Roy
Cloud	Moore (AL)	Self
Clyde	Norman	Webster (FL)
Crane	Ogles	

NOT VOTING—28

Blumenauer	Granger	Porter
Bowman	Grijalva	Rodgers (WA)
Chavez-DeRemer	Hunt	Salazar
Clyburn	Kelly (PA)	Velázquez
Doggett	Lieu	Waltz
Evans	Loudermilk	Waters
Gallego	McHenry	Wexton
García (IL)	Murphy	Williams (TX)
García, Mike	Napolitano	
Gottheimer	Pelosi	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

□ 1422

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I missed the following votes, but had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 512, YEA on Roll Call No. 513, YEA on Roll Call No. 514, and YEA on Roll Call No. 515.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 4864

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 4864, a bill originally introduced by Representative GAETZ of Florida, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprintings pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WIED). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

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

RESEARCH SECURITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN DHS ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9748) to require the Under Secretary of the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a Department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9748

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 "Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act".

SEC. 2. SAFEGUARDING SENSITIVE RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 302 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 182) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (13), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (14), by striking the period and inserting "; and"; and

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

"(15) developing, in coordination with appropriate agency officials, a Department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions."

(b) GAO REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on how the Department has complied with National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 (NSPM-33) and adopted the National Science and Technology Council's 2022 implementation guidance.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall address the following:

(A) How the Department of Homeland Security has complied with disclosure requirements outlined in NSPM-33, and how violations are reported to the relevant executive agencies, including in the intelligence community (as such term is defined in section

3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

(B) Coordination and compliance with guidelines established by the National Science Foundation, the National Science Technology Council, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and other executive agencies regarding Federal research security.

(C) The role of the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department regarding establishing a research security framework for research and development projects across the Department.

(c) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a briefing addressing the development of policies and processes to safeguard Department of Homeland Security research and development in accordance with paragraph (15) of section 302 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 182), as added by subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 9748.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1430

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 9748, the Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act.

The Science and Technology Directorate is the principle of research and development at DHS.

In 2022, the DHS Office of Inspector General found that S&T failed to safeguard sensitive information in research and development projects.

This bill requires S&T to develop a proper standard for safeguarding sensitive information, which has become especially critical given the heightened activity of our adversaries.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO) for his leadership on this issue, and I am proud to join him as a cosponsor.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are here today to consider H.R. 9748, the Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act.

This legislation aims to improve security policies by requiring the Department of Homeland Security's Science

and Technology Directorate to develop a department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions.

Further, the bill would task the Government Accountability Office with reporting how DHS has complied with the National Science and Technology Council's 2022 implementation guidance and a 2021 National Security Presidential Memorandum relating to protecting U.S. research against foreign interference.

I am particularly pleased that this legislation includes a briefing to Congress by the Secretary of Homeland Security about the bill's implementation.

We have seen time and time again where bad actors have attempted to access sensitive information. This measure will strengthen the Department's abilities against those who wish to do us harm. This bill is an important step in ensuring that DHS prioritizes policies and procedures safeguarding research and development.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 9748, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO).

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support and leadership on the Homeland Security Subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support H.R. 9748, the Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act.

My grandfather was in his mid-nineties when he died a proud World War II combat veteran. One of the things he always told us was to leave the world a little bit better than you found it each day. From my time serving as an NYPD detective or chief in the fire service or here in Congress, that has been something I have been committed to.

I am proud of my bill. I urge my colleagues to support the Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act.

As threats against the United States' homeland evolve, we must continue to innovate quickly and ensure that our Nation's law enforcement officers have the tools and technologies they need to keep our communities safe.

Right now, Federal research and sensitive technologies are a target for foreign theft, espionage, and influence, and we must ensure that these technologies do not fall into the hands of bad actors.

It should come as no surprise that many of the Department of Homeland Security's research and development projects contain sensitive information about the United States' capabilities and vulnerabilities, and it is common sense that the Department of Homeland Security's research and development projects should be safeguarded from bad actors.

Whether the Department of Homeland Security is working to prevent a

terrorist attack, vetting bad actors at the airport, or disrupting transnational criminal organizations at the southwest border, the Department of Homeland Security relies heavily on sensitive research and development projects to keep pace with the evolving threats against this great Nation.

H.R. 9748, the Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act, requires that the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate develop a process that safeguards sensitive information projects across all components of the Department to limit unauthorized access to and disclosure of sensitive information.

Both the Trump and Biden administrations have made Federal research security a priority by issuing executive orders and Federal research security guidance for government agencies like Homeland Security to follow. However, it is unclear how DHS has complied under Secretary Mayorkas with existing Federal guidelines to protect the \$461 million worth of research and development projects.

That is why my bill will also require the Government Accountability Office to report how the Department of Homeland Security has complied with existing Federal guidance to protect federally funded research from foreign malign influence, ownership, and control.

By passing this commonsense bill, we will not only protect sensitive projects throughout the Department of Homeland Security, but we will also better protect the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9748, to better safeguard the Department of Homeland Security and this great Nation, leaving our homeland better than we found it.

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

Mr. Speaker, passage of this legislation is an important step to ensuring DHS research and development capabilities are safeguarded from bad actors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9748, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9748, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9748.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

ceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DHS INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS OVERSIGHT AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8664) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct an annual audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8664

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 "DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act".

SEC. 2. ANNUAL AUDIT OF DHS OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND BULK DATA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle A of title II of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 121 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 210H. ANNUAL AUDIT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND BULK DATA.

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term 'appropriate congressional committees' means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

"(2) BULK DATA.—The term 'bulk data' means large quantities of data acquired without the use of discriminants, a significant portion of which are not reasonably likely to have intelligence or operational value.

"(3) DISCRIMINANTS.—The term 'discriminants' means identifiers and selection terms.

"(b) ANNUAL AUDITS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter, the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department shall conduct an audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, which shall be consistent with the intelligence oversight guidelines of the Office.

"(c) NOTIFICATIONS.—The Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department shall provide the appropriate congressional committees with—

"(1) a notification not later than 30 days after the first analysis or other intelligence use by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis after the date of the enactment of this section of any new bulk data set and the associated terms and conditions; and

"(2) an update not later than 30 days after any changes to such associated terms and conditions related to the use of such a bulk data set.

"(d) REPORTS AND REVIEW.—

"(1) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days after the conclusion of each audit

under subsection (b), the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees the findings and results of such audit.

“(2) GAO REVIEW.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall provide the appropriate congressional committees a review of the implementation of the annual audit requirement under subsection (b), challenges to the implementation of such requirement, and recommendations for improving such audits.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–296; 116 Stat. 2135) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 210G the following:

“Sec. 210H. Annual audit of information systems and bulk data.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8664.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8664, the DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act introduced by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE).

DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis, or I&A, is required to audit bulk data transferred to or from I&A to appropriately limit intrusion into information related to the civil rights and liberties and other privacy concerns of Americans.

A recent GAO study found I&A has not implemented guidelines to address this issue. Ms. LEE's bill would amend the Homeland Security Act to require I&A to conduct an annual audit and report to Congress on its progress.

I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for her commonsense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8664, the DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act.

H.R. 8664 would require the Undersecretary for Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security to annually audit and report to Congress on the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, or I&A.

The bill would ensure such systems and data are consistent with oversight guidelines.

Last year, at the request of Ranking Member THOMPSON, the Government

Accountability Office issued a report that found that I&A is not auditing its information systems and bulk data.

Such audits are necessary to ensure, for example, that information pertaining to U.S. persons that is collected, stored, shared, and managed in information systems is protected.

The GAO report recommended that the Undersecretary identify who is responsible for conducting the audits of information systems and that the responsible official actually conduct them. This bill would simply codify the recommendations made in the GAO report.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8664, the DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act.

Our public servants must carefully protect the personal information and data of Americans.

Unfortunately, time and again, we have seen examples of agencies and bureaucrats who have failed to secure and protect our most sensitive information.

A recent report from the Government Accountability Office found that the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis, I&A, has not fully implemented oversight guidelines pertaining to bulk data collection activities and has not conducted an audit as outlined in the intelligence oversight guidelines.

To ensure transparency and to protect Americans' civil liberties, privacy, and civil rights, my bill, the DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act, will require DHS' I&A to conduct an annual audit to assess whether access to and searches of Americans' data are appropriately limited and in line with the I&A's intelligence guidelines.

To further conduct oversight, this bill will require the Undersecretary for Intelligence and Analysis to submit a report to Congress that outlines the findings of every annual audit to ensure transparency for the American people.

Americans deserve to know what data and information is being accessed by government agencies. This bill will make sure that entities responsible for conducting audits of information systems and bulk data are carrying out their duties in accordance with I&A's oversight guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 8664.

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill would ensure that DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis audits their systems and data, and that personnel follow policies to protect the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of United States persons.

I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. LEE) for introducing the bill in response to oversight done by Democrats on the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8664, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8664, and I thank Ms. LEE for her hard work on this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8664, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TSA COMMUTING FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8662) to reduce commuting burdens on Transportation Security Administration employees, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8662

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 “TSA Commuting Fairness Act”.

SEC. 2. FEASIBILITY STUDY ON TSA COMMUTING BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a study on the feasibility of treating as on-duty hours the time Transportation Security Administration employees working at airport locations spend traveling between regular duty locations and airport parking lots and bus and transit stops.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the feasibility study required under subsection (a), the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall consider the following with respect to Transportation Security Administration employees:

(1) The amount of time needed by such employees to travel between regular duty locations and airport parking lots and bus and transit stops at small hub airports, medium hub airports, and large hub airports (as such terms are defined in section 40102 of title 49, United States Code).

(2) The amount of time such employees spend commuting, on average, exclusive of the time described in paragraph (1).

(3) The potential benefits to such employees and the Administration of treating as on-duty hours the time described in such paragraph.

(4) The feasibility of using mobile phones, location data, and any other means to allow such employees to report their arrival to and departure from the airport parking lots and bus and transit stops concerned.

(5) The estimated costs of treating as on-duty hours the time described in such paragraph, including by considering such hours creditable as basic pay for retirement purposes.

(6) Other considerations determined appropriate by the Administrator.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8662.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8662, the TSA Commuting Fairness Act.

TSA often struggles to adequately employ enough personnel, and given the high cost of housing near airports, travel time to and from work may be an inhibitor for current and future employees.

□ 1445

This bill would require the TSA administrator to conduct a feasibility study to address this issue. I thank my colleague from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) for bringing this legislation forward.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, over the next couple of weeks, millions of Americans will travel through our Nation's airports for the holidays.

Air travel is at an all-time high, with the 10 busiest days in the Transportation Security Administration's history all occurring this year.

Throughout this busy travel period, the efforts of TSA employees are critical to keeping the aviation system secure.

Transportation security officers, or TSOs, screen travelers as they pass through checkpoints. Federal air marshals provide an in-flight security presence. K9 handlers add an extra layer of security to the system.

TSA employees face some unique challenges when commuting to work, however. Many employees find housing they can afford far from the airports, leading to long commutes with limited public transit options and heavy traffic.

Upon arrival at the airport, employees often must park in an employee lot and wait on irregular shuttles to bring them to the airport terminal where they may have to walk a long distance to a security checkpoint just to clock in for work.

According to the Government Accountability Office, TSOs have reported that just getting from the parking lot to the checkpoint to clock in for work can take as long as 45 minutes. If these hardworking civil servants are just a few minutes late to clock in, they can face discipline and punishment.

My bill, the TSA Commuting Fairness Act, would help provide fairer conditions for these employees as they commute to work to secure our transportation systems.

This bill would direct TSA to conduct a feasibility study on using mobile phones and location data to allow employees to clock in for work upon arrival at the airport parking lots and bus transit stops.

Doing so would reduce commuting costs and improve quality of life for TSA employees while allowing TSA leadership to manage the workforce appropriately and maintain order and discipline.

This study will provide insight for TSA and Congress as we collectively seek innovative ways to recruit and retain top talent to help secure our transportation systems.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working with me to develop this legislation.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I am prepared to close after the gentleman from New York closes, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as we advance our efforts to recruit and retain a skilled and well-trained workforce to secure our Nation's aviation system, we must seek new ways to compete for top talent.

Studying ways to address some of the TSA's workforce's greatest frustrations will allow TSA to continue to build the workforce it needs to counter evolving threats and keep air travel moving.

This bill will push TSA to consider ways to improve the quality of life for its workforce, which will ultimately help our national security.

I urge all Members to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 8662, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8662.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY SCREENING MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3959) to require the Transportation Security Administration to streamline the enrollment processes for individuals applying for a Transportation Security Administration security threat assessment for certain programs, including the Transportation Worker Identification Credential and Hazardous Materials Endorsement Threat Assessment programs of the Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3959

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 "Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration.

(2) HAZMAT ENDORSEMENT.—The term "HAZMAT Endorsement" means the Hazardous Materials Endorsement Threat Assessment program authorized under section 5103a of title 49, United States Code.

(3) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions of the United States.

(4) TSA.—The term "TSA" means the Transportation Security Administration.

(5) TWIC.—The term "TWIC" means the Transportation Worker Identification Credential authorized under section 70105 of title 46, United States Code.

SEC. 3. STREAMLINING OF APPLICATIONS FOR CERTAIN SECURITY THREAT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) STREAMLINING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall take such actions as are necessary, including issuance of an interim final rule if needed, to streamline the procedures for individuals applying for or renewing enrollment in more than one TSA security threat assessment program, in particular, the TWIC and HAZMAT Endorsement programs, and any other credentialing

programs as determined by the Administrator, by—

(A) permitting an individual to enroll at any TSA authorized enrollment center once for a threat assessment program endorsement and use the application, including associated biometric and biographic data, as well as information generated by TSA's vetting, for one of such programs to enroll in any other of such programs;

(B) permitting an individual to visit any TSA authorized enrollment center and enroll in more than one TSA security threat assessment program at the same time for a fee that is less than the cumulative fee that would otherwise be incurred for each such program separately;

(C) permitting an individual to undergo a streamlined and expeditious renewal process;

(D) aligning the expiration of an individual's successful, valid eligibility determination with the expiration of that individual's eligibility to participate in subsequent TSA security threat assessment programs to which the individual applies;

(E) providing to States the expiration dates for each individual's TSA security threat assessment to ensure a commercial driver's license of an individual who holds a HAZMAT Endorsement does not indicate the individual is authorized to transport hazardous materials after the expiration date of the enrollment of the individual in the HAZMAT Endorsement security threat assessment program if such commercial driver's license has an expiration date that is different from the expiration date of such enrollment; and

(F) enrolling an individual in a subsequent TSA security threat assessment program at the minimum cost necessary for the TSA to cover printing, issuance, and case management costs, costs associated with the collection of any additional biometric and biographic data in accordance with paragraph (3), and other costs that are not duplicative.

(2) STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR STREAMLINING.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the States shall carry out the responsibilities of the States pursuant to section 5103a of title 49, United States Code.

(3) SPECIAL RULE.—If an individual under this subsection is at different times applying for or renewing enrollment in more than one TSA security threat assessment program, such individual may be required to revisit a TSA authorized enrollment center for the collection of additional data, such as biometrics, necessary for any such program that were not so collected in connection with any other such program.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Administrator shall post on a publicly available website of the TSA information relating to the streamlining of the enrollment processes for individuals applying for more than one TSA security threat assessment program described in subsection (a).

(c) EXPEDITED RULEMAKING.—Notwithstanding sections 551 through 559 of title 5, United States Code, nothing in this section shall require notice and comment rulemaking, and to the extent it is necessary to add additional requirements for which limited rulemaking may be advisable, the Administrator shall implement such requirements through publication of an interim final rule.

(d) BRIEFING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall brief Congress on progress made toward the implementation of this section.

SEC. 4. ELIMINATING DUPLICATIVE COSTS.

(a) AUDIT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Com-

ptroller General of the United States shall audit the administration of the security threat assessment programs by the TSA and the States, including the TWIC and HAZMAT Endorsement programs.

(b) ELEMENTS.—

(1) TSA AUDIT.—In conducting the audit of the TSA required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall—

(A) identify any redundancies and duplications in costs and administration of security threat assessment programs that if eliminated would not impact national security and any benefits of eliminating such redundancies and duplications and improving the experiences for individuals applying for or renewing enrollment in more than one TSA security threat assessment program;

(B) review the impacts of the implementation by the TSA of recommendations from previous studies conducted by the Comptroller General, including GAO-07-756 and GAO-17-182, on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness, and reducing costs, of processing applications for enrollment and renewal in TSA security threat assessment programs;

(C) review the findings of the assessment required by section 1(b) of the Act entitled "An Act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a comprehensive security assessment of the transportation security card program, and for other purposes", approved December 16, 2016 (46 U.S.C. 70105 note; Public Law 114-278) and determine whether the TSA has implemented any remedies to redundancies and duplication identified by that assessment and whether such implementation impacted national security;

(D) determine whether there are unique challenges rural applicants have with accessing TSA security threat assessment programs;

(E) assess the numbers and locations of enrollment centers for meeting the needs of such programs, including determining the access provided to rural applicants;

(F) identify potential opportunities that exist to improve the enrollment center operations of and customer experience with such programs;

(G) identify potential opportunities to harmonize the enrollment, vetting, and renewal processes of such programs in which similar information is collected for similar security threat assessment processes for different vetted credentials while not impacting national security;

(H) identify other ways the TSA can reduce the costs of the TSA security threat assessment programs while not impacting national security; and

(I) review the vetting, application, and enrollment processes of each TSA security threat assessment program.

(2) STATE AUDIT.—In conducting the audit of the States required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall review—

(A) the administration of the HAZMAT Endorsement program by the States;

(B) methods by which the States could streamline the HAZMAT Endorsement program; and

(C) any potential barriers States face administering TSA security threat assessment programs for individuals applying to TWIC and the HAZMAT Endorsement program or individuals that already have a TWIC credential.

(c) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the completion of the audit required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Administrator, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

(1) a summary and analysis of the costs associated with the operation and administration of each individual TSA security threat assessment program;

(2) a summary and analysis of the application and enrollment costs associated with providing an individual multiple credentials under TSA security threat assessment programs;

(3) an identification of any potential duplicative processes associated with an applicant applying for, or the vetting or enrollment by the TSA of an individual in, a subsequent or multiple TSA security threat assessment programs;

(4) a breakdown of costs borne by applicants for current enrollment and renewal processes of such programs;

(5) ways to improve access to such programs, including for rural applicants;

(6) any potential recommendations to the TSA for reducing costs and streamlining the administration and operation of each TSA security threat assessment program while not impacting national security;

(7) any potential recommendations for the TSA to administer such programs in a way that would improve national security; and

(8) any potential recommendations for ways States can improve their role in administering the HAZMAT Endorsement program and streamline the application process or reduce costs for individuals seeking multiple transportation security credentials.

(d) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the receipt of the report required by subsection (c), the Administrator shall—

(A) implement the recommendations from such report;

(B) provide to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives a written notification detailing—

(i) the timeline for implementation of each recommendation from the report;

(ii) justifications for any implementation timeline lasting longer than 2 years; and

(iii) justifications for recommendations that the Administrator has declined to pursue or implement.

(2) BRIEFINGS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the receipt of the report required by subsection (c), and annually thereafter until the date that the TSA has implemented each recommendation made in such report, the Administrator shall brief the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives on the implementation of recommendations from the report.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KENNEDY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 3959.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of S. 3959, the Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act of 2024, which will streamline the background check and credentialing processes for American truck drivers across the United States. Truck drivers are a vital element of the U.S. supply chain that touch every sector of our economy.

From the food on your table to the lifesaving medicine at the pharmacy to the gas pump, truck drivers are an essential part of our daily lives that often go overlooked.

As it currently stands, truck drivers who transport hazardous materials or require access to secure areas of regulated maritime facilities in the United States must undergo separate background checks for the credentials they need to do their jobs, even though the background checks are the exact same.

This bill would streamline credentialing for America's truck drivers by eliminating duplicative background checks administered by the TSA.

S. 3959 will allow truck drivers to apply for and enroll in any security threat assessment program administered by the TSA for the credentials they need based on only one background check, not multiple threat assessment programs.

We depend on our truck drivers every day, and I firmly believe that we should make their lives easier by streamlining their credentialing process.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the House companion to this bill, H.R. 5840, and I am grateful to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) for his leadership in the House, as well as Senator WICKER of Mississippi for bringing forth this important piece of legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, many U.S. truck drivers and other transportation workers must undergo Transportation Security Administration background checks as a requirement for employment.

Workers requiring access to secure areas within maritime posts must undergo a background check to receive a Transportation Worker Identification Credential known as a TWIC.

Likewise, truck drivers authorized to transport hazardous materials must undergo a background check to receive hazardous materials or hazmat endorsement.

In fact, many workers with both a TWIC and a hazmat endorsement—and though TSA has made some progress in reducing requirements for such workers—they are still subject to far too many duplicative burdens and costs.

The Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act of 2024 would help eliminate and ease those burdens by streamlining requirements and reducing costs.

Importantly, the bill will push TSA and the Federal Bureau of Investiga-

tion to allow truck drivers and other individuals to visit a TSA enrollment center once and use their application to enroll in multiple programs.

This bill will reduce barriers to employment for these essential workers who are keeping our economy moving.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the sponsor and author of the House version of this bill.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is common sense. Why does a patient not go through the same open heart surgery twice? Because you fixed it, you addressed the problem.

In this case, if you have someone that is a truck driver, someone that is a port worker, and they have to get a TWIC card, they have to go through a background check. If they also have to get a hazardous materials endorsement, they have to go through a background check, the same background check.

Einstein is often credited with the quote that the definition of insanity is expecting a different outcome from the same process. I know that a lot of people have said he didn't really say that, but accuracy has never ever prevented anyone on the House floor from saying something.

The reality is why would you do it twice? It costs additional money, and it takes additional time to do that.

In my home State of Louisiana, one in every five jobs are tied back to our waterways, one in every five. If you are going to delay these workers, the availability of workers, that impacts our supply chain by making them go through this same process twice, by delaying them months, by costing them additional dollars, it simply doesn't make sense.

I thank Chairman MARK GREEN for working with us on this. I thank Ranking Member ADAM SMITH. I thank Ms. TITUS from Nevada, Mr. CARBAJAL, and many others that worked with us on a bipartisan basis to apply this common-sense legislation and fix this problem, help with government efficiency, and get our supply chain back in order.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) an original cosponsor of the House version of this legislation.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GREEN, Mr. GRAVES, and all the people that have been involved in this process. It is, as has been described, a very common-sense fix that really affects a lot of blue-collar workers.

If you work in a job that takes you into secure transportation environments, you are required to go through

a very cumbersome process and also pay fees to get the security clearance to do that job. The fees are redundant, the process is redundant, and it is an incredible burden on workers just trying to do their job. This bill makes a ton of sense, fixes the process, reduces the fees, streamlines the process, is going to make it easier for workers all across the country, and it is something we need to work on.

In my own world in the Department of Defense we have a similar problem with security clearances taking forever and in many cases being redundant, so I hope this is an idea that will spread. We need workers to go to work for us. Yes, we need security, but the process takes too long, it is redundant, and it costs too much. I hope this can be an inspiration to fix it.

The last thing I want to say is that I first heard about this issue—and I think this is the coolest thing about this legislation—from a constituent, Van Hurst, who was a Teamster and a truck driver at the time, who experienced this process, alerted my office to the problem, and it led to our involvement in this legislation.

A lot of people say that the system doesn't work; nobody ever listens to us. This is an average constituent, a truck driver in my district, who had a problem and brought it to us. We worked through the process, and now today we are about to pass the Senate bill, solve the problem, send it off to the President where it will be signed, and the problem will be fixed.

For all constituents out there frustrated, irritated, aggravated about all the things that aren't happening, bring your problems to us. We will do our level best to listen and try to solve them. It doesn't always work. It is a big, complicated democracy, a lot of people with a lot of voices, but it works far more often than people realize.

I will close with another shout-out to Van Hurst, a Teamster from the city of Kent in the Ninth Congressional District who brought this to my attention, and we are now working to solve the problem.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and as such, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, TSA's vetting programs are critical to ensuring the security of our Nation's transportation systems. At the same time, we must ensure these programs do not place unnecessary burdens on frontline workers.

The Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act of 2024 will help reduce these burdens while upholding security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I, too, want to thank Mr. GRAVES and Ranking Member SMITH. I urge my colleagues to support S. 3959, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOLINARO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3959.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1800

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MOLINARO) at 6 p.m.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 18, 2024, at 3:15 p.m.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1607.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1727.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2468.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3324.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4094.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4385.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5770.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6826.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6843.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 7332.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 9566.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Acting Clerk.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 18, 2024, at 3:15 p.m.

That the Senate passed S. 1097.

That the Senate passed S. 1144.

That the Senate passed S. 1277.

That the Senate passed S. 1299.

That the Senate passed S. 3022.

That the Senate passed S. 3373.

That the Senate passed S. 3502.

That the Senate passed S. 3543.

That the Senate passed S. 4181.

That the Senate passed S. 4576.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Acting Clerk.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 18, 2024, at 3:15 p.m.

That the Senate passed S. 4654.

That the Senate passed S. 5005.

That the Senate passed S. 5130.

That the Senate passed S. 5398.

That the Senate passed S. 5575.

That the Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 44.

That the Senate agree to the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate H.R. 5009.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 663.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Acting Clerk.

DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL H.R. 5009

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 44) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 44

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall make the following corrections:

(1) In the table of contents in section 2(b), strike the item relating to section 5705 and insert the following:

Sec. 5705. Readmission requirements for servicemembers.

(2) In the table of section 601 regarding basic pay for enlisted members, in the entry relating to a member in pay grade E-5 with over 2 years, strike "3,317.10" and insert "3,466.50".

(3) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 3 years, strike "3,480.90" and insert "3,637.50".

(4) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 4 years, strike "3,638.40" and insert "3,802.20".

(5) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 6 years, strike "3,789.00" and insert "3,959.40".

(6) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 8 years, strike "3,984.20" and insert "4,142.40".

(7) In the table of contents preceding section 5701, strike the item relating to section 5705 and insert the following:

Sec. 5705. Readmission requirements for servicemembers.

(8) Strike section 5705 and insert the following:

SEC. 5705. READMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS.

Subsection (a) of section 484C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091c(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) DEFINITION OF SERVICE IN THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.—In this section, the term ‘service in the uniformed services’ means service (whether voluntary or involuntary) on active duty in the Armed Forces, including such service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve.”

(9) Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2025 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.”

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable HAKEEM JEFFRIES, Democratic Leader:

December 18, 2024.

HON. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON: Pursuant to section 1092(b)(2) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263), I am pleased to announce the joint appointment, together with the Majority Leader of the Senate, of the Honorable Filemon Vela of Houston, Texas to serve as a Co-Chairperson of the Commission on the Future of the Navy.

Thank you for your attention to this appointment.

Sincerely,

HAKEEM JEFFRIES,
Democratic Leader.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I have had the honor and the privilege to represent the northeast San Fernando Valley for 28 years as a State assemblyman, as a city council member, and as a United States Congress Member.

I grew up in a neighborhood where I was told far too often: You are never going to amount to anything. You want to go to college? Don't even try it. Kids like you from your neighborhood never amount to anything.

I heard that countless, countless times, too many times from too many people, but I am here to remind anybody and everybody who has ever experienced that kind of negativity, those kinds of lies, that that is just not true.

I am very proud to say that I grew up in a community of hardworking people, a community that most of the families or most of the children are raised by immigrants in my community, just like me. I was raised by immigrants from Mexico, Andres and Maria Cárdenas, who came to this country not for themselves but for future generations to have a better life, a better life than they were afforded in their hometown of Temastian, Jalisco, Mexico.

I thank the many, many people who have been a positive influence in my life and who have given me support in many different ways.

I first thank the voters of my district who voted to elect me in 1996 to be the first person of color, the first Latino, to ever represent San Fernando Valley in any of our capitals. They elected me to be the State assemblyman for a community that was over 80 percent minority people. In a community where we never had a person of color represent us, they elected me to be the first one.

It was an honor that I didn't take lightly. I took it very seriously. I made sure that my goal wasn't to be the first. My goal was to make sure that I wasn't the last. Again, I thank the voters of the San Fernando Valley who have given me this responsibility and opportunity by voting me into office for over the last 28 years.

I hope and pray that I have done well for all of my constituents. I have tried my best. I have always done my best. I have always listened to them. I have always taken in the issues and tried to interpret them the best that I could to make sure that all of their lives in the San Fernando Valley are better for it.

I thank my parents, Andres and Maria Cárdenas, and my ten brothers

and sisters, for being such positive role models for me, for teaching me how to be good, do good, and give back to our great country and our community.

God is good because God gave me ten older brothers and sisters and two parents who stayed together for 48 years until my father passed away, who gave me all the examples I needed, the example of stick to it, the example of making sure that when you have "ganas" "the will power," when you want to get something done, do it, and to always think positive, always be positive, always give to others.

They taught me faith. They taught me how to respect myself and my community. Those are the examples, not my college degrees. Those are the examples that have allowed me to be an effective legislator for the last 28 years, the core building blocks of what it means and what it takes to be the best that you can be, not perfect, but the best that one can be.

I thank the community leaders like teachers and counselors and people who passed through my life and put their arm on my shoulder and said: You can do this. You are good enough. They nurtured me and encouraged me to always do good, to always think positive, to always believe in myself.

Again, to those people who choose to say the opposite of that to young people like I was, to people who grow up in bad neighborhoods—whatever that means—to the sons and daughters of immigrants whose parents don't even speak English, who raised their children here to love this country, to respect this country, and to honor this country; to the people who don't believe in people like me, like the ones that have passed through my life and told me the lies that you can't do this and you can't do that, good always prevails over bad, always.

To young people who have to endure that: I have endured it myself. Don't believe those lies. Believe in yourself. You are better than those who put you down.

I thank the supporters in the community who have volunteered all across our district, who have always been there to help thy neighbors when we were able to get resources out in the community and we needed help in doing so. I thank those community volunteers.

To the supporters in the halls of city hall, in our State capitol, and here in our United States Capitol, I thank you for encouraging me to be myself and to do the best job that I can for our country and for all people.

I have been very blessed to have amazing staff in all of my years in office, 28 years, dozens and dozens of amazing, wonderful people who have a heart for public service, people who put their heart and soul into everything that they do for the people. They are smart, talented, and caring people who have served our community and our country with distinction and honor.

To all of my staff, I thank them for serving. I see them as family and my family sees them as family as well.

I also thank my mother-in-law—yes, my mother-in-law. She loves me like a son. My mother-in-law, who came here as a young immigrant, Elvira Delgado Wagner, and my father-in-law, Jesus Luis Sanchez, and my brothers-in-law, Louie and Robert, to my many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, and my over 40 nieces and nephews: Without you, our family, my family, my wife, Norma, and our children may not have been able to do this for this long.

I thank all of them for being part of the support system that any and every elected official needs to do this job of public service.

I am eternally grateful to my wife, Norma, and our children, Vanessa, Cristian, Andres, and Alina. You have been so supportive and understanding for the past 28 years, to have that weird life of seeing your father go away for 3 or 4 days at a time to the State capitol, to the United States Capitol, being involved in community meetings and community events, yes, even during your birthdays and our anniversaries. I thank them so much for their understanding and their support and their patience.

□ 1815

I also thank my son-in-law Brian De La Rosa and also our two beautiful grandchildren, Joaquin and Jimena. How blessed I am to be a husband, a father, a grandfather, to have so many beautiful family members that I can count on that have always supported me in a loving, beautiful way.

Next to me is a picture of my wife, Norma, about the time that I met her. You might say, wow, I know why he fell in love with her. The beauty that my wife, Norma, exudes is nowhere near as beautiful as what she has inside. She is so understanding, so supportive, so tolerant of me. We have been married for 32 years, and I am grateful for every day.

Being an elected official is a difficult job. I would say for family members of full-time elected officials like us, Members of Congress, being a family member of an elected official is harder. As elected officials people praise us more than they should perhaps. People laugh at our jokes. People tell us nice things, but our family members don't necessarily receive that praise or that acknowledgment. I am not just speaking for myself; I think I speak for all of us who are elected, who do our job willingly, who do our job as it is supposed to be done with 100 percent of effort.

Let me tell you, you will never hear an elected official say that their family comes first. I have said it, and I mean it. However, when you actually consider who sacrifices the most not having their father, their mother with them, their brother, their sister, their husband, their wife, who is the elected official, what the family endures, I believe, is more.

I have been blessed, blessed to be elected in a community that did not see themselves in their elected officials. Today, more of us do in the northeast San Fernando Valley.

When I got elected in 1996, one of my core missions was to break that glass ceiling; to be the first person of that community and from that community who went to those public schools, who tripped on those broken sidewalks, who drove over those potholes and felt forgotten, to get elected to office and to fill those potholes and fix those cracks and make those schools better and build new schools. Those are the things that I have been able to help achieve for our community over the last 28 years.

I made it my personal mission that wherever I went I would identify with good people who wanted to be good public servants and help them get elected starting with my own community. I helped a young man, an amazing young man, ALEX. I met him when he was 21 years old. Somebody was telling me, TONY, you need to run for the State assembly. I asked ALEX, If I run for the State assembly, will you run my campaign? I didn't know anything about campaigns. He said, Neither do I, but let's do this.

When I decided to run, I made him my campaign manager. He had never run a campaign before in his life. The district was 450,000 people. It was not an easy task, but we took it on as two people who grew up in Pacoima, two kids who were both told by the same math teacher 10 years apart from one another that they couldn't cut it.

When I told my math teacher that I got accepted to the University of California, Santa Barbara to be an electrical engineering student, he laughed in my face, and he told me, You can't cut it. Don't even try it. They will eat you alive. Try community college, maybe you can handle that.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years later when ALEX PADILLA got selected to go to MIT, the number one engineering university in the world, that same math teacher told him, You can't cut it. That young man, ALEX PADILLA, got elected to the L.A. City Council, became the first Latino council president of the city of Los Angeles and the youngest council president in the history of Los Angeles.

He later went on to be our State senator for our community, and served two terms. Then he went on to be the secretary of State, the first Latino secretary of State in California history and served his two terms there.

One day he got the call from our Governor of California and was asked: Will you accept my appointment to be our United States Senator for California to fill the vacancy that KAMALA HARRIS left when she became our first woman Vice President of the United States? With tears in his eyes, he said, Yes.

The reason why ALEX PADILLA was brought to tears was because when the Governor asked him if he would take

on that responsibility, if he would accept that responsibility, I said, Mama Padilla—which is what I called ALEX's mother—I said, What would your mother think of you becoming a United States Senator? He thought about the sacrifices that his mother made who cleaned homes for a living, the career that his father had being a short order cook to raise their three children, and he said, Yes, I accept.

He has since been elected to the U.S. Senate twice. I am so proud of him, the young man who grew up just a couple of blocks away from me, who endured the same lies that I had to endure from teachers and others who didn't believe in him and didn't believe in me. Unfortunately, too many of those people don't believe in many of us. They don't believe enough of us to think that we can do what we have been elected to do, to be community leaders, to be national leaders, to make decisions that affect every American citizen and beyond.

Every time I have been termed out of office or every time I have chosen, like this time, to no longer run for that position, State assembly, city council, and now in Congress as I retire from Congress, I have always chosen someone to consider running in my former position. Every single time, it has been a woman, a Latina, who grew up in the same community that I grew up and that ALEX PADILLA grew up in, and on every occasion they have done a much better job than I. I am proud of that track record.

To be a true public servant, one has to realize it is not about me, it is about we. It is about the community, uplifting the community, bringing out the best in one's self and each other, bringing out the best in our community.

When I met my wife, Norma, she looked like the first picture, and she is more beautiful today. I can't take credit for raising our four beautiful children. She can. She says, No, no, no, it wasn't me. Yes, it was. Yes, it was. She takes care of the family when I am away too much, making sure that when our children cried there was a shoulder to cry on, making sure that when it was time to take them to the hospital or to the doctor, she did that, not me. She gave me the space to be the best Representative that I can be, and she shouldered the burden of being the mother to our children and filling in the gaps when I couldn't be there.

In this picture, as you can see, she is wearing a cap and gown. While doing all that, she actually went to school, and she achieved her goals in many areas. She has run her own business, many times sacrificing her own business to make sure that she didn't leave the family out or that she made sure that she was there for them when I couldn't be there.

Oftentimes when we think of the people who are closest to us we take it for granted how much they support us, how much they give of themselves, how much they give to others. I just wanted

to make sure that before I leave Congress, before I no longer can express what I feel I need to express on the House floor in these Chambers—because when I am no longer a Member of Congress, I am not allowed to come and speak from the podium, to speak from that microphone. Only current Members of Congress are allowed to do that, as it should be.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the opportunity to say thank you to so many people, to say thank you to my family members, to say thank you to my staff, to say thank you to the people who cared for me and loved me enough to teach me and mentor me to help me be the person that I am today.

I never cared to be the best. I always made sure that I focused on doing the best that I can achieve, to do the best job that I can.

I feel good about my career. People remind me now and then, they say remember when you did this and remember when you did that, and many times I actually put it so far back in my mind that I am like, wow, I did do that, didn't I? We did achieve that.

I hope that what I do in the future can give me the satisfaction of knowing the difference that we were able to make in these Chambers, in city hall, in our State capital, but I feel confident that I am going to be happy because God has blessed me with beautiful children, beautiful grandchildren, amazing family members, and the most beautiful woman I have ever met, the most beautiful woman in the world, my wife, Norma.

I hope that she can put up with me being around more often. When I hear from my friends who have retired once in a while they hear from their wives when they retire or their partner, Don't you have somewhere to be? I can understand if my wife, Norma, says that to me. I hope she doesn't, but if she does, I can understand. She comments sometimes that being married to an engineer can be difficult. I know. I know what she means.

Again, I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you to all the people who choose the life of being an elected official. I want to say thank you to all of the people in my life who have helped me become an elected official, to be an elected official for 28 years, staff, friends, family, voters, everyone. It has been an honor. It has been a privilege.

My interpretation of that is I think that I receive a lot of love from all of you. That is how I interpret it. I love you, too. Thank you for giving me this honor.

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

□ 1830

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LOPEZ) is recognized for 60

minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, Members of the House of Representatives, and my fellow Americans, lend me your ear.

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Since 1776, the people of this great Nation have bestowed the responsibility of fulfilling that declaration and setting the course of the future of our Nation in the collective hands of Congress which is comprised of both Members of the House of Representatives and Members of the United States Senate.

Since that time, every Member willingly raises their hand and publicly makes that sacred pledge to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

It is my belief that the American people look for the principles of respect, collaboration, friendship, unity, and statesmanship in every Member of Congress.

I encourage all Members of Congress to subscribe to and remember this quote from Henry Ford: “Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.”

The issues our Nation faces today are not Republican or Democrat issues. They are people issues. One issue I have repeatedly highlighted during my time here has been our national debt and the broken way in which Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, continue to support reckless spending.

Spending the people's money irresponsibly has created a \$36 trillion national debt which grows by \$1 trillion every 100 days. A \$1 trillion national debt equates to \$107,594 per person, \$272,546 per household, and \$493,233 per child.

Quite frankly, it is an embarrassment, and it needs to stop. Something must be done.

I join the millions of Americans who pray that on January 20, the President in the 119th Congress will seriously focus on the budget crisis and make the right decisions to remove this heavy burden off the backs of hard-working people of this great Nation and the backs of our children.

I thank my good friend, JODEY ARRINGTON, chairman of the Budget Committee, and my friends on the Committee for sounding the alarm and for their efforts to help right this ship.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise for the last time in this hallowed Chamber to bid my farewell. Even though my time here pales in comparison to the joy I find in family and faith, I proudly say that being among all of you has been more than an honor. It has been a privilege.

Yes, this place has its problems, but it has so much worth celebrating. I made friends across the aisle and have gotten to know a few of you through the early morning congressional football practices or prayer groups.

I have been blessed to know and learn from intelligent, loyal, and long-suffering staff that guided me through my journey. I have spoken on the House floor about issues that matter to the people of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, also known as the eastern plains of Colorado.

On January 2, my 6-month term as a sitting Member of Congress will come to an end. In just 6 months, my staff in D.C. and I have: Passed H.R. 9714 out of the Budget Committee, introduced a commonsense red card bill that would allow immigrant workers to remain in our labor force, introduced legislation that would place the national debt on every Federal voting ballot, highlighted and advocated for important local issues, presided over the House floor, played in the congressional football game, and drew national attention to the dangerous Tren de Aragua apartment takeover in Aurora, Colorado.

I joined the DOGE Caucus and worked as a constructive Member of the Republican caucus to support commonsense legislation that will help families in Colorado.

From July 21 to December 15, 147 days, my district staff back in Colorado have closed 401 cases, had 58 walk-in appointments, referred 1,116 constituent calls for further help, helped 21 constituents with grant requests, and helped return \$564,760 back to constituents with \$3,914,000 yet to be deposited into individual accounts for a total of \$4,478,760 or, better yet, \$30,468 a day.

I recommended 52 individuals to the military academies. They assisted me in traveling to all 21 counties of the Fourth Congressional District at least twice within the last 5 months.

Arriving in Congress wasn't a high point, and leaving isn't a low point either. It is life. You see, I describe my short time in Congress as that of a foreign exchange student. I arrived in July during the middle of the year. I missed the yearbook pictures. No one knew me. So both sides of the aisle liked me. I will not be coming back next year.

As a veteran, I describe my time here as a TDY, better known as a temporary duty assignment. Now it is time to return home.

Mr. Speaker, I treasure, Lisa, my wife, my children, Michael and Christina, my service in the Air Force, and my Lord more than any amount of time in Congress. I am proud to define my life by service to my Lord, my family, the Armed Forces, and now to the people of Colorado's Fourth Congressional District.

To my wife, Lisa, I thank her for joining me in this unexpected and unbelievable opportunity of serving in Congress. Having her by my side every day here in D.C., along with her support, encouragement, and love, has made the hours in travel, the early mornings in briefings, the afternoons in meetings, the evenings with receptions, studying memos, and racing to late-night votes made it both productive and bearable.

Lisa is my soulmate and my rock. I love her more than she will ever know.

To my son, Michael, and my daughter, Christina, I love them both. I hope that I have made them both proud.

One day I hope to bring my grandkids here. We will fly into Reagan airport and fight through the afternoon traffic. I will point out the never-ending construction on Cannon and lead the little ones to Statuary Hall before walking through the tunnels and eventually heading up to Rayburn's fourth floor where my office was.

I will hold them close there and say that their granddaddy was a part of this. I will say that government for and by the people isn't an abstraction. It is in their bloodline. I speak of generations because that is what the government is for, to protect, preserve, and pass along a legacy for our children.

At the end of my oath of office, I bound myself to my pledge by saying, “So help me God.” He has indeed helped me the same way that he has shepherded and guided this still-young Nation.

As I prepare to depart, I am reminded of my parents, Gregorio and Victoria Lopez. They taught me the value of hard work, laboring in the fields under the Texas Sun. When the day was over, the foreman would come out and yell, “Ya Vamenos. Ya cavamos de trabajar,” which translated means, “Let's go. Our work is done,” then my parents would finish up and head home.

Colorado is calling me home, and I must answer. My work here is done. I now depart.

With immense gratitude to God, my family, Colorado's Fourth Congressional District, the friends I have made here, my staff, and this institution, I bid them all a fond farewell.

In my story, this is just a chapter, and every chapter ends. That is for the best because we can see what happens next.

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

□ 1845

ISSUES OF DEBT AND DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 30 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, we learned late this afternoon that the Republican leadership of this House has derailed the important appropriation bills to fund the Government of the United States for the fiscal year that actually began October 1.

It has been delayed for months and months, and now, today, with legislation ready to move, again, the Republican leadership has failed the people of the United States.

Why did they do this? The incoming administration, which has not been sworn in yet, called and asked them to shelve the funding of the Government of the United States for the fiscal year of 2025, which, as I said, began on October 1.

Why did they do that? All the Members were here on both sides of the aisle. We were ready to vote. We had done the work.

I serve on the Appropriations Committee. We have worked for well over a year to put 12 bills together that should have been presented to the Chamber one at a time starting back last June.

They say they want to talk. They want to talk with Congress about the debt ceiling. Surely, this is a joke.

Here are the facts, and here is a great chart. Numbers don't lie.

President-elect Trump in his last term had tax cuts passed to millionaires and billionaires that have already added \$2 trillion to the over \$30-trillion U.S. debt. We are going to add up numbers tonight, simple numbers. So, \$2 trillion from the first term, and that adds up even more every year.

There is more to come, Mr. Speaker. The tax cuts provided by a predecessor of his, George Bush the second, have already added \$8 trillion to the U.S. debt. Those benefits went to, again, billionaires and millionaires, not to the middle class or working people, and there is more debt to come because those tax cuts haven't expired.

So, just with the past Trump administration and the two Bush tax cuts, we are talking about almost one-third of the accumulated debt of the country, and that number is right up here. It is \$36 trillion in U.S. debt.

It is interesting where it is coming from. Bush two's wars added another \$8 trillion as part of that \$36 trillion in military spending to the debt, but it wasn't paid for.

Just these three Republican gouges of the Federal purse total \$18 trillion of the \$30 trillion.

That is accumulated debt on the current generation and future generations, but it is not over. Republicans again cuddled up to Wall Street, causing the horrid recession of 2008. That cost a

minimum of \$3 trillion more of the \$36 trillion to bail out America where it could be bailed out. That recession was a total disaster.

The average African-American citizen of our country who owned a home lost one-half of their accumulated wealth because so many families lost their dwelling. About 30 percent of Hispanic Americans lost their homes. The rest of the country lost about 20 percent of their accumulated wealth. That was a horrible, horrible, horrible meltdown of the economy. Again, it added \$3 trillion to the accumulated debt.

Now, we hear one of the people on the phone to the leadership of this House, Elon Musk, who is the richest man in the world, is trying to strangle the U.S. Government, in other words, to not pass the appropriation bills to grow his monopoly power. He already has contracts with the Department of Defense and from NASA.

What is he interested in doing? Gaining even more control over the production of three things: electric vehicles, space-based communication, and commercial and military rockets.

How much is he going to add to the accumulated debt?

Mr. Speaker, this is not a pretty picture. The middle class and working people of this country have to stand up to these billionaires and millionaires strangling the U.S. Treasury and causing raids in the future on the accumulated wealth of the American people, particularly in our Social Security and Medicare accounts and the food and agricultural programs, which are being held up because this body is being held back by people who haven't been sworn in yet from doing its job.

Environmental cleanup? Forget about that. There is not going to be money for that and so many programs critical to the working people of the United States.

Numbers don't lie. Forget politics, Mr. Speaker. Just look at the raw figures.

We have a lot of accounting to do in this Chamber to the American people for the chaos attending those who hold the gavel, and they had better bring that bill to the floor tomorrow. The American people have been waiting for far too long. Frankly, they shouldn't be paid. If you can't bring the bill to the floor, then you shouldn't be paid.

I want to turn to another subject, and this regards the Army-Navy Football Game that was broadcast about 1 week ago.

For spectators watching the Army-Navy Football Game, the moments can be exhilarating. From either their seats in the stands or couches at home, spectators can enjoy the thrill of the game.

Meanwhile, the teams on the field put their grit and mettle to the test. The trials of the gridiron are often compared to the rigors demanded of our young soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardians in uniform.

There may be similarities in teamwork, but believe me, ultimately, play-

ing football does not compare to the sacrifices demanded of our servicemembers in combat, including, for some, the last measure of full devotion.

Our Nation is protected by our military's patriots, whose motto is: We Are Your Defense.

The veterans in our family have fought for our Nation for over a century and a quarter. Most of them did not play football. All were hard workers dedicated to service and deep patriots of the United States of America.

Our Uncle Tony, who served in the Office of Strategic Services under Lieutenant General Joseph Stilwell, remarked that service in his lifetime meant kill or be killed in the lethal China, Burma, and India theater as U.S. soldiers parachuted into those killing fields and ultimately built what is called the Burma Road.

Our father's oldest brother, Szepan, deployed into combat under Woodrow Wilson as a marine against the Bolsheviks' civil war after World War I. He was sent to northern Russia in the Arctic, where frigid, 40-degree-below-zero temperatures and remote conditions took their toll as marines deployed to Arkhangelsk and Vladivostok to fight the Bolsheviks. That ultimately resulted in a civil war.

The Red army was victorious, sadly, and almost all those who served in our family on both sides, both our mother's and our father's sides, had been combat veterans for this country going back a century and a quarter.

For my part, as a senior in high school, I dreamed of attending the United States Air Force Academy to serve my country, but in those days, my application was rejected because I was a woman. Thank goodness that has changed.

Despite this rejection, I maintain my interest in our national security by now serving as a senior member of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, and that is another reason that the leadership of this House should not hold up the appropriation bills. The Defense funding for 2025 is in that bill. The work of Defense ensures our men and women in uniform are supplied with the resources required to protect American interests at home and abroad.

As I watched the publicity around the Army-Navy Game, I realized I could not recall any veterans in President Donald Trump's family. Could I possibly be correct? I began to consider how someone with no or few veterans in their family would think about selecting advisers on such weighty questions as defense, war, and peace.

We must hope that these appointees being considered will be outstanding intellects and experienced leaders. This is America's tradition as the greatest fighting force on Earth. Top leaders must have exemplified lives of integrity, a serious commitment to military service, a deep knowledge of history, command of contemporary world events, and a record of managing a very large, complex organization.

The Defense Department's mission is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our Nation's security. Accomplishing this mission is anything but simple. It requires the dedicated work and leadership of around 2.3 million troops and civilian employees, with an annual operating budget at the Department of Defense of nearly \$900 billion.

The individual appointed to lead this Department must be highly capable mentally, physically, and emotionally to lead these brave men and women while managing the vast means to move the levers of military might and national security. Historically, our Nation has appointed individuals with the background and aptitude commensurate with the demands of this office. Those who rise to the role of Secretary of Defense are cut from a special cloth.

For example, at a turning point in history, Americans such as General George Marshall—one of my heroes, without question—served President Truman in shaping the new post-World War II alliance with our Allies. Marshall's selfless patriotism—oh, my, he was one of a kind—and superior military and diplomatic experience built the foundational alliances that still guard liberty today here at home and abroad.

Truman, who integrated the U.S. military, called Marshall the architect of victory in World War II. Marshall spent most of his life, 49 years, devoted to America's defense.

Another example of a great defense leader was James Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense under the Truman administration who served from 1947 to 1949. He played a defining role in reorganizing our military to meet the requirements of a post-World War II landscape under the National Security Act of 1947.

That is when the U.N. was just being founded. There was a lot of imagination and intellect that went into creating the institutions for liberty following that most costly of our wars after the Civil War.

Forrestal previously worked for the Secretary of the Navy handling extensive contracts and legal affairs and built his office into an efficient organization. He had served as the Secretary of the Navy in 1944, guiding our Navy through World War II and the difficult years of demobilization following the surrender of Imperial Japan and its rebuilding. His service set a very high standard for leading our brave men and women in uniform to maintain the security of our Nation.

During the Eisenhower administration, Charles E. Wilson led a major internal reorganization and implemented the "New Look" defense concept that elevated strategic air power and modernized the Reserve forces.

Wilson brought to the Defense Department his experience as president of General Motors, one of our greatest industrial companies, and his direction of the country's defense production effort during World War II.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, we entered that war without sufficient weaponry and armaments.

President Franklin Roosevelt recognized his personal commitment and expertise by awarding him the U.S. Medal of Merit for his efforts to create and manage the arsenal of democracy.

After selling his stock in General Motors to avoid a conflict of interest, he used his experience to ensure that the Department of Defense managed its budget in a manner that aligned national security and economic prosperity.

A more recent example, Robert M. Gates is the only Secretary of Defense in U.S. history to be asked to remain in that office by a newly elected President. He served Presidents of both political parties.

Prior to his appointment as Secretary of Defense, Gates served in the Central Intelligence Agency for 27 years and was the only career-level officer to rise from entry-level employee to Director.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. During 9 of those years, he served on the National Security Council for four Presidents. That is seasoning.

Gates also served as president of what was at the time our country's seventh largest university, Texas A&M.

George Herbert Walker Bush appointed Gates as his Secretary of Defense in 2006, and President Obama requested that he remain in that position. His background gave him expertise in special intelligence, the management of large organizational budgets, and foresight. He devoted 31 years of his life in service to our Nation.

During my own service, I have had the privilege of serving in Congress with many individuals who rose to the position of Secretary of Defense. These include Leslie Aspen of Wisconsin, Leon Panetta of California, and Dick Cheney of Wyoming. Though their views differed widely, they were respected as stable, broadly competent, and knowledgeable in defense and international affairs.

□ 1900

In contrast to these individuals, Caspar Weinberger serves as a cautionary tale of the importance of maintaining a strong moral compass in one of our Nation's most critical positions.

He served as Secretary of Defense during the Reagan administration. During his tenure, he worked with Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North and Robert McFarlane to make a secret agreement to send antitank missiles and other military equipment to Iran in hopes of securing the release of U.S. hostages.

Despite raising concerns on the legality of this agreement, his actions were nonetheless critical to enabling the sales to occur. This debacle, the Iran-Contra affair, would become synonymous with political hubris, government incompetence, and dishonesty.

The Secretary of Defense is a position of great power. With great power

comes great responsibility. The American people have a right to expect that their Secretary of Defense will have the experience, aptitude, and integrity of character to take the helm of the world's strongest military with a steady hand.

This is even more important now as our Nation faces a growing spiderweb of tyranny: Russia, Iran, China, and North Korea causing instability in the Middle East, the Korean Peninsula, and in European nations that require working in concert with our allies to protect the foundations of democracy itself.

The President-elect must ask the hard question: Is Mr. Pete Hegseth, the current nominee for Secretary of Defense, the most experienced and capable choice to lead our Department of Defense during this contemporary era, a most complex period?

His experience appears to consist of running two small veterans organizations, both of which reportedly fell into significant debt, and working in public relations as a weekend cohort of a morning cable news program.

Yes, he served in the military as a junior to midgrade officer, for which America and I thank him. However, I cannot help but note the disparity between leading a platoon of 50 soldiers or an organization of less than 60 individuals compared to leading a department of over 2 million men and women.

He has also said publicly that women should not serve in combat. This is 2024, not 1964. Nearly 20 percent of the U.S. military is comprised of women. On July 12, 1948, President Harry Truman signed the bill into law that permitted women to enlist from ages 18 to 35.

The American people rightly expect that our men and women in uniform will conduct themselves according to the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

I have heard that Mr. Hegseth wishes to reclaim the title of the "War Department" for our Department of Defense, changing the title. I do not agree with him. Why?

After World War II, which set the stage for modern international relations, it is my understanding that the term "War Department" was dropped because the U.S. did not want to be seen as the enforcer of global security.

Rather, the term "defense" was used in recognition of the fact that other nations had been invited into a fraternity of democratic countries that would form NATO, the mutual self-defense pact of trusted allies that forms a powerful defensive shield among free nations.

In addition, respected alliances were negotiated with the Virgin Islands, the Philippines, the Northern Mariana Islands, Hawaii, until it became a State, Guam, and American Samoa.

Proposals to change the name of the U.S. Department of Defense would be subject to very serious congressional review and debate. Current threats to

the United States and liberty-loving people require military alliances that can counter and defeat willful aggression by rogue states.

The Secretary of Defense is in a critical position that requires a sacred trust, especially the trust of our brave servicemembers, that they will be led capably; the trust of our Nation, that we will maintain the security of the American people; and the trust of our allies and partners, that America will continue to stand strong as a shield of freedom and liberty for all.

The consequences of betraying that sacred trust are both dire and lasting. We must choose wisely.

AMERICAN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I have one final topic this evening on the question of American energy independence, which is so vital to our domestic security and our international security.

We well know, when the United States became dependent on imported oil, we fell into deep recession during the 1970s, and we spent the last half century trying to catch up to become energy independent here at home in perpetuity. It is a major objective for the safety and security of our people, and we are making great progress.

With the radiant lights above us here in the Chamber tonight, I am here to speak about that force that illuminates every facet of our daily lives: energy. Not just any energy, but American energy. Energy infuses life into our Nation, energy powers our homes, energy fuels our industries, and energy safeguards our independence.

My message is clear: Our Nation must aim forcefully toward American energy independence in perpetuity.

In northwest Ohio, you don't have to look far to see the embodiment of an all-encompassing energy strategy. From the majestic wind turbines that dot our western agricultural basin landscape, especially in the agricultural regions, to our premier domestic solar manufacturing companies, to the advanced nuclear and hydrogen future we imagine, our region is a living testament to the strength and potential of our skilled technicians and industrious innovators.

America can't and shouldn't play the piano with just one key. We need every key on the energy board: oil and gas, wind, solar, hydrogen, thermal recovery, biofuels, advanced nuclear, and systems yet to come.

Energy is essential and innovative. It creates high-paying jobs in multiple energy sectors, ensuring that the lights stay on for energy and power systems and allowing our holiday trees to sparkle a little brighter. Energy allows families to gather in warm homes, bake holiday treats, and make good memories.

Over the last 4 years, our Nation has made enormous strides toward energy independence. We are increasing energy production across all sectors. In 2023, the United States set all-time

records for both crude oil production and natural gas exports.

As time goes on, those resources will diminish, and we simply must invent our way forward to be energy independent forever. This is not easy, but it is the struggle we are in.

At the same time, renewable energy production continues to grow with the shocking statistic of wind and solar power now contributing close to 15 percent of our electricity. That is just in modern history, and we have a long way to go. These technologies are revolutionizing our accomplishment of energy independence at the start of this 21st century's new energy age.

Yet, as we make strides in energy diversity and security, we face new political whims that mustn't threaten to derail the progress that we have made. Politics should never jeopardize the security of the American people or play games with energy independence. We must keep our pedal on the metal, pushing forward, not backward.

To the new administration in Washington, I say: Embrace an all-of-the-above energy policy. Leave no sector behind. "Clean energy" is not a dirty word. We must maintain a balanced portfolio to ensure American energy independence going far into the future.

The farm bill that has been held back by the leadership of this House, that we could pass this week, has a special section that is built into it, and that includes the continuing resolution that it is a part of an E15 inclusion for our country in perpetuity. It is just magnificent as we try to use every key on the piano to help our country produce new, good jobs in the energy sector and one that uses all of our talents.

Come to northwest Ohio. See firsthand how a comprehensive energy strategy operates. See the innovation and dedication that fuels our community and our country. We are inventing the future.

Just this week, the village of Pioneer in Williams County, Ohio, has shown remarkable vision and determination to harness the power of clean energy with new funding announced for a solar field through a \$10.5 million Federal loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Pioneer will deliver tangible benefits for northwest Ohio residents, including lowering energy costs, strengthening infrastructure, and promoting energy independence for decades to come.

I commend the Pioneer community leadership in pursuing this opportunity to power its future with better and lower costs through renewable energy. Northwest Ohio is the solar capital of America, and I encourage other communities across our region to follow the pioneering lead of Pioneer, Ohio, in building solar fields that can harness the renewable energy of the Sun that shines bright over our region.

Let's not throttle down on American progress in any sector. Instead, let's do what America does best: invent the future and adapt to changing conditions.

Let's accelerate energy innovation. Let's champion it. Let's support it and propel it into the future. We have a duty to safeguard our energy independence to ensure security so that every American family, community, and business can continue to thrive.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2231

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YAKYM) at 10 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Kevin F. McCumber, Acting Clerk of the House, reported that on December 17, 2024, the following bills were presented to the President of the United States for approval:

H.R. 7872 To amend the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act to modify certain requirements applicable to salinity control units, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6960 To amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children program.

H.R. 6829 To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize and support the creation and dissemination of cardiomyopathy education, awareness, and risk assessment materials and resources to identify more at-risk families, to authorize research and surveillance activities relating to cardiomyopathy, and for other purposes.

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.

H.R. 3801 To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to streamline and improve the employer reporting process relating to health insurance coverage and to protect dependent privacy.

H.R. 3797 To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an alternative manner of furnishing certain health insurance coverage statements to individuals.

H.R. 3254 To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a process to review applications for certain grants to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1097 To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Everett Alvarez, Jr., in recognition of his service to the Nation.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-6409. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the System's final guidance — Guidance for Resolution Plan Submissions of Foreign Triennial Full Filers [Docket No.: OP-1817] received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6410. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the System's final guidance — Guidance for Resolution Plan Submissions of Domestic Triennial Full Filers [Docket No.: OP-1816] received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6411. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the System's final rule — Federal Reserve Bank Capital Stock [Regulation I; Docket No.: R-1844] (RIN: 7100-AG85) received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6412. A letter from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Truth in Lending (Regulation Z) Annual Threshold Adjustments (Credit Cards, HOEPA, and Qualified Mortgages) received December 11, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6413. A letter from the Senior Congressional Liaison, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Fair Credit Reporting Act Disclosures received December 11, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-6414. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the 2023 Victims of Child Abuse Act Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-6415. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Personal Protective Equipment in Construction [Docket No.: OSHA-2019-0003] (RIN: 1218-AD25) received December 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

EC-6416. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Sixteenth Annual Report on Delays in Approvals of Applications Related to Citizen Petitions and Petitions for Stay of Agency Action:

FY 2023, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. 355(q)(3); June 25, 1938, ch. 675, Sec. 505(q)(3) (as amended by Public Law 110-85, Sec. 914(a)); (121 Stat. 956); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-6417. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Health Data, Technology, and Interoperability: Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) (RIN: 0955-AA07) received December 11, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-6418. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2023 Nursing Workforce Report to Congress; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-6419. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, Office of State and Community Energy Programs, State Energy Programs, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Mandatory Transmission and Distribution Planning Support Activities (RIN: 1930-AA01) received December 16, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

EC-6420. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6421. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress covering the six-month period ending September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6422. A letter from the Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the period ending September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6423. A letter from the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, pursuant to 6 U.S.C. 345(b); Public Law 107-296, Sec. 705; (116 Stat. 2219); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6424. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Labor, transmitting the Semiannual Report of the Office of the Inspector General for the period April 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6425. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report to Congress, covering the period ending September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6426. A letter from the Director, Office of Communication and Legislative Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2024 Agency Financial Report, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a)(1); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 107-289, Sec. 2(a)); (116 Stat. 2049); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6427. A letter from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting the Commission's Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report to

Congress, covering the period from April 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6428. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting the Commission's Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1, 2024, through, September 30, 2024 and the Management Report on Final Actions for the Six-Month Period Ending September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6429. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2024, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a)(1); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 107-289, Sec. 2(a)); (116 Stat. 2049); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6430. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the period April 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6431. A letter from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting the Administration's Semiannual Management Report to Congress, covering the period April 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6432. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Management Response for the period of April 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6433. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Privacy Act Regulation; Exemption for Legal Case Management Records (RIN: 1212-AB59) received December 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6434. A letter from the Chair of the Board, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6435. A letter from the Board Members, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the Board's Performance and Accountability Report for Fiscal Year 2024, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3515(a)(1); Public Law 101-576, Sec. 303(a)(1) (as amended by Public Law 107-289, Sec. 2(a)); (116 Stat. 2049); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-6436. A letter from the Biologist, Branch of Domestic Listing, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for Swale Paintbrush [Docket No.: FWS-R2-ES-2022-0173; FXES1111090FEDR-256-FF09E21000] (RIN: 1018-BF79) received December 13, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6437. A letter from the Biologist, Branch of Domestic Listing, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Species Status for the Peñasco Least Chipmunk and Designation of Critical Habitat [Docket No.: FWS-R2-ES-2020-0042; FXES1111090FEDR-245-FF09E21000] (RIN: 1018-BD94) received December 16, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6438. A letter from the Assistant to the Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action — Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Self-Governance PROGRESS Act Regulations [Docket No.: BIA-2024-0001; 256A2100DD/AAKCO01030/A0A501010.999900] (RIN: 1076-AF62) received December 16, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6439. A letter from the Executive Assistant, Office of the Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Rights of Way [NPS-WASO-PPFL-38951; Docket No.: NPS-2024-0004; PPWOPFFLL0; PPMSPD1Y.YM0000] (RIN: 1024-AE75) received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6440. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 180831813-9170-02] (RIN: 0648-XY015) received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6441. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 630 in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 200221-0062; RTID 0648-XY081] received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6442. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Deep-Water Species Fishery by Vessels Using Trawl Gear in the Gulf of Alaska [Docket No.: 180831813-9170-02] (RTID: 0648-XY085) received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6443. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — 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 [Docket No.: 200227-0066; RTID 0648-XY087] received December 9, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

EC-6444. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's Annual Report to Congress on Investigation, Enforcement, and Implementation of the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act Requirements, pursuant to 34 U.S.C. 20991; Public Law 109-248, Sec. 635; (120 Stat. 644); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-6445. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting the National Institute of Justice Annual Report 2023; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-6446. A letter from the Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Department of Justice,

transmitting A Report to Congress on Best Practices and Professional Standards for Peer Support Counseling Programs for First Responder Agencies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-6447. A letter from the Chief Special Master, United States Court of Federal Claims, transmitting the United States Court of Federal Claims' "Office of Special Masters — Fiscal Year 2024 Report"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-6448. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's National Water Quality Inventory: Report to Congress; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

EC-6449. A letter from the Senior Advisor, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Rates VA Pays for Special Modes of Transportation; Delay of Effective Date From February 16, 2025, Until February 16, 2029 (RIN: 2900-AS19) received December 12, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-6450. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a legislative proposal to reauthorize the Defense Production Act; jointly to the Committees on Financial Services and Veterans' Affairs.

EC-6451. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's "2024 Report to Congress — Annual Update: Identification of Quality Measurement Priorities and Associated Funding for the Consensus-Based Entity and Other Entities", pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395aaa(e); Aug. 14 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1890(e) (as amended by Public Law 115-123, Sec. 50206(b)); (132 Stat. 184); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

EC-6452. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a Report on Unobligated Balances for Appropriations Relating to Quality Measurement, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395aaa(f)(1); Public Law 116-94, div. I, Sec. 102(a) (as amended by Public Law 116-260, Sec. 102(b)(2)); (134 Stat. 2941); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

EC-6453. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on Strengthening Medicare and Repaying Taxpayers Act Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) Non-Group Health Plan (NGHP) Threshold for Calendar Year (CY) 2025", pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395y(b)(9)(D); Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1862(b)(9)(D) (as added by Public Law 112-242, Sec. 202(a)(2)); (126 Stat. 2379); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3283. A bill to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to report to Congress on any barriers to establishing online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-545, Pt. 2). Referred

to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 4043. A bill to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to make the District of Columbia eligible for certain wastewater infrastructure grants, and for other purposes; with amendments (Rept. 118-897). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. H.R. 9135. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to require certain air carriers to develop and regularly update an operational resiliency strategy, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-898). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 1209. A bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-899). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 5798. A bill to restore the right to negotiate matters pertaining to the discipline of law enforcement officers of the District of Columbia through collective bargaining, to restore the statute of limitations for bringing disciplinary cases against members or civilian employees of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-900). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 7867. A bill to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to establish a limit for the total amount of additional unfunded regulatory costs that may be imposed in a fiscal year, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-901, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 7533. A bill to improve retrospective reviews of Federal regulations, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-902). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 4428. A bill to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-903). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 262. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the publication, by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, of information relating to rulemakings, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-904, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 7532. A bill to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, to establish Federal AI system governance requirements, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-905). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. COMER: Committee on Oversight and Accountability. H.R. 3230. A bill to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to provide for regulatory impact analyses for certain rules, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-906, Pt. 1). Referred to

the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1319. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop long-distance bike trails on Federal land (Rept. 118-907, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3562. A bill to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to reauthorize Forest Service flexible partnerships; with an amendment (Rept. 118-908, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3049. A bill to provide for the exchange of certain Federal land and State land in the State of Utah (Rept. 118-909). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 5582. A bill to provide for white oak restoration, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-910, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6342. A bill to promote and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for members of the Armed Forces and veterans on Federal recreational lands and waters, with an amendment (Rept. 118-911, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 5015. A bill to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, to enter into contracts, grants, and agreements to carry out certain ecosystem restoration activities, and for other purposes, with amendments (Rept. 118-912, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 7003. A bill to amend the National Landslide Preparedness Act to reauthorize such Act, with an amendment (Rept. 118-913, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 4235. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to establish a wildfire technology tested pilot program, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 118-914, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6012. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to permit removal of trees around electrical lines on National Forest System land without conducting a timber sale, and for other purposes, with an amendment (Rept. 118-915, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 7516. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to address liability for payment of charges or costs associated with provision of purchased/referred care services, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-916, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 3269. A bill, to modernize Federal firearms laws to account for advancements in technology and less-than-lethal weapons, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-917, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 1419. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to issue a new rule removing the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from

the Federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife (Rept. 118-918). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 215. A bill to provide long-term water supply and regulatory reliability to drought-stricken California, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-919). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 3173. A bill to provide for transfer of ownership of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada, to authorize the disposal of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada for economic development, to promote conservation in northern Nevada, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-920, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 6994. A bill to require the re-opening of covered recreation sites closed due to a natural disaster, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-921, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 7408. A bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-922, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 5482. A bill to prevent energy poverty and ensure that at-risk communities have access to affordable energy; with an amendment (Rept. 118-923, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 934. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out activities to suppress wildfires, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-924, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 4374. A bill to nullify Public Land Order No. 7923, withdrawing certain land in San Juan County, New Mexico, from mineral entry (Rept. 118-925). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 188. A bill to direct the Secretary concerned to coordinate with impacted parties when conducting a forest management activity, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-926, Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H.R. 2989. A bill to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 118-927, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WESTERMAN: Committee on Natural Resources. H. Con. Res. 34. A resolution expressing disapproval of the withdrawal by the Secretary of the Interior of approximately 225,504 acres of National Forest System lands in Cook, Lake, and Saint Louis Counties, Minnesota, from disposition under the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws (Rept. 118-928). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on the Judiciary discharged

from further consideration. H.R. 262 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 1319 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2989 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3173 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Rules, the Budget, and the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3230 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3269 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 3283 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 4235 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Agriculture, the Budget, and Rules discharged from further consideration. H.R. 5482 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Agriculture and Veterans' Affairs discharged from further consideration. H.R. 6342 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 6994 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology discharged from further consideration. H.R. 7003 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Agriculture discharged from further consideration. H.R. 7408 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Energy and Commerce discharged from further consideration. H.R. 7516 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on the Judiciary discharged from further consideration. H.R. 7867 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER (for herself and Ms. WATERS):

H.R. 10465. A bill to study the need for, and the feasibility and cost of, establishing a national residential rental registry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 10466. A bill to deposit portions of revenue generated from public lands into the Social Security Trust Fund; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself and Mr. LAHOOD):

H.R. 10467. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for in-service rollovers for individual retirement annuity purchases; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 10468. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish an elective residency-based income tax for nonresident citizens of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ARRINGTON (for himself and Mr. ROY):

H.R. 10469. A bill to limit eligibility for Federal benefits for certain immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BEYER (for himself and Ms. SCANLON):

H.R. 10470. A bill to amend section 207 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit certain former Federal officials from investing in or serving in a managerial role in an investment fund in which a foreign principal owns shares within a certain time period if such investment or managerial role is based on conversations between such former officials and such foreign principal while such former official was employed by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BONAMICI (for herself, Mr. TONKO, and Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN):

H.R. 10471. A bill to support marine carbon dioxide removal activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BRECHEEN:

H.R. 10472. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to make payments to the Quapaw Nation and certain members of the Quapaw Nation in accordance with the recommendation of the United States Court of Federal Claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BURLISON (for himself and Mr. BIGGS):

H.R. 10473. A bill to prevent covered vehicle manufacturers from accessing, selling, or otherwise selling certain covered vehicle data, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 10474. A bill to require an annual report on the costs to the Department of State associated with producing required reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. CLEAVER (for himself and Ms. CLARKE of New York):

H.R. 10475. A bill to direct the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish a grant program to address deed fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 10476. A bill to amend chapter 423 of title 49, United States Code, to prohibit air carriers from paying ancillary fee incentives and discriminating on the basis of a covered characteristic in charging or setting fares or ancillary fees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. COURTNEY (for himself, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. DESAULNIER):

H.R. 10477. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and reduce interest rates; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. RASKIN):

H.R. 10478. A bill to ensure that foster children are able to use their Social Security benefits, Supplemental Security Income benefits, and other assets and benefits to address their needs and improve their lives; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DELUZIO:

H.R. 10479. A bill to amend title 46, United States Code, with respect to grants for vessel concept development and infrastructure to build commercially viable specialty vessels for supporting energy transition initiatives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 10480. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish and maintain a local gun violence prevention laws database, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 10481. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve safety and security for service weapons used by Federal law enforcement officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DUARTE:

H.R. 10482. A bill to amend the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act to extend provisions related to the Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, and San Joaquin rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. GALLEGUO:

H.R. 10483. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide grants under the Drinking Water Infrastructure Risk and Resilience Program for training programs relating to protecting public water systems from and responding to cyberattacks, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself and Ms. PETTERSEN):

H.R. 10484. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a public awareness campaign to increase participation by women in clinical trials that are conducted or supported by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER (for himself and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS):

H.R. 10485. A bill to authorize to be appropriated funds for COPS Tech projects; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HARDER of California (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. SWALWELL):

H.R. 10486. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to establish a grant program to help law enforcement agencies with civilian law enforcement tasks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:

H.R. 10487. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide temporary firearm storage to veterans who seek to store their firearms outside of their residence due to certain mental health conditions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 10488. A bill to establish an advisory committee on military financial services in the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Ms. TLAB, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 10489. A bill to prohibit drilling in the outer Continental Shelf, to prohibit coal leases on Federal land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 10490. A bill to amend the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 to improve community outreach, public participation, and the consideration of community and environmental impacts with respect to the issuance of a license under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. NORTON, Ms. PINGREE, and Ms. MATSUI):

H.R. 10491. A bill to require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a Blue Carbon Program to conserve and restore blue carbon ecosystems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 10492. A bill to amend the Act of August 9, 1955 (commonly known as the "Long-Term Leasing Act"), to authorize leases of up to 99 years for land held in trust for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KELLY of Mississippi (for himself and Mr. GARAMENDI):

H.R. 10493. A bill to support the national defense and economic security of the United States by supporting vessels, ports, and shipyards of the United States and the U.S. maritime workforce; to the Committee on Armed

Services, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Foreign Affairs, Oversight and Accountability, Education and the Workforce, Financial Services, the Judiciary, Natural Resources, Science, Space, and Technology, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KUSTOFF (for himself, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. ALFORD, Mr. CAREY, and Mr. COSTA):

H.R. 10494. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a tax credit to incentivize the purchase of American agricultural commodities; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. LEE of Nevada (for herself and Mr. BALDERSON):

H.R. 10495. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make improvements to the redistribution of residency slots under the Medicare program after a hospital closes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania (for herself and Ms. SCANLON):

H.R. 10496. A bill to authorize the Attorney General to make grants to strengthen the provision of legal representation to individuals in judicial proceedings that take place after the individual has been arrested in connection with a criminal offense, including at initial appearance; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 10497. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for certain rules for housing or transportation based on gender and to provide for a limitation on gender-related medical treatment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MEEKS (for himself and Mr. SESSIONS):

H.R. 10498. A bill to amend the National Housing Act to restrict the collection of annual mortgage insurance premiums when a 78 percent loan-to-value ratio is reached, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. MCIVER, and Mr. LUTTRELL):

H.R. 10499. A bill to establish a pilot program on home kenneling of canines for U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Office of Field Operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. NADLER (for himself and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H.R. 10500. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to add a bankruptcy chapter relating to the debt of individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself and Ms. JAYAPAL):

H.R. 10501. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the annual numerical limitation on visas for certain immigrants, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant work authorization to certain immigrants with a pending application for nonimmigrant status under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 10502. A bill to require the United States Armed Forces to fully utilize applicable State extreme risk protection order programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. PLASKETT (for herself and Mr. ESTES):

H.R. 10503. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to determine global intangible low-taxed income without regard to certain income derived from services performed in the Virgin Islands; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. RAMIREZ (for herself, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. TLAI, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. CARSON, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. MCIVER, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. THANEDAR):

H.R. 10504. A bill to establish in the Department of Homeland Security the Task Force on the Reunification of Families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RASKIN (for himself, Ms. SALINAS, and Mr. CASTEN):

H.R. 10505. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to prohibit political election or contest agreements, contracts, transactions, and swaps; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. RUIZ (for himself, Mr. BUCSHON, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mr. BUCHANAN):

H.R. 10506. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements for supporting new mobile cancer screening units to expand patient access to essential screening services in rural and underserved communities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SWALWELL (for himself, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Ms. PINGREE, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 10507. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for a percentage of student loan forgiveness for public service employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 10508. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to support the responsible development of offshore renewable energy projects, establish the Offshore Power Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10509. A bill to expand and enhance consumer, student, servicemember, and small business protections with respect to debt collection practices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10510. A bill to permanently extend certain enhancements related to credit unions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10511. A bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to permit credit unions to

serve certain underserved areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MEEKS (for himself, Mr. CROW, Ms. JACOBS, Mr. PALLONE, and Ms. TITUS):

H. Con. Res. 135. Concurrent resolution affirming the nature and importance of the support of the United States for Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. BARRAGAN:

H. Res. 1619. A resolution congratulating the Los Angeles Galaxy for winning the 2024 Major League Soccer Cup; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H. Res. 1620. A resolution calling on law enforcement led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Aviation Administration to provide an immediate briefing to the public on the current drone situation in New Jersey and New York; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PANETTA (for himself and Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia):

H. Res. 1621. A resolution proclaiming that it is United States policy to allow the Government of Ukraine to use United States weapons against military assets inside of the Russian Federation; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

ML-157. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the House of Representatives of the State of North Carolina, relative to House Resolution 1076, urging the United States Congress to work more closely with Germany on trade issues and foreign investment, expressing support for the United States-Germany alliance, celebrating decades of friendship between North Carolina and Germany, strengthening friendship and economic ties between the state of North Carolina and Germany, acknowledging the impact of German culture and centuries of German immigration on North Carolina, and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the state of North Carolina and the Federal Republic of Germany; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Ways and Means.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND SINGLE SUBJECT STATEMENTS

Pursuant to clause 7(c)(1) of rule XII and Section 3(c) of H. Res. 5 the following statements are submitted regarding (1) the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution and (2) the single subject of the bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER:

H.R. 10465.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Housing

By Mr. GOSAR:

H.R. 10466.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Section 8 of article I of the Constitution.
The single subject of this legislation is:
To deposit portions of revenue generated from public lands into the Social Security Trust Fund.

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 10467.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Allows flexibility in retirement plans and simplifies the 402f notice

By Mr. LAHOOD:

H.R. 10468.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: "The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes . . ."

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to establish an elective residency-based income tax for nonresident citizens of the United States.

By Mr. ARRINGTON:

H.R. 10469.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is: immigration

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 10470.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To prohibit certain former Federal officials from investing in or serving in a managerial role in an investment fund in which a foreign principal owns shares within a certain time period if such investment or managerial role is based on conversations between such former officials and such foreign principal while such former official was employed by the Federal Government

By Ms. BONAMICI:

H.R. 10471.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

Marine carbon dioxide removal research and development.

By Mr. BRECHEEN:

H.R. 10472.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article VI

The single subject of this legislation is:

Payment of unobligated funds to Quapaw Tribe for federal environmental damage to land.

By Mr. BURLISON:

H.R. 10473.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII of the United States Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

This bill would protect consumer data that is generated from automobiles that are owned by American consumers.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 10474.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congressman Joaquin Castro

Constitutional Authority—Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. I, Sec. 8, Clause 18)

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION ARTICLE I, SECTION 8: POWERS OF CONGRESS CLAUSE 18

The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for

The single subject of this legislation is:
Foreign Affairs administration

By Mr. CLEAVER:

H.R. 10475.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To direct the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish a grant program to address deed fraud, and for other purposes.

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 10476.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Prohibit air carriers from paying ancillary fee incentives and discriminating on the basis of a covered characteristic in charging or setting fares or ancillary fees.

By Mr. COURTNEY:

H.R. 10477.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and reduce interest rates.

By Mr. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 10478.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution: To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the powers enumerated under section 8 and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

Child Welfare

By Mr. DELUZIO:

H.R. 10479.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is:

Transportation and Infrastructure

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 10480.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Transportation and Infrastructure

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 10481.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish and maintain a local gun violence prevention laws database

By Mr. DESAULNIER:

H.R. 10481.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To improve safety and security for service weapons used by federal law enforcement officers

By Mr. DUARTE:

H.R. 10482.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 14

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act.

By Mr. GALLEGGO:

H.R. 10483.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18:

[The Congress shall have Power . . .] To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the

United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

Water

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H.R. 10484.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

The SEARCH Act directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a public awareness campaign to increase participation by women in clinical trials that are conducted or supported by the National Institutes of Health.

By Mr. GOTTHEIMER:

H.R. 10485.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Expand the COPS Tech Grant program to provide grants for local and state law enforcement to purchase radar technologies to mitigate drone and UAS interference.

By Mr. HARDER of California:

H.R. 10486.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Sec. 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to establish a grant program to help law enforcement agencies with civilian law enforcement tasks, and for other purposes.

By Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana:

H.R. 10487.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Artl.S8.C18: To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To expand "The Armory Project" VA pilot program to 5 states for a period of 3 years.

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 10488.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Financial Services for the Armed Services.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 10489.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Drilling prohibition on federal lands and waters

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 10490.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Maritime Administration

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 10491.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Blue carbon ecosystem research and conservation

By Mr. KEATING:

H.R. 10492.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

A bill amending the “Long-Term Leasing Act”

By Mr. KELLY of Mississippi:

H.R. 10493.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article 1 of the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.

The single subject of this legislation is:
National Defense

By Mr. KUSTOFF:

H.R. 10494.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article 1, Section 8, the Necessary and Proper Clause. Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing powers and all Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department of Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

This legislation establishes a tax credit for U.S. businesses that purchase a certain percentage of their agricultural commodities domestically.

By Ms. LEE of Nevada:

H.R. 10495.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 provides Congress with the power to “lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises”

The single subject of this legislation is:
Health

By Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 10496.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Art. 1, Sec. 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To expand legal representation in judicial proceedings that take place after an individual has been arrested in connection with a criminal offense, including at initial appearance.

By Ms. MACE:

H.R. 10497.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To provide for certain rules for housing or transportation of prisoners in the Federal Bureau of Prisons based on sex and to provide for a limitation on gender-related medical treatment.

By Mr. MEEKS:

H.R. 10498.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the National Housing Act to restrict the collection of annual mortgage insurance premiums when a 78 percent loan-to-value ratio is reached, and for other purposes.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

H.R. 10499.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To direct the Customs and Border Protection Office’s of Field Operations to establish a pilot program to assess whether a canine home kenneling program would benefit both handlers and canines.

By Mr. NADLER:

H.R. 10500.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Judiciary

By Mr. PANETTA:

H.R. 10501.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the annual numerical limitation on visas for certain immigrants, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant work authorization to certain immigrants with a pending application for nonimmigrant status under such Act, and for other purposes.

By Ms. PINGREE:

H.R. 10502.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill concerns how U.S. military services interact with crisis intervention laws.

By Ms. PLASKETT:

H.R. 10503.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

Tax parity and fairness for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

By Mrs. RAMIREZ:

H.R. 10504.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

The single subject of this legislation is:

This legislation would establish in the Department of Homeland Security the Task Force on the Reunification of Families, and for other purposes.

By Mr. RASKIN:

H.R. 10505.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to prohibit political election or contest agreements, contracts, transactions, and swaps.

By Mr. RUIZ:

H.R. 10506.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution, to provide for the general welfare and make all laws necessary and proper to carry out the powers of Congress.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements for supporting new mobile cancer screening units to expand patient access to essential screening services in rural and underserved communities.

By Mr. SWALWELL:

H.R. 10507.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in congress).

The single subject of this legislation is:

This bill revises the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program to provide for partial loan cancellation based on the length

of public service employment. Specifically, the bill directs the Department of Education (ED) to cancel 15%, 15%, 20%, 20%, and 30% of the amount a borrower owes after 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 years of public service employment respectively, on

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 10508.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18: The Congress shall have power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To support the efficient and responsible development of offshore renewable energy projects in the United States.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10509.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution, which provides Congress with the power to “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill expands consumer protections with respect to debt collection practices.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10510.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution, which provides Congress with the power to “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill modifies the Federal Credit Union Act to improve credit union access to emergency liquidity.

By Ms. WATERS:

H.R. 10511.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution, which provides Congress with the power to “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill modifies the Federal Credit Union Act to allow credit unions to serve communities in banking deserts.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 345: Mr. MCGARVEY.

H.R. 834: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 1089: Ms. SPANBERGER.

H.R. 1255: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 1634: Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas.

H.R. 1716: Mrs. MCIVER and Mr. GOMEZ.

H.R. 2447: Ms. SPANBERGER.

H.R. 2768: Mr. PAPPAS.

H.R. 2785: Mrs. MCIVER and Mr. FROST.

H.R. 2961: Mr. FROST.

H.R. 3238: Mr. LOPEZ.

H.R. 3409: Ms. MCCLELLAN.

H.R. 3442: Mr. CURTIS.

H.R. 3850: Mr. CASAR.

H.R. 3851: Mrs. MCBATH.

H.R. 3876: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 3925: Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 4050: Ms. HOULAHAN.

H.R. 4177: Ms. PORTER.

H.R. 4189: Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 4295: Mr. MCGARVEY.

H.R. 4333: Mrs. BICE, Mr. GOMEZ, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.
 H.R. 4456: Mr. TAKANO.
 H.R. 4562: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 4612: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 4774: Mr. MCGARVEY.
 H.R. 5251: Mr. ARRINGTON.
 H.R. 5433: Mr. GARAMENDI.
 H.R. 5920: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 6353: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 6462: Mr. CISCOMANI.
 H.R. 7012: Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 7174: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS.
 H.R. 7576: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
 H.R. 7577: Mr. JOYCE of Ohio.
 H.R. 7710: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
 H.R. 7725: Mr. ROY and Mr. BUCHANAN.
 H.R. 7731: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 7840: Ms. TITUS.
 H.R. 7896: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 8370: Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. CROW, Ms. BUDZINSKI, and Mr. MCGARVEY.
 H.R. 8600: Mr. AUCHINCLOSS.
 H.R. 8613: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 8807: Mr. KEATING.
 H.R. 8893: Mr. VAN DREW.
 H.R. 8988: Mr. CASAR.
 H.R. 9002: Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. BERA, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. SYKES, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 9149: Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California.

H.R. 9188: Mr. VAN DREW.
 H.R. 9233: Ms. MATSUI.
 H.R. 9475: Mr. FOSTER.
 H.R. 9522: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 9559: Ms. ADAMS.
 H.R. 9649: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.
 H.R. 9720: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
 H.R. 9723: Mr. NEGUSE.
 H.R. 9950: Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. BACON, Ms. LEE of Florida, Mr. BENTZ, and Mr. KILEY.
 H.R. 10045: Ms. SPANBERGER.
 H.R. 10073: Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas.
 H.R. 10086: Mr. KUSTOFF and Mr. CARL.
 H.R. 10092: Mr. CASAR.
 H.R. 10099: Mrs. DINGELL.
 H.R. 10138: Mr. GRIJALVA.
 H.R. 10262: Mr. GREEN of Texas.
 H.R. 10263: Mr. GREEN of Texas.
 H.R. 10280: Mr. PANETTA and Mr. STEUBE.
 H.R. 10287: Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 10329: Ms. SCANLON and Ms. ESCOBAR.
 H.R. 10349: Mr. LAMALFA.
 H.R. 10384: Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 10427: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 10442: Mr. GRIJALVA.
 H.J. Res. 226: Mr. MCGOVERN and Ms. OMAR.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

PT-54. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Mr. Gregory D. Watson, a citizen of Austin, TX, relative to requesting the enactment of Federal legislation to amend the applicable provisions of 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1324b, of 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000e-2, and of any relevant Federal statute, so as to lawfully permit preferential hiring of United States Citizens for employment opportunities and to legally allow preferential placement of United States citizens in educational programs (whether primary, secondary, or post-secondary and whether vocational or non-vocational); which was referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Education and the Workforce.

PT-55. Also, a petition of Mr. Gregory D. Watson, a citizen of Austin, TX, relative to requesting the enactment of Federal legislation to amend the applicable provisions of 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1324b, of 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000e-2, and of any relevant Federal statute, so as to lawfully permit preferential hiring of United States Citizens for employment opportunities and to legally allow preferential placement of United States citizens in educational programs (whether primary, secondary, or post-secondary and whether vocational or non-vocational); which was referred jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary and Education and the Workforce.



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No. 188

Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, December 16, 2024)

The Senate met at 10 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

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

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

As the Senate enters a new season of change, with Senators and staff coming and going, we thank You that You are the changeless one. May those who are leaving remember Your promise that You go with them and that You will never leave them or forsake them. May they have courage to face the future without fear.

Today, we honor the Secretary of the Senate, Ann Berry. Lord, thank You for her 45 years of faithful work. As she retires, give her a sense of accomplishment and joy. Give our Senators wisdom and understanding. May the works of their hands and the meditations of their hearts be pleasing to You.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WILDLIFE INNOVATION AND LONGEVITY DRIVER REAUTHORIZATION ACT—Continued

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the unfinished business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 5009, a bill to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer amendment No. 3317 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 3318 (to amendment No. 3317), to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, so last night, I think as everyone knows by now, congressional leaders released the text of bipartisan legislation that will keep the government open, deliver critical disaster relief, extend vital healthcare programs, and protect our farmers.

With this agreement, we are now on our way to avoiding a government shutdown. The sooner Congress acts, the better. As always, bipartisan cooperation must lead the way.

We can't have last-minute delays or grandstanding or else the American people won't get the funding they deserve or else we could risk a shutdown.

Now, there are many good things in this bill that Democrats worked hard

for and achieved. Democrats have insisted these agreements must not have cuts, and this bill has no cuts.

Democrats have warned we can't have poison pills, and this bill has no poison pills. And Democrats pushed hard to make sure this agreement included millions for childcare, workforce training, job training, funding to rebuild the Key Bridge, and more.

There are three things in particular that I pushed hard—very hard—for and that I am glad to see in the bill. Policies to outcompete China, including outsourcing, policies on artificial intelligence, and policies to bring manufacturing back to America, including chip production.

The package includes new restrictions I pushed for to restrict the flow of U.S. investment to CCP development of technologies like AI and chips. I am also very pleased this agreement helps alleviate supply chain disruptions, alleviates price spikes, and increases chip investment in the United States.

I also pushed especially hard to get a strong disaster relief package into the bill, and I am really glad we got that done too. Federal disaster relief programs are about exhausted, and I have warned that doing nothing would come back to haunt us. Communities across the Southeast, across the Northeast, and, in fact, across America still need help rebuilding from the aftermath of hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and other acts of Mother Nature that have grown far more powerful because of climate change. So it is very good news this disaster package got into the bill.

And there are other good things in the bill too. We permanently secured 9/11 responder and survivor health funding. We secured important provisions related to Haiti, extended protection for farmers, dealt with the nature of lithium ion batteries that might explode on bikes, and much, much more.

Now, clearly, this CR isn't perfect. It does not include everything Democrats

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



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called for and includes some provisions we wouldn't have added. But this CR is a sound and bipartisan and necessary compromise that will keep the government open and deliver many, many good things for the American people.

So now time is of the essence. The sooner Congress acts the better. If we want to avoid an unnecessary government shutdown right before Christmas, Republicans must work with Democrats to pass this CR quickly.

H.R. 5009

Mr. President, now on the NDAA, later this morning, the Senate will hold a vote to pass the annual Defense authorization bill, the NDAA. Congress has passed the NDAA on a bipartisan basis for over six straight decades, and this year will be no different. Many feared that it would be, given the polarization, given the late date, but, no, we are passing the NDAA, and that is a very good thing.

The NDAA isn't perfect, but it still includes some very good things that Democrats fought for. Just like in the CR, it has strong provisions to stand up against the Chinese Communist Party, here on a national security basis. It boosts our use of AI for national defense. This is one of the things our forums on AI talked about early on, and it is now in the bill. And it expands tech innovation here at home by expanding money to tech hubs.

I am particularly glad that the NDAA expands the Tech Hubs Program that I created with Senators YOUNG, CANTWELL, and others in the bipartisan Chips and Science Act. And these funds are going to transform communities in Upstate New York, the Midwest, and across the country that hadn't been focused on tech and are now going to become the epicenters of innovation and of manufacturing—high-end manufacturing. This is something these rural areas, these smaller cities across Upstate New York and the Midwest, needed, and they are getting some more. They are getting some more dollars in this regard so there will be more tech hubs.

Again, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the good work on the NDAA, especially Chairman REED and Ranking Member WICKER.

DRONES

Mr. President, on drones, this afternoon, I will come to the Senate floor to stand with Senator PETERS to take up legislation to respond to the recent reports of unusual drone activity.

I am proud to cosponsor this bipartisan legislation, which the FBI, DHS, DOD, and FAA all support. Let me say that again. This legislation is supported by just about every group—every Federal group—concerned: the FBI, the DHS, the Department of Defense, and the FAA. The Senate should pass our bill without delay.

Our bill, among other things, explicitly authorizes State and local authorities to conduct drone detection and helps them better coordinate with Federal law enforcement Agencies to keep

communities safe. The utter confusion surrounding these drone sightings shows that the Feds can't respond all on their own. The Federal Government needs help from local officials detecting these drones.

But, right now, the locals have neither the authority nor the resources to act. Our bill will fix that. All the Federal Agencies involved say they need local help. Drones are relatively new, but they are all over the place. And many of them—you don't want to tell people they can't fly drones for recreational use and many other commercial uses. So it is a difficult area, and we don't have broad-reaching Federal legislation on drones, even though we do say they can't be near airports and be near military facilities and can't fly below 4,000 feet. That is about it.

So there is a desperate need, until the Federal Government does more on this new issue of drones, for the locals to participate. The Feds want the locals to participate. There is no reason they shouldn't. So I hope the Senate will pass our bipartisan drone legislation later today.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. President, on Social Security, finally, before I pay tribute to two of our retiring colleagues, the Senate will take a very important vote this afternoon to ensure that no American who has chipped into Social Security is wrongly denied well-earned benefits.

This afternoon, we will vote on whether or not to take up the Social Security Fairness Act, a bill repealing two flawed policies that eat away at the benefits of many Americans who, at some point or another, worked as teachers, firefighters, postal workers, and other public sector workers. When we vote today, retirees deprived of their benefits will be watching closely. Every Senator will decide who will vote to secure their benefits and who will stand in the way to waste this golden opportunity to make a law.

TRIBUTE TO KYRSTEN SINEMA

Mr. President, now, two of our departing colleagues will deliver their farewell addresses on the floor, Senator BOB CASEY and Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA.

I will start with a few words about Senator SINEMA. I was proud to work with her on many different issues. And whenever we did team up together, it was a potent team, and we got a lot of good things done.

But as I am sure KYRSTEN would be the first to say, we also disagreed a lot. KYRSTEN is independent. That is how she has always been. I respect that.

So whether we agreed or disagreed, I never questioned two things: one, that she cared deeply about her work; and, two, that she would always stay true to herself and to the people of Arizona who elected her.

During her time in the Senate, KYRSTEN has had a hand in passing some of this majority's biggest accomplishments—the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Chips and Science Act,

the PACT Act, the gun safety act, and the Respect for Marriage Act, and others as well.

She was also a trusted negotiator. She had a keen ability to find consensus, even on the toughest issues, when it wasn't easy, but she always kept at it. Our caucus, on numerous occasions, partnered with her—usually at crunch time—to work with Republicans to help get bills over the finish line. And that is when KYRSTEN was at her best, when it was time to reach an agreement.

I will always respect KYRSTEN for her excellent work in these hard moments. I know many Senators on both sides will feel the same.

So we thank Senator SINEMA for her service, her contributions, her commitment to Arizona, and wish her well in whatever comes next.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

Mr. President, this afternoon, our dear friend BOB CASEY will also come to the floor to deliver his farewell speech after many, many distinguished and very successful years serving the people of Pennsylvania.

Now, with a career as distinguished as BOB's, there are many things you can say about what he meant to his beloved home State. And he loved and breathed Pennsylvania. It is a big, diverse State, and he knew every corner of it and was loved and respected in every corner of it.

Here is what his people called him: "a champion for Pennsylvania workers," "a champion for middle class families," "a champion for children," "a champion for seniors," "a champion for disability rights," "a champion for clean energy and the environment," "a champion in the fight against corporate gouging." These are just some of the ways that people described BOB.

During his 18 years in the Senate, there are very few issues that he didn't champion. It is not hard to understand where he got such a strong work ethic. Like Joe Biden, he is from Scranton, where hard work is the rule, not the exception. If you combine that work ethic with an innate sense of public service, as the son of a Governor, as somebody who deeply cares about the people he represents and is genuine—and it comes out of every pore of his body—you will get a fighter who works as hard as the people he represents; you will get BOB CASEY.

When Pennsylvania coal miners suffering from black lung disease needed help, he successfully fought to get their benefits and made sure they got medical help.

He was an amazing advocate for our Nation's children, always making sure that they had the support they needed to reach their full potential.

He championed efforts to expand access to early childhood healthcare, childcare, child nutrition, family tax benefits; and was one of the biggest advocates for extending the CHIP, or the Children's Health Insurance Program, which kept so many kids healthy—millions of poor kids healthy.

And he will go down as one of the Senate's greatest champions ever, in all of history, when it comes to disability policies. When our former colleague Tom Harkin retired, many people wondered who would carry on as the voice for Americans with disabilities? Without hesitation and with amazing success, BOB stepped up to the plate. In the years since, he has been instrumental in passing legislation to advance the rights of people with disabilities and help them live free from discrimination.

He didn't have any connections—personal connections—to the disability community, nor was he trying to score political points. He did it all simply because it was the right thing to do.

And he was one of the most beloved Members of our caucus. People love BOB—everybody. No one ever said a bad word about BOB CASEY. Why? Why? Because he cared so much, was so hard working, was so effective, and was one of the most genuine people that we have ever, ever seen in this Senate, not just now but throughout history.

He leaves a deep impression on every one of us. He does. And the guy had it all, and in such a nice way.

He got things done. He was hard working. He didn't take no for an answer. But when he came back at you, time and time again, because he was so committed, so well prepared, so sincere, and so nice, you always said yes. It is one of the reasons he was so effective.

So that sums up the man, BOB CASEY.

And let's not forget he always did the right thing, even in difficult political situations. I would talk to him: We need your help here, BOB. We need your vote there.

He would struggle with it. He knew it might have bad political consequences, but he inevitably did the right thing.

He is as good, as decent, as honorable as any Senator I have worked with in this Chamber.

He has a beautiful wife Terese. To the entire Casey family, I say to all of them: Thank you for sharing BOB with us all these years. Thank you for backing him up, despite some tragedies your family has had.

And, BOB, thank you. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship, and, simply, thank you for being you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture votes with respect to the Cheeks and Murillo nominations occur upon the disposition of the motion to proceed to H.R. 82.

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

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

WRDA

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, the House passed the Water Resources bill with broad bipartisan support. Today, it is the Senate's turn to act.

Thanks in large part to the leadership of Ranking Member CAPITO and her team, the sensible legislation before us will strengthen our Nation's water infrastructure from the Everglades, to the Port of Los Angeles, to the inland waterways that course through Kentucky.

It is good news for communities across the country. From clean drinking water, to ecosystem maintenance, to storm resiliency, to navigable waterways for trade and commerce, the bill before us takes a comprehensive approach. Because our communities understand their challenges better than any bureaucrat in Washington, this bill will provide the flexibility to tailor solutions to each community's unique needs.

I am also pleased it will authorize several projects important to the health and well-being of Kentuckians. One will build out infrastructure for water and wastewater treatment in Appalachia—always a concern of rural communities across America's heartland. Another will help secure safe and reliable drinking water for the growing number of families in Scott County. Finally, another will update Greenbrier Lake Dam, which supplies water for Kentuckians across Montgomery County.

So far, an impressive, broad coalition has thrown their support behind this bill, from ports and shippers, to farm groups and unions, to dozens of industry leaders who rely on our waterways to move goods, protect jobs, and keep costs low for the American people.

I appreciate the House's work to move this must-pass bill forward in bipartisan fashion. Obviously, I hope the Senate will do the same today.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, President Biden's decision earlier this month to pardon his son may well have set a unique and unfortunate precedent. But abuse of the Presidential pardon doesn't stop there.

Last week, the President went on to commute 1,500 sentences, and the way liberal activists see it, he should have done even more.

More than 20 liberal, retired judges—including the Boston radical who recommended the disgraced, pro-crime U.S. attorney Rachael Rollins—have now urged the President to turn his eye to Federal death sentences. They claim that the Federal death penalty is "rife with fundamental problems," including race discrimination and poor representation of defendants.

But this is not just some theoretical recommendation about systemic injustice. If the President heeded these former judges' call, it would mean commuting the death sentences of the mass murderer who slaughtered Black churchgoers at Mother Emanuel in Charleston and the perpetrator of the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Are these men the victims of systemic racism? Did they have inadequate counsel? Of course not. They are mass murderers, guilty beyond any doubt whatsoever.

Let's be clear what commuting these sentences would mean. It would mean that the laws passed by Congress and applied by our judges and juries have no value. It would mean that progressive politics is more important to the President than the lives taken by these murderers. It would mean that society's most forceful condemnation of White supremacy and anti-Semitism must give way to legal mumbo jumbo.

The irony of claims of systemic racism causing the President to spare Dylann Roof is ludicrous—ludicrous—to the point of tragedy.

This is no legacy a President should seek.

TRIBUTE TO KYRSTEN SINEMA

Now, Mr. President, on an entirely different matter from the President's unfortunate legacy, I would like to close with just a few words about another of our departing colleagues, the senior Senator from Arizona. It is, perhaps, unconventional for the leader of one party to pay formal tribute to a departing Senator who caucused with the other side, but then KYRSTEN SINEMA has never had trouble with bucking a trend.

For one thing, she has spent her 6 years in this body earning levels of influence, respect, and command of policy that are uncommon among Senate freshmen. She has thrown herself into worthwhile projects, done the heavy lifting of legislation, and kept at it when longer tenured colleagues might have thrown in the towel. Needless to say, Senator SINEMA's maverick streak extends to her efforts to broaden the Senate's fashion horizons as well.

But the cornerstone of our colleague's legacy in this Chamber will be her willingness to defend the Senate, the Senate itself, when saying nothing would have been a great deal easier. Arizona's senior Senator stood up in the face of a grave threat to this institution's defining characteristic, and she said no—no—and in doing so, she sent a message that will resonate long after her departure from the Chamber.

I admire our colleague for the courage, wisdom, and clarity that have guided her service for the people of Arizona and for the entire Nation, and I wish her the very best in her next chapter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, our country demands much of the Senate

Judiciary Committee on which the Presiding Officer serves, and it has been my honor to serve as chair of that committee for the last 4 years. We have worked hard to defend freedom, advance justice and equality, and balance our Federal judiciary.

During my time as chair these last 4 years, we have held 145 full committee hearings, 88 subcommittee hearings, and 86 executive business meetings. We advanced 373 Executive and judicial nominees, and we reported 56 bills out of committee. We confirmed highly qualified, diverse judicial nominees who will be a frontline defense of the rule of law for a generation. Our efforts over the last 4 years have filled the vacancies of one-fourth of the members of the Federal judiciary. We also revitalized the committee's critical oversight rule over the executive branch Agencies under our jurisdiction. We made progress on issues critical to Americans, including protecting children online, supporting women who have faced sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, and implementing critical gun violence prevention reforms.

I want to thank all of the Senate Judiciary members, particularly the Democrats, for their hard work in ensuring equal justice for all and defending our democracy.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge our former colleague, the late-Senator Dianne Feinstein of California. Dianne was a trailblazer and champion for LGBTQ Americans, reproductive rights, and gun violence. We honor her legacy by continuing our efforts on those critical issues.

I am also particularly thankful for the Republican ranking member, LINDSEY GRAHAM, and my Senate Judiciary Republican colleagues who were willing to work across the aisle to advance judicial nominees and bipartisan legislation. Over 80 percent of all of the judges approved by the Senate, reported out of the committee, have been approved by a bipartisan rollcall.

Perhaps our most impactful work has been in confirming these highly qualified, independent, and evenhanded judges. Aside from their exceptional qualifications and respect for the rule of law, they represent historic demographic and professional diversity.

Under President Biden's leadership, the Senate has confirmed more Black women to the Federal circuit courts than all prior Presidents of the United States combined, including the first-ever Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court—Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. We have confirmed a historic number of Asian Americans, Latinos, and LGBTQ judges. We have also confirmed more circuit judges who have experience as public defenders than all prior Presidents combined.

During the last 4 years, Senate Democrats have confirmed 233 judges to lifetime positions, and if we confirm 2 more to the Federal bench this week, which is our plan, we will have surpassed the previous administration's

record. The confirmations of these highly qualified, diverse judges will help ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice in our Nation. These judges are already making significant contributions to protecting freedoms and democracy.

Since becoming chair of the committee in 2021, I have also made it a priority to revitalize our tradition of oversight of executive branch Agencies within the committee's jurisdiction. We need to make sure these Agencies are serving the interests of the American people, and we have regularly scheduled hearings for this type of oversight. We have had meetings with the Attorney General, officials in the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Homeland Security, making sure that every member on both sides of the table had a chance to question the leaders of these Agencies on a regular basis.

Over the past 4 years, we have made progress in advancing key legislation. Important bills we enacted into law include legislation barring forced arbitration for sexual assault and sexual harassment cases; legislation I authored to sustain the Federal Crime Victims Fund; legislation that I also authored to eliminate the Federal statute of limitations for child sex abuse cases; and my legislation with Republican Senator GRASSLEY to allow the Justice Department to prosecute war criminals. We showed that, when we are willing to come together on a bipartisan basis, we can make progress.

We also unanimously reported several bills to help stop the exploitation of kids online. Earlier this year, I held a full committee hearing to demand that the CEOs of social media giants Discord, Meta, Snap, TikTok, and X—formerly known as Twitter—come before the hearing. It highlighted the ongoing risks that social media poses to our kids and the immediate need for Congress to act. We didn't get it done in this session, and we must get it done in the next. I believe that Senator GRAHAM, who will continue to serve on the committee, will join me in that effort.

The committee has also led the effort to address the Supreme Court's ongoing ethics crisis. This troubles me. It used to be that issues of ethics before the Court were bipartisan issues in the Senate—not so anymore. At a time when the worst reports are coming out of the Supreme Court of lavish gifts for Supreme Court Justices, this has become a partisan issue—the Democrats calling for change and the Republicans resisting.

I don't know what happened to that bipartisan consensus on ethics, but in looking at the evidence that we have uncovered through committee staff work and subpoenas, it surely is demanding of us to do something. Ensuring that all Supreme Court Justices are subject to an enforceable code of conduct is critical to establishing the American people's trust in the Court.

More than 12 years ago, I asked, in writing, Chief Justice Roberts to adopt a binding code of conduct for all Supreme Court Justices—12 years ago. Last year, the Judiciary Committee reported the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act to the full Senate. It is a work product of one of our members, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE. It is an excellent bill, and I was happy to support it. The bill would require Justices to adopt an enforceable code of conduct so that the highest Court in the land—the Supreme Court—doesn't have the lowest ethical standards of all courts in America.

Our work didn't stop there. We worked on defending reproductive healthcare, curbing gun violence, and dealing with the major issues that are on the minds of the American people.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work of the Senate Judiciary Committee's eight subcommittees, which held dozens of hearings on matters under the committee's jurisdiction. I want to thank Chairs BLUMENTHAL, BOOKER, BUTLER, COONS, KLOBUCHAR, OSSOFF, PADILLA, WHITEHOUSE, and Senators HIRONO and WELCH for their hard work and leadership in this effort.

Once again, thanks to all the members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for their cooperation. It has been the honor of a lifetime.

POLIO VACCINE

Mr. President, I want to make one other short statement.

I remember polio. I remember it as a kid. It scared the hell out of us. Nobody knew what was happening. A kid could wake up in the morning, go to school, look as healthy as could be, and die before dinner. That is what polio was all about—iron lungs, scary results, crippling kids, and we didn't know where it came from. Every conscientious mom had a theory. My mom said playing in rainwater from the freshly fallen rain in our neighborhood was dangerous for polio. That was her interpretation. No one really knew.

Then came the amazing news that someone had developed a vaccine to deal with polio. We couldn't believe it. No kid wants to take a shot, but to be protected from polio, you did it, and you were happy to do it. I did it when I was a kid in the 1950s. As a result of it, we brought polio under control in this country—a vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk, from Pittsburgh—a man I will always revere because of the comfort that he brought to families who were concerned about polio.

Can you believe that we are now debating the polio vaccine again in this country; that the nominee proposed by President Trump for the Health and Human Services Department has raised questions about the efficacy and safety of vaccines, including the polio vaccine?

This morning, in the Chicago Sun-Times, a reporter named Neil Steinberg wrote an article about this issue. He quoted a statement that was made very recently by Katie Miller. She is

the transition spokesperson for RFK, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who is President Trump's nominee for HHS, which has jurisdiction over many health Agencies and certainly has the lion's share of responsibility when it comes to vaccines.

Here is what Steinberg wrote:

Mr. Kennedy believes the Polio Vaccine should be available to the public and thoroughly and properly studied—

His spokesperson said, "Thoroughly and properly studied," what a great idea—

Let's look into it! How about taking 1,349,135 [kids across America] and submitting them to a blind trial at 244 [different] test areas around the country. [Half will receive] the cherry-red vaccine, and half a placebo, or nothing. [Then we can really find out. We can really study and see if this vaccine is any good, the polio vaccine.]

Oh, wait. [That is exactly what we did] in the spring and summer of 1954—[70 years ago]. To this day, it's the largest medical experiment in the United States history. Thousands of doctors, nurses, principals, teachers, parents, and other volunteers banded together, working for free—the government wasn't paying because that smacked of socialized medicine.

Gosh, Neil—

Neil Steinberg—

—you might ask, being yourself an inquisitive sort, just like me, why did thousands of doctors, nurses, principals, [and others], all supposedly with busy lives, drop everything to help run this giant medical test [in America] for no compensation? Possibly because polio was scything through their children: more than 57,000 cases in 1952, with over 3,000 deaths. A child could be healthy at breakfast and dead by dinner. That catches the attention of the neighbors and dials up public spiritedness.

For RFK, Jr., to say that we have to study the polio vaccine at this point is not only sad, it is shocking—shocking that a person seeking the highest level Cabinet position under the Trump administration is willing to be so fast and loose with the scientific truth—1,300,000-plus cases. We were administering it, testing it before we moved forward with it 70 years ago—nothing in the meantime to suggest it be otherwise. It is safe and efficient and effective.

What about all the other vaccines? Polio is the one I am focusing on today. What about all of the other vaccines that have spared children—measles and rubella and so many other diseases and problems that can be dangerous to them? Now we are going to debate those all over again in the 21st century because RFK, Jr., has his own theories on vaccines?

Listen, I am willing to meet with RFK, Jr., and ask him, point blank, what his position is. And I will tell you this: If he is going to be the scourge against vaccinations across America, he is in for a fight, because what is going to happen, sadly, is a lot of innocent children and innocent people are going to be hurt as a result of it.

Coincidentally, just before the 1954 test began—1.3 million people—radio commentator Walter Winchell went on

the air to warn the vaccine may be a killer and that the authorities were stockpiling little white coffins just in case. The next week, 10 percent of the kids were pulled out of the experiment by worried parents. We have been through this before, and, thank God, cooler heads and smarter minds prevailed. If we have to go through it again, it is worth the fight.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

[From the Chicago Sun-Times]

KENNEDY CALLING FOR STUDY OF POLIO VACCINE ISN'T SKEPTICISM, IT'S REJECTIONISM
(By Neil Steinberg)

Study! I love to study. A pot of coffee, a comfortable chair and a deadline that isn't today—nothing makes me happier than to dive into a subject, stacks of books around me, obscure databases on the screen. It's perhaps the most appealing aspect of my job.

One day, I'm digging into the circumstances behind Oscar Wilde's famous line about the Water Tower ("a castellated monstrosity with pepperboxes stuck all over it"—not a quip, as commonly described, but premeditated provocation). The next, I'm exploring solar eclipses (if you are ever stumped as to where helium was first detected, remember helios is Greek for "the sun," where the gas was noticed spectrographically during an eclipse in India in 1868).

So study is good. However, I also know that "study" can be a code word for wanton dismissal of facts that don't serve your personal narrative, and I'll give you an example. If someone says they are studying the Holocaust, trying to determine what really happened, then you can be sure you are not dealing with a scholar, but an antisemite. Your immediate answer should be along the lines of: "Well, I hope your 'study' involves reading a few of the thousands of meticulously documented books outlining the precise enormity of the crime, you odious bigot. Sticklers for bookkeeping, those Germans were. Fifteen minutes in a library should lay it out pretty clearly."

With anti-vax advocate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. up for the role of secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Senate minority leader MITCH MCCONNELL, whose spine occasionally stiffens before going soft again, warned that nominees hoping for Senate approval should "steer clear" of undermining the polio vaccine.

Prompting a classic weasel response from Katie Miller, RFK Jr.'s transition spokesperson.

"Mr. Kennedy believes the Polio Vaccine should be available to the public and thoroughly and properly studied," she said.

Proper study! What a good idea. Let's look into it! How about taking 1,349,135 children and submitting them to a blind trial at 244 test areas around the country, with half getting the cherry-red vaccine, and half a placebo, or nothing. Then we'll really find out if this vaccine is any good.

Oh wait, we did that. In the spring and summer of 1954. To this day, it's the largest medical experiment in United States history. Thousands of doctors, nurses, principals, teachers, parents and other volunteers banded together, working for free—the government wasn't paying because that smacked of socialized medicine.

Gosh Neil, you might ask, being yourself an inquisitive sort, just like me, why did

thousands of doctors, nurses, principals, etc., all supposedly with busy lives, drop everything to help run this giant medical test for no compensation? Possibly because polio was scything through their children: more than 57,000 cases in 1952, with over 3,000 deaths. A child could be healthy at breakfast and dead by dinner. That catches the attention of the neighbors and dials up public spiritedness.

The vaccine worked. Now that kids don't die of polio, alas, we've forgotten they ever have. Society has atomized into a buzzing cloud of random individuals, bouncing off one another. Respect for authority that isn't Donald Trump has evaporated, and many in our country are deciding: Screw this medical authority business, I alone will determine what is good for my children. Ignorant rejectionism has put on the trappings of genuine academic skepticism and wanders the land, gaining converts.

Nor should we overlook the first part of Miller's sentence: "Mr. Kennedy believes the vaccine should be available to the public . . ."

Well gosh, that's big of him, considering that he's spent years urging gullible people to swallow the lie that vaccines cause autism.

People are sheep. The recent election proved that. After Kennedy soft-pedaled a measles outbreak in American Samoa in 2019 and cast doubt on the efficacy of vaccines, he was accused of causing dozens of people to die needlessly.

Baseless undermining of medical advances is nothing new. Just before the 1954 test began, radio commentator Walter Winchell—the Fox News of his day—went on the air to warn the vaccine "may be a killer" and that the authorities were stockpiling "little white coffins" just in case. The next week, 10% of children were pulled from the experiment by worried parents.

They were worried about the wrong thing. The vaccine wasn't the killer; polio was. That's as true today as it was in 1954. History will some day gape in shock that a leader could try to lure us back into the past. Actually, we don't have to wait for history to pass judgment. It's pretty shocking right now.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

TRIBUTE TO RYAN NELSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to my longtime chief of staff Ryan Nelson, who has decided to step down in the new year.

It is difficult to know where to start to pay tribute to a man who has been indispensable to everything I have ever done in Congress; so perhaps I should start at the beginning, back in 1996, during the Republican primary for South Dakota's lone House seat.

I was a green candidate running on a shoestring budget, and one morning, a campaign volunteer showed up at my door and announced that he was my driver. His name was Ryan Nelson. That day, we headed to an event in Arlington, SD. Unbeknownst to me, my new driver proceeded to lock his keys in the car. This might have caused some campaign volunteers to panic, but not Ryan. He made his way over to a filling station, found someone who could get into the car and retrieve the keys, all without my knowing that anything had ever happened. That resourcefulness turned out to be a pretty

good indicator of what was to come—not the “locking the keys in car” part but the seeing a problem and solving it before I even had a chance to become aware of it.

Ryan kept driving me around the State, and we ended up winning the primary. Ryan came to a crossroads, both metaphorical and literal. You see, Ryan was originally just filling time on the campaign. He was scheduled to leave for the Kansas City police academy the day after the primary. He was driving out of his hometown in Gettysburg, SD, when he came to that literal crossroads. You would have to go one way for the police academy and the other way to stay with the campaign. He chose to stay with the campaign. And among the many blessings I have been given over the course of my career, I have to count that as one of the greatest.

Ryan has now been with my team for 28 years. He has helped build my staff and guide my operations, mentored generations of Thune employees, and been a constant source of insight and wisdom. There is no one that I trust more.

Ryan's knowledge is deep and broad. He has an intuitive understanding of politics and an encyclopedic knowledge of South Dakota, and he is deeply connected to the needs of our State.

I relied on those qualities throughout my career, and not just on those qualities but on his character. Ryan is someone who got into politics for all the right reasons. He is not interested in personal glory. In fact, I think everyone who knows Ryan would agree that there is no one who more persistently dodges the spotlight. He got into politics to serve. He cares about our State. He cares about our country. And he has done everything he can throughout his career to ensure a brighter future for both.

I suppose Ryan is, technically, my employee—for a few more days, at least—but that is not a word I think of when I think of Ryan. I think of words like “ally,” “partner,” and “friend,” and not just to me but to my whole family. Ryan has cared as deeply for the well-being of my wife Kimberley and of our daughters Brittany and Larissa, as he has for mine.

When I think back to long days on the campaign trail when our family was young, I think of Ryan joking with the girls, jollyng them along, and keeping an eye out for when they needed a break.

The long days on the trail used to sometimes wear on my younger daughter Larissa especially, and Ryan used to keep up her spirits by promising her her favorite chicken alfredo at the end of the day. And, of course, being Ryan, he never failed to deliver. In fact, “chicken alfredo” is still a family joke.

I know some of my daughter's favorite memories are of days spent with Ryan and his wife Carmen, on the campaign trail or at the lodge then run by Ryan's dad. We used to regularly spend

time there as a family, and the girls loved nothing more: doing puzzles, watching movies, riding on the four-wheelers, hunting, and then all gathering for a good meal at the end of the day.

Ryan always made sure the girls' favorites were on the menu. Of course, as devoted as Ryan has been to the Thune family, his greatest devotion is to his own family—to Carmen and to their sons Parker and Mitchell. When I decided to run for leader this year, he said that he would do everything he could to help—as he always has—but that he wouldn't miss his son's football games. And he hasn't.

I am fairly sure that he has only missed one of his son's games in all the time they have played.

While it is hard to think of his not being my chief of staff, I am happy that he will have more time to spend with Carmen and with their boys.

There is so much more that I could say about Ryan. It is hard to give a speech about him without mentioning his love of football. Between his own days as a standout high school and college player and his son's time playing the game, Ryan brings a wealth of football knowledge to the table.

Then, there is his dry sense of humor and love of a prank or two, his deep faith, his loyalty, and his work ethic. It is hard for me to believe that his time in my office is drawing to a close.

The Apostle Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 4:

It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

There is no one who has been more faithful to his trust than Ryan Nelson. I am more grateful than I can ever say for his service, and I pray that God will richly bless him and his family in the new days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Arizona.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. President, I stand here today, closing out my time in Congress, and I am reminded of the gravity of this place, the storied history of the Senate, one in which we are all honored to contribute, and the guardrails that serve as the foundation of this body and our democracy. Those guardrails—the Constitution, our oath of office, the rules of the Senate, and the norms of collegiality, integrity, and respect—these are the pillars that have ensured our democracy could endure. They exist for a reason: to cultivate relationships so we can move history forward, to temper the excesses of greed, and to curb the hunger for power.

As our country has become more and more divided and as our politics has devolved into a constant series of all-or-nothing battles, we find ourselves bumping into these guardrails with more frequency. In recent history, both parties have wrestled with the importance of norms and rules, and both par-

ties have viewed these norms and rules as outdated, constraining, or simply obstacles to their short-term victories. Many now blame these guardrails for blocking critical progress instead of recognizing that it is us—our actions, our words, our incivility, and ultimately our unwillingness to compromise—that prevent reasonable solutions from advancing.

When holding political power and feeling the hunger and pressure for an immediate partisan win, it is easy to view the legislative filibuster as a weapon of obstruction. It is tempting to prefer elimination of the filibuster to compromise. It certainly feels faster, easier, and more satisfying—at least in the short term, that is—but there are dangers to choosing short-term victories over the hard and necessary work of building consensus.

To give in to the temptation of the short-term victory means giving in to the chaos caused by the constant ricocheting of laws or it means you labor under an illusion that by eliminating the filibuster, you will maintain political power forever, effectively ending our two-party system. That is a fallacy, and worse, it is scary. One-party rule is not democracy; that is autocracy. That is not the system our forefathers envisioned, and it is not what our country deserves.

The beauty of America is in the push and the pull. Our democracy ensures that no one person, no one party, has too much control. The checks and balances built into our government protect us all. When we work together, listen, compromise, and forge moderate movements forward, we are doing exactly what our forefathers intended: We are crafting solutions with broad support to protect against those wild ricochets of policy changes and the whiplash that could be caused by the overreach of a temporary partisan majority.

Over the past 6 years, I have had the honor of serving with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who chose to do the hard work and who took the time to build relationships and build that consensus. Together, we accomplished real results for the constituents we serve across this great country.

I am so grateful for the colleagues who took those risks with me. Not many are willing to step out of their comfort zones and risk political capital for the sake of a deal that may not pay off immediately, but to those who did, thank you. And to their staff, thank you for your dedication and your service and for answering random calls from a Senator, even though it was a little unorthodox, when I was just looking to get a deal done and solve a problem or two.

Beginning with my good friend and our former colleague Senator Rob Portman and the other Members of our bipartisan group of 10, including the wonder women of the Senate—Senators SUSAN COLLINS, LISA MURKOWSKI, JEANNE SHAHEEN—and our guys—Senators MITT ROMNEY, JON TESTER, BILL

CASSIDY, MARK WARNER, and JOE MANCHIN—we painstakingly crafted a historic infrastructure law, delivering Americans better broadband, new roads and bridges, cleaner air and water, and more job opportunities.

Later, working with Senators MITT ROMNEY, TAMMY BALDWIN, SUSAN COLLINS, and THOM TILLIS, we passed the Respect for Marriage Act, giving Americans of all backgrounds peace of mind, protecting marriage and religious freedoms.

Teaming up with Senator TODD YOUNG, we saved the Chips and Science law spearheaded by Senators JOHN CORNYN, MARIA CANTWELL, and ROGER WICKER. We saved it from partisan collapse, and now America and Arizona can lead the way in semiconductor manufacturing, and our country is safer and more secure.

Bringing Senators JOHN CORNYN, CHRIS MURPHY, and THOM TILLIS together to tackle the intractable issue of gun violence, we not only saved lives; we improved our country's mental health care.

As everyone involved in each of those deals knows, the results weren't easy. It was a product of months of hard conversations, many tough decisions, many tradeoffs, and constant back-and-forths that pushed us toward those solutions and that progress.

While those are the highlights, we have also witnessed what happens here in this Chamber when we give in to the temptation of taking the easy way out and abandoning those guardrails.

In 2013, judicial nominees weren't confirmed at a fast enough pace for the majority, so one party lowered the 60-vote threshold to a simple majority. And while one political party started it, the other finished it, and now all Federal judges, including Supreme Court nominees, are confirmed with just 51 votes.

Just 9 short years after that, half the country was shocked and disappointed when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. But it was no surprise at all. It was a foreseeable, predictable result of eliminating the Senate standard that requires broad bipartisan support for judicial nominees. No longer is the majority party required to nominate mainstream judges who earn support from across the global spectrum. Now it is just a race to get your guys into the spots while you have power. Yet some wonder why public trust in our judiciary is at an alltime low.

Even still, with the consequences of those shortsighted decisions clear for all to see, the clamor to similarly destroy the Senate's process of passing legislation persists. Surely I am not the only one to see the absurdity in all of this.

The political winds have now shifted, and yet the filibuster endures to ensure that the tyranny of the majority does not overrule the rights of the minority, regardless of who sits in the seat of power.

Now, as we approach the 119th Congress, Republicans will control the

Presidency, the Senate, and the House. Sadly, I am already hearing rumors of a hunger to subvert these norms—indeed, to use reconciliation as a tool to circumvent the filibuster. But the end result of that shortsighted action would be the same. As history has shown, abusing or eliminating one tool for short-term gain means the other party will do the same when it regains political power. It is a devolution, and I can't think of anything more dangerous to our dear democracy than the unwillingness to question our own preconceived ideas, to examine our own biases, or to learn from those who think differently from ourselves.

What I have tried to demonstrate in these 6 years is that you don't have to burn down the rules and the norms to achieve what you want. You can just do the hard work. You can build relationships. You can choose to focus on consensus, not division. You can be an independent thinker and put your State, your constituents, and your country ahead of party leaders and activists—because you can get it done.

Over my time in the Senate, I have partnered with more than a few unlikely allies—from the very most progressive to the very most conservative—to break through gridlock and find some solutions. While I can't detail each and every one of those unique relationships here today, I will highlight a few:

My infamous Barbenheimer partner, MIKE LEE—I know we are a bit of an odd couple, but we have gotten a lot done together. My dear friend JAMES LANKFORD, whom I had the honor of sharing the Border Subcommittee with throughout my last 6 years in the Senate and with whom I spent many, many hours working on a solution that, while it isn't law today, perhaps parts will become law one day. Senator RAND PAUL. CYNTHIA LUMMIS. The list goes on and on. And at the very, very dear risk of damaging their careers: CHRIS MURPHY, BRIAN SCHATZ, PATTY MURRAY.

I hope I haven't ruined your careers. (Laughter.)

It has been an honor to work with so many incredible people in the U.S. Senate over these last 6 years.

One thing I learned early on in my very first days—actually, Senator JIM RISCH taught me this—is that we don't have to agree on everything; we just have to agree on some things. It is not worth getting angry about the things with which you disagree; it is better to focus on those areas where you can agree.

So over these last 6 years, I have been grateful to embrace the diversity of opinions in this body, to find solutions that reflect the complexity of our country and our democracy, and to deliver meaningful, measurable results: to bridge divides between Tribes and Federal stakeholders to designate land around the Grand Canyon; to secure historic resources, strengthening western water, safeguarding Arizona fami-

lies, and making sure that all of us throughout this country can grow and thrive for generations to come. We have worked together and cleared the way for historic settlements, land transfer deals, water deals, providing economic certainty, all by listening to one another—not to debate or to rebut but to understand.

It is this very marketplace of the diversity of ideas that makes our country great, the knowledge that with dialogue and competition, we are driven to be more thoughtful and more creative. That is why, despite the challenges facing our country, I remain hopeful.

America is still the freest, most creative and innovative place in the world. We are the birthplace of emerging technologies in medicine, artificial intelligence, energy, and robotics, all revolutionizing our global economy. And the opportunities created by American ingenuity are limitless.

We must not let our politics hold us back, for America is still the shining city on the hill, and it is up to each of us to protect it and to strengthen it. We cannot afford to let political differences stand in the way of what tomorrow may bring. We must hold firm to those guardrails, our shared commitment to the principles that our forefathers built this great country upon, and the ability and the willingness to see the decency in each other, our fellow citizens. We must choose the better angels of our nature.

Speaking of the better angels, over the past 12 years, I have had the honor of working with some incredible people in both the House and the Senate. I don't mean the Senators and Members of Congress I served alongside, although that has been an incredible privilege. I have the deepest respect and gratitude for my current and former colleagues. But I speak now of our staff. From the minority and majority floor staff to the cloakrooms, the Sergeant at Arms, the cafeteria workers, the Parliamentarians, the police officers, the elevator operators, the Architect of the Capitol employees, who never, ever fail to give a kind word in the basement of this building—you all are the unsung heroes of the Capitol. You are here long before we arrive each day. You are here long after we head home for the night. So thank you.

To my own staff, many of whom are here today, from my very first days in the House to my very last days here in the Senate, thank you. You are the backbone of everything that we have delivered for Arizona and for this country. I am so grateful that all of you chose to serve alongside me and help us deliver real results for my beloved State and our country. I could not be more proud of what we accomplished.

As I leave this floor after 6 years in the Senate, I cannot help but continue to think of President Abraham Lincoln's words as he closed his first inaugural address. He called for unity in a deeply divided country, and his words ring true today:

I am loathe to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

TRIBUTE TO KYRSTEN SINEMA

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the truly extraordinary contributions to the U.S. Senate, to her home State of Arizona, and to our country of my friend and colleague Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA.

The qualities that took KYRSTEN from a difficult childhood to college, law school, the Arizona Legislature, and the U.S. Congress are evident to all of us who have had the privilege to work alongside such a remarkable leader. Her strength, courage, and fierce independence are inspiring. Her belief in the power of hard work and the importance of lending a hand to those in need guides her approach to public service.

Most of all, I will never forget her persistence in forging compromises that benefit the American people. It truly is remarkable. KYRSTEN always puts country over party.

I had the privilege of working with KYRSTEN on consequential legislation. She was the negotiator of the Electoral Count Reform and Presidential Transition Improvement Act to ensure the orderly transition of Presidential power. She was the lead Democratic negotiator of the bipartisan infrastructure act, the most significant investment in our infrastructure since the Interstate Highway System in the fifties.

KYRSTEN's work to craft the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is yet another example. She coauthored the provisions to better prevent domestic abusers from having access to firearms.

She was vital to the success of the Respect for Marriage Act, which defends same-sex marriages while at the same time strengthening and respecting religious liberties.

KYRSTEN also believes in protecting our institutions, and she spoke eloquently today of the importance of the filibuster and made such a compelling case. Standing up to intense pressure, her strong defense of the filibuster preserved the rights of the minority.

I have been here when Republicans have been in the majority and when they have been in the minority. She reminded us that working together across party lines inevitably produces better legislation that is more carefully thought out and drafted.

In a powerful speech that Senator SINEMA gave to a college on a college campus, 2 years ago, she said this:

Imagine what more we could accomplish for our country if, rather than staying in comfortable partisan corners, more leaders

reached out in a genuine desire to craft durable, bipartisan solutions to our country's most difficult challenges.

That is exactly what KYRSTEN SINEMA has done. She is that kind of leader. I thank her for her service, for making such a difference in the U.S. Senate, for her country, for the Senate, and for her home State. And I wish her all the best in her next endeavor.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I don't think I have had a better friend in the U.S. Senate than Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA. We are best friends. I would not have predicted that at the outset. By all appearance, we are about as different as we can be. But actually, our roots are very much in the same soil. We have grown up with the kinds of values that have shaped our lives and our public service.

When she first came to the Senate floor, her appearance was quite striking and her personality was, in a similar vein, highly noticeable. And I turned to one of my Senate colleagues, and I said: What do you think about that new Senator from Arizona?

And he said: I can tell you right now, she is going to be trouble.

She obtained the nickname "Trouble" at that point and has carried it ever since, at least in my lexicon.

The truth is, she has been so far from trouble, it is hard to imagine a less appropriate name. Why is that? One, I believe she has been the most productive U.S. Senator in the last 6 years of anyone in this body.

Now, there may be a competition, here and there, from other people, but I don't think so. If you look at all the legislation of significance that has been passed over the last 6 years, she has been critical to it, generally leading it, at least a co-chair, in virtually all of that legislation.

At the same time, she gets along with everybody. I think those are related. There are some Members of my own caucus which I believe are an acquired taste—which I haven't acquired yet—and yet she has, from the outset, been able to make friends with people who are dramatically different in politics but also different in personal style. She likes some very difficult-to-like people. As a result of those friendships, she has been able to get people to come across the aisle, from time to time, when it was critical to get things done.

But if I had to say what has distinguished her most as a Member of this body—not just the fact that she has been the most productive and has been able to get people on both sides of the aisle to work through tough issues and to make the Senate work when we were stalled—what I think sets her apart most is the degree of her principle and character. She is an individual who was raised in a home with principles, went to institutions, including my alma mater, Brigham Young University. She graduated a lot faster than I did and

made it through that university in a short period of time.

But, at one point, my colleagues asked me: Is she going to be able to stand up to the pressure that is going to be placed on her for preserving the institution of the Senate, because there is going to be enormous political pressure rained upon her, and will she be able to resist that pressure? I volunteered at our caucus lunch to go sound out whether she would have the capacity to overcome what was a groundswell on her side of the aisle to take action which would have devastated, in my view, the institution of the Senate.

I approached her and said: KYRSTEN, will you be able to vote no? Will you be able to defend the principle that has made the Senate work over these decades?

And she said: MITT, you ought to know me by now. I was raised with the same values you have. I am a person of principle, and I stand by my principles.

And I have watched her time and again do that very thing.

I spoke with one of the leaders in my party, and I said: How is the Senate going to work without KYRSTEN SINEMA to bridge the divide that often exists between us? And he said: I am not sure it will be able to work without her. How in the world she is not coming back as a United States Senator is one of the great mysteries to me. She should be coming back. We need her in this body. She has been an essential Member of this body.

I will just close with this: I used to love reading books by Louis L'Amour. He writes about the American West. I read them all; I probably still love them. I am getting old enough to forget his earlier books, so I could read them again and still love them. But he had an expression about people that were just really individuals you could count on, rely on, people of character and capacity and principle. He said they had "sand."

And if there is someone who has sand in this body, it is KYRSTEN SINEMA. She is going to continue to make a huge imprint on the United States of America. It has been an honor to serve with her.

I feel we have been blessed by having her in this body.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, one of my jobs in this Congress is chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and considering hundreds of nominees for lifetime appointments to the Federal bench. It has been quite a process. About 80 percent of those who have gone through have been on a bipartisan basis, which is a good thing, but there have been ups and downs.

There is only one Senator who is able to bring two nominees from her State through the committee without the usual waiting periods because she asked on the other side for permission to move forward. They trusted her;

they liked her; and they gave her an exception. In both instances, KYRSTEN SINEMA has delivered for the State of Arizona when it comes to Federal judges on an expedited basis, pure and solely by her personality and charm and ability, I might add.

I also want to say a word, I have invested a large part of my Senate career on the immigration issue, and I thank her for her valiant effort trying to put together a bipartisan effort on that whole immigration issue. I know it was a hard break for you not to be able to do that, and I think you really held the key to bringing together both sides in a way that I have never seen in the Senate.

So thank you for trying, thank you for your effort. Congratulations on your achievements. I wish you the very best.

H.R. 5009

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the National Defense Authorization Act under consideration by the Senate today provides crucial resources to our Armed Forces and our national defense. This year's defense bill invests directly in the men and women in uniform through a significant pay raise for junior enlisted members along with improvements in housing, healthcare, and support for all servicemembers and their families. The bill also provides funding authorization for the many Federal Agencies in Maryland whose missions support our national defense, including resources for critical projects taking place at Fort Meade and Aberdeen Proving Ground, as well as the construction of a contained burn facility at Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head, protecting air quality in our local communities. I also worked with my colleagues to expand the scope of the SERVE Act, which I helped pass into law in the FY22 NDAA, by ensuring that high school students applying to attend the Merchant Marine Academy do not lose the opportunity to be nominated because of a vacancy in the office of one of their U.S. Senators or Representative in the U.S. House. The bill also includes the State Department Authorization Act and takes meaningful steps to improve the quality of life for our diplomatic corps and their family members, such as greater flexibility for foreign service families' housing arrangements and fairer pay for locally hired foreign service staff.

There are many important provisions in this legislation, and I support funding a robust national defense that meets the challenges of emerging threats and an increasingly unstable world. Maryland is the proud home of tens of thousands of military personnel and civilians working in the defense sector, as well as critical military installations, and I am glad that this legislation invests over \$200 million in our State's critical assets to address the security challenges of today and tomorrow. Maryland's bases are innovating in fields from cybersecurity to energetics and are conducting critical research to protect our military.

Protecting our national security goes hand-in-hand with advancing U.S. innovation and competitiveness. Maryland has a key role to play in developing the technologies of the future that will keep our Nation at the cutting-edge. Today's bill authorizes the Department of Commerce to utilize up to \$500 million from spectrum auction proceeds for the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs ("Tech Hubs") program, which was established in the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, to fund designated Tech Hubs and to expand the program. In 2023, the Baltimore Region Tech Hub was designated as one of the 31 inaugural Tech Hubs, and this funding could further its efforts to become a global leader in advancing biotech and equitable artificial intelligence to improve national health outcomes.

While I support important investments in our national defense, I remain concerned about the continued growth in defense spending, especially when the Pentagon as a whole continues to fail independent audits, with only half of the Department's 28 Agencies passing their own individual audits. While I do not believe that across-the-board cuts are the best way to reduce spending, I do believe we need to put our defense dollars to much more strategic use and make the hard choices necessary to right-size our defense spending. As we discuss ways to achieve greater government efficiency, we must apply the same standard to the Department of Defense, which represents over half of total Federal discretionary spending.

Today's bill also includes harmful language unfairly targeting transgender youth and their families. It is not Congress's place to decide what health decisions our military families make; these decisions should be left to servicemembers, their families, and their doctors. It is especially galling that this bill restricts some healthcare and fails to expand access to IVF to help military members struggling with infertility. We should be supporting our military families, not limiting their access to care. Given these concerns, I supported Senator BALDWIN's amendment to remove section 708 entirely, and I am disappointed this language remains in the final bill.

In addition, despite promises to the contrary, the new definition for what is considered an "electronic communications service provider" that was included in the April 2024 reauthorization of section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was not amended in this bill. This new definition, while intended to clarify the term to account for changing technology, broadly includes "any other service provider who has access to equipment that is being or may be used to transmit or store wire or electronic communications." This overly broad definition, among other reasons, is why I voted against the reauthorization of section 702 of FISA. While I accept the

representations from proponents that this language is not intended to open the door to requiring a slew of service providers to comply with government demands to intercept communications, its plain language is very broad. I, along with other Members who were concerned with this provision, were told by our colleagues that this language would be altered in the final bill. I appreciated that the Senate's version of the Intelligence Authorization Act included revised language addressing this concern, but that provision unfortunately wasn't included in the final NDAA, and I am deeply disappointed with this outcome.

Ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the tools they need to defend the United States is critical. Like any bill, this package isn't perfect, but overall, I believe it will meaningfully advance our national security goals, support our defense workforce, and invest in crucial priorities for Maryland. That being said, I have serious concerns with several important issues within this legislation. We must right-size our defense spending. We must protect our military families and their access to healthcare. And we must protect Americans from the possible misuse of surveillance authorities. I will continue to work with my colleagues in the next Congress to address these serious concerns.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator REED, Senator SCHUMER, and I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the Senate will soon consider the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2025.

The NDAA is among the most important bills Congress considers each year. It is a primary way of fulfilling our most solemn obligation: our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense.

Congress has come together to pass the NDAA each year for more than six decades—63 years to be precise. Today, we continue our streak of earned success.

In our best moments, we worked out the NDAA in an open and aboveboard process. Here I must say that I am frustrated with the majority leader's decision to thwart that regular order this year. He did not bring the bill to the floor, thus denying Americans the opportunity to witness their elected representatives make decisions in the open on critical national security issues.

Still, we continued in the spirit of honesty and collegiality. The numbers bear that out. The Armed Services Committee considered nearly 3,000 requests submitted by all Senators. We considered 618 amendments at markup, adopting 327 of those amendments. We

then processed over 90 amendments during the informal conference process.

These statistics tell the story of the hard work and professionalism that characterized the construction of this bill.

We are currently experiencing the most dangerous national security moment since World War II. One need only scroll through the headlines summarizing this year's world events. Congress needed to respond in kind. At every possible opportunity, we should be sending a signal of peace through strength of strong deterrence.

Accordingly, the Senate Armed Services Committee took an honest look at growing capability and aggression by our adversaries. We decided that this year was the time to change our course and move our military toward the generational defense investment it deserves.

That vital committee action included an upgrade of \$25 billion for our missile defense, shipbuilding, and counter-drone technology, among other modernization programs—\$25 billion.

This should have been part of the bill today. Regrettably, we missed an opportunity to strengthen the President-elect's hand as he takes office in a precarious world situation.

I hope and expect we will see bipartisan support for much-needed investment early in 2025. And yet as I note what is missing from the bill, I am happy to recognize the immense accomplishments that Members have included in NDAA. We secured a significant 14.5 percent pay raise for our junior enlisted servicemembers, as well as a 4.5 percent increase for all other servicemembers.

We made investments in junior ROTC and recruitment capabilities, both of which will help solve the military's manpower crisis.

This bill stops the Department of Defense from paying for puberty blockers and hormone therapies for children.

We blocked the teaching of critical race theory in military programming, and we froze diversity, equity, and inclusion hiring at the DOD. In fact, we defunded DEI.

The NDAA authorizes critical investments across the board. We accelerated ongoing nuclear deterrence efforts; we moved forward in shipbuilding programs for our destroyers and submarines; finally, we learned from the wars going on around us today, using real world experience, we found ways to strengthen security assistance for frontline allies in the Pacific, the Middle East, and in Europe.

So let me say again, this is a good bill. It is a piece of legislation in which I take pride. As always, I am grateful to have the opportunity to advance our national security. And as I speak of gratitude, I want to extend special thanks to my friend, Chairman JACK REED. I also want to thank his team on the Armed Services Committee, ably led by staff director Liz King.

I thank my Republican and Democratic colleagues on the committee as

well; each made important contributions to the bill. This is especially true of our subcommittee chairs and ranking members, and I will recognize those on my side of the aisle: Senator TOM COTTON, ranking member of Airland; Senator DEB FISCHER, ranking member of Strategic Forces; Senator MIKE ROUNDS, Cybersecurity ranking member; Senator JONI ERNST, Emerging Threats and Capabilities ranking member; Senator RICK SCOTT ranking member of Personnel; and Senator DAN SULLIVAN, ranking member of Readiness.

I also want to thank my Armed Services Committee staff. These patriotic individuals burned the midnight oil for months, literally. They delivered a product that this body can be proud of, one that does much to advance American interests.

The American people would be astounded to see how hard and how long these staff members work. And I can hardly mention my staff without thanking my intrepid staff director John Keast. John and his superb team know how to get the job done, and I want to recognize John Keast and his staff by name.

They are Rick Berger, Brendan Gavin, James Mazol, Greg Lilly, Adam Barker, Zach Barnett, Kristina Belcourt, Jack Beyrer, Cody Emerson, Isaac Jalkanen, Kevin Kim, Eric Lofgren, Katie Magnus, Jonathan Moore, Sean O'Keefe, Brad Patout, Katie Romaine, Eric Trager, Adam Trull and Olivia Trusty.

This year's NDAA will further the cause of our national defense, but it cannot do all that we need. This bill—this will be the final vote on this bill. It has passed the House. We have invoked cloture, and this vote will send this bill to the President.

Let this piece of legislation be an exhortation that Congress can no longer leave the job of national defense half finished. We have no choice but to move ahead and to move ahead early next year with a generational investment in our military.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to express my support for the fiscal year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act. I am glad that we will soon be voting on final passage of the bill, and I expect it to pass with strong support.

First, I would like to acknowledge the great work and leadership of my colleague Senator ROGER WICKER; also our colleagues in the House, Chairman MIKE ROGERS and Representative ADAM SMITH. Their partnership has been crucial for the success of this bill. The hallmark of the Senate and House Armed Services Committee has long been bipartisanship, and I am glad that we have continued that tradition for the 64th consecutive year.

I would also like to thank the Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees who helped produce this bill, as well as Leader SCHUMER, Leader MCCONNELL, Speaker

JOHNSON, and Leader JEFFRIES, who facilitated a thorough debate and enabled all Members to engage in the process.

We were able to negotiate hundreds of bipartisan provisions between both Chambers over the past 2 months. This is a strong, forward-looking bill that we can all be proud of. This NDAA is laser-focused on the threats we face.

First and foremost, it recognizes the urgent challenge that China poses to our national security. Beijing continues to escalate its aggressive behavior both militarily and economically against the United States and our allies, and we must respond with resolve.

This NDAA makes strong progress in that regard. Among many other efforts, it authorizes \$15.5 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. It establishes a joint force headquarters in Japan, and it strengthens a number of our regional networks, including AUKUS, the Quad, our trilateral partnership with South Korea and Japan, our alliance with the Philippines, and our partnership with Taiwan. These are momentous accomplishments.

The NDAA also addresses the evolving threats from Russia, Iran, North Korea, and transnational criminal organizations.

It authorizes full funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, provides support for our security cooperation missions with Israel, and improves our counterdrug capabilities in the Western Hemisphere.

Importantly, the bill authorizes record-level investments in key technologies, like hypersonics and artificial intelligence, and significantly increases resources for uncrewed systems and counter-UAS development.

Indeed, our drone capabilities, both defensive and offensive, must be improved quickly as we are seeing every day.

The bill also makes substantial progress toward modernizing our ships, submarines, aircraft, and combat vehicles.

Most importantly, this NDAA provides a historic level of support for our troops and their families. We have included the largest pay raise for junior enlisted servicemembers in decades, expanded eligibility for the Basic Needs Allowance, and authorized increased funding to repair barracks around the world.

Now, I acknowledge the concerns that some of my colleagues have about the bill. A number of Senators hoped to see a higher top line to match the threats we face around the world. Their concern is well-reasoned. However, I would point out that the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, which was demanded by House Republicans, clearly set forth the top-line cap and the budgetary consequences that would result from breaking it. The top line we ultimately negotiated adheres to that law. Nonetheless, I am confident that this bill will provide robust capabilities for the Department.

In addition, I share many of my colleagues' frustrations that the bill includes a provision that would prohibit gender-affirming healthcare for minors in certain circumstances. I voted against this provision in committee, and I disagree strongly with including such a, frankly, I think misguided provision in the Defense bill. We will continue to work to ensure the healthcare rights of all military personnel and their dependencies.

Ultimately, though, we have before us a very strong National Defense Authorization Act. I am confident it will provide the Department of Defense and our military men and women with the resources they need to meet and defeat the national security threats we face.

Now I would like to take an opportunity to recognize the staff who have made this bill possible. Senator WICKER has already pointed out the extraordinary members of his staff and rightfully commended them for their excellent work. I specifically want to recognize, first, the director of the Democratic staff Elizabeth King and the director of the Republican staff John Keast. They did a superb job. They have led their staffs with professionalism and skill.

I would also like to thank members of the Armed Services Committee staff on my side of the aisle: Jody Bennett, Carolyn Chuhta, Jon Clark, Jenny Davis, Jonathan Epstein, Jorie Feldman, Kevin Gates, Creighton Greene, Chad Johnson, Gary Leeling, Maggie McNamara Cooper, Mike Noblet, John Quirk, Andy Scott, Cole Stevens, Meredith Werner, Alison Warner, Isabelle Picciotti, Leah Brewer, Sean Jones, Joe Gallo, Ryan Bates, Sean Jones, Brittany Amador, Sofia Kamali, Noah Sisk, and Zachary Volpe.

Also, I want to thank the floor staff and the leadership. We can't get anything done around here without the floor staff and the leadership.

Thank you, Senator SCHUMER.

Mr. SCHUMER. In that order of importance, in my opinion.

Mr. REED. As the majority leader points out, the floor staff is the most important component of what we do.

You have been part of this process for the last several weeks and have done a remarkable job getting us to this point, and I thank you very much.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

Mr. REED. Finally, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me commend JACK REED for his great leadership as head of the Armed Services Committee. He is an amazing leader. He knows the military like no one, from his service there. He is a West Point graduate—great New York institution. Sorry they lost. I was on their side. He can explain things. He has just done an amazing job, and he is steadfast and intrepid and on the merits, and everyone respects him. That is

why we have gotten—this was a difficult year to get this bill done. Some thought we wouldn't be able to with the polarization, the late hour, and everything else, but because of this man, we did, and he deserves all of our thanks.

I want to thank Senator WICKER as well. He is a big, strong fighter for the military and did a great job as well.

So I thank both of you. This is the kind of bipartisan way we should do this.

Now, today, for the 64th consecutive year, the Senate passes a bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act to protect the American people and strengthen our security—64th year. Pretty good. Pretty good.

The NDAA is not perfect, but it still makes several important advances Democrats fought for to secure America's national defense and take a strong stand against the Chinese Communist Party. I am particularly glad that the NDAA expands the Tech Hubs Program that I created in the bipartisan Chips and Science Act, along with Senators YOUNG, CANTWELL, and others, and I thank our leaders for understanding the importance of that issue. It will help make tech innovation more achievable in the Midwest, across the country, and—near and dear to me—in Upstate New York.

The NDAA will also strengthen America's leadership on AI by expanding our AI infrastructure within the Department of Defense—something that our bipartisan AI forums from last year stressed was critical, and now we are getting it passed into law.

The NDAA gives our troops a raise, authorizes funding for military families to pay for childcare, extends programs for military spouses to find good-paying jobs, and expands mental health services for parents.

Again, I thank the staffs as well. They are great, professional, and excellent. I thank Senator REED. I thank Ranking Member WICKER and the members of the Armed Services Committee.

This is a good day for the strength of America.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 3317
WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending motion to concur with amendment No. 3317 be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 85, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 325 Leg.]

YEAS—85

Barrasso	Graham	Peters
Bennet	Grassley	Reed
Blackburn	Hagerty	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Heinrich	Rosen
Brown	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Budd	Hirono	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cardin	Johnson	Schumer
Carper	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Casey	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shaheen
Collins	King	Sinema
Coons	Klobuchar	Smith
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Tester
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Cramer	Manchin	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Mullin	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murphy	Wicker
Fetterman	Murray	Young
Fischer	Ossoff	
Gillibrand	Padilla	

NAYS—14

Baldwin	Markey	Stabenow
Booker	Merkley	Warren
Braun	Paul	Welch
Kim	Sanders	Wyden
Lee	Schiff	

NOT VOTING—1

Vance

The motion was agreed to.
(Mr. HICKENLOOPER assumed the Chair.)

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT OF 2023—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 82, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows.

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 693, H.R. 82, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1631

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in a few moments, my friend Senator PETERS will offer legislation that responds to the reports of unusual drone activity, and I thank him for his great work and leadership on this. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bipartisan drone legislation, which the FBI, the DHS, the FAA, and the DOD—the Department of Defense—all support. The Senate should pass our bill without delay.

Our bill, among other things, explicitly authorizes State and local authorities to conduct drone detection and helps them better coordinate with Federal law enforcement Agencies to keep communities safe.

The people in New York and New Jersey have a lot of questions, and they are not getting good enough answers.

The utter confusion surrounding these drone sightings shows that the Feds can't respond all on their own; they need help detecting these drones from local officials who have neither the resources nor the explicit authority to act. The bill fixes that.

We all know drones are a relatively new phenomenon, and there are millions of them all over the United States. A lot of them are hobbyists. Some of them are companies doing legitimate work. But the Federal Government just doesn't have the ability or resources. If we were to say the Federal Government should look at this completely, they would be taken away from so many other important jobs. So the most logical thing to do is say: Let the localities have some authority. These are law enforcement authorities. These are people we know and we trust.

Now, for all we know, the recent drone incidents are entirely benign, but the people of New York and New Jersey understandably still have questions, and they deserve answers. The problem is, the widespread use of drones is relatively new in the eyes of Federal law, and therefore the authority to detect drone activity near sensitive infrastructure is totally within Federal jurisdiction. That should be fixed in an appropriate way. The Federal Government just doesn't have the ability to go in every corner of America and see whether the drones are safe or not safe.

Local law enforcement is appropriate, and they will work with the Feds in working on this. The bill is about giving local officials on the ground greater flexibility and proven technology to detect and track threats in their jurisdictions. It is about giving people answers they don't now have, heard directly from authorities on the ground. If this bill becomes law, we will have better clarity in the future.

So I yield to my friend from Michigan who has worked hard on this issue for a long period of time. It has broad bipartisan support. I hope the Senate can act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, every day, more and more Americans are using drones for everything from hobby flights to commercial applications, as well as law enforcement activities. Drones can offer important societal and economic benefits, but they can also cause problems if they are not used appropriately.

Recently, in New Jersey, we have seen reports of loud and menacing drones. And while the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and other key Agencies have assured the public that these drones pose no immediate homeland security threat, they have certainly caused unease and concern for many Americans.

Rogue drones can interfere with commercial air traffic—as we saw with the recent closure of runways at a New

York airport—as well as large public gatherings like football games or concerts. The National Football League, a key supporter of this legislation, has shared that in recent seasons, they have seen more than 2,500 drones violate the airspace around stadiums, in some cases leading them to stop the football games to resolve potential threats to their fans as well as to their teams.

We have also seen how drones operated by a bad actor can quickly become a very serious security threat. This summer, an assailant used a drone to surveil President-elect Trump's rally site in Butler, PA, just hours—just hours—before firing shots in a horrific assassination attempt.

That is why I have been working to pass bipartisan legislation that would address these concerns by giving law enforcement the tools and the authorities that they need to detect, identify, and track drones to ensure that they do not pose any risk to Americans.

My legislation, which passed out of the committee that I chair—Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs—unanimously last Congress, out of committee, would equip law enforcement agencies, including State and local police—like the officials currently dealing with the ongoing situation in New Jersey—with the tools to better detect and to track drones and identify cases where they may pose a security threat to large public gatherings, airports, critical infrastructure facilities, as well as our communities.

Most urgently, this bill would ensure that law enforcement has the technology needed to quickly and clearly identify exactly what the reported sightings of drones across the country actually are. If a drone is found to be a potential danger, our law enforcement agencies, they must—they must—have the tools to mitigate these threats effectively.

That is why my bill would allow the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice to operate a pilot program so that State and local law enforcement agencies can conduct drone mitigation activities to safely disable threatening drones before they cause serious harm.

This legislation has strong bipartisan support here in the U.S. Senate. We currently have 28 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle—14 Democrats, 11 Republicans, and 3 Independents. And as the number of registered drones continues to grow, so does the need to pass this critical legislation to ensure that our law enforcement agencies can address these potential threats.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this commonsense bill to safeguard our homeland and ensure that law enforcement can better protect our communities from the potential threats posed by recklessly or nefariously operated drones.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Af-

fairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1631 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the Peters substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; and that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, no one disputes that drones flying in airspace could be a danger, that drones flying over the Super Bowl could be a danger, that drones flying over military bases could be a danger. That is why it is illegal. It is currently illegal, and the Federal Government has the capacity to investigate and stop drones that are in airspace over our military bases, following our ships. We have that capacity.

What is disputed and what the Biden administration is currently telling us is they don't see a problem. So if there is a problem, let the Biden administration be forthcoming. Let us know the extent of the problem. Let us know who is flying the drones. Let us know what is going on. Instead, this bill says: Well, we don't know. The Biden administration doesn't know, but why don't we give the power to the local officials to go after drones.

But I rise today to object to this unanimous consent request because, at this time, public trust in government is at historic lows. This body must not rush to grant sweeping surveillance powers without proper consideration and debate by the committees of jurisdiction, which is what I pledge to do beginning in January when we will be in charge of the committees.

Yet what is going on is exactly what this legislation seeks to do now: to expand Federal authority to intercept communications and disrupt drone activity, powers that raise serious concerns for Americans' privacy, civil liberties, and Fourth Amendment protections against unwarranted search and seizure.

We are being told this legislation is urgent; that it is needed to address an imminent drone threat. Yet the government itself admits no such threats exist.

So either there is a threat or there isn't a threat, but the Biden administration keeps saying: Well, it is all normal stuff, and it is just planes.

So it is or it isn't. Why don't we try to get to the truth of the matter of what actually exists and what the threat is before we propose legislation.

Federal Agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, have stated clearly that there is no current national security risk, no public safety concern, and no unlawful drone activity requiring intervention. So there either is a problem or there

isn't a problem. If there is a problem, let's discuss how to do it while protecting the communications of innocent Americans whose communications could be caught up in this legislation.

Until the Federal assessment changes—the assessment that it isn't a problem changes to that it is a problem, and these are the malefactors, these are the people that are orchestrating this—let's get that from the Biden administration. Tell us what the problem is. Tell us the extent of the problem. Instead, the Biden administration is saying there is not a problem.

So, Madam President, this pattern is all too familiar. History has shown us, time and time again, how fear and manufactured urgency are used as pretexts to expand government power at the expense of freedom.

After 9/11, Congress passed the Patriot Act. In the name of security, Americans were promised that these surveillance powers were necessary; they would only be directed toward foreigners; they would only be directed toward terrorists—until we discovered that these powers were being used on Americans. Americans were promised that these powers were necessary and temporary. Instead, they were abused, misused, and weaponized. Innocent Americans had their privacy violated, their data collected, and their rights trampled.

The lesson here is clear: When Congress legislates in haste, without careful scrutiny, without debate, and without accountability, it is the American people who suffer the consequences. Today, we are facing a similar moment.

The bill before us would grant law enforcement significant authority to intercept private electronic communications without consent.

For example, the bill will allow the government to conduct dragnet surveillance of the phones of innocent Americans traveling through U.S. airports, as long as the government claims they are doing it to neutralize a drone. So in order to look at the information that might be coming to a drone, it may be that you capture all the information of everybody surrounding an airport or everybody who lives near an airport.

Once you have all that data, what are the assurances that the government isn't looking at your data in addition to the data that may be related to flying the drone?

This is not just about security. It is about unchecked government overreach. It is about capitalizing on fear and media-driven hysteria to jam through sweeping legislation that could violate the civil liberties of American people.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to serve as a check on the Executive power, not as a rubberstamp for it.

The Federal Government already has the power to deal with drones. The

Federal Government already has the power to stop any drones that are in airspace around airports. The Federal Government already has the power to protect its air bases. So if there is a significant problem here, the Biden administration needs to come forward and let us know: Who are these drones? Who is operating these drones?

What is the Federal Government doing to protect either airports or bases from this? Instead, we are told by the Biden administration there is no threat to our national security.

Let's first insist on truth and transparency from the Biden administration before offering up legislation that is feel-good, pat somebody on the back, and say: Oh, we have done something about drones. We are strong on drones.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to serve as a check on Executive power, not as a rubberstamp. We owe it to the American people to demand compelling justification, meaningful safeguards, and full transparency before granting new surveillance authorities.

We are a Nation of laws, not fear, not panic, and not manufactured urgency. We do not trade away our freedoms, our privacy, and our constitutional protections for vague promises of security.

I will object to this bill today, but I am open to talking with the authors of this bill about how we could have enhanced ability to interrupt drone activity, but done while protecting all Americans' constitutional right to privacy.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

PROVIDING FOR A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 5009

Mr. REED. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 44.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 44) directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REED. I further ask that the concurrent resolution be agreed to; 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 concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 44), was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 44) is printed in today's RECORD (Legislative Day of December 16, 2024) under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. REED. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 3373, H.R. 4385, and H.R. 5770, and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 629, S. 4576; S. 3373; H.R. 4385; and H.R. 5770.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged of the relevant bills, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bills, en bloc.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment to S. 3373 at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bills, as amended, where applicable, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

COLORADO RIVER BASIN SYSTEM CONSERVATION EXTENSION ACT

The bill (S. 4576) to amend the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015, to reauthorize the Colorado River System conservation pilot program, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4576

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 "Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF COLORADO RIVER SYSTEM CONSERVATION PILOT PROGRAM.

Section 206 of the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015 (43 U.S.C. 620 note; Public Law 113-235), is amended—

- (1) in subsection (b)(2), by striking "this Act" and inserting "the Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act";
- (2) in subsection (c)(2), by striking "2024" and inserting "2026"; and
- (3) in subsection (d), by striking "2025" and inserting "2027".

REQUIRING THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION TO EXTEND THE TIME PERIOD DURING WHICH LICENSEES ARE REQUIRED TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN HYDROPOWER PROJECTS

A bill (S. 3373) to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the time period during which licensees are required to commence construction of certain hydropower projects.

The amendment (No. 3343) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF TIME TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN HYDROPOWER PROJECTS.

(a) **DEFINITION OF COVERED PROJECT.**—In this section, the term “covered project” means a hydropower project with respect to which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a license before March 13, 2020.

(b) **AUTHORIZATION OF EXTENSION.**—Notwithstanding section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806), on the request of a licensee of a covered project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may, after reasonable notice and for good cause shown, extend in accordance with subsection (c) the period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of the covered project for an additional 4 years beyond the 8 years authorized by that section.

(c) **PERIOD OF EXTENSION.**—An extension of time to commence construction of a covered project under subsection (b) shall—

(1) begin on the date on which the final extension of the period for commencement of construction granted to the licensee under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) expires; and

(2) end on the date that is 4 years after the latest date to which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is authorized to extend the period for commencement of construction under that section.

(d) **REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.**—If the time period required under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) to commence construction of a covered project expires after December 31, 2023, and before the date of enactment of this Act—

(1) the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may reinstate the license for the applicable project effective as of the date of expiration of the license; and

(2) the extension authorized under subsection (b) shall take effect on the date of that expiration.

The bill (S. 3373), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time and passed.

DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS ACT

The bill (H.R. 4385) to extend authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

WATER MONITORING AND TRACKING ESSENTIAL RESOURCES (WATER) DATA IMPROVEMENT ACT

The bill (H.R. 5770) to reauthorize certain United States Geological Survey water data enhancement programs was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, in Colorado and across the West, as you know as well as I, many, many communities are facing a historic drought crisis. Decades of drought are, in fact, long-term aridification and in many ways have become the new normal.

These bills respond to the urgent needs of our drought-stricken communities. They maintain the Federal Government’s ability to respond to drought and allow voluntary water conservation in the Upper Colorado River Basin.

We need these now as we are seeing in realtime how drought threatens our very way of life. More than 40 million people rely on the Colorado River for water, food, recreation, energy. Our communities, our farms, our environment all depend on water. These bills extend programs that we already know work. At risk is our entire way of life.

Thankfully, the two House bills I mentioned, the Drought Preparedness Act and WATER, the Water Data Improvement Act, will now become law. My colleague from Boulder, JOE NEGUSE, has done the heavy lifting to get this across the finish line in that Chamber. I am happy to do the same here.

But the two Senate bills just passed will still need to pass the House to help us out in the West. We really are running out of time.

The System Conservation Pilot Program enables voluntary water conservation in the Upper Colorado River, and I have been working closely with Senator BARRASSO to reauthorize it. It is supported by the Upper Colorado River Commission and got its start in the depths of the 2022 Colorado River drought that continues to this day.

It is critical that we pass this 2-year reauthorization because water users and farmers who participate need to make decisions now about signing on for next year. Any delay that will limit the Upper Basin’s ability to find participants and run a successful water conservation program, we can’t afford that.

We are asking Speaker JOHNSON to please put this lifeline for western farmers and ranchers on the suspension calendar and make sure that it is able to pass this year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I am speaking to S. 3373, the hydropower license extension, which helps a lock on the Red River and Overton Lock projects. This bill is incredibly important to Louisiana.

Hydropower is reliable, safe, and responsible; and the Federal Government should be enabling projects, not standing in the way.

Today’s actions are bipartisan, pro-job and pro-American energy. I am glad to see Congress cut the redtape holding up the Red River and Overton Lock projects.

These hydropower projects have been negatively impacted by supply chain issues the last 4 years. They simply need more time to start construction.

I am very pleased to see this get across the finish line.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Ms. LUMMIS. Madam President, I am proud to support H.R. 4385, the Drought Preparedness Act, which I joined my colleague from Colorado in introducing.

Senator HICKENLOOPER has been fabulous to work with, as have all of the Senators from the States that headwater and utilize the Colorado River, including yourself, Madam President.

This bill would reauthorize the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act and allow the Department of the Interior to prepare drought contingency plans and provide technical assistance to State, local, and Tribal governments on their drought contingency plans.

This is one of the many bills I have had the pleasure of partnering with Senator HICKENLOOPER on, and I look forward to the President signing it into law.

Again, Madam President, I appreciate your help on these matters as well.

I am also pleased to support H.R. 5770, the Water Data Improvement Act, also sponsoring and introducing with my colleague Senator HICKENLOOPER, to reauthorize three water data programs at the U.S. Geological Survey that address water scarcity in the West. The West continues to lead the Nation in water conservation and management practices and is home to some of the best and brightest experts in this field. By extending these successful programs, we will improve water quality, secure our water infrastructure, and ensure we remain good stewards of our natural resources.

Again, with my appreciation for my fellow Colorado River Senators, with whom we have been working for the last couple of years on these measures and others to support our State’s engineers in the more than 100-year-old Colorado River Compact, I thank you and look forward to continuing to work with you to address the important Colorado River issues to the West and to our country.

I yield the floor.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

TRIBUTE TO ANNE STANSKI

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful staffer who has been indispensable to me and the entire Stabenow team. She has left us now; so she is in the Gallery, rather than sitting next to me. But I am so grateful for Anne Stanski and her incredible work.

Anne began as a scheduler in my Washington office at the beginning of my second term in the Senate, and after just a few weeks, I wondered how I got along for 6 years without her. Anyone who knows congressional offices knows that being the scheduler is not the most glamorous job. But having a great scheduler is the secret sauce of every successful Hill office.

Anne tracked countless flights to and from Michigan, organized every detail of a codel to four different countries in Africa, planned and executed numerous events, and so much more. No task was ever too small or too large for Anne to handle. She knew how to do it all, and she did it all exceptionally well. She rolled with the punches and was always, always available to untangle the knots that inevitably make their way into a well-planned schedule.

After 10 years of being the go-to person on all things scheduling, Anne transitioned to be my deputy chief of staff. I pride myself on having the best team in the Congress, and Anne was influential in building that team.

Over the years, Anne has mentored countless interns, many of whom became staffers in our office and grew to become integral members of our team under her guidance. Her latest achievement in this area includes two of her former schedulers becoming engaged to each other.

Everyone on staff always knew they could go to Anne for help. Whether it was managing the front office, solving a scheduling issue, or just needing someone to talk to, Anne was always there. Anne's leadership and hard work has made my office effective at getting things done and a great place to work.

During her time in my office, we have had one of the lowest staff turnovers of any office in the Senate. Most recently, Anne took on the responsibility of leading the Democratic policy and communications committee, comprised of 51 Senators whose schedules often appear to be purposefully planned to thwart any attempt to get us all in one place. Despite this, Anne successfully planned and executed annual retreats, which is no small job, and weekly policy luncheons for the committee, all while carrying out the essential service of steering our party's policies and messaging forward.

May I add, she has accomplished all of this while she and her husband Matt are raising very impressive twin girls, Addie and Lizzie, who were born while Anne was working for me and are now in high school. I can't believe this.

They are such a beautiful family. Now, despite what many people think, you don't have to be a Michigan State University fan to work in my office, but it helps. As proud alums, Anne and I have always spent so much time together cheering on our Spartans, even watching them play in the Sweet 16 at Madison Square Garden. Go, Green.

Anne, thank you for everything—your incredible work, your loyalty, your friendship. I wish you every happiness and success possible in the future. You deserve it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion on the motion to proceed to H.R. 82 be waived.

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

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from North Carolina.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about the vote that we are about to move to here shortly. It sounds like motherhood and apple pie—the Social Security Fairness Act. Who could be against Social Security fairness?

The fact of the matter is, the policy does address a challenge with Social Security for a single-digit percentage of people who have a pension—a government pension program—and they are not necessarily getting exactly what they should back. So it is something we need to fix, but this is not the way to fix it.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are 10 years away from most economists' consensus believing that the Social Security trust fund is going to reach insolvency—10 years—10 years away.

This bill will take \$200 billion over that 10-year period out of the Social Security trust fund without any offsetting payment to it. So that is, to right a wrong for a small percentage of people that should get fairly treated, they are going to rake \$200 billion—with a "b"—over 10 years to pay for this.

That pulls insolvency forward by 6 months. Now 6 months doesn't sound like a lot, if you are talking years and years and years into the future, but we are estimated to be reaching insolvency within the next 9 to 10 years. Suddenly, 6 months becomes a pretty significant amount of time. So we are bowing—we have people here who have voted against bills before because they say: I don't like the idea of something not going through regular order, getting dumped on us at the last minute, and voting on it.

Ladies and gentlemen, this bill has not even had a hearing in any committee in the House or the Senate. It got sent to us through a procedure called a discharge petition, which means that they have discharged their duty of doing regular order, sent it to us, and now we are about to take a vote today without having voted on it.

Now, I know there are a lot of people that say: THOM TILLIS must be committing political suicide because how could you be against Social Security fairness?

People asked me the same question when I was against the PACT Act that my office helped author. The PACT Act was a veterans bill, a trillion-dollar bill that we had a commitment to take through regular order to get it right before we passed it. I talked to vet-

erans groups who were concerned with my lack of support for a bill that I helped author, and I said: It is because I think you are going to regret it by us not thinking through the implications.

I said: It wouldn't surprise me if, 2 years from now, you are going to see and realize the very challenges that I told you about.

They said: You know what, we think it will work itself out.

Well, do you know what happened almost 2 years to the month? We are \$3 billion in the hole for the current year veterans budget and \$15 billion in the hole going forward because we didn't do our homework. We caved to the pressure of the moment instead of doing this on a sustainable basis.

Now, I don't know how many people are going to oppose the bill today. It is likely to move through. But to those of you who are looking past the regular order and fixing the things that I know are not fixed in this bill, own it when we have to come back and fix it. I will come back and fix it. I will help with Social Security reform. But know that you are making the job harder to fix a trust fund that is within 10 years of going insolvent.

It would be easy for me to talk to my friends at the Fraternal Order of Police and say: Yes, we are going to get this done.

And by God, I hope somebody over the next 8 to 10 years fixes Social Security in the future because in 10 years, there will be a mandatory 17—minimum 17 percent cut in the Social Security benefit across the board if we continue to fail to act here and if we continue to dig a deeper hole by the vote we are having today.

So to those of you who need this fixed, who need to be treated fairly, count me in. But understand that the folks who are rushing this vote today are hastening the day where they are probably going to break the promise for 97 percent more people on Social Security who do not benefit from this bill.

Look, I am in an election cycle. A lot of people may think that I am committing political suicide by doing this, but this Chamber needs courage and needs to say what needs to be said. We are about to pass an unfunded \$200 billion spending package for a trust fund that is likely to go insolvent over the next 9 to 10 years, and we are going to pretend like somebody else has to fix it. Well, when you are a U.S. Senator and you have the election certificate, that falls on us.

I want to finish with this: There is nobody in this Chamber I hate to be in disagreement with more than the senior Senator from Maine. Senator COLLINS understands that we do need to fix this, and her sense of fairness and her expertise are unmatched in this Chamber. We do not disagree with what we ultimately need to do. This is a disagreement in how to get there and how to have something that addresses the downstream risk.

So it is with some trepidation that I come to the floor and criticize the good work of Senator COLLINS, but I do it because there is so much riding on us getting this right and having the courage to fix Social Security over the next few years, folks, or—record this speech—we will rue the day that we failed to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, let me just briefly say that I have great admiration for the Senator from North Carolina. This is a rare instance in which we see the issue differently. But I appreciate his leadership and hard work.

I rise today in strong support of the long overdue Social Security Fairness Act. This bipartisan bill would repeal two Social Security provisions that unfairly penalize many public servants in Maine and across the country.

I also want to acknowledge and thank Senator BROWN for his leadership. We have championed this bill together for several years. In fact, we have been debating this inequity in the Social Security System for decades—for decades.

In 2003, I held the very first Senate hearing on this policy. In 2005, the late Senator Dianne Feinstein and I introduced the first Social Security Fairness Act. In 2007, Senator Barbara Mikulski and I introduced another version of the bill. Just last month, the House of Representatives passed the bill overwhelmingly by a vote of 327 to 75.

It is now time for the Senate to finally pass this legislation so that it can become law.

Social Security is the foundation of retirement income for most Americans. Yet many teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public servants often see their earned Social Security benefits unfairly reduced by two provisions: the so-called windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset.

The windfall elimination provision, or WEP, affects public servants who receive a pension from a job not covered by Social Security but who also worked long enough in another job to qualify for Social Security benefits. In other words, they have earned those benefits. They have worked the 40 quarters, the 10 years, under a job that pays into Social Security. Due to the WEP, however, their Social Security benefits are calculated using a different formula, which reduces their monthly benefits. For workers who become eligible for benefits in 2024, the WEP reduction can be up to \$700 per month.

The government pension offset, or just GPO, affects public servants who receive a pension from a job not covered by Social Security but who are also eligible to receive a Social Security spousal or widow's benefit. The GPO, however, reduces the Social Security spousal or widow's benefits by an

amount equal to two-thirds of the non-covered pension. More than 70 percent of those affected by the GPO lose their entire benefit.

This issue is extraordinarily important to people in my State of Maine because the State's pension system does not include a Social Security component. Among those most affected are Maine schoolteachers. They love their jobs and the children they teach, but they have to worry about their future and their retirement security.

Many are women, often retired from teaching, whose spouses worked full time in the private sector, but when they become widowed, their retirement security is often jeopardized because they don't receive the standard amount from their late spouse's Social Security. The fact is that 83 percent of retirees penalized by the GPO provision are women.

According to the Social Security Administration, in November 2024, more than 2 million people—including more than 20,000 in Maine—had their Social Security benefits reduced by the WEP. Similarly, more than 650,000 people were affected by the GPO in November of 2024, including more than 6,000 in Maine.

Let me give you one example. There are so many. Catherine Sjogren from Bangor, ME, told me about having to reenter the workforce at age 72 after retiring from teaching for many decades. Her husband, a Navy veteran, paid into Social Security for 40 years. When he passed away, the GPO reduced Catherine's widow benefits by two-thirds. She did not have the financial security any longer to remain retired, and the GPO penalty left her with few choices but to return to work.

Our dedicated public servants, such as our teachers who help prepare our children for future success and our police officers and firefighters who help keep our communities safe, should receive the full Social Security benefit that they have earned. Let me stress that last point: They have earned these benefits.

This is an unfair, inequitable penalty. I urge my colleagues to support the Social Security Fairness Act and end this inequity once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes and that Senator BROWN be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

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

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, when Washington, when we in Congress, when the President makes a promise to the American people, people expect us to fulfill it. Today, the Senate has an opportunity to live up to a promise.

Millions of teachers, firefighters, police officers—I worked in a public hos-

pital for the uninsured, and I would add nurses, technicians, lab techs, janitors—they expect us to fulfill this promise, and they are watching today. They are watching, filled with hope that the Senate will pass the Social Security Fairness Act to finally stop punishing them for having elected to serve our communities. We can fix a broken system that has unfairly harmed them for almost 30 years. We can finally deliver relief this Christmas for millions of Americans after years of nothing but empty promises.

The Social Security Fairness Act has passed the House and has overwhelming, bipartisan support in the Senate. With 62 cosponsors, it should not be even a question if we have the support to move forward today.

Not too long ago, I met with a retired Louisiana schoolteacher impacted by GPO. She cried in my office, not understanding why she was getting less in Social Security spousal benefits than if she had never worked at all. Think about this. She had her quarters. She had worked, say, 20 years in the private sector. She was getting less from spousal benefits than if she had never worked at all. She felt like she was being punished for educating generations of Louisiana children, and she was being punished. There is no excuse to treat our public servants this way.

So to my colleagues who are concerned about the pricetag, I hear you. The good news: I have a plan that helps address these concerns. I have a comprehensive Social Security plan that addresses both the insolvency in 9 years and including paying for this repeal of WEP and GPO. If you want to talk about it, I have been promoting this for 4 years.

By the way, it does not increase the full retirement age. People can still retire at the age at which they planned to retire.

By the way, it checks boxes that President Trump, during his campaigning, said he would like to do in order to benefit our Nation. It checks that box too.

So if you are concerned about the pricetag, please talk to me about how we can afford to do right by the public servants who are being penalized by WEP and GPO but also help our Nation financially.

We can do both if we have the courage to do both. But at the very least today, we can keep a promise to make Social Security fair again.

I want to thank all the advocates for their work in getting here, including the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Chiefs of Police Association, the Louisiana State Employees' Retirement System, the Louisiana Police Jury Association, the Louisiana Municipal Association, the International Association of Firefighters, the National Fraternal Order of Police, and all the others who have contributed so much to this effort.

I also want to thank President Trump, who has publicly announced his

support for this bill. It is a sacred trust between the American people and our government. President-elect Trump—soon-to-be President Trump—recognizes this.

As long as I am here, I will fight to keep the promises that we make to the American people.

With that, I yield to my good friend Senator BROWN.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Senator CASSIDY.

I thank Senator CASSIDY and his incredible staff for the work that they have done with the Cleveland Connection. And I just appreciate so much, as I leave the Senate, the work that Senator CASSIDY and I have done on a host of bills. And I would say the same about my work with Senator COLLINS. I have been at this bill for a long time. She has been at this bill for now more than two decades.

And I know from our pension bill, I know from the child tax credit, I know from the PACT Act, I know from a whole lot of issues that this stuff takes time. But 21 years is ridiculous. And we need to move forward on this. And I so appreciate that she kept this alive.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator SCHUMER be permitted to speak for 2 minutes prior to the scheduled vote.

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

Mr. BROWN. And I will be brief.

Social Security, we know, is a bedrock of our middle class. It is retirement security that Americans pay into and earn over a lifetime. You pay in for 40 quarters. You pay in for, essentially, 10 years. You have earned it. It should be there when you retire.

These restrictions right now, though, prevent some 3 million Americans—nearly 250,000 people in my State alone, many of whom are law enforcement, first responders, teachers, schoolbus drivers, school cafeteria workers, public servants—it means that many will not get their full Social Security benefit.

It makes no sense. These workers serve the public. They protect our communities. They teach our kids. They pay into Social Security just like everyone else.

When we did a hearing a few months ago at a fire station in Columbus, I met Barbara Ward. She drives a special needs bus for Fairland Local Schools in, I believe, Lawrence County, on the Ohio River. She drives 200 miles a day. She has done this for 40 years. She is in her seventies. Her mom was the first female busdriver hired in that district. Her husband served our country in the Navy Seabees, building our naval bases, and paying into Social Security with every paycheck.

After he passed away 10 years ago, Barb started receiving his Social Security survivors benefits, until Barb retired with her school pension, when her Social Security benefit dropped from \$2,100 a month to 500 a month.

Again, he earned this. This wasn't charity. This wasn't a giveaway. He earned that Social Security benefit, and she should have it.

At our hearing, she said: It is just not fair. My husband worked for that. We worked for that.

They earned that Social Security. They paid into it.

Over and over, these Americans, like that busdriver, have watched corporations get tax cuts and Wall Street gets bailouts. All these workers are asking for is what they have earned.

It is an issue that has a huge impact on a worker's life. But it doesn't get enough attention in Washington.

Again, I thank Senator COLLINS for keeping this alive for so long.

The people it affects aren't powerful corporate interests. They are cops. They are sheriff's deputies. They are firefighters. They are teachers. They work at parks. They work at libraries. They pick up our trash, and they plow our roads. They make our lives livable and better.

We must finally get this done. The House passed it with 327 votes. They don't agree on much in the House, period. But Members of both parties came together and agreed. I believe every single Ohio Member of Congress voted for this. We need to restore those workers' Social Security.

Yesterday, in front of about 50 of my colleagues, I gave what some called my last speech on the Senate floor. I ended it by saying it would not be the last time you heard from me.

Of course, it wouldn't. I am back today fighting for the dignity of work. It is the way I began my career in the Senate. It is what I will continue to do, whether in the Senate or not. Whether it is restoring workers' Social Security or saving workers' pensions or fighting for overtime pay, for supporting unions, so much of what I fought for in the Senate has one thing in common: It is about hard work paying off. It is about what workers earn. It is about honoring the dignity of work.

If you love this country, you fight for the people who make it work. I urge all my colleagues on both sides to join us. Restore the Social Security that people who protect us and serve us have earned over a lifetime of work.

Senator SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in just a few moments, the Senate will hold a vote to take up the Social Security Fairness Act, a bill that ensures no retiree or spouse is wrongly denied their well-earned benefits simply because they chose, at some point in their careers, to work in public service.

Time is short, but I am hopeful the Senate can take up and pass this bill and send it to the President's desk very quickly.

Passing this Social Security fix right before Christmas would be a great gift for our retired firefighters, police officers, postal workers, teachers, and oth-

ers who, for years, contributed to Social Security but are now being penalized because of their time of public service. That is unfair. It is deeply unfair. It goes against the American ideal of working hard, chipping in, and enjoying a well-earned retirement.

Our bill will finally repeal the outdated and unfair WEP and GPO programs which have wreaked havoc on the hard-earned benefits of our public service retirees and their spouses. It has been going on too long. People have been working for decades to pass legislation to fix this issue. We now have that opportunity.

The House has already passed this bill by an overwhelming margin, with Democrats and Republicans, 327 to 75.

We Democrats are ready to stand with our public service retirees and finally fix this problem. The American people will see today which Senators are ready to deliver on these Social Security benefits and who will block this golden opportunity that could help millions.

I thank Senator BROWN and others for their hard work.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 693, H.R. 82, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Baldwin, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Debbie Stabenow, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tina Smith, Richard Blumenthal, Martin Heinrich, Richard J. Durbin, Gary C. Peters, Christopher A. Coons, John W. Hickenlooper, Tammy Duckworth, Tim Kaine, Chris Van Hollen, Jack Reed.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 82, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 73, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 326 Leg.]

YEAS—73

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Boozman
Bennet	Booker	Braun

Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Cantwell	Kaine	Schatz
Capito	Kelly	Schiff
Cardin	Kennedy	Schmitt
Casey	King	Schumer
Cassidy	King	Scott (FL)
Collins	Klobuchar	Scott (SC)
Coons	Lankford	Shaheen
Cornyn	Lujan	Sinema
Cortez Masto	Markley	Smith
Cotton	Merkley	Stabenow
Cramer	Moran	Sullivan
Duckworth	Mullin	Tester
Durbin	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Murphy	Vance
Fischer	Murray	Warner
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warnock
Hagerty	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Peters	Welch
Hawley	Reed	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Ricketts	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Rosen	
Hirono	Rubio	

NAYS—27

Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Budd	Johnson	Rounds
Carper	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Lummis	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 73, the nays are 27.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, we all have State and local governments that have control over their own judicial systems. For example, in my State of Maryland, we have the Maryland Court of Appeals. We have the lower courts in the State of Maryland. Then, of course, we have the Federal court system.

What I am talking about today has nothing to do with the Federal court system. What I am talking about today has to do with judges appointed to the District of Columbia, and because of current law, this Congress oversees those judicial actions.

I think we would all agree that, if we were here in the U.S. Senate blocking decisions, nominations made for judges back in our States or our local jurisdictions, that would be a kind of bizarre thing to do. So I want to make it clear that today we are not talking about the Supreme Court of the United States or the U.S. courts of appeals or Federal district court judges. We are talking about the local judges for the people of the District of Columbia, and in that local court system, they have a commission that determines who the nominees are. But the President then nominates the local judges because of the statutes governing the District of Columbia within the U.S. Congress.

I have heard on the floor of the Senate, many times, legitimate concerns expressed about crime in the District of Columbia and a backlogged court system in the District of Columbia. And yet some, until today—and I hope today will be different—have blocked

consideration or votes on the judges for the people of the District of Columbia. Because of that, Washington, DC's court system has been plagued by vacancies for years. They currently have 11 vacancies—9 on the superior court that handles civil, criminal, and small claims cases; and 2 on the court of appeals. And because of these vacancies, fewer judges are having to take on significantly more case, leading to long delays. In some cases, these proceedings take years.

Judges in the civil division are handling things like landlord and tenant disputes, medical malpractice, and discrimination, and they are handling double the casework that they used to, an average of 473 cases a year.

Without the appointment of a new judge—in other words, if we don't allow the appointment of a new judge here—there will be only one judge handling all of the criminal domestic violence misdemeanors—30 to 60 cases per day. I want to say that again. Unless we take this action, you are going to have only one judge overseeing criminal domestic violence misdemeanors—30 to 60 cases a day—with longer waits for litigants and significant delays in resolving domestic violence cases.

Judges are double- and triple-booking trial dates. One hundred to 200 cases every year are delayed in the court of appeals. Again, not the U.S. court of appeals. I want to make it clear: This is the District of Columbia system and their court of appeals.

The judges before us today are all nonpartisan. In fact, two of them were previously nominated by President Trump. It gives you an idea how long they have been waiting. They are not interpreting Federal law. They are overseeing local criminal and civil cases, just like judges in our State and local courts, as I said.

So I just want to be really clear for our colleagues who are going to delay these judges. They are going to make it even more difficult for the people of DC to deal with criminal justice issues and with their civil litigation.

I really hope, given the fact that we are not talking about Federal judges, we will be able to proceed with these nominations and support them.

With that, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, as if in executive session, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Kenechukwu Onyemacchi Okocha, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, would it be in order if I ask what the basis of the objection is, given the fact that these are nonpartisan judges for the District of Columbia? Would that question be in order if I were to yield to the gentleman?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator may ask questions through the Chair.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I am just wondering if my colleague from Kansas would like to explain the basis for objecting to a judge—this particular judge—in the DC court system.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator should continue.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I gather not, OK.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 767, Sherri Malloy Beatty-Arthur, to be an associate judge for the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 768, Erin Camille Johnston, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 769, Ray D. McKenzie, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 770, Rahkel Bouchet, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 771, John Cuong Truong, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 838, James Graham Lake, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 839, Nicholas George Miranda, to be an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 774, Carmen G. Iguina Gonzalez, to be an associate judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I am going to try one more time. I ask that it be made in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 775, Joseph Russell Palmore to be an associate judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I would just say that based on what I said in my earlier remarks, I have not heard and the body has not heard of any good reason to be blocking these judges for the District of Columbia, have not heard one substantive objection to any of these individuals, have not heard any other rationale for why we are not going to act on these judges right away.

As I indicated, the result of inaction in blocking these judges is just to back up the entire court system of the District of Columbia—criminal cases, civil cases. It makes no sense.

If someone was looking out on the Senate right now, they would see this as one of the many examples of complete dysfunction because of the kind of obstruction based on who knows what rationale for doing the right thing for the District of Columbia.

This is just one reason why many of us support statehood for the people of the District of Columbia. They

shouldn't have to have the U.S. Senate sign off on their judicial nominations, just as we don't sign off on judicial nominations for State courts, whether it be the State of Wisconsin or my State of Maryland. We don't sign off on nominations for local courts in our States, but we do have that power for now and responsibility for now in the U.S. Senate, and this is just an example of total failure to live up to our responsibility to make sure there is a functioning court system in the District of Columbia.

So it is another bad day as we come to the close of this Congress, another unnecessary obstruction that just makes it more difficult for people to get justice in civil cases or in criminal cases and for people to be held accountable in criminal cases, including, as I mentioned, the many domestic violence cases.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today for the final time as a U.S. Senator with a heart full of gratitude. When I was growing up in Scranton, PA, my mother Ellen Harding Casey would often say to my brothers and sisters and me:

Count your blessings. Count your blessings.

She would say that over and over again. So, today, I seek to do so here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I begin with an expression of deep, abiding gratitude to the people of Pennsylvania who conferred upon me the honor of serving them in three statewide public offices for 28 consecutive years; first as auditor general, then as State treasurer, and for the last 18 years, as U.S. Senator. It has been a privilege to have served our Commonwealth, to have served the people of our Commonwealth.

Now, for 39½ years, I have been blessed by the unconditional love and unflinching support of my wife Terese, the oldest daughter of John and Nancy Foppiano. Every day—every day—that I have been a public official, Terese has been the foundation of our family. Her love for me and our daughters has been boundless and constant.

I want to thank each of our four daughters who are with us today. And for me, just saying their names is like a prayer of thanksgiving: Elyse, Caroline, Julia, and Marena. They, like Terese, sacrificed so much while I was in public office. I am so proud of the accomplished young women they have become.

Elyse and our son-in-law Michael brought us the gift of our grandsons: Max, age 4, and Aiden, a 2-year-old, each of whom bring so much joy to our lives.

And I am so grateful that my brothers and sisters, their spouses, and Terese's sisters and their spouses and so many of my nieces and nephews are with us today and so many friends from all across our Commonwealth.

I remember today my late parents Bob and Ellen Casey, who gave me and my siblings life and love, as well as their shining examples of treating every person that we meet with respect.

My father's work as a public official was a testament to the inscription on the finance building in Harrisburg where he once worked and I worked as well. This inscription has also guided my work all these years. Here is what it says:

All public service is a trust, given in faith and accepted in honor.

The Senate is a place where Senators are accorded most of the attention—not breaking news there. Today, I want to thank, of course, the men and women who don't get the headlines, the men and women who work behind the scenes every day, the staff of the Senate Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper who keep the business of the Senate running seamlessly every day, people like Delta Whitfield, Raicee Leake, Rocketa Jackson, and Tim O'Neill, just to name a few who go out of their way to make everyone feel like a VIP; the staff at Restaurant Associates who cater and staff our special events on campus and who serve Senators, staff, and visitors to our Capitol with a smile in our cafeterias; the men and women of the Architect of the Capitol and Senate Superintendent who clean up the Capitol buildings and keep the facilities immaculate every day, even in this centuries-old building; and, of course, the Capitol Police officers. How can we even begin to thank them for their service? Police officers keep us in our complex safe every day. Many of you will never get the commendation or credit that you deserve, but the work you do is vital and is a great service to our Nation.

Of course, I will miss working with Senators on both sides of the aisle, many of whom are here today with us. I am grateful for lasting friendships, like Senator BROWN on my right, Senator KLOBUCHAR on my left. We have a lot of stories, which I won't share today, but I am so grateful for their friendship, and all of my 2006 classmates and so many others in different classes who came in after us and before us, so many Senators who served with distinction.

I have been honored to serve these past 2 years with my friend and Pennsylvania colleague Senator FETTERMAN. I am honored he is with us today again.

Majority Leader SCHUMER and the late Senator Harry Reid, I want to thank them for encouraging me to run for the Senate way back in 2005. I want to thank Chuck for his leadership and our friendship.

I have been blessed to have been served by an exceptional staff every single day that I have been in the U.S. Senate. From my former chief of staff Jim Brown and former legislative director Dick Spiegelman to my current chief of staff Kristen Gentile, who is

right over here, and our legislative director Derek Miller, who is right between those columns there next to former Senator Harkin, I have been blessed by their help all these years, and I am also grateful to have had help in the State as well. My current State director Teresa Dennis has served with me every year that I have been a public official.

These last few years were especially challenging for our office and I know many others with the pandemic and so much else. We had the pandemic and then we not too long after that were in a long, difficult election cycle. I was blessed to have Kristen Gentile, my chief of staff, whose leadership and hard work guided our staff through difficult and demanding times. She led with grace, grit, and humor, and I am grateful for her service, her public service here in the Senate.

But I want to thank each and every single person who served on my Senate staff from January 3, 2007, to today. They have worked tirelessly every day to help the people of Pennsylvania. So I want to thank our staff who are on both corners of the room here, on the left and the right, both present and past, and I know some others in the Galleries. I am so grateful for their work.

Without objection, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter the names of all my past and current staff, both in my office and on the Aging Committee, into the record so they can be recognized for their hard work and exemplary public service for the people of Pennsylvania and our Nation.

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

Tad Abramowich, Natalie Adams, Rotimi F Adeoye, Sandra C Aguilera, Callie R Anderson, Andres D Anzola, Michael L Aumiller, Karsen P Bailey, Jordan Ball, Alexander A Baloga, Christina Baumgardner, Dianne M Beecher, Kathleen B Bell, Tayo Belle, Elly Bennett, Robert J Bielunas, Kimberley Y Bierly, Hulan Bikales, Reagan Blewett, Claire Blewitt.

Claire Borzner, Chloe Bowser, Elizabeth C Breckenridge, Regina A Brennan, Sydney M Brooks, Christina M Brown, Heather Brown, James W Brown, Cheryl B Bullock, Jessica M Butherus, Kathi Brumbaugh Caber, Gwen M Camp, Meg Campbell, Jenna Carmen, Michael W Carmody, Jeralyn Cave, Alyssa J Charney, Julia Cinquegrani, MacKenzie Cliatt, Cameron T Cochran.

Liz Conroy, Max Conway, Elizabeth M Cooper, Shavonnia L Corbin-Johnson, Connor Corpora, Ryan Costella, Amy E Cozze, Jessie L Crabb, Vivian G Cueto, Rory C Daly, Alexander G Davis, Michael J Deery, Erin Delaney, Stephanie Deluca, Teresa L Dennis, Kaylin K Dines, Elena C Ditraglia, Joshua Dubensky, Alexandria Duque, Brett T Ekberg.

Jaclyn W Erickson, Micah G Escobedo, Mark J Farrell, Marlon L Ferguson, James A Ferruchie, Elizabeth L Fishback, Lara K Flynn, Jamie F Fofanah, Adam C Fountaine, Caitlin G Frazer, Katie Fricchione, Deirdre D Fruh, Ian M Futerfas, Michael A Gaffin, Alexa R Gall, Jeannie Galloway, Bonnie Geist-Seaman, Kristen Gentile, Kasey Gillette, Ben Gilsdorf.

Veronica Goodman, Joseph F Gookin, Ian Graham, Matthew D Grill, Jack B Groarke,

Andrea M Guscott, Larry Hailsham, Michelle Haimowitz, Kyle L Hannon, William E Hansen, Kristen Harfield, Douglas Hartman, Elizabeth Hermsen, Maria A Hernandez, John Hicks, Joseph V Hill, Sonja Hoover, Corey Husak, Sean R Hyland, Kurt E Imhof.

Maurya T Incavido, Jennifer Jackson, Ian M Jannetta, Brian D Jennings, Harry Johnson II, Aisha T Johnson, Christopher M Johnson, Jonathan A Jones, Augustin Jones, Jofi J Joseph, Madeline L Joyce, Robert J Joyce, Matthew W Justinus, Elizabeth L Kanick, Zoey N Keeley, Anna G Keilly, Mary A Kent, Samantha M Koshgarian, Molly Krafcik, Matthew W Lachman.

Abby R LaForm, Kendra Barkoff Lamy, Deborah Landau, Trace J Ledgard, James Lee, Virginia H Lenahan, Matthew J Leonard, Misha Samuel Linnehan, Kylie C Lipinski, Jaren Love, Nefetia Z Lundy, Sharon E Lynett, Mairead Lynn, Charles R Lyons, Ian F Madigan, Kristin A Magnotta, Shoshana Z Marin, Lindsay M Martin, Arthur R Martinucci, Sara C Maskornick.

Roberta M Matesic, Cindy E Matos Beltre, Jae Von L McClain, Jennifer S McCloskey, J Michael McCullough, Bryn McDonough, Spencer R McKinstry, Jacob P Medvitz, April K Melody, Alina C Meltaus, Leah M Mercik, Datnilza Metz, Alexandra J Miller, Derek J Miller, Aryeh E Mittleman, Geoffrey A Mock, Patricia A Monahan, Makese S Motley, Jeff W Mozdziocik, Gillian R Mueller.

Thomas J Murabito, Damian Murphy, Jonas Murphy, Catherine M Murray, Morna A Murray, Peter Nalli, Katharine Nasielski, Evan C Neill, Grace V Nelson, Paul A Nestler, Sarah A Newman, Carol Obando-Derstine, Stephen O'Brion, Maureen O'Dea-Brill, Kennedy E O'Dell, Nduvuisi Onwumere, Panini Chaitanya Pandya, Reecha R Patel, Jacob Pawlak, Taylor A Pelletier.

Isabel Perez, Joycelyn Pickens, Nikki Rai, Jacklin B Rhoads, Nicole E Rhoads, John L Richter, Tyisha S Rivas, John Rizzo, Antoine Jamal Robinson, Robert Roggio, Pablo Rojas, Emma Rachel Romanowsky, Rahmon L Ross, Ryan C Ross, Christopher T Rosselot, Jesse A Salazar, Kate E Samuelson, Valli Sanmugalingam, Benjamin J Schwartz, Michael J Schwartz.

Ethan Seletsky, Julia R Sferlazzo, Zachary M Shaw, Emily J Sheehan, Livia Shmavonian, Avni P Shridharani, Michelle S Shwimer, Sara-Paige Kathleen Silvestro, Madison F Sloat, Larry M Smar, Allegra F Smith, Jared S Solomon, Ben Soltero De Martin, Zahra J. Somji, Brooke M Souder, Richard D Spiegelman, Kevin M Stanton, Nico Starr, Nathan C Steinwald, Sadie L Sterner.

Jackson Still, Monica L Swintz, Adam G Tarr, Cameron G Thompson, Ashely Stover Tokic, Mary C Topolinski, Amanda Toth, Alexandra F Trachtman, CT Turner, ND Ubezou, Barbara J Vachon, Jenna J Valle-Riestra, Mariska H Van Aalst, Nikita Varman, Landy Wade, Noel Walker, Karen L Walsh, Heather E Walters, Elizabeth A Washo, Kevin J Washo.

Tia L Watson, Melody R Webb, Kichelle Webster, Aimee C Wechsler, Ebony S Weidman, Liz Weintraub, Adam T Wells, Wesle Whistle, Edward C Williams, Erin Wilson, Lucy Xiao, Joshua A Yearsley, Stephanie D Zarecky.

Mr. CASEY. I am proud of the work we have done together, on behalf of the people of Pennsylvania, to fight for our children, our seniors, people with disabilities, our veterans, and our workers.

In my 18 years in the Senate, I have worked to pass many laws focused on improving the lives of everyday Americans. Allow me to give you some exam-

ples. One of my proudest accomplishments is the Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act, the so-called ABLE Act, which turned 10 years old this month.

Before ABLE, people with disabilities could not save more than \$2,000 without risking access to their Federal benefits, forcing many people with disabilities into a permanent state of poverty.

I worked with Senator Richard Burr to pass the ABLE Act in 2014 so that people with disabilities can save for their futures. There are almost 190,000 ABLE accountholders across the Nation who have already saved over \$2 billion. Brenda Dare is one of those, an ABLE accountholder from Allegheny County, PA. She says that ABLE "gives us a way to be fully functional citizens who are able to save and prepare for their futures." Her ABLE account allows Brenda to own her own home and raise her niece full time.

In building on the success of the program, starting in 2026, people who acquired their disability before the age of 46 will be able to open ABLE accounts, expanding eligibility to 6 million more Americans, including more than a million veterans.

In 2013, I passed the Campus SaVE Act to put greater responsibility on colleges and universities to prevent sexual assaults on college campuses. This was important legislation to make sure students understood their rights and protections on campus. It has made college campuses safer in the decade since its passage.

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act passed 2 years ago this month. It provides pregnant women with "reasonable accommodations" to work and to maintain a healthy pregnancy as they continue to do their work. Senator BILL CASSIDY worked with me to pass this bill, and I am grateful for his help.

Modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act, this legislation ensures that pregnant women can go to their employer and ask for reasonable accommodations, simple things like a stool to sit on or a water bottle or bathroom break and other accommodations, just as people with disabilities have been able to ask for accommodations of other kinds for the past three decades in their workplaces.

A number of years ago, as a Member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I was proud to author a law that has dramatically improved our schools and our children's nutrition. That provision, modeled after a Philadelphia pilot program, allowed high poverty schools to offer school lunch and breakfast free of charge.

Nearly 68 percent of American school districts now offer free meals under this option, and 20 million children attend schools offering universal free meals. That is 10 times the number of children as in 2010.

Captain Victor Saracini was a Bucks County resident and a United Airlines pilot killed in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. His wife Ellen Saracini turned her

unimaginable grief into action, and she fought to pass legislation to make airline cockpits safer.

I was honored to work alongside Ellen to pass two laws to make sure that new airplanes are built with a secondary barrier to the cockpit and to retrofit older planes. These laws would help prevent future terrorist attacks.

We all know the global food insecurity around the world not only leaves millions of children starving and malnourished, but it also creates political instability. I worked with my Republican colleagues to authorize and then to reauthorize—more than once—the Global Food Security Act to combat food insecurity, create economic opportunity, and promote international stability.

I also fought to keep our service-members safe in Afghanistan by working to reduce the number of IEDs—those awful explosive devices. In the 2000s, IEDs were killing and wounding U.S. troops in Afghanistan at an alarming rate. Through legislation to stop the flow of ammonium nitrate used in IEDs as well as pushing the Pentagon, by 2012, deaths by IEDs had dropped significantly.

But passing legislation isn't the only measure of success in the Senate. I am an extraordinarily proud Senator of the work that was done by my constituent services team, currently led by Lindsay Martin, all of whom have some of the hardest jobs here in government anywhere in the Capitol—in our States, as well.

Over the course of my three terms in the Senate, they have closed almost 200,000 constituent cases. Let me give you just four examples: First, the number represents Pennsylvanians we helped get the Social Security benefits that they were due but were not receiving; second, the 94-year-old World War II veteran from Philadelphia for whom we secured updated discharge papers and backpay reflecting a promotion he had been denied because he was a Black soldier; the first responder from Erie we helped receive money that she was owed from the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund; and, finally, the mother whose son was denied care by their insurance company for 2 months until our office reached out on their behalf—and so many more constituents across the State.

Finally, I fought to deliver Federal funding for Pennsylvania families and communities in all 67 counties. I worked to provide investments to lift up families during the pandemic; support public safety by delivering funding for police and fire departments; improve water and sewer systems, roads, and bridges in small rural areas; and support local nonprofits that protect the most vulnerable among us.

In Southwestern Pennsylvania, that economy of that corner of the State relies upon our waterways system. The Port of Pittsburgh and the region's locks and dams could move essential commodities. Those waterways create

jobs, and they promote economic development.

Without our waterways, the region's entire economy would come to a standstill, threatening some 200,000 jobs.

Thanks to the Infrastructure Law and persistent work over many years to highlight just how vital these waterways are, I was able to secure nearly a billion dollars to replace the Montgomery Locks and Dam in Beaver County, PA, and invest in the broader waterway system.

In 2016, during a phone call with county commissioners in Southwestern Pennsylvania, one of the commissioners just started to scream into the phone. He said: "Senator, kids can't do their homework." And he made a point to me that I will never forget.

So I went to work, as we all did, on high-speed internet. I was able to deliver significant investments to expand high-speed internet to rural communities across our Commonwealth. Without high-speed internet, not only are schoolchildren adversely impacted, small businesses can't connect with their customers; farmers can't fix their equipment when it breaks down in the field. But that is changing.

Just last week, I was in Washington County, in the southwestern corner of our State, to highlight the expansion of high-speed internet for 9,000 residents and small businesses in rural communities, made possible by a public-private partnership that folks at the local level started. But it included \$25 million from the American Rescue Plan legislation.

Washington County is not alone. High-speed internet is being deployed all across the Commonwealth.

As many of you know, Pennsylvania has a rich history of energy production. Our coal miners risked their health and their safety and many lost their lives over generations to power the Nation.

Pennsylvania's energy workers, I would argue, are the best in the world. And they are also well-equipped to lead us into the energy economy of the future.

As the Senate worked to pass the Inflation Reduction Act—as many know, a bill to spur a new energy manufacturing renaissance—I made sure that Pennsylvania energy communities were first in line.

In the bill, I secured an energy communities tax credit for investments in clean energy facilities and communities whose economies have relied upon coal, oil, or natural gas.

These incentives are spurring investments all across Pennsylvania—from the Mineral Basin solar plant on abandoned mine lands in Clearfield County to the expanded demand for Voith Hydro's production in York County.

I want to wrap up with just some thoughts about what is ahead for the next Congress—and the next number of Congresses probably—with some of these challenges. I want to highlight some of the challenges that lie ahead for our Nation.

There are so many priorities we could talk about today, like combating climate change and gun violence and the opioid crisis, lowering costs for families, providing home and community-based services for seniors and people with disabilities. And there are so many more that I didn't mention.

As many of you know—and you see it in your own communities, your own families, your own States—it is much more difficult to raise a family and provide long-term stability than it used to be. Pennsylvanians used to be able to work one job, often without a college degree, and provide for their families for decades.

There is a big moment in 2025: a tax bill. I won't be here for it. But that tax debate will be a critical moment for American families. Congress will decide whether to help middle-class and low-income families—people striving to get to the middle class—or to continue what I would argue is a 40-year trend to provide substantial tax benefits to the largest corporations on the planet Earth and the wealthiest Americans. I hope that the Senate will act to help the middle class and those striving to get to the middle class.

I urge, as well, the Senate to make the Child Tax Credit—something that Senator BROWN and Senator BENNET long ago introduced legislation on—to make that Child Tax Credit—two words—"fully refundable" rather than provide more corporate and high-income tax breaks.

When that tax credit was made fully refundable in 2021, that one action changed the lives of so many children. It reduced childhood poverty by 40—40—percent.

I have long warned as a United States Senator that China is not just a competitor, it is an economic adversary, and that we must continue to confront China head-on. I have often said that when China cheats, Pennsylvania loses jobs.

I have worked for years to crack down on China's trade cheating and to limit the risks of sending our national security technology and know-how to China.

Senator CORNYN and I have been working for years to pass legislation to crack down on U.S. investments in China that would undermine our national security. And later this week, Congress will pass a version of that legislation in the continuing resolution to fund the government.

We all know that a key to global competitiveness lies here at home. In order to compete globally, we must invest in our children.

Inspired by Franklin Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, I introduced, in early 2020, a set of ideas where I proposed Five—Five—Freedoms for America's Children: the freedom to be healthy, the freedom to learn, the freedom to have economic security, the freedom to be safe from harm, and the freedom from hunger.

If every American child—every American child—was able to benefit

from these five freedoms, they would have the opportunity to succeed in life. There are so many benefits to our Nation as well: a higher skilled workforce, if we invest in our kids; a greater GDP; a stronger national security; a healthier society, if—if—we invest in our children.

Finally, the Senate—and the American people—have to make a choice in the years ahead between dictators and democracy. We must continue to support—not just in the Senate and the House but as Americans, we must continue to support the people of Ukraine in their consequential war with a murderous dictator, Vladimir Putin.

Our Nation has generously supported the Ukrainian military. We cannot stop. Abandoning them now undermines freedom-loving people all over the world.

You and others have been a patient audience. But I would like to conclude with some final thoughts. I want to go back to my mother. Inspired by my mother, I have been granted today the privilege of counting my blessings on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

One of the greatest blessings in my life—and I know for so many people here—has been the blessing of public service. As the scriptures tell us:

It is in giving that we receive.

Dr. Martin Luther King said it another way. He said:

Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.

King taught us in that simple statement that the word “great” in this context isn’t about fame or a claim or notoriety or riches. “Great” is about something much more valuable, much more valuable: the opportunity to help others.

I will continue to do my part to serve as a citizen and as a Pennsylvanian. And serving in the U.S. Senate has been an honor of a lifetime. Thank you. And God bless you.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Pennsylvania.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

Mr. FETTERMAN. Madam President, this is not a speech that I ever expected to give and definitely never wanted to give. Discussing this has been difficult. Anyone who was with us last night at that dinner would confirm that.

But today, on the floor of the Senate and for the record, I will confirm that BOB CASEY is Pennsylvania’s best Senator. Now, it is difficult to follow BOB CASEY, both right now but also without him. I really can’t imagine it. For 18 years, BOB showed up, he put his head down, he worked, and he delivered for Pennsylvania. It has been a supreme honor to call BOB a colleague, a friend, and a mentor.

During my campaign, BOB was by my side. When I had a stroke, he lent me his voice when I was learning how to speak again. I never forgot that. And

when I got to the Senate 2 years ago, he became a mentor to me. At a very difficult time in my life, he stuck by me because that is who BOB is—a friend and an amazing Senator.

Every day for 18 years, he fought for working Pennsylvanians. He fought for our rural communities. He fought for seniors and for people with disabilities, including myself. He fought for all of us. After 18 years, BOB CASEY’s legacy is a better Pennsylvania.

Thank you, BOB CASEY.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I have enjoyed watching Senator FETTERMAN and Senator CASEY and working together in the mentoring and seeing how productive that has been for them in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Marcus Aurelius said:

Humility is the foundation of all virtue.

Humility is the foundation of all virtue.

Humility is not a common trait in this body, perhaps, but humility infuses the work of BOB CASEY every single day. I have worked with his staff. My office, in fact—we have worked with his staff perhaps—not perhaps—more than any other office, and I feel that, you know, what he brings to this is that uncommon humility and uncommon kindness in his personal relationships with his friends in the back row here, an uncommon kindness to the people of Pennsylvania, and an uncommon kindness with his own staff—I love watching that: little test, little staff turnover—the kind of energy that they bring and the kind of kindness they bring.

One of the things that really brought that home to me, in listening to BOB’s talk a minute ago, was he concentrated on constituent service. BOB CASEY understands that to do this job—the real building blocks of this job—you help people individually. There are tens of thousands of people he has helped in his offices in, I guess, Philly and Pittsburgh, and I don’t know where else—whatever all these inferior cities are—inferior to Ohio—in Pennsylvania.

(Laughter.)

But what he has brought to his offices in reaching out to people—those really are the building blocks of public service. He has been a public servant extraordinaire in the way he does his work, in the way he does his job. As I said, he brings to it that uncommon kindness, that uncommon humility, and it infuses his work in constituent services. It infuses his work in fighting for economic justice.

He didn’t talk that much in his speech about what he has done with children and poor children. I saw three of his daughters and Terese downstairs before the speech, and I got a chance to talk to them. I have watched them grow up over these years. Terese was already grown up. I have watched his daughters grow up over these 18 years.

(Laughter.)

And there is just this kind of energy and commitment to service to people that I have seen in them, which has been a delight to watch.

But he didn’t talk all that much about what he has done for children. Nobody in the body has focused their work on children as much as BOB CASEY. It is the child tax credit, for sure, but it is so many things—from disabled kids; from giving kids from, you know, Erie to Sharon, to Philly, to Bucks County—giving them more opportunity in life than they otherwise would have had.

Also, one of the things that—when I think about BOB CASEY, I think of him standing up for the little guy. I have heard him talk about his trips to the grocery store and how some people in this body blame inflation on government spending, which, of course, doesn’t hold economic water. But BOB has really focused on helping me come to discuss inflation.

Connie and I go to church. When we go to church on Sunday, we often stop at a nearby grocery store, and you talk to people at the checkout line or at the meat counter or just walking down the aisles, talking about how much things cost. BOB had this understanding. He called it shrinkflation. What he kind of taught me to say is, When you go to the grocery store and you are paying higher prices, you are paying them because of private, executive compensation and bonuses. You are paying for those higher prices by stock buybacks and exorbitant profits. And BOB understood that and always fought for the little guy.

I so appreciate the friendship, first of all. I appreciate the gentleness of spirit and his uncommon empathy and understanding. He always understood, in part, because he goes home and listens. He doesn’t go home and make a lot of speeches. He goes home and listens to people and understands their concerns. He brought them here. He made such a difference for Pennsylvanians. He made such a difference for Ohioans and for the people in the other 48 States too.

I will be eternally grateful to BOB CASEY for that friendship, for the humility that he has shown toward his job and toward the world around him, and just for being a really, really good man.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise from the back row—with some of my best friends back here—to honor, like everyone gathered here today, BOB CASEY, who has served the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 17 years here with honor, dignity, and, yes, joy. He served before he got here—as he noted, always a public servant—and he will serve after he leaves here. That we know for sure.

So, yes, we were this great class of freshmen Senators together, and I do remember when BOB first led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance—is this

not correct?—the day after we got sworn in. There was someone who was particularly rule-bound who worked here at the time. BOB finished. He thought he had done such a good job. He comes back to his seat.

Mr. CASEY. Are you really telling this?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I am really telling it.

And she says to him: Do you know what, Senator? In the U.S. Senate, when we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we put our hand over our heart.

He said: Well, that is what I did.

She said: No, you were doing it like you were getting sworn in again.

He went like this.

(Laughter.)

Mr. CASEY. A true story.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Then I remember our—what?

Mr. CASEY. A true story.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. It was a true story. Thank you. That is one of my virtues.

(Laughter.)

I remember our first day of our first classified briefing. We had no idea what we were doing, and they said: Well, you just go right at this statue, left at this painting, right at this thing.

The two of us are wandering through the halls of the Senate. We get completely lost; we are going to miss the classified briefing. And, all of a sudden, we see a group of Minnesotans coming over.

They just stop, and they go:

Look, it's Amy, and she has a guard.

So, not missing a beat, your Senator, BOB CASEY, goes all full Secret Service on us and plays the part.

(Laughter.)

We have been friends ever since, and I think so many people here see BOB as their friend. So many people in Pennsylvania see him that way.

Terese and BOB were over with us last night and got to watch the video of his postelection day. One of his neighbors—just a man on the street—was interviewed and said: Well, yes. I have always been a Republican, but BOB is such a good neighbor; so I voted for him.

I think that says a lot about BOB.

You know, in 1977, Minnesota's "happy warrior," Vice President Hubert Humphrey—and this is the ultimate compliment from Minnesotans—said this: The moral test of government is how the government treats those who are in the dawn of life, how it treats those who are in the twilight of life, and how it treats those who are in the shadows of life.

From the moment BOB CASEY got to this place, he saw that as his job—always looking out for people who didn't have a voice, always looking out for people who couldn't afford to hire a lobbyist, always looking out for people when no one else was listening. He did that.

He looked out for seniors and people with disabilities with the ABLE Act. I have been with him when people have

come up and told him that, because of BOB CASEY and his leadership on that bill, when no one else was caring about it in the U.S. Senate, they have a savings, and they have a future life.

He headed up the Aging Committee, looking out for the people in the twilight of their lives. He fought to bring down prescription drug costs.

He stood up for kids on childcare when no one else was doing it, looking out for people in the dawn of their lives. He made adoption easier for Americans looking to start families.

And that is barely scratching the surface.

We have worked on 150 pieces of legislation together, but who is counting? And we are still friends.

But what has made BOB truly a good friend is you can actually trust him. In an environment where you tell people things, and you tell them "don't tell anyone," and the next day, it is either in the news or a colleague down the hallway is saying, "Hey, I heard about this," not BOB. He keeps your trust. In that way, he has been to me like the brother I never had.

His friends trust him. His family trusts him. The people of Pennsylvania trust him, and, I will add, maybe that has something to do with this incredible family of his: seven brothers and sisters, four daughters—that must have been a time growing up—and, of course, Terese.

When you put all those names in the RECORD, I thought it was going to be your entire family, and it was going to take up the day's RECORD.

(Laughter.)

So we want to thank you, BOB, for everything you have done. We can't wait to hear what you do next. Thank you for your public service. Thank you for being a true public servant. Thank you.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, so much niceness headed toward this guy—it is killing me over here.

(Laughter.)

I want to clear the record, and I have a beef to settle with the good Senator from Pennsylvania.

I will tell you this: I consider myself a person of faith, and I think that Senator BOB CASEY has done something very irreligious if I must say. I know he grew up as a Catholic. I grew up in a Baptist church. We are both Christians. We have very different religious faiths, but I have an issue with BOB CASEY because, in the organizing Bible verse that I used to tell people was how I motivated my life, I come here, and he completely eviscerates my allegiance to this Bible verse.

So I am using this, and forgive me. And I might be rule XIX'd by somebody for maligning a colleague. But I am very upset that you have made me lose my religion a little bit, and I will give you an example.

If you know—a point of order? No.

(Laughter.)

Will the Senator yield? No, I will not.

(Laughter.)

Matthew 25 is really one of those Bible verses that has, for so much of my life, motivated me. You know, the Lord said: I was hungry, and you fed me; or thirsty, and you gave me to drink.

And it ends with this verse 40: And then you shall answer and say unto them, "Verily I say to you, in so much as you have done to the least of these my brethren, you have done to me."

The least of these is how—I thought that that was the calling of my faith—to do unto the least of these. And for 10 years now—11 years that I have been in the Senate, you have undermined that idea of doing unto the least of these.

Now, look, BOB—if I may call you that, sir—I came into the Senate thinking that was our job, but I have watched you for 11 years never see anyone as "least." You have this way of looking at everybody and seeing their grandeur. You see people not as if they are in a lower station in any way, but you have a way of seeing people as if they are a reflection of the Divine Himself.

I had a very humbling experience in the past 7 days with the good Senator from Iowa. We were down in the basement of Dirksen when people from the disability community from Pennsylvania and all around America came to give you tribute. As I sat there welling up at the tributes to you from these extraordinary Americans, every person that spoke and that I spoke to afterwards told me that you saw them; that you were a person who recognized their humanity, who recognized their strength, who saw their character, capabilities; and that you were not doing to any least but that you were elevating everyone and this Nation in the process.

When you remarked about the little lobbyists, you pointed out how powerful they were in saving healthcare for all Americans.

So I want to tell you, in my farewell to you after your speech, that when I was coming out of college, my greatest hero in America was not a Senator or a politician; it was Marian Wright Edelman. I thought that should be the calling of this country, to focus on children.

I love what Marian Wright Edelman said:

So much of America's tragic and costly failures to care for all of its children stems from our tendency to distinguish between our children and other people's children—as if justice were divisible.

I see this framing that has made humanity suffer for thousands of years—those who framed humanity in us versus them. You have this superpower to only see just us. It is not your family and my family; we are family—to try not to sound like a famous song.

Somehow, my friend, you make real the words of one of my favorite poets, Gwendolyn Brooks, who simply said:

We are each other's harvest; we are each other's business; we are each other's magnitude and bond.

I look up to you, BOB. I see in you—if you ask me what is the difference between a Hollywood heartthrob—or what does BOB CASEY have in common with a Hollywood heartthrob, I would say, nothing at all.

(Laughter.)

You are not sexy. You are not glamorous.

(Laughter.)

My church tradition was, you had charismatic leaders in the pulpit giving great speeches. You must have gone to a very boring church.

(Laughter.)

But somehow you made me aspire to know in the Senate the difference between celebrity and significance, the difference between a showhorse and a workhorse, the difference between some nobility that you feel that you are reaching out and reaching down to help others, to humbling yourself before God's creations.

I end with this framing: Marian Wright Edelman inspired me at the beginning of my career, and the way you have focused on children inspires me amidst my middle-age years as a Senator. I still am inspired by people who care about kids. That is why you have been one of my greatest heroes.

So to steal from CHRIS COONS, who is the one person, I think, who knows Swahili in this Chamber, I would like to end with some Swahili words.

The Maasai warriors have this incredible tradition. These are the people who are most valued in their defense of those in the village who might not be able to defend themselves, who are powerful in their fierce fighting capabilities and fight for those who are powerless.

When they are out and about, they have a greeting that they say to each other, and the greeting, if I am pronouncing it right—and CHRIS COONS will correct me later—is “Kasserian ingera.” This is the greeting of two warriors. When they see each other, they greet each other: “Kasserian ingera.” The response is “Sepati ingera,” which means—one warrior says to the other “How are the children?” and the response of two warriors is “The children are well.” This is the indicator for the Maasai people of what the strongest, what the most powerful, what the fearsome fighters are most focused on, which is the children.

You, my friend, are one of the greatest warriors I have ever served with. I know your heart. I know your moral compass. I know how you live your faith every single day and how much you have deepened mine.

In the words of the Maasai, I have two words to say: “Asante sana”—thank you very much.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise in defense of my colleague from the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. BOB CASEY is sexy.

(Laughter.)

Being fully bald is not the sole indicator of one's celebrity or sexiness.

Although an inspiring quote was just delivered by my dear colleague from our neighboring State of New Jersey, that was not Swahili, and I ask leave to conduct the rest of my remarks today in Kiswahili.

(Laughter.)

I am kidding.

I will just briefly say of my dear friend and colleague, of my neighbor, traveling companion, partner, and source of inspiration, that long before I imagined I could ever be a Senator, I served in local government in Delaware and knew that there was to our north a son of Scranton who was someone who was deeply grounded in his family, in his faith, and in his sense of justice.

Some mistake Senator CASEY for not only not being sexy but for not being a fighter. One of the things I have held most closely to, as I have tried to conduct myself in this Chamber and in this work of being a Senator with humility and dignity and kindness, is that it is possible—in fact, daily demonstrated—for someone like Senator CASEY, who is humble and unassuming, who is generous and kind, who sees every one, who treats all of us with respect, to still be fierce and to still be determined and to still be a fighter and to still be someone who sees righteousness and refuses to yield.

There was attributed to St. Francis an important saying, I think:

Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary, use words.

Senator CASEY's walk through this life, alongside his incredible blessing Terese, alongside the amazing blessing of Elyse, Julia, Caroline, Marena, and those two great grandsons, has been a walk of dignity and fierceness. To fight for the five freedoms for children, to coauthor the Global Food Security Act, to be someone who crafts legislation that touches people all over our country and the world, is to deliver on the promise and the call of the Gospel.

From your time as a Jesuit volunteer, from your days at a dance at Holy Cross, from the days that you have spent here and crisscrossing the Commonwealth, you have shown, with a heart like a lion, that you are every bit the fighter as those who are more known on Twitter and TV and that you are every bit as fierce.

We had the blessing of traveling with you—my wife Annie, who is from Pennsylvania, and I with Terese and BOB—and what you just said about the importance of fighting for Ukraine and Ukrainians and of seeing everyone and of caring for them we got to see in the joy that you brought to delivering relief to Ukrainian children refugees.

This place will not be the same without my colleague from Pennsylvania. I have never campaigned harder for a colleague. I have never been more disappointed at an outcome. It has never

seemed more unjust to me than the days we must face ahead without this son of Scranton, who has not just counted his blessings before us today but who has been a blessing to us every single day.

With that, I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I say to the Senator, I want to add a few words to the tribute to you, BOB, and just to take another angle, if I might.

I have been fortunate enough to join you and campaign in your home State. I remember your first campaign and a trip that I took to try to help. It ended with a party at the end of the day, and if I am not mistaken, it was a bank that had been converted into some meeting hall, maybe, in Scranton.

Mr. CASEY. A bar.

Mr. DURBIN. A bar—more appropriate.

I recall standing there with your friends and family, having a drink and a good time, and I am thinking to myself, I could back up a big truck right to the front door here, ask everyone to take their drinks and walk on, take them to the Beverly section of Chicago, open the door, and they could continue the conversation without any interruption. It was an Irish-Catholic, largely Democratic group. They would have been just as comfortable in the environs of Chicago and many other places in this country.

But what I remember is how many members of your family were there. I think you filled the place with family members. It told me an awful lot about the “Casey” name in Pennsylvania. It wasn't just a legend. It was more than that. It made a difference in the lives of so many different people and inspired you into public service. I think that was probably the beginning of your commitment to what you have reached in your career—family, faith, and a sense of fairness.

I went back on a bus trip on another one of your campaigns. That is when I met Lieutenant Governor-Candidate JOHN FETTERMAN and a lot of other of your friends. We went through Bucks County and other places. I have seen you in Chicago. You look just as much at home as you would in the State of Pennsylvania. I think it speaks to what I understand in politics: Family, faith, and fairness can take you a long way. You have made a career out of it. What you have been able to do is to reach out and help people who otherwise wouldn't have had a fighting chance, and that, in my mind and yours too, is why we are here today.

I want to close with this brief remark and just make note of a mutual friend of ours that we talk about all the time. He is a fellow in Philadelphia that I turned to in 1992 to be my political adviser, a fellow named Saul Shorr.

I know that he loves you as a politician and a friend and dedicated so much of his life's work to your success.

And I know that your defeat hurt him as much as it does all of us.

But you will be remembered here, and you will inspire others. A new generation will follow, and they will say: We are keeping up the Casey name. We are standing up for what BOB CASEY stood for: family, faith, and fairness.

Thanks, BOB, for being a great friend and a great Senator.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Minnesota.

AMENDING THE THYE-BLATNIK ACT

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, northern Minnesota is home to some of the most beautiful and valuable forestlands in the Nation.

As a Minnesota Senator, my job is to make sure that northern Minnesota communities are treated fairly when it comes to taxes, and that is what this bill is about that I am here to speak about today. It is a very particular Minnesota issue that doesn't affect any other State, but it is extremely important to us.

For decades, the bipartisan Thye-Blatnik Act has ensured that Lake County, Cook County, and St. Louis County in Minnesota receive a vital source of revenue in exchange for hosting Federal wilderness lands. Thye-Blatnik is unique from other similar laws around the country in that the Federal Government makes payments to counties depending on appraisals that are conducted every 10 years by the U.S. Forest Service. And for decades, everything has worked just great.

But then, in 2018, because of unusual circumstances, the regular appraisal led to almost a 50-percent cut in the Thye-Blatnik payments to the counties, and this created a big hardship for the residents in these small-population rural counties that do not have a big tax base because so much of their land is tied up in national forestland and wilderness areas.

Many of my colleagues on this floor represent counties like this and understand the challenges of providing essential services like road maintenance and public safety in these communities. So without the action in my bill today, communities in northern Minnesota would face a serious budget crunch.

Since 2018, I went to work with Senator KLOBUCHAR and Republican Congressman PETE STAUBER, from Minnesota's Eighth District, to figure out how to fix the problem. We worked with the Biden administration and the Trump administration to find a fix. And while everyone agrees that the problem needs to be fixed, no one can figure out how to do this administratively. That is why we need this bill. It is a technical fix that will go a long way toward helping rural Minnesota counties.

This bill would make sure that future Thye-Blatnik payments don't go down

because of the vagaries of appraisals that no one has any control over. It is a simple bill. It is not controversial. It is bipartisan. And, as I said, it doesn't affect any other State or county in the country. But, of course, to these three counties in Minnesota, it is a real lifeline.

Without action, this vital source of revenue, which supports services like emergency management and road maintenance, will decrease. So I am asking for Congress to get this done.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 5595, which was introduced earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5595) to amend the act of June 22, 1948.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times 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 (S. 5595) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 5595

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

SECTION 1. APPRAISALS.

Section 5 of the Act of June 22, 1948 (commonly known as the "Thye-Blatnik Act") (62 Stat. 570, chapter 593; 16 U.S.C. 577g), is amended by striking "of the fair appraised value of such" and inserting "of the highest fair appraised value, including historical fair appraised values, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with this section, of such".

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I now rise in support of my friend Patrice Kunesh, who was nominated to serve as Chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission.

Patrice is a descendant of the Standing Rock Lakota and is currently commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans at the Department of Health and Human Services and a distinguished and highly qualified public servant. Her current role at the Administration for Native Americans is just the latest role in her lifetime of service to Indian Country.

In addition to Federal service at the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Justice, and the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, she has worked for the Native American Rights Fund, in-house for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, and in academia.

The last time she was nominated for a Senate-concerned position, she received strong bipartisan support.

Madam President, I have been hearing from Tribal leaders in Minnesota

and around the country about the importance of confirming Patrice Kunesh to be the NIGC Chair. To them, her confirmation isn't a partisan issue, nor should it be; it is about securing strong leadership at a body created to advance Tribe sovereignty and economic self-determination.

NIGC is responsible for regulating Tribal gaming, and it has been without a Chair since February. Patrice is eminently qualified, she is experienced, and she is ready to serve Indian Country.

So therefore, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in executive session, the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar 841, Patrice H. Kunesh, of Minnesota, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission for the term of three years; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Wyoming.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 595, S. 3123; Calendar No. 644, S. 5125; Calendar No. 306, S. 2018; Calendar No. 649, H.R. 5443; Calendar No. 304, S. 961; and Calendar No. 613, S. 4209.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments, where applicable, be considered and agreed to; that the bills be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

MODERNIZING ACCESS TO OUR PUBLIC WATERS ACT

A bill (S. 3123) to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Modernizing Access to Our Public Waters Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **FEDERAL FISHING RESTRICTION.**—The term “Federal fishing restriction” means a defined area in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently prohibited or restricted by a Federal land or water management agency.

(2) **FEDERAL LAND OR WATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY.**—The term “Federal land or water management agency” means—

- (A) the Bureau of Reclamation;
- (B) the National Park Service;
- (C) the Bureau of Land Management;
- (D) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- (E) the Forest Service.

(3) **FEDERAL WATERWAY.**—The term “Federal waterway” means waters managed by a Federal land or water management agency.

(4) **FEDERAL WATERWAY RESTRICTION.**—The term “Federal waterway restriction” means a restriction on the access or use of a Federal waterway applied under applicable law by 1 or more of the Secretaries.

(5) **SECRETARIES.**—The term “Secretaries” means—

- (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service; and
- (B) the Secretary of the Interior.

(6) **SECRETARY CONCERNED.**—The term “Secretary concerned” means—

- (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, with respect to Federal waterways under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture; or
- (B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to Federal waterways under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY DATA STANDARDIZATION.

Not later than 30 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in consultation with the Federal Geographic Data Committee, shall jointly develop and adopt interagency standards to ensure compatibility and interoperability among applicable Federal databases with respect to the collection and dissemination of geospatial data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways and Federal fishing restrictions.

SEC. 4. DATA CONSOLIDATION AND PUBLICATION.

(a) **FEDERAL WATERWAY RESTRICTIONS.**—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned, to the maximum extent practicable, shall digitize and make publicly available online, as applicable, geographic information system data that includes, with respect to Federal waterway restrictions—

(1) status information with respect to the conditions under which Federal waterways are open or closed to entry or watercraft, including watercraft inspection or decontamination requirements;

(2) the dates on which Federal waterways are seasonally closed to entry or watercraft;

(3) the areas of Federal waterways with restrictions on motorized propulsion, horsepower, or gasoline fuel;

(4) the areas of Federal waterways with anchoring restrictions, no wake zones, or vessel speed restrictions;

(5) Federal waterway restrictions on the direction of travel, including upstream or downstream travel; and

(6) the uses, including by watercraft, that are restricted on each area of a Federal waterway, including the permissibility of—

- (A) canoes and other paddlecraft;
- (B) rafts and driftboats;
- (C) motorboats;
- (D) personal watercraft;
- (E) airboats;
- (F) amphibious aircraft;
- (G) hovercraft;
- (H) oversnow vehicles and other motorized vehicles on frozen bodies of water;
- (I) swimming; and
- (J) other applicable recreational activities, as determined to be appropriate by the Secretary concerned.

(b) **FEDERAL WATERWAY ACCESS AND NAVIGATION INFORMATION.**—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned, to the maximum extent practicable, shall digitize and make publicly available online, as applicable, geographic information system data that includes, with respect to Federal waterway access and navigation information—

(1)(A) the location of boat ramps, portages, and designated fishing access sites under the authority of the Secretary concerned; and

(B) the identification of the dates on which the facilities and sites identified under subparagraph (A) are open or closed, as applicable; and

(2) available bathymetric information and depth charts.

(c) **FEDERAL FISHING RESTRICTIONS.**—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned, to the maximum extent practicable, shall digitize and make publicly available online geographic information system data that describes, with respect to Federal fishing restrictions—

(1) the location and geographic boundaries of Federal fishing restrictions on recreational and commercial fishing, including—

- (A) full or partial closures;
- (B) no-take zones; and
- (C) Federal fishing restrictions within or surrounding marine protected areas;

(2) Federal fishing restrictions on the use of specific types of equipment or bait, such as restrictions on the use of barbed hooks or live bait; and

(3) Federal requirements with respect to catch and release.

(d) **PUBLIC COMMENT.**—The Secretaries shall develop a process to allow members of the public to submit questions or comments regarding the information described in subsections (a) and (b).

(e) **UPDATES.**—The Secretary concerned, to the maximum extent practicable, shall update—

(1) the data described in subsections (a) and (b) not less frequently than annually; and

(2) the data described in subsection (c) in real time as changes go into effect.

(f) **EXCLUSION.**—This section shall not apply to irrigation canals and flowage easements.

(g) **DISCLOSURE.**—Any geographic information system data made publicly available under this section shall not disclose information regarding the nature, location, character, or ownership of historic, paleontological, or archaeological resources, consistent with applicable law.

SEC. 5. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION.

(a) **COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS.**—For purposes of carrying out this Act, the Secretary concerned may—

(1) coordinate and partner with non-Federal agencies and private sector and nonprofit partners, including—

- (A) State natural resource agencies;
- (B) technology companies;
- (C) geospatial data companies; and
- (D) experts in data science, analytics, and operations research; and

(2) enter into an agreement with a third party to carry out any provision of this Act.

(b) **UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.**—The Secretaries shall work with the Director of the United States Geological Survey to collect, aggregate, digitize, standardize, and publish data on behalf of the Secretaries to meet the requirements of this Act.

(c) **REQUIREMENT.**—With respect to data developed and distributed under this Act, the Secretaries shall—

(1) develop the data in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws (including regulations); and

(2) include a notice that any geospatial data are subject to applicable Federal, State, and Tribal laws (including regulations).

(d) **EXISTING EFFORTS.**—To the extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall use or incorporate existing applicable data, maps, and resources in carrying out this Act, including

data, maps, and resources developed and published under—

(1) the Modernizing Access to Our Public Land Act (16 U.S.C. 6851 et seq.);

(2) section 103 of division DD of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (43 U.S.C. 776); or

(3) other applicable law.

SEC. 6. REPORTS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter through March 30, 2033, the Secretaries shall submit a report that describes the progress made by the Secretaries with respect to meeting the requirements of this Act to—

(1) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(2) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

(4) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(5) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated—

(1) to the Secretary of the Interior to carry out this Act—

(A) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and

(B) \$6,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2029; and

(2) to the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out this Act—

(A) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2025; and

(B) \$4,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2029.

SEC. 8. EFFECT.

Nothing in this Act—

(1) modifies or alters the definition of the term “navigable waters” under Federal law;

(2) affects the jurisdiction or authority of State or Federal agencies to regulate navigable waters;

(3) modifies or alters the authority or jurisdiction of Federal or State agencies to manage fisheries; or

(4) expands or restricts access to Federal waterways.

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

The bill (S. 3123), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

LAND MANAGER HOUSING AND WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2024

A bill (S. 5125) to provide for certain improvements to the housing and workforce programs of Federal land management agencies, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Land Manager Housing and Workforce Improvement Act of 2024”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—EXPANDING AUTHORITY

Sec. 101. Prioritizing National Park Service workforce housing.

Sec. 102. Authorizing the National Park Service to address workforce housing off-park.

Sec. 103. Expanding National Park Service rental options.

Sec. 104. Leveraging National Park Service rental receipts for workforce housing programming.

Sec. 105. Empowering the Forest Service to address workforce housing needs.

TITLE II—EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY

Sec. 201. Engaging partners to address National Park Service workforce housing.

Sec. 202. Encouraging public-private cooperative management.

Sec. 203. Leveraging philanthropic support to address National Park Service workforce housing.

TITLE III—SUPPORTING WORKFORCE

Sec. 301. Supporting the land manager workforce.

Sec. 302. Supporting the seasonal National Park Service workforce.

TITLE IV—REPORTS AND OVERSIGHT

Sec. 401. Quantifying the workforce housing needs of land managers.

Sec. 402. Conducting oversight on the housing programming of land managers.

Sec. 403. Justifying emergency spending.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

(E) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and

(F) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(2) COVERED AGENCIES.—The term “covered agencies” means—

(A) the National Park Service;

(B) the Bureau of Land Management;

(C) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

(D) the Forest Service.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

TITLE I—EXPANDING AUTHORITY

SEC. 101. PRIORITIZING NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WORKFORCE HOUSING.

Section 103502(a)(3) of title 54, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “quarters for field employees (as those terms are defined in section 101331),” after “prioritize”; and

(2) by inserting a comma after “facilities”.

SEC. 102. AUTHORIZING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE HOUSING OFF-PARK.

Section 100901 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR ADMINISTRATION OF SYSTEM UNITS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To facilitate the administration of a System unit, the Secretary may acquire, by donation, exchange, or transfer from another Federal agency, not more than 20 acres of land or interests in land, cumulatively, within the vicinity of the System unit boundary for the development, construction, maintenance, or operation of quarters for field employees (as those terms are defined in section 101331) for the System unit.

“(2) MANAGEMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to any land or interest in land acquired by the Secretary under paragraph (1)—

“(i) the land or interest in land shall not—

“(I) be administered as part of the System; or

“(II) be subject to the laws (including regulations) governing the associated System unit; but

“(ii) the Secretary shall—

“(I) have the authority to supervise, manage, and control the land; and

“(II) issue such rules and regulations as the Secretary may determine to be necessary and proper for the use and management of the land.

“(B) AUTHORIZATIONS.—The Secretary may grant exclusive privileges, leases, and permits for the use of land acquired under paragraph (1) and enter into contracts relating to such authorizations as authorized under this title, notwithstanding any restriction on such authorizations to land within a System unit boundary.

“(3) DISPOSAL.—If the Secretary determines that any land or interest in land acquired under paragraph (1) no longer supports the administration of the System unit—

“(A) the Secretary may determine the land and any improvements to the land to be excess property for disposal; and

“(B) the proceeds from the disposal of excess property under subparagraph (A) shall be retained by the Secretary and deposited in the special fund established for the development, construction, maintenance, or operation of quarters for field employees (as so defined) described in section 101338(b), to be expended by the Secretary without further appropriation.”.

SEC. 103. EXPANDING NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RENTAL OPTIONS.

Section 101336 of title 54, United States Code, is amended, in the first sentence, by striking “management, repair, and maintenance of field employee quarters” and inserting “development, construction, maintenance, or operation of quarters for field employees”.

SEC. 104. LEVERAGING NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RENTAL RECEIPTS FOR WORKFORCE HOUSING PROGRAMMING.

Section 101338 of title 54, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) USE OF SPECIAL FUND BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.—Amounts deposited by the Service in the special fund described in subsection (b) and established under section 320 of Public Law 98–473 (5 U.S.C. 5911 note) shall be available for the development, construction, maintenance, or operation of quarters for field employees at System units.”.

SEC. 105. EMPOWERING THE FOREST SERVICE TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE HOUSING NEEDS.

(a) USE OF FOREST SERVICE STRUCTURES OR IMPROVEMENTS.—Section 7 of the Act of April 24, 1950 (commonly known as the “Granger-Thye Act”) (64 Stat. 84, chapter 97; 16 U.S.C. 580d), is amended by striking “thirty years as determined by him” and inserting “30 years, or in the case of a permit for workforce housing and related infrastructure, 50 years, as determined to be appropriate by the Secretary of Agriculture”.

(b) CONVEYANCES OF FOREST SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE SITES.—Title V of the Forest Service Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act of 2005 (16 U.S.C. 580d note; Public Law 109–54) is amended—

(1) in section 503—

(A) by striking subsection (f); and

(B) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (f); and

(2) in section 504(c)(2), by striking “by competitive sale” and inserting “by soliciting not fewer than 2 competitive bids”.

TITLE II—EXPANDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY

SEC. 201. ENGAGING PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WORKFORCE HOUSING.

Section 101701(a) of title 54, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting, “, including projects for quarters for field employees (as those terms are defined in section 101331),” after “responsibilities of the Secretary”; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting “, Tribal,” after “State”;

(B) by inserting “(including an organization that has a philanthropic agreement to fundraise or otherwise generate donations on behalf of, or for the benefit of, the Service)” after “organization”; and

(C) by inserting “(including an individual that has a philanthropic agreement to fundraise or otherwise generate donations on behalf of, or for the benefit of, the Service)” after “individual”.

SEC. 202. ENCOURAGING PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT.

Section 101703 of title 54, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“§ 101703. Cooperative management agreements

“(a) DEFINITION OF STATE.—In this section, the term ‘State’ means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and each territory of the United States.

“(b) COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in accordance with the laws generally applicable to System units and under such terms and conditions as the Secretary considers appropriate, may enter into a cooperative management agreement with a State, Indian Tribe, or local government with park land adjacent to a System unit, if the agreement would provide for more effective and efficient management of a System unit and the adjacent non-Federal park land.

“(2) NO TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Secretary may not transfer administration responsibilities for any System unit under this subsection.

“(c) PROVISION OF GOODS AND SERVICES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide or acquire goods and services on a reimbursable basis as part of a cooperative management agreement entered into under subsection (b).

“(2) RETENTION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary may retain and expend any funds received under this section without further appropriation.

“(d) CO-LOCATION.—The Secretary and a State, Indian Tribe, or local government may collocate in offices or facilities owned or leased by either party as part of a cooperative management agreement entered into under subsection (b).

“(e) EMPLOYEES.—

“(1) ASSIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEE.—The Secretary may arrange an assignment under section 3372 of title 5 of a Federal employee or an employee of a State, Indian Tribe, or local government, as mutually agreed on, for work, on the applicable Federal, State, local, or Tribal park land covered by the cooperative management agreement.

“(2) EXTENSION OF ASSIGNMENT.—An assignment under paragraph (1) may be extended if the Secretary and the State, Indian Tribe, or local government determine the extension to be mutually beneficial.”.

SEC. 203. LEVERAGING PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT TO ADDRESS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WORKFORCE HOUSING.

Section 103501(c)(3) of title 54, United States Code, is amended by striking “(including funds and fairly valued durable goods and materials)” and inserting “(including any combination of cash, fairly valued services, and durable goods and materials)”.

TITLE III—SUPPORTING WORKFORCE

SEC. 301. SUPPORTING THE LAND MANAGER WORKFORCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture, as applicable, may recruit and directly appoint qualified individuals into the competitive service who are certified, in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary or the Secretary of Agriculture, as applicable, as maintaining a permanent and exclusive residence within the vicinity of a site administered by the National Park Service, the

United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Forest Service to a field unit which the individual would report to work into any position at or below grade GS-9 of the General Schedule, WG-15 of the Federal Wage System, or equivalent within the applicable field unit.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—An appointment by the Secretary under subsection (a) shall be considered compliant with all applicable provisions of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, if the Secretary ensures that the appointment action—

(1) is consistent with the merit principles of section 2301 of that title; and

(2) complies with the public notice requirements of section 3327 of that title.

(c) **TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.**—The authority provided under subsection (a) shall terminate on September 30, 2030.

SEC. 302. SUPPORTING THE SEASONAL NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WORKFORCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of determining the noncompetitive rehire eligibility of temporary seasonal employees of the National Park Service—

(1) the Secretary shall establish a definition of what constitutes a major subdivision of the National Park Service; and

(2) any requirement that a position be in the same local commuting area shall not apply.

(b) **TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.**—The authority provided under subsection (a) shall terminate on September 30, 2030.

TITLE IV—REPORTS AND OVERSIGHT

SEC. 401. QUANTIFYING THE WORKFORCE HOUSING NEEDS OF LAND MANAGERS.

Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a needs assessment report that provides, with respect to housing the workforce of covered agencies, as applicable—

(1) an analysis of the unit type and condition of—

(A) housing owned by the covered agencies; and

(B) housing leased by the covered agencies;

(2) an analysis of the employment status of the occupants of the housing analyzed under paragraph (1), including—

(A) whether the occupants are—

(i) members of the permanent workforce; or

(ii) members of the seasonal workforce; and

(B) which positions identified under subparagraph (A) required housing provided by the applicable covered agency as a condition of employment with the covered agency; and

(3) an analysis of the private housing markets within the vicinity of a covered agency field unit, including—

(A) the availability and affordability of housing for sale or lease; and

(B) the impact of vacation rental services on—

(i) the cost of living; and

(ii) the available supply of housing.

SEC. 402. CONDUCTING OVERSIGHT ON THE HOUSING PROGRAMMING OF LAND MANAGERS.

(a) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that—

(1) assesses, in consultation with the National Housing Council described in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-45, the effect of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-45R on the housing of the workforce of covered agencies;

(2) assesses the effect of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11 on the housing of the workforce of covered agencies;

(3) assesses the effect of department-level guidance on the housing of the workforce of covered agencies;

(4) assesses the effect of agency-level guidance on the housing of the workforce of covered agencies; and

(5) identifies suggested administrative actions and legislative proposals to reform the guidance assessed under paragraphs (1) through (4), including—

(A) improvements to tenant experience;

(B) improvements to workforce housing supply, including—

(i) housing managed by the covered agencies; and

(ii) leased private market housing;

(C) improvements to financing options;

(D) improvements to public-private partnerships;

(E) improvements to philanthropic engagement; and

(F) improvements to commuting times to report stations, including—

(i) available housing in the gateway communities;

(ii) available housing in the nearest established community (as defined in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-45); and

(iii) differences between normal commuting conditions and peak-commute traffic conditions, including considerations for—

(I) road quality and condition;

(II) availability of public transportation;

(III) winter driving; and

(IV) visitor traffic.

(b) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the report is submitted under subsection (a), the heads of the covered agencies shall carry out the administrative actions identified under paragraph (5) of that subsection.

SEC. 403. JUSTIFYING EMERGENCY SPENDING.

Section 5 of the Act of August 3, 1956 (70 Stat. 1033, chapter 950; 7 U.S.C. 2228), is amended—

(1) by striking the section designation and all that follows through “The Department” and inserting the following:

“SEC. 5. EMERGENCY SUBSISTENCE FOR EMPLOYEES.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Department”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) **REPORT.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (3), not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of Agriculture furnishes subsistence to employees under subsection (a), the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress (as defined in section 2 of the Land Manager Housing and Workforce Improvement Act of 2024) a report providing—

“(A) 1 or more justifications for the use of the authority;

“(B) the number of employees that were furnished subsistence;

“(C) the estimated cost of furnishing subsistence; and

“(D) the expected duration for which subsistence is to be provided.

“(2) **OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET.**—The information for a report required under paragraph (1) shall be produced in coordination with, and approved by, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

“(3) **EXCEPTION.**—A report under paragraph (1) shall not be required in the case of an emergency resulting from a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other man-made disaster.”.

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

The bill (S. 5125), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONNECT OUR PARKS ACT

A bill (S. 2018) to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in Na-

tional Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

“(4) **LIMITATION.**—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a plan developed under that paragraph shall not be required to address broadband internet access service or cellular service in any National Park with respect to which the superintendent of the National Park determines that there is adequate access to broadband internet access service or cellular service, as applicable.”

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Connect Our Parks Act”.

SEC. 2. BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE AND CELLULAR SERVICE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING IN NATIONAL PARKS.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

(2) **BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.**—The term “broadband internet access service” has the meaning given the term in section 8.1(b) of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

(3) **CELLULAR SERVICE.**—The term “cellular service” has the meaning given the term in section 22.99 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

(4) **NATIONAL PARK.**—The term “National Park” means a unit of the National Park System.

(5) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

(b) **ASSESSMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall complete an assessment of National Parks to identify—

(A) locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service, based on the considerations described in paragraph (2)(A); and

(B) areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, based on the considerations described in paragraph (2)(B).

(2) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—

(A) **BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.**—For purposes of identifying locations in National Parks under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall consider, with respect to each National Park, the availability of broadband internet access service in—

(i) housing;

(ii) administrative facilities and related structures;

(iii) lodging;

(iv) developed campgrounds; and

(v) any other location within the National Park in which broadband internet access service is determined to be necessary by the superintendent of the National Park.

(B) **CELLULAR SERVICE.**—For purposes of identifying areas in National Parks under paragraph (1)(B), the Secretary shall consider, with respect to each National Park, the availability

of cellular service in any developed area within the National Park that would increase—

(i) the access of the public to emergency services and traveler information technologies; or

(ii) the communications capabilities of National Park Service employees.

(3) REPORT.—On completion of the assessment under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress, and make available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report describing the results of the assessment.

(c) PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a plan, based on the results of the assessment completed under subsection (b) and subject to paragraph (4)—

(A) to install broadband internet access service infrastructure in certain locations in National Parks; and

(B) to install cellular service equipment and infrastructure in certain areas of National Parks.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In developing the plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with—

(A) affected Indian Tribes; and

(B) local stakeholders that the superintendent of the applicable National Park determines to be appropriate.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan developed under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) provide for avoiding or minimizing impacts to—

(i) National Park viewsheds;

(ii) cultural and natural resources;

(iii) the visitor experience;

(iv) other resources or values of the National Park; and

(v) historic properties and the viewsheds of historic properties;

(B) provide for infrastructure providing broadband internet access service or cellular service to be located in—

(i) previously disturbed or developed areas; or

(ii) areas zoned for uses that would support the infrastructure;

(C) provide for the use of public-private partnerships—

(i) to install broadband internet access service or cellular service equipment; and

(ii) to provide broadband internet access service or cellular service;

(D) be technology neutral; and

(E) in the case of broadband internet access service, provide for broadband internet access service of at least—

(i) a 100-Mbps downstream transmission capacity; and

(ii) a 20-Mbps upstream transmission capacity.

(4) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a plan developed under that paragraph shall not be required to address broadband internet access service or cellular service in any National Park with respect to which the superintendent of the National Park determines that there is adequate access to broadband internet access service or cellular service, as applicable.

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

The bill (S. 2018), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ACCELERATING APPRAISALS AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS ACT

The bill (H.R. 5443) to establish a policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction, and for other

purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SALEM MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK REDESIGNATION AND BOUNDARY STUDY ACT

The bill (S. 961) to redesignate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Massachusetts, as the “Salem Maritime National Historical Park”, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 961

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 “Salem Maritime National Historical Park Redesignation and Boundary Study Act”.

SEC. 2. SALEM MARITIME NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

(a) REDESIGNATION.—The Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Massachusetts, shall be known and designated as the “Salem Maritime National Historical Park”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the national historic site referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Salem Maritime National Historical Park”.

SEC. 3. BOUNDARY STUDY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) STUDY AREA.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “study area” means the city of Salem, Massachusetts, and the vicinity of that city.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “study area” includes—

(i) the Salem Armory Visitor Center building; and

(ii) the park located adjacent to that building, known as “Salem Armory Park”.

(b) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a boundary study to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of including in the National Park System, as part of the Salem Maritime National Historical Park (as redesignated by section 2(a)), any sites and resources located in the study area that are associated with—

(1) the maritime history of the study area;

(2) coastal defenses of the study area; or

(3) military history of the study area, including National Guard and militia activity.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are initially made available to conduct the study under subsection (b), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report describing—

(1) the results of the study; and

(2) any findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Secretary.

KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT ACCESS ACT

The bill (S. 4209) to provide greater regional access to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the

State of Maine, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4209

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 “Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Access Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AUTHORIZED ACQUISITION AREA.—The term “authorized acquisition area” means the designated area outside the boundary of the National Monument depicted as “Authorized Acquisition Area” on the map entitled “Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Proposed Boundary Adjustment”, numbered 686/193.181 and dated March 2024.

(2) NATIONAL MONUMENT.—The term “National Monument” means the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the State of Maine established by the Proclamation.

(3) PROCLAMATION.—The term “Proclamation” means Presidential Proclamation Number 9476, dated August 24, 2016 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL LAND FOR NATIONAL MONUMENT.

(a) BOUNDARY.—The boundaries of the National Monument shall be the boundaries established by the Proclamation.

(b) ACQUISITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary may acquire, by purchase from a willing seller, donation, or exchange, land or interests in land within the authorized acquisition area.

(2) PROHIBITION ON USE OF EMINENT DOMAIN.—Nothing in this Act authorizes the use of eminent domain to acquire land or an interest in land.

(c) TREATMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND; BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—On acquisition by the Secretary of any land pursuant to subsection (b)—

(1) the land shall be included in the National Monument; and

(2) the boundaries of the National Monument shall be adjusted accordingly.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENT.

(a) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall administer the National Monument (including the land added to the National Monument under this Act) in accordance with—

(1) this Act;

(2) the Proclamation; and

(3) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System.

(b) HUNTING, FISHING, AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ON ACQUIRED LAND.—The Secretary shall allow hunting, fishing, or any other outdoor recreation activity on land acquired pursuant to section 3(b)—

(1) if that activity was in existence on the day before the date of acquisition of the land; and

(2) consistent with the management of that activity under the Proclamation.

(c) COLLECTION OF FIDDLEHEAD FERNS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary shall allow the gathering by hand of fiddlehead ferns (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) in the National Monument for noncommercial personal use and consumption by the general public.

(2) LIMITATION.—If the Secretary determines that the gathering of fiddlehead ferns

(*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) under paragraph (1) may adversely affect resources of the National Monument, the Secretary may limit the gathering of fiddlehead ferns (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) under that paragraph in accordance with applicable regulations.

(d) PUBLIC EDUCATION.—In accordance with the mission of the National Park Service, the Secretary shall collaborate with local communities and Tribal governments to educate the public regarding the natural environment and history of land management in the National Monument, including the shaping of that landscape by Native communities and practices, successive generations of timber management, and other activities.

(e) FORESTRY.—In accordance with the management plan for the National Monument, the Secretary may conduct such non-commercial timber harvests as the Secretary determines to be necessary.

(f) PROTECTION OF EXISTING ACCESS.—Nothing in this Act affects valid existing rights, including existing rights of access through the National Monument for the removal of timber outside the boundaries of the National Monument.

(g) PUBLIC SAFETY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide to the public appropriate safety education and notification materials to ensure safe interactions between visitors and logging trucks, equipment, and operations on roads in or adjacent to the National Monument.

(2) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall collaborate with affected stakeholders to establish procedures to meet the needs of visitors to the National Monument, logging and trucking operations, and other users of roads in or adjacent to the National Monument to ensure safe interactions between active logging operations and visitors.

SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATIVE SITES AND VISITOR FACILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—To facilitate the administration of the National Monument, the Secretary may acquire, by purchase from a willing seller, donation, or exchange, not more than 10 acres of land or interests in land, including improvements, for the administration of the National Monument and visitor services outside the boundaries, but within the vicinity, of the National Monument.

(b) AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into agreements with State of Maine, units of Tribal or local government, or private entities—

(1) to carry out this section; and

(2) to develop a cooperative information center for the National Monument.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3415

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I rise today to pass important legislation in the State of Wyoming. This bill has only to do with Wyoming and no other State. It is H.R. 3415, the Pilot Butte Power Plant Conveyance Act.

It allows the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to transfer the ownership of the facility to stakeholders in my home State of Wyoming. The Pilot Butte power plant is owned by the Federal Government, but it has not been in service since 2008. It closed when it became too costly to operate. So it has been sitting idle there in Wyoming in a small area of 2½ acres for the past 15 years. It is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and they are planning to demolish it.

To be clear, we are talking about a mothballed hydroelectric structure. We are talking about 2 acres of Bureau of

Reclamation land. This is essentially 1½ football fields in size. That is how small of a footprint this is.

Well, the Midvale Irrigation District in Pavillion, WY, reached out to the Wyoming congressional delegation—all three members of the delegation—saying that they were willing to take ownership of this power plant that has been sitting idle for 15 years and ready to be demolished. Midvale Irrigation proposed this transfer as a solution to provide energy to local users. The local people right there came to us. They said that they will make the needed repairs to bring this power station back into operation.

If enacted, the bill will enable the facility to be revived after years and years of neglect and sitting idle. Communities in my home State of Wyoming will once again be able to get electricity from this local source of hydropower. This transfer is the only option to save the facility for future use. Without this bill, the Bureau of Reclamation plans to demolish the facility. As a result, it is going to cost the American taxpayers over \$7 million to destroy this property.

This bill that I have introduced, sponsored by the entire Wyoming delegation, is a win-win. The American people will no longer own a mothballed facility that is going to cost \$7 million to demolish, and the people of Wyoming will be able to put the hydro-power plant back into use.

Now, there has been a lot of conversation about the consultations and discussions that I have had with community members and stakeholders. I have met directly with both the Eastern Shoshone and the Northern Arapahoe Tribes regarding this specific bill and the hydropower plant. Since February—February of this year—my office has been actively engaged in discussions with all parties involved. This summer, my staff visited the facility and met with all of the stakeholders.

Everyone wants to see the facility operating again, and I am confident that the people of Wyoming will properly manage this facility in a way that benefits everyone in the local community.

The House of Representatives passed this legislation unanimously back in February. It has the support of the entire Wyoming delegation.

So, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3415, which was received from the House; further, 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. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, reversing the right to object, I want to say that I understand that Senator HEINRICH from New Mexico has concerns about the Pilot Butte Power Plant Conveyance Act, and I share his concerns.

The Eastern Shoshone and the Northern Arapahoe Tribes are rightfully concerned about the lack of official Federal Government to Tribal consultation on this proposal which would directly impact their reservation. I know that one of our most fundamental responsibilities as a body is to honor our trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations and to uphold that government-to-government relationship.

I want to say that I appreciate Senator BARRASSO's work with my colleagues on these land bills, and I am not objecting to any others of them. However, I urge that we have the Tribal consultation that should be appropriately conducted on this bill; therefore, I object to the passage of H.R. 3415.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, this 2½ acre piece of land is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation—not owned by the Tribe, not owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. It is a title transfer to create an energy source for local stakeholders. This is all about my home State of Wyoming. We are talking 2½ acres.

I understand the Senator from Minnesota is making this objection on her behalf as well as the behalf of the Senator from New Mexico. Let me assure the Senators from Minnesota and New Mexico that I will be vigilant and watching out for bills that impact at least 2½ acres in their home States. For example, the Senator from New Mexico, right now, has a bill, Cerro de la Olla, and it was reported favorably out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Madam President, that bill established 12,000 acres—not 2½ acres—12,000 acres of wilderness in New Mexico. This bill in my home State—not New Mexico, not Minnesota—Bureau of Reclamation land is 2½ acres.

As I said, I will be vigilant and watching out for bills that impact at least 2½ acres in their home States. And I consider their bills now dead until the Pilot Butte issue is resolved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, could I clarify for the Chair, Calendar No. 304 was misread as 301. It is 304, which is S. 961.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I rise today to thank Senator BARRASSO and my colleagues on Energy and Natural Resources.

Today, we were able to pass H.R. 5443, which is the Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act. I am so appreciative of my colleagues for that support today. This is going to make a real difference for working families in this country.

We know that every parcel of land the Federal Government transfers or sells has to be appraised. Right now, we have a backlog of transfers waiting on approval because of a shortage of appraisals. That is delaying affordable housing construction, conservation efforts, and critical infrastructure projects that we really need in Nevada.

I thank my colleagues in joining me in cutting through this government redtape.

This act was authored by me here in the Senate but also my colleague Congresswoman SUSIE LEE in the House. It will speed up land transfers at no additional cost to the American taxpayer by giving private appraisers the same flexibility as the government to be part of this process. In my home State of Nevada, where over 80 percent of the land is owned by the Federal Government, that is a big deal.

This is a commonsense bipartisan solution. I am so grateful we were able to pass it today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 588, S. 2620, Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act, and Calendar No. 636, S. 4994, Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged of the relevant bill, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; that the bills, as amended, where applicable, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The bills passed en bloc as follows:

CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ACT

A bill (S. 2620), to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ADVISORY COMMISSION.**—The term "Advisory Commission" means the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Advisory Commission established under section 9(a).

(2) **BAY.**—The term "Bay" means the Chesapeake Bay, including its tidal tributaries, in Maryland and Virginia.

(3) **BAY PROGRAM.**—The term "Bay Program" means the Chesapeake Bay Program authorized under section 117 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267).

(4) **CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS.**—The term "Chesapeake Gateways" means the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network authorized under section 502 of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105-312).

(5) **MAP.**—The term "Map" means the map entitled "Chesapeake National Recreation Area Proposed Boundary", numbered P99/189631, and dated June 2023 (5 pages).

(6) **NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**—The term "National Recreation Area" means the Chesapeake National Recreation Area established by section 3(a).

(7) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) **YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE.**—The term "youth representative" means a member of the Advisory Commission who—

(A) has not attained the age of 22 as of the date on which the member is appointed or reappointed; and

(B) is tasked with representing the interests of children and young adults in the State from which the member is appointed.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND BOUNDARIES OF CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), there is established the Chesapeake National Recreation Area in the States of Maryland and Virginia as a unit of the National Park System to preserve, protect, interpret, and provide for the public enjoyment of, and access to, the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources relating to the Bay and surrounding areas.

(2) **DETERMINATION BY THE SECRETARY.**—The National Recreation Area shall not be established until the date on which the Secretary determines that a sufficient quantity of land or interests in land has been acquired to constitute a manageable park unit.

(3) **NOTICE.**—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary makes a determination under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the National Recreation Area.

(b) **BOUNDARY.**—The boundary of the National Recreation Area shall include any area acquired by the Secretary from sites depicted on the Map.

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The Map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(d) **REVISION OF FORT MONROE NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—At such time as the Secretary determines that the land identified on the Map within the boundary of Fort Monroe National Monument established by Proclamation 8750, dated November 1, 2011 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 76 Fed. Reg. 68625), has been remediated and is appropriate for inclusion in the National Recreation Area—

(A) administrative jurisdiction over the land shall be transferred from the Secretary of the Army to the Secretary for inclusion in the National Recreation Area; and

(B) the boundary of the Fort Monroe National Monument shall be revised to exclude all land and interests in land within the North Beach area of the Monument (as in existence on the day before the date of enactment of this Act), as generally depicted on the Map.

(2) **REFERENCES TO NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**—Any reference in any law, regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to the land described in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the National Recreation Area.

(3) **INTERIM ADMINISTRATION.**—Until the date on which administrative jurisdiction over the land is transferred to the Secretary under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Army shall continue to administer the land described in that paragraph that was under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army as of the day before the date of enactment of this Act in accordance with the memorandum of agreement between the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary entitled "Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior for Fort Monroe National Monument" and dated December 9, 2016.

(4) **BOUNDARY REVISION.**—On transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the land to the Secretary under paragraph (1), the boundary of the National Recreation Area shall be revised to include the land transferred under that paragraph, which shall be administered in accordance with the laws applicable to the National Recreation Area.

SEC. 4. ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR THE CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to subsection (c), the Secretary may acquire land or interests in land within the boundary of the National Recreation Area by—

(1) donation;

(2) purchase from a willing seller with donated or appropriated funds;

(3) exchange; or

(4) transfer from another Federal agency.

(b) **ADDITIONAL SITES.**—The Secretary, in consultation with the Advisory Commission, may—

(1) identify additional sites near or adjacent to the Bay for potential addition to the National Recreation Area; and

(2) subject to the availability of appropriations, assess whether sites identified under paragraph (1)—

(A) are appropriate for addition to the National Recreation Area; and

(B) meet National Park Service criteria applicable to additions to units of the National Park System.

(c) **LIMITATION.**—Any land or interest in land owned by a State or a political subdivision of a State that is within the boundary of the National Recreation Area may be acquired only by donation.

(d) **CONDEMNATION.**—No land or interest in land may be acquired for the National Recreation Area by condemnation.

SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall administer the National Recreation Area in accordance with—

(1) this section; and

(2) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(A) sections 100101(a), 100751(a), 100752, 100753, and 102101 of title 54, United States Code; and

(B) chapters 1003 and 3201 of title 54, United States Code.

(b) **HEADQUARTERS.**—To facilitate coordination of the National Recreation Area with the Chesapeake Gateways program and the Bay Program, the Secretary may locate the headquarters of the National Recreation Area at the Chesapeake Bay Office of the National Park Service.

(c) **ADMINISTRATIVE, INTERPRETIVE, AND VISITOR SERVICE SITES.**—The Secretary may acquire, in accordance with section 4(a), not more than 10 acres outside the boundary of the National Recreation Area for administrative, interpretive, and visitor service purposes.

(d) **COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING.**—Nothing in this Act affects statutory or regulatory authority with respect to navigation or regulation of commercial or recreational fishing activities or shellfish aquaculture in the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries.

(e) **STATE JURISDICTION.**—Nothing in this Act enlarges or diminishes the jurisdiction of a

State, including the jurisdiction or authority of a State with respect to fish and wildlife management.

(f) **COORDINATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Consistent with the purposes of the National Recreation Area, the Secretary shall coordinate the management of the National Recreation Area with the Chesapeake Gateways and the Bay Program.

(2) **COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES.**—As a component of the management plan required under section 8, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate the development of an implementation plan to interpret and enhance public understanding of the outstanding, remarkable, and nationally significant resources of the Bay with units of the National Park System located in the Bay watershed.

SEC. 6. AGREEMENTS.

The Secretary may enter into an agreement with a State, a political subdivision of a State, a nonprofit organization, or an individual to interpret and restore nationally significant historic, cultural, or recreational resources relating to the Bay if the agreement provides for reasonable public access to the resources covered by the agreement.

SEC. 7. CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall administer the Chesapeake Gateways in coordination with the National Recreation Area.

(b) **PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION.**—Section 502(c) of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105–312) is amended by striking “is authorized” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.”.

(c) **EFFECT.**—Nothing in this section or an amendment made by this section modifies the eligibility criteria developed under section 502(b)(2) of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105–312).

SEC. 8. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available for the preparation of a management plan for the National Recreation Area, the Secretary, in consultation with the Chesapeake Executive Council (as defined in section 117(a) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267(a))) and the Advisory Commission, shall prepare a management plan for the National Recreation Area in accordance with section 100502 of title 54, United States Code.

(b) **VISITOR FACILITIES.**—In preparing the management plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider the inclusion of visitor facilities for the National Recreation Area in Annapolis, Maryland, and near Fort Monroe.

(c) **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.**—As part of the management plan prepared under subsection (a), the Secretary, in consultation with State and local governments, shall seek to minimize park-related traffic impacts of the National Recreation Area on nearby communities.

SEC. 9. CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ADVISORY COMMISSION.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish an advisory commission, to be known as the “Chesapeake National Recreation Area Advisory Commission”.

(b) **DUTIES AND AUTHORIZATIONS.**—The Advisory Commission—

(1) shall—

(A) make recommendations to the Secretary on the development and implementation of the management plan required under section 8; and

(B) after consultation with the States and other interested parties, provide to the Secretary recommendations on the Bay for additional properties on the Bay to be studied for potential addition to the National Recreation Area in accordance with section 4(b); and

(2) may establish committees relating to specific National Recreation Area management issues, including education, tourism, transportation, natural resources, cultural and historic resources, and activities to raise revenue for the National Recreation Area, with membership on a committee established under this paragraph to be open to members of the Advisory Commission and individuals that are not members of the Advisory Commission.

(c) **APPLICABLE LAW.**—Except as otherwise provided in this section, the Advisory Commission shall be subject to—

(1) chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Federal Advisory Committee Act”), except section 1013(b) of that title; and

(2) all other applicable laws (including regulations).

(d) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Advisory Commission shall be composed of 19 members, appointed by the Secretary, of whom—

(A) 9 shall be appointed from the State of Maryland, of whom—

(i) 4 shall have knowledge of environmental, recreational, cultural, or historic resources, education, or interpretation;

(ii) 1 shall represent commercial fishing interests on the Bay;

(iii) 1 shall represent agricultural interests in the watershed of the Bay;

(iv) 1 shall be a youth representative;

(v) 1 shall be selected after considering recommendations by the Governor of the State of Maryland; and

(vi) 1 shall be a representative of a federally recognized Indian Tribe or State-recognized Indian Tribe that is traditionally associated with the Bay;

(B) 9 shall be appointed from the State of Virginia, of whom—

(i) 4 shall have knowledge of environmental, recreational, cultural, or historic resources, education, or interpretation;

(ii) 1 shall represent commercial fishing interests on the Bay;

(iii) 1 shall represent agricultural interests in the watershed of the Bay;

(iv) 1 shall be a youth representative;

(v) 1 shall be selected after considering recommendations by the Governor of the State of Virginia; and

(vi) 1 shall be a representative of a federally recognized Indian Tribe or State-recognized Indian Tribe that is traditionally associated with the Bay; and

(C) 1 shall be the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

(2) **REQUIREMENT.**—In appointing the members described in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B)(i) of paragraph (1), the Secretary shall seek to ensure representation from communities around the Bay and broad practicable representation of the areas of knowledge described in those subparagraphs.

(e) **TERMS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—A member of the Advisory Commission shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(2) **SUCCESSION AND REAPPOINTMENT.**—On expiration of the term of a member of the Advisory Commission, the member—

(A) shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed; and

(B) may be reappointed to serve an additional 3-year term.

(f) **VACANCIES.**—A vacancy on the Advisory Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(g) **ELECTED POSITIONS.**—

(1) **CHAIRPERSON.**—The Advisory Commission shall have a Chairperson who shall—

(A) be elected by the Advisory Commission; and

(B) serve for a term of 1 year, unless reelected pursuant to procedures established by the Advisory Commission under subsection (h)(1).

(2) **VICE CHAIRPERSON.**—The Advisory Commission shall have a Vice Chairperson who shall—

(A) be elected by the Advisory Commission;

(B) serve for a term of 1 year, unless reelected pursuant to procedures established by the Advisory Commission under subsection (h)(1); and

(C) serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

(3) **OTHER POSITIONS.**—The Advisory Commission may establish other positions and elect members to serve in those positions as the Advisory Commission determines to be appropriate, subject to subsection (h).

(h) **PROCEDURES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraphs (2) through (6) and any applicable laws (including regulations), the Advisory Commission may establish such rules and procedures for conducting the affairs of the Advisory Commission as the Advisory Commission determines to be necessary.

(2) **MEETINGS.**—The Advisory Commission shall meet at the call of—

(A) the Chairperson; or

(B) a majority of the appointed members.

(3) **QUORUM.**—A quorum shall consist of not less than 11 of the members of the Advisory Commission.

(4) **ACTIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION.**—Any action of the Advisory Commission shall require a majority vote of the members present at any meeting.

(5) **VIRTUAL MEETINGS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Meetings of the Advisory Commission may be conducted virtually, in whole or in part.

(B) **REQUEST.**—Any member of the Advisory Commission may request permission from the Chairperson of the Advisory Commission to participate virtually in—

(i) a meeting; and

(ii) all activities for that meeting.

(6) **ELECTIONS.**—Not less than ¾ of the members of the Advisory Commission must be present, virtually or in-person, for elections carried out under subsection (g).

(i) **ADVISORY COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.**—

(1) **COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Members of the Advisory Commission shall serve without compensation.

(B) **TRAVEL EXPENSES.**—Members of the Advisory Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter 1 of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of services for, or the duties of, the Commission.

(2) **STAFF.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary may provide the Advisory Commission with any staff or technical assistance that the Secretary, after consultation with the Advisory Commission, determines to be appropriate to enable the Advisory Commission to carry out its duties.

(B) **DETAIL OF EMPLOYEES.**—The Advisory Commission may accept the services of personnel detailed from a State or any political subdivision of a State.

(j) **TERMINATION.**—The Advisory Commission shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

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

The bill (S. 2620), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK BOUNDARY MODIFICATION ACT

The bill (S. 4994) to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4994

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 “Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act”.

SEC. 2. VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CONVEYANCE AND BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.

(a) CONVEYANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall convey to the State of Mississippi (referred to in this Act as the “State”) without consideration subject to any terms and conditions that the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Federal land described in subsection (b).

(2) DESCRIPTION OF FEDERAL LAND.—The Federal land referred to in subsection (a) is the following:

(A) The parcel of approximately 3.66 acres of National Park Service land within the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park, as depicted on the map entitled “VICK-2024-01”, to be used by the State as a welcome center or other public use.

(B) The approximately 6.48 acres of National Park Service land within the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park, as depicted on the map entitled “VICK-2024-02”, to be used by the State an interpretive center or a museum or other public use.

(b) BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.—On conveyance of a parcel of Federal land under subsection (a), the Secretary shall modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park to reflect the conveyance of the parcel of Federal land.

Mr. WICKER. I thank my colleagues. I will yield for a moment to my friend from Maryland and then I may say a word after that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, let me start by thanking my friend and colleague, the Senator from Mississippi, for working on these two pieces of important legislation. One which the Senator from Mississippi will talk about in a moment in greater depth is the Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act. And coupled with that is the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act, as amended, and unanimously passed by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources just last month.

I introduced the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act in July of 2023, after years of engagement with communities around the Chesapeake Bay and with the support of Senator CARDIN, Senator WARNER, Senator KAINE. And it has also been introduced in the House on a bipartisan basis by Congressman SARBANES and Congressman WITTMAN.

The idea for a Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act was born four decades ago. This has been a long time coming, and I am glad we arrived at this moment. It was motivated by a desire to formally recognize the Chesapeake Bay as the national treasure that it is and to provide all Americans with a greater opportunity to experience it.

The Chesapeake National Recreation Act would unite voluntarily contributed sites and iconic Chesapeake Bay properties under the operation of the National Park Service in what we call a string of pearls that will help to tie together key areas of the Bay.

The establishment of the Chesapeake National Recreation Area would improve public access to the Bay, allowing visitors to experience it firsthand, strengthening the culture of environmental stewardship, and providing visitors with an opportunity to learn about the region’s rich history and culture.

The National Chesapeake National Recreation Area would also create jobs and support economic growth throughout the region, promoting responsible tourism, and boosting the outdoor recreation and tourist economies.

This bipartisan initiative has been driven by local leaders since the beginning, and it was developed through exhaustive public outreach and meaningful collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.

I want just, for a moment, to describe to my colleagues the outreach effort that brought us to this moment because it included the formation of a working group composed of a bicameral group of lawmakers, State government representatives, and more than 30 regional organizations to help develop the legislation.

It included a public comment period which we used to gather input and compile over 1,300 comments, which we integrated the feedback into the bill.

When we introduced the bill, it was accompanied by over 70 letters of support and 100 endorsements from local elected officials, environmental and historical preservation organizations, seafood and outdoor recreation businesses, and many more. We also worked closely with the National Park Service on technical assistance to guide the bill.

So it has been a great pleasure to work with Senator WICKER on his Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act as we also work on this Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act. This is collaboration for the public good, for people in both of our States and people throughout the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. WICKER. Reclaiming my time simply to say that I appreciate the cooperation of the Senator from Maryland, and I thank the Senate for giving unanimous consent to these two measures.

S. 4994, the Vicksburg National Military Park Modification Act, will modify—simply modify—the boundary of the Vicksburg National Park in my State of Mississippi. This transfer will convey a small parcel of Federal land to the State government and to the Friends of Vicksburg Military Park, an organization that will assist with restoration efforts at the park.

These efforts include a new, state-of-the-art, interactive center, which will guide tourists through the park and teach them the history and importance of Vicksburg, MS, during the Civil War. To execute these plans, the park will need to perform this land transfer.

The State will then be responsible for building and maintaining the connector road as well as the bridge to the new center, relieving the National Park Service from that burden.

So I am glad to see that our partners as well as Friends of Vicksburg are working together to establish a modern, interactive center that will tell the story of the siege and battle of Vicksburg for many generations to come.

I thank the Chair, I thank my colleague, and I thank the Senate for giving unanimous consent to these two measures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills, en bloc: Calendar No. 276, S. 1088; Calendar No. 297, S. 1059; Calendar No. 301, S. 432; Calendar No. 303, S. 608; Calendar No. 611, S. 4129; and Calendar No. 645, S. 5136.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills, en bloc.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; the Blumenthal substitute amendment to S. 5136, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; the bills as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, en bloc.

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

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

NORTH DAKOTA TRUST LANDS COMPLETION ACT OF 2023

The bill (S. 1088) to authorize the relinquishment and in lieu selection of land and minerals in the State of North Dakota, to restore land and minerals to Indian Tribes within the State of North Dakota, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

[SEC. 7. SAVINGS CLAUSE.]

[Nothing in this Act applies to or impacts the ownership of any land or mineral resources.]

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **NORTH DAKOTA ENABLING ACT.**—The term “North Dakota Enabling Act” means the Act of February 22, 1889 (25 Stat. 676, chapter 180).

(2) **RESERVATION.**—The term “reservation” means any Indian reservation located wholly or partially within the State of North Dakota and recognized under United States treaty, Executive order, or Act of Congress.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) **STATE.**—The term “State” means the State of North Dakota, acting through the North Dakota Board of University and School Lands and its agent, the Department of Trust Lands.

(5) **STATE LAND GRANT PARCEL.**—The term “State land grant parcel” means—

(A) a parcel of land granted to the State of North Dakota by Congress—

(i) on statehood; or

(ii) through a grant pursuant to the North Dakota Enabling Act;

(B) a section of land numbered 16 or 36 granted to the State of North Dakota by Congress for school purposes;

(C) a parcel of land selected by the State of North Dakota as indemnity for any section of land numbered 16 or 36; and

(D) a parcel of land other than a parcel of land described in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) obtained by the State after statehood.

(6) **UNAPPROPRIATED FEDERAL LAND.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “unappropriated Federal land” means public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management located within the State of North Dakota, including public land that is mineral in character.

(B) **EXCLUSIONS.**—The term “unappropriated Federal land” does not include—

(i) land (including an interest in land) acquired by the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) any area of critical environmental concern established pursuant to section 202(c)(3) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712(c)(3)); or

(iii) land that is—

(I) withdrawn from—

(aa) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

(bb) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; or

(cc) disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials;

(II) located within a component of the National Landscape Conservation System;

(III) designated as a Research Natural Area;

(IV) located within any reservation;

(V) located within—

(aa) T. 147 N., R. 95 W.;

(bb) T. 148 N., R. 95 W.;

(cc) T. 148 N., R. 96 W.; or

(dd) T. 149 N., R. 95 W.;

(VI) located within a United States military reservation; or

(VII) designated by Congress or the President for conservation purposes.

SEC. 3. RELINQUISHMENT AND SELECTION; CONVEYANCE.

(a) **RELINQUISHMENT AND SELECTION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to valid existing rights, if the State elects to relinquish all right, title, and interest of the State in and to a State land grant parcel located wholly or partially within the boundaries of any reservation, the Secretary shall authorize the State to select in accordance with this Act 1 or more parcels of unappropriated Federal land of substantially equivalent value.

(2) **APPROVAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the State makes a selection under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall approve or reject, in whole or in part, the selection.

(3) **REVIEW.**—Nothing in this subsection precludes the Secretary from conducting an environmental review of any parcel proposed for relinquishment under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines that an environmental review is appropriate.

(b) **CONVEYANCE.**—

(1) **CONVEYANCE BY SECRETARY.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary approves a State selection of unappropriated Federal land under subsection (a)(2), the Secretary shall initiate the actions necessary to convey to the State the unappropriated Federal land.

(B) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Conveyance of unappropriated Federal land by the Secretary under this Act—

(i) shall be by patent or deed in a form acceptable to the State and the Secretary; and

(ii) shall not be considered a sale, exchange, or conveyance for purposes of section 203, 205, 206, or 209 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1713, 1715, 1716, 1719).

(2) **RELINQUISHMENT AND CONVEYANCE BY STATE.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—As consideration for the conveyance of unappropriated Federal land under paragraph (1), on the date on which the unappropriated Federal land is conveyed to the State, the State shall concurrently relinquish and convey to the Secretary all right, title, and interest of the State in and to the State land grant parcel identified for relinquishment under subsection (a)(1).

(B) **TITLE.**—The State shall convey to the Secretary title, free of any financial claims, liabilities, or other financial encumbrances, to all parcels relinquished under subparagraph (A).

(C) **LIMITATION.**—Relinquishment and conveyance by the State of a State land grant parcel under this Act shall not be considered an exchange or acquisition for purposes of section 205 or 206 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1715, 1716).

(c) **SUCCESSION TO RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS.**—Each party to which land is conveyed under this Act shall, to the fullest extent allowable under Federal and State law, succeed to the rights and obligations of the conveying party with respect to any lease, right-of-way, permit, or other valid existing right to which the land is subject.

(d) **MANAGEMENT AFTER RELINQUISHMENT.**—

(1) **RESERVATION.**—If a State land grant parcel relinquished by the State and conveyed to the Secretary under this Act is located wholly or partially within the boundaries of any reservation, on request of the applicable Indian Tribe, the portion of the State land grant parcel located within the boundaries of the reservation shall be—

(A) taken into trust by the Secretary on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the Indian Tribe on the date of the conveyance; and

(B) considered to be a part of the reservation of the Indian Tribe.

(2) **CONSULTATION REQUIRED.**—Prior to the conveyance of a State land grant parcel located wholly or partially within the boundaries of any reservation, the State and the Secretary shall consult with affected Indian Tribes, including the Indian Tribe the land of which is subject to conveyance in accordance with Executive Order 13175 (25 U.S.C. 5301 note; relating to consultation and coordination with Indian tribal governments) and other applicable laws.

(e) **WITHDRAWAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to valid rights in existence on the date of enactment of this Act, all unappropriated Federal land selected by the State for conveyance under this Act, effective beginning on the date on which the State makes

the selection and ending on the date described in paragraph (2), is withdrawn from all forms of—

(A) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws;

(B) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(C) disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials.

(2) **DATE DESCRIBED.**—The date referred to in paragraph (1) is the date on which, as applicable—

(A) the unappropriated Federal land is conveyed by the Secretary to the State;

(B) the Secretary rejects the selection under subsection (a)(2); or

(C) the State withdraws the selection.

SEC. 4. VALUATION.

(a) **EQUAL VALUE.**—With respect to a State land grant parcel conveyed under this Act in consideration for a parcel of unappropriated Federal land selected in accordance with this Act—

(1) the overall value of the State land grant parcel and the overall value of the parcel of unappropriated Federal land shall be substantially equal; or

(2) subject to subsection (c), if the overall value of the parcels is not equal, the party conveying the parcel of lesser value shall—

(A) equalize the value by the payment of funds to the other party; or

(B) enter the imbalance in value on a ledger account in accordance with subsection (e).

(b) **APPRAISAL REQUIRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in subsection (d), the value of the unappropriated Federal land selected in accordance with this Act and the value of a State land grant parcel conveyed under this Act shall be determined by appraisals conducted by 1 or more independent appraisers selected jointly by the Secretary and the State.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—An appraisal under paragraph (1) shall be completed in accordance with—

(A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; or

(B) subject to subsection (d)(1), the Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice.

(c) **EQUALIZATION.**—With respect to a conveyance to the Secretary of a State land grant parcel of lesser value than the parcel of unappropriated Federal land to be conveyed to the State under this Act, the total value of the equalization payment described in subsection (a)(2)(A) or the ledger entry described in subsection (e), as applicable, may not exceed 25 percent of the total value of the parcel of unappropriated Federal land.

(d) **LOW VALUE PARCELS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, with the consent of the State, may use mass appraisals, a summary appraisal, or a statement of value made by a qualified appraiser carried out in accordance with the Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice to determine the value of a State land grant parcel or a parcel of unappropriated Federal land to be conveyed under this Act instead of an appraisal that complies with the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions if the State and the Secretary agree that market value of the State land grant parcel or parcel of unappropriated Federal land, as applicable, is—

(A) less than \$500,000; and

(B) less than \$500 per acre.

(2) **DIVISION.**—A State land grant parcel or a parcel of unappropriated Federal land may not be artificially divided in order to qualify for a summary appraisal, mass appraisal, or statement of value under paragraph (1).

(e) **LEDGER ACCOUNTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—With respect to a State land grant parcel conveyed under this Act in consideration for a parcel of unappropriated Federal

land, if the overall value of the parcels is not equal, the Secretary and the State may agree to use a ledger account to make equal the value.

(2) **IMBALANCES.**—A ledger account described in paragraph (1) shall reflect imbalances in value to be reconciled in a subsequent transaction.

(3) **ACCOUNT BALANCING.**—Each ledger account described in paragraph (1) shall be—

(A) balanced not later than 3 years after the date on which the ledger account is established; and

(B) closed not later than 5 years after the date of the last conveyance of land under this Act.

(4) **COSTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary or the State may assume costs or other responsibilities or requirements for conveying land under this Act that ordinarily are borne by the other party.

(B) **ADJUSTMENT.**—If the Secretary or the State assume costs or other responsibilities under subparagraph (A), the Secretary or the State shall make adjustments to the value of the unappropriated Federal land conveyed to the State to compensate the Secretary or the State, as applicable, for assuming the costs or other responsibilities.

(5) **MINERAL LAND.**—If value is attributed to any parcel of unappropriated Federal land that has been selected by the State because of the presence of minerals under a lease entered into under the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) that is in a producing or producible status, and the lease is to be conveyed under this Act, the value of the parcel shall be reduced by the amount that represents the likely Federal revenue sharing obligation under the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) with the State, but the adjustment shall not be considered as reflecting a property right of the State.

SEC. 5. MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Land or minerals conveyed under this Act shall be subject to all applicable Federal, State, and Tribal law.

(b) **PROTECTION OF INDIAN RIGHTS.**—

(1) **TREATY RIGHTS.**—Nothing in this Act modifies, limits, expands, or otherwise affects any treaty-reserved right or other right of any Indian Tribe recognized by any other means, including treaties or agreements with the United States, Executive orders, statutes, regulations, or case law.

(2) **LAND OR MINERALS HELD IN TRUST.**—Nothing in this Act affects—

(A) land or minerals held in trust by the United States as of the date of enactment of this Act on behalf of, and for the benefit of, any Indian Tribe; or

(B) any individual Indian allotment.

(c) **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary and the State shall make available for review and inspection any record relating to hazardous materials on land to be conveyed under this Act.

(2) **CERTIFICATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Prior to completing a conveyance of unappropriated Federal land under this Act, the Secretary shall complete an inspection and a hazardous materials certification of the land to be conveyed.

(B) **STATE LAND GRANT PARCELS.**—Prior to completing a conveyance of a State land grant parcel under this Act, the State shall complete an inspection and a hazardous materials certification of the land to be conveyed.

(d) **GRAZING PERMITS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—If land conveyed under this Act is subject to a lease, permit, or contract for the grazing of domestic livestock in effect on the date of the conveyance, the Secretary or the State, as applicable, shall allow the grazing to continue for the remainder of the term of the lease, permit, or contract, subject to the related terms and conditions of the user agreements, including permitted stocking rates, grazing fee levels, access, and ownership and use of range improvements.

(2) **CANCELLATION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this Act prevents the Secretary or the State from canceling or modifying a grazing permit, lease, or contract if the land subject to the permit, lease, or contract is sold, conveyed, transferred, or leased for non-grazing purposes.

(B) **BASE PROPERTIES.**—If land conveyed by the State under this Act is used by a grazing permittee or lessee to meet the base property requirements for a Federal grazing permit or lease, the land shall continue to qualify as a base property for the remaining term of the lease or permit and the term of any renewal or extension of the lease or permit.

(C) **RANGE IMPROVEMENTS.**—Nothing in this Act prohibits a holder of a grazing lease, permit, or contract from being compensated for range improvements pursuant to the terms of the lease, permit, or contract under existing Federal or State laws.

SEC. 6. SAVINGS CLAUSE.

Nothing in this Act applies to or affects litigation or disputes pending on the date of enactment of this Act regarding the ownership of any land or mineral resources located within the State of North Dakota.

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

The bill (S. 1088), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT

The bill (S. 1059) to adjust the boundary of Big Bend National Park in the State of Texas, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 1059

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 “Big Bend National Park Boundary Adjustment Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **MAP.**—The term “map” means the map entitled “Big Bend National Park, Proposed Boundary Adjustment”, numbered 155/167,296, and dated November 2022.

(2) **PARK.**—The term “Park” means the Big Bend National Park established under the Act of June 20, 1935 (49 Stat. 393, chapter 283; 16 U.S.C. 156).

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) **LAND ACQUISITION.**—The Secretary may acquire approximately 6,100 acres of land or interests in land generally depicted on the map as “Tracts to Include in Boundary” by donation, purchase from willing sellers, or exchange.

(b) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(c) **BOUNDARY REVISION AND ADMINISTRATION.**—On acquisition of any land or interests in land under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) revise the boundary of the Park to include the acquired land or interests in land; and

(2) administer the acquired land or interests in land as part of the Park in accordance with applicable laws (including regulations).

(d) **EMINENT DOMAIN OR CONDEMNATION.**—In carrying out this Act, the Secretary may not use eminent domain or condemnation.

NULHEGAN RIVER AND PAUL STREAM WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY ACT OF 2023

The bill (S. 432) to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream in the State of Vermont for potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 432

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 “Nulhegan River and Paul Stream Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT.

(a) **DESIGNATION FOR STUDY.**—Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(147) NULHEGAN RIVER AND PAUL STREAM, VERMONT.—The following segments:

“(A) The approximately 22-mile segment of the main stem of the Nulhegan River from the headwaters near Nulhegan Pond to the confluence with the Connecticut River, and any associated tributaries (including the North, Yellow, Black, and East Branches).

“(B) The approximately 18-mile segment of Paul Stream from the headwaters on West Mountain to the confluence with the Connecticut River, and any associated tributaries.”.

(b) **STUDY AND REPORT.**—Section 5(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(24) NULHEGAN RIVER AND PAUL STREAM, VERMONT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary of the Interior shall—

“(A) complete the study of the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream segments in Vermont described in subsection (a)(147); and

“(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the results of such study.”.

DEERFIELD RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY ACT OF 2023

The bill (S. 608) to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Deerfield River for potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 608

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 “Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION FOR STUDY; REPORT.

Section 5 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

“(147) DEERFIELD RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS AND VERMONT.—The entire river, including—

“(A) the North, South, East, and West Branches of the Deerfield River; and

“(B) the major tributaries of the Deerfield River, including the Green River, North River, South River, Clesson Brook, Chickley River, Cold River, Gulf Brook, Bog Brook, and Dunbar Brook.”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following:

“(24) DEERFIELD RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS AND VERMONT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this paragraph, the Secretary of the Interior shall—

“(A) complete the study described in subsection (a)(147); and

“(B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the results of such study.”.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY MUSEUM ARTIFACTS ACT

The bill (S. 4129) to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Museum Artifacts Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **FOUNDATION.**—The term “Foundation” means the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation.

(2) **LIBRARY.**—The term “Library” means the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library to be located in Medora, North Dakota.

(3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY.

(a) **GRANTS.**—

(1) **AUTHORIZATION.**—To the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts and subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Secretary may provide to the Foundation grants in an amount not to exceed a total of \$50,000,000 for the establishment of the Library—

(A) to preserve and make available to the public materials relating to the life of President Theodore Roosevelt; and

(B) to provide interpretive and educational services that communicate the meaning of the life of Theodore Roosevelt.

(2) **MATCHING REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary may not provide a grant under paragraph (1) until the date on which the Foundation certifies to the Secretary that the Foundation has received an amount equal to not less than \$100,000,000 from funds for the Library—

(A) contributed by the State of North Dakota; or

(B) raised from non-Federal sources during the period beginning on the date on which the Foundation was established and ending on the date of the certification.

(3) **PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.**—Grant funds provided under this subsection may not be used for the maintenance or operation of the Library.

(b) **FEDERAL ARTIFACTS AND OBJECTS RELATING TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary may enter into 1 or more agreements with the Foundation to provide for a loan to the Foundation from Federal agencies under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary (including the National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service) of historic, educational, artistic, natural, and other museum artifacts and objects, particularly artifacts and objects that are not on display to the public, without monetary consideration, subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary for the preservation and exhibition of the artifacts and objects loaned to the Foundation.

(c) **NON-FEDERAL OPERATION.**—The Secretary or any other Federal entity shall have no involvement in the operation of the Library, except at the request of the non-Federal entity responsible for the operation of the Library in accordance with applicable laws (including regulations).

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

The bill (S. 4129), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PLUM ISLAND PRESERVATION STUDY ACT

The bill (S. 5136) to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The amendment (No. 3344), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Plum Island Preservation Study Act”.

SEC. 2. PLUM ISLAND PRESERVATION STUDY.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) **STUDY AREA.**—The term “study area” means the consolidated Federal asset commonly known as “Plum Island” in the State of New York and all improvements on and to the Federal asset, including—

(A) the Orient Point facility; and

(B) all real and personal property, all transportation assets, and all associated infrastructure that support—

(i) Plum Island operations; and

(ii) access to Plum Island.

(b) **STUDY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall conduct a study to determine the appropriateness of—

(A) designating all or a portion of the study area as a unit of the National Park System or a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System; or

(B) providing protection for the resources of the study area by other means.

(2) **CONTENTS.**—In conducting the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) evaluate the national significance of the study area;

(B) consult with interested Federal agencies, State or local governmental entities,

private and nonprofit organizations, or any other interested individuals; and

(C) identify cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives considered.

(3) **REPORT.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that describes—

(A) the findings and conclusions of the study; and

(B) any recommendations of the Secretary.

The bill (S. 5136), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I am going to say a few words, and then others who have supported these bills, such as Senator CORNYN, Senator HOEVEN, and Senator WELCH, will speak to others as well.

The bill that I am very gratified and grateful that this body has now approved is S. 5136, the Plum Island Preservation Study Act, with the amendment that we just approved as well.

Very simply, I have been working on this issue for a long time. Plum Island has been there for a long time. Indigenous people treasure Plum Island; 800 acres with plant and animal species; thriving seal populations; species that now are endangered, like the piping plover and the roseate tern; and over the years, two significant locations: Fort Terry and the Plum Island Light-house.

It was a treasure then, and it is a treasure now. I haven't been working on it for as long as, obviously, it has been regarded as a treasure, but over the years that I have worked on it now—more than a decade—with Majority Leader SCHUMER, Senator GILLIBRAND, and Senator MURPHY, as well as State and local stakeholders and countless advocates, we have come to the realization that we need to preserve Plum Island.

Those 800 acres are in the midst of one of the most densely populated areas in the United States, and Plum Island is a home to those really valuable species of wildlife and habitat, an ecosystem that really supports wildlife up and down the east coast, for example, when populations of birds come there to rest and nest.

We are not going to make 500 acres—let alone 800 acres—of important ecological habitat in the middle of Long Island Sound if it is lost, and it has been threatened with loss because it had served as a site for a research facility, biological research, classified mostly—I have visited it—and that research facility is going to be moved to Kansas. The question has been, What happens now to Plum Island? The possibility of commercial development or residential buildings has been there from time to time.

The requirement existed that Plum Island be sold when the research facility moved. In 2020, Congress successfully repealed the requirement to sell Plum Island and prevented a private developer from coming to develop it and destroy the really enormous ecological and environmental value that it provides. But stopping this sale was not enough. I have continued to push for a permanent preservation outcome for Plum Island, ensuring that the island is protected for generations to come.

Earlier this year, I was proud to introduce a pair of bills that would require our Federal Agencies to work internally and help determine the future of the island. Both of these bills passed out of committee with bipartisan support, and there is bipartisan support for this measure, as there should be, because it is about our environmental future and the preservation of open space and a rare resource for the Nation.

Passage of today's legislation marks a monumental stride towards conserving Plum Island. This measure will require the U.S. Department of the Interior to determine how to designate Plum Island as a unit of the Department of the Interior and how to preserve it for the use of people for generations to come and protect it from development, to conserve it for people to use recreationally, to make sure that it is available for wildlife that can be studied and observed and enjoyed by the people of Connecticut, New York, and all around the country.

I have worked closely with the Department of the Interior on how this study should be done, and I want to thank the Department for its input on the language in this legislation.

The study is crucial as a first step, but, obviously, equally more important, in fact, is the outcome, and it needs to be done before the end of this decade. It must be completed before Plum Island's transition is done.

I want to thank my colleagues again—Senator SCHUMER, who has been totally dedicated to this cause, Senator GILLIBRAND, and Senator MURPHY—for their cosponsorship for this bill. It will have a lasting and historic effect because it enables Plum Island to become part of our Federal resource protection ecosystem through the Department of the Interior. I urge that this study be conducted quickly, expeditiously, thoroughly, and within less than 5 years. Certainly, it is doable in a couple of years, and I would urge that the Department of the Interior address it right away.

I thank my colleagues for joining me in support of this bill.

I yield to the senior Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I thank my colleague from Connecticut for offering the unanimous consent request by which we passed these various

bills. I just want to discuss the Big Bend National Park Boundary Act.

Texas is home to very diverse terrain, which includes vibrant wildlife and big, wide-open spaces, and Big Bend National Park is no exception.

This legislation that we just passed by unanimous consent here in the Senate expands and preserves the park's heritage, its natural resources, and its jaw-dropping scenery, while also safeguarding private property rights. This bill authorizes the National Park Service to acquire approximately 6,100 acres of land adjacent to Terlingua Creek, along the western boundary of the park. It clarifies that the National Park Service may only acquire lands through donation, purchase from willing property owners, or exchange, and it explicitly prohibits the use of eminent domain or condemnation, thereby protecting private property rights.

This legislation is important for helping Texans and all Americans enjoy our big, beautiful national parks, and I am pleased that the Senate has adopted this legislation today by unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I had hoped we would be joined by Senator HOEVEN, but I just want to commend him for another of the measures we have just approved by unanimous consent.

I am a cosponsor with him of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Museum Artifacts Act. This measure is enormously important to preserve the artifacts and other memorabilia of one of our Presidents—one of our great Presidents—Theodore Roosevelt.

I have been to that part of the country—the Badlands—and visited that part of the country, and I think this measure will be a fitting, educational resource. It will be a destination.

Now, I think that a lot of people may wonder, why there? Well, Theodore Roosevelt's connection to the Badlands and the Dakotas is well known, and making it a destination will draw more Americans to appreciate that part of our great Nation, which is so beautiful.

I want to commend the private contributors. This library museum will be the result of many private donations and contributions led by a team of one of my constituents Charlie Melcher, and it will be a real tribute not only to Theodore Roosevelt but to America's commitment to its history, its living history, and making it living history for so many young people, families, and others, who will appreciate Theodore Roosevelt's legacy to this Nation.

I see we have been joined by my colleague from Vermont, and I am happy to yield to him.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you, Senator, I am fully supportive of the work that you have done. Is there anything that gives more pleasure than being able to do something that is generated by our

local citizens, the people we represent, that reflects the dedication, the reverence, the appreciation they have for the natural world in your State of Connecticut or now in my State of Vermont? I mean, what a privilege it is for both of us to be here advocating on behalf of these aspirations of the people we represent.

I know that is true for the Presiding Officer as well, all the work that you have done.

Today, I rise in support of S. 432, the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream Wild and Scenic River Study Act. The bill will initiate the process of designating the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream in Essex County, VT, which is way up in the northeast corner of Vermont that Senator George Aiken named the "Northeast Kingdom," a place that we love and that someday, when you are so lucky that you can come to the Nulhegan River, you will love, too.

I was proud to work with my colleagues Senator SANDERS and Representative BALINT in introducing this legislation, and it was my first act as a U.S. Senator.

These two rivers run through Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, as I mentioned, home to some of our State's most scenic parts of a scenic State.

It is very close to the annual Moose Festival that I know, Senator, you will enjoy when I finally get you up there to Canaan, VT.

But the Nulhegan, for example, passes through the Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge. It is the only watershed-based refuge in the United States.

And by the way, Silvio Conte, as you know, was a Congressman from Western Massachusetts. That is where I grew up, and he did so much—Republican—to preserve the watershed of the Connecticut River.

The Nulhegan, the river, winds through the valleys between hills and, in the fall, is framed by really striking foliage, largely undisturbed by outside visitors. They don't know about it, but now they will.

In the spring, the rivers' whitewater provides a unique and challenging place for daring fisherman and paddlers.

Healthy rivers, I know we all agree, are really essential to our State's ecosystems, and they play an important role in Vermont's outdoor recreation economy. It is no surprise that the communities neighboring these two rivers support protecting their free-flowing nature too.

And that is the point I was making at the beginning. When you have the citizens who are living there and seeing how precious this resource is and wanting to do everything they can to protect that resource and we can help them, that is a good day in the U.S. Senate.

S. 432 will preserve these two rivers, enhance Vermont's renowned recreational resources, and conserve these vital habitats.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, thank you for giving us this opportunity, and, again, I thank my colleagues for approving all of these unanimous consents on behalf of land and resources that have such great value, like Plum Island, a national treasure.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, in recent weeks, there has been a lot of talk and a lot of optimism about President Trump's Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, and, of course, Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy's plan to eliminate government waste, fraud, and abuse, and there is a reason for this. I think we have pretty much hit a tipping point with the American people. They have looked at this big, bloated government. They have looked at this \$36 trillion in debt—which is growing every day—and they truly see this as a threat to our Nation's stability, to our children's futures, and for us to be able to protect ourselves from our enemies.

And what they have noticed is that, as this debt grows, then more of their taxpayer dollars are being spent to pay the interest on the debt. That is money that is not going to national security. It is money that is not going to disaster relief. It is going to the debt.

And here is a great example of that. In just the first half of fiscal year 2024, our country spent—get this—\$440 billion to service the debt. Now, interestingly enough, that was more than what we spent on our military in the same time.

So the American people are smart. They are seeing this and they are saying it is a problem and this has got to be brought under control.

Now, I think it is important for us to look at how we have gotten to where we were, and I went back and looked at where we were when George W. Bush left office and President Obama came into office. As George W. Bush left, our debt was at \$10.6 trillion, and we all remember that. We remember 2008, 2009. That is not that long ago. But think about that number, \$10.6 trillion. Now, I will remind everybody that was after the Gulf war; that was after that period of time, 9/11, when our economy shut down for a full quarter. And the total debt at that point was \$10.6 trillion.

Now, when Obama left office, after 8 years in office, that debt had nearly doubled. It was just shy of \$20 trillion. Think about that.

Now, President Trump came into office. 4 years later, he leaves, and our

debt was north of \$27 trillion with all the COVID spending that was done in 2020.

And instead of restoring spending to stable levels and going back to those pre-COVID levels, what did President Biden do?

Since his inauguration, he has piled more than \$8 trillion on our debt. And the deficit for this year alone—fiscal 2024 alone—is at \$1.8 trillion.

And these are the numbers. Anyone who wants to look at this can go to any number of government websites. You can pull up these numbers through OMB, through Treasury. But what the American people have seen is a recklessness and a disregard for them, the taxpayer.

Since this Nation's founding, people have believed we are a government of, by, and for the people. And, quite frankly, I think that this year the people decided to be "We the people."

And what they have seen is, over the last 4 years, during the Biden-Harris administration, there has been a government that wasn't really accountable to anybody. If they wanted to do something, they just did it. And they have watched this wasteful, out-of-control spending. They have seen a growing bureaucracy with people who don't even show up to work. Less than 10 percent of the Federal workforce is showing up 5 days a week in person. This is why the people have said: We the people are going to take charge of this.

Speaking of that workforce, the Federal Government today is employing 2.2 million bureaucrats. Just to put context on this, that is a number larger than the population of 15 of our States. And you have people, less than 10 percent, showing up every day in person to do their job. And when you look at the amount of office space that is being used, only 12 percent of our Federal office space is occupied.

Now, to make matters worse, for most Federal employees, pay increases and promotions are completely disconnected from their job performance. They are paid the longer they stay on the job. They get automatic pay increases that are tied to the amount of time they spend employed by the Federal Government, not how well they are doing their jobs.

I think that, as you look at this, this is why the American people have said: We support the Department of Government Efficiency. And it is why they are excited about this and why Mr. Musk and Mr. Ramaswamy are going to have the American people standing with them to make these cuts.

Now, last week, I introduced the DOGE Acts, and it is a package of bills that will hold the government accountable for how they manage and use taxpayer dollars. Among the measures, the DOGE Acts will address out-of-control spending with 1, 2, and 5 percent across-the-board cuts to discretionary spending, excluding Defense, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs.

In addition to the spending cuts, this legislation will freeze salaries for Fed-

eral bureaucrats and order Agency heads to shrink their workforce by 5 percent over 3 years.

To drain the swamp, the legislation will establish a commission to study how the incoming administration can relocate Agencies from Washington, DC, to States across the country.

Who can seriously claim that it is good for beltway bureaucrats to be siloed away from most of the American people? If anything, they should be closer to the people who are suffering from their burdensome rules and regulations.

To ensure that Federal bureaucrats are actually working while living on the taxpayer dime, the DOGE Acts would require government employees to return to their office by ending pandemic-era telework policies.

And to reward merit, they would implement a pilot program for Agencies to pay employees based on productivity, not seniority.

In just a few short weeks, Republicans here in Congress and the Trump administration will work together to put our country back on track, including rightsizing the Federal Government, and we look forward to pushing forward our DOGE Acts and helping make that happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

BLACKWATER CANYON

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise to congratulate all of my colleagues for passing a piece of legislation that is going to make the whole country happy and a beautiful place.

The Senate passed a bill that I sponsored with my friend Senator CAPITO to name a 2,700-acre parcel of land in the Monongahela National Forest after Mrs. Patsye Crites.

I want to thank my colleagues here in the Senate for agreeing to this bill, as well as express my support for the completing of a land sale to put this land in the hands of the Forest Service and preserve it for the public in perpetuity.

Earlier this year, the Forest Service reached an agreement with John Crites and his family to purchase this spectacular land along the Blackwater River, which we call the Blackwater Canyon.

This is what we call Lindy Point, and it is unbelievable. And the foliage just bursts alive, like a kaleidoscope of colors. It is just gorgeous.

It is one of the most beautiful pieces of property, I think, anywhere in the country. Of course, I am a little personal on that. You can see, just one glimpse behind me, within an already popular area, hikers and outdoorsmen from across the country. And down in the valley, there is Blackwater River, which has great fishing, as far as trout fishing. We enjoy that very much.

The purchase agreement for this property will be a huge win for the Mountain State and the Nation by ensuring that people are able to enjoy more of wild and wonderful West Virginia, as well as support our booming tourism economy.

Let me take a moment to describe how this agreement and the naming came together.

This land was privately owned by John Crites and his family and his wonderful wife of 54 years, Patsye. The entire Crites family have been incredible stewards of this land, and I can think of no better way to honor their work than to name the track after Patsye, who truly loved the outdoors and this remarkable canyon, in particular.

Unfortunately, Patsye passed away in 2018. But she was an incredible—West Virginian and represents some of the best qualities in our Mountain State of the great people we have and what they have to offer.

Patsye and John were leaders in responsible forestry and hardwood production in our State for more than 50 years—unbelievable contributions to the State of West Virginia. Her business acumen, however, never came along with a hard heart. Everyone who ever met Patsye or knew Patsye knew her as gentle, warm, and an extraordinary loving person.

Senator CAPITO and I, the Forest Service, and the local community all agree that this parcel should be named the Patsye Crites Forest.

I cannot think of a more fitting tribute to this exemplary West Virginian.

Once again, I want to thank my colleagues for agreeing to pass this bill, and I urge the House to follow our lead.

I want to especially thank the Crites family—John and his children and his grandchildren—for making sure that generations to come will be able to visit the Patsye Crites Forest and enjoy it just as she did.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am going to make some comments in regard to the energy policy for the United States. But, first, I would like to make a couple of comments, starting with commenting in regard to my good friend and colleague from West Virginia Senator MANCHIN.

Senator MANCHIN is the current chair of the Energy Committee, and I am on that Energy Committee. And I am going to reference two pieces of legislation—two bills—which just passed the Senate. I am going to start by thanking him as chairman of the Energy Committee because, without his help—and he supported both of these bills—but without his help and agreeing to bring them to the committee to get them passed through the committee so that they could be on the floor here and we could pass them on the floor, which we just said, it wouldn't have happened.

So, Mr. Chairman—Chairman MANCHIN—thank you, once again, for your support.

And I would further note for the record that Senator MANCHIN and I actually were Governors together for—I don't know—two terms, at least—6

years. That sounds right. We crossed over 6 years, and we worked together. And JOE developed a reputation as somebody who would work with anybody—and did—and he was always cheerful about it and fun to work with and was really good at bringing people together from both sides of the aisle.

He certainly developed that reputation as Governor and brought it to the Senate. He and I worked together here for 14 years on a whole number of things, including, in 2013, passing S. 1, which was the Keystone XL Pipeline. And that is just one example.

I know that he is leaving the Senate at the end of this year. And all of us will very much miss both JOE and Gayle. They are just incredibly good people. I know there are a lot of folks who have and will continue to say a lot of nice things about the Manchins, all well-deserved, about his acumen at passing legislation, working across the aisle—all of those things and more. I just want to make sure that the RECORD reflects that he is a great guy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

NORTH DAKOTA TRUST LANDS COMPLETION ACTS

Madam President, the two bills that I want to reference that we just passed are the North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act and then, also, the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Act, and just a few brief comments on each.

The North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act, actually, will help my home State better develop its land and minerals to support education and also to provide Tribal nations—we have five reservations in North Dakota. But it will also help provide those Tribal nations greater ownership over the lands within their reservation boundaries.

Senator CRAMER, my colleague from North Dakota, joined me in introducing this important legislation, and, also, KELLY ARMSTRONG, who is actually the current Governor, on the House side, worked on it as well.

Currently, North Dakota holds more than 130,000 acres of minerals and over 31,000 surface acres that are located within Tribal reservations. They are not developed because they are located—they are State-owned, but they are within the boundaries of the reservation. So they are not being developed.

So this bill is absolutely a win-win by helping our State generate revenue for education and other priorities, while allowing the Tribes to regain the fragmented lands and minerals located within their boundaries, because we are trading. We are trading land for outside the reservation for ownership within the reservation, which is going to help development both on the reservation and off. So it truly is a win-win. It is a win for the Tribes and a win for our State as well.

And it is supported by the State of North Dakota, by the Tribal nations, all of the Tribes within our State, and all of the western counties and the

grazing associations that are involved in our State.

We have multiple use throughout the Federal lands and the other lands—private lands, Federal lands, BLM lands, national grasslands—but this is a great example of how we all worked together and accomplished a win-win.

So I want to thank my cosponsor on the bill, BEN RAY LUJÁN, the Senator from New Mexico—or as we like to affectionately call him, “Ray-Ban”—and, also, RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, PETER WELCH, and Senator JOHN CORNYN, who were helpful today in getting this completed.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY ACT

Madam President, the other bill is the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Act. Teddy Roosevelt first traveled to the Dakota Territory in 1838 to hunt bison. It is bison, by the way. Some people say “bi-son”; but it is “bi-zon,” and it is our national mammal—at least that is how we say it. Anyway, he went there to hunt bison and returned in 1884 while mourning the passing of both his wife and his mother.

President Roosevelt called the Dakota Territory home for 3 years while he enjoyed the vast beauty that the Badlands have to offer. As President Roosevelt proudly claimed, he would not have ascended to the Presidency had it not been for his formative years in North Dakota.

Fittingly, the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library will be located adjacent to another important national treasure named in his honor—and that is the purpose here. The Theodore Roosevelt National Park is in North Dakota, and now his library will be as well. I think we have already exceeded more than \$250 million—already over a quarter billion dollars—being raised for this library. We have broken ground, and we had a beam-laying ceremony. It is going to be just unbelievable, just unbelievable.

This S. 4129 will help support the construction of this important initiative to honor our Nation's 26th President and ensure that future generations of Americans can access the rich history and enduring impact of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Again, I want to thank my bipartisan colead on the legislation, Senator BLUMENTHAL, along with cosponsors Senator CRAMER, Senator HEINRICH, and Senator MITT ROMNEY.

CLEAN COAL

Madam President, I would like to turn to some remarks regarding our national energy policy, specifically clean coal.

If you saw President-elect Trump's interview recently, he talked about clean coal and the amazing technology that we are bringing to bear to utilize this baseload power source that is so vitally, vitally important to our Nation, not just in terms of energy independence but, really, energy dominance for our country. During his press

conference, I was pleased to hear President Trump highlight our shared commitment to restore America's energy dominance and that clean coal is going to be a vitally important part of it. He emphasized that, and I appreciate it very much.

He talked about how it is reliable, affordable, and incredibly abundant—an energy source that is going to be available for many, many, many years. North Dakota alone has over 700 years of coal supply, and our coal-fired electric industry works to ensure that homes and businesses have access to affordable and reliable power on a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week basis—baseload. Regardless of weather conditions—on the hottest day, on the coldest day, whether the wind is blowing or whether it is not; whether the Sun is out or whether it is not—24/7, that baseload is available and is incredibly important for our grid. That is what provides grid stability for intermittent sources of energy. The fact remains that our Nation needs more energy, not only more electricity but more baseload electricity, as I say, so that it is available 24/7 and so that our grid can operate in a reliable fashion.

North Dakota is fortunate to have the most advanced—and this is where the clean-coal technology really comes in. North Dakota really is in a position and is leading the way on this. We are fortunate to have the most advanced coal-fired power plants in the world while also leading the way in reducing emissions like SO_x, NO_x, and mercury—so, SO₂, nitrogen oxides, and mercury. We are reducing those emissions. We have led the way on that.

To meet this growing demand for more energy, we have been working to crack the code on carbon capture, utilization, and storage, or CCUS, and enable the next generation of clean, coal-fired electric power. We have worked over the past 15 years to put the legal, tax, and regulatory environment in place to establish North Dakota's leadership in advancing carbon capture.

North Dakota became the first State to be granted regulatory primacy for class VI wells to ensure CO₂ is safely and securely stored below the surface. We recently secured a multihundred-million-dollar demonstration grant from the Department of Energy to advance Project Tundra, which will enable the coal-fired Milton R. Young power plant to capture and store 4 million metric tons of CO₂ per year.

At the same time, we have worked hard to put into operation the largest coal-powered carbon capture energy project in the world. Basin's Dakota Gasification synfuels plant is currently in operation and will capture up to 2.25 million metric tons of CO₂ per year. Let me repeat that: 2.25 million metric tons of CO₂ per year—the largest in the world.

I look forward to working with President Trump to take the handcuffs off of our energy producers and empower them to develop the latest, greatest

technologies to produce more energy with better environmental stewardship.

This really is about unleashing our Nation's vast coal reserves and one of our country's most important strategic assets. By leveraging technology and unlocking clean coal's full potential, we will be able to increase the supply of affordable, reliable electricity and bring down the prices for American families and businesses that are struggling with the impact of inflation.

North Dakota is leading the way in clean coal technologies, and this will be an important part of our efforts, in working with the Trump administration, to make America not only energy secure but energy dominant.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my friend, Senator CRUZ from Texas.

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

H.R. 82

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of the 476,000 West Virginians who rely on Social Security benefits. Majorities of our seniors in every State rely on Social Security benefits, and we know that we are in trouble.

The Senate is considering the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal the windfall elimination provision and government pension offset from the Social Security benefit calculation, providing relief for many public employees who have been adversely impacted.

Now, make no mistake: We have a problem. We all agree. The status quo is unfair, and it penalizes millions of hard-working Americans—whether it is teachers, firefighters, police officers, among others. But we also have an obligation to honor our promises to ensure that Social Security is going to be there for the people who have paid into it and have earned it and also for those generations who come afterward.

We can fix this problem without blowing a hole in the Social Security trust fund. This is a \$200 billion pricetag, and we can fix that without having any—any—effect on our budget; but it is just unbelievable that no one seems really concerned about what we have in the debt we are facing.

One of my first meetings here and hearings I had gone to—and this was in early 2011—was for the Armed Services Committee.

I asked Admiral Mike Mullen—I said: Chairman Mullen—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—what is the greatest threat facing America?

And I am thinking I am going to hear about the military powers from around the world. He never hesitated one second.

He said: The debt of the Nation will bring us down first.

The debt of our nations has brought down every—every—major society in history, and that is exactly what we are on track to do.

We have a fiscal crisis in this country right now, and no one is talking about it. On either side of the aisle, we are not talking about it. In fiscal year 2013, our Federal spending was less than \$3.5 trillion. In fiscal year 2023—10 years later—it is \$6.1 trillion. That is a 75-percent increase. No one can withstand that. Last year's total revenues were \$4.4 trillion, which left us with a deficit of \$1.7 trillion—the largest deficit in U.S. history since the pandemic.

We have been spending more than we bring in every year for the last 22 years, and the debt that has resulted from it is absolutely crippling. Most Americans couldn't even last 22 paychecks, let alone 22 years of spending more than they have brought in. Years of fiscal irresponsibility have brought us to the crisis we are in today, which is more than \$36 trillion of national debt. That breaks down to \$104,000 for every man, woman, and child in this great country of ours—a \$104,000 liability on every human citizen in the United States of America.

It is terrifying to think that at the end of the fiscal year, we are going to spend more on paying just the interest—just the interest—on our debt than we do to defend our country. This is the crisis we are facing, and we are going into this blindly.

It passed overwhelmingly, with cloture, 72 votes. It is unbelievable that no one is even thinking about what we can do and how we can do it better. There is a problem, and we can fix the problem.

The government makes tough choices. I don't need to tell you all that. But, however, as matters stand, we are now choosing to ignore the fiscal crisis again. If this thing hits the wall, that means it increases 6 months. It advances the insolvency of Social Security 6 more months.

We are trying to figure out how we can save Social Security, and we are not doing a thing for the people and fixing the problem we have that is within our means to do so.

Our amendment would replace the WEP-GPO with a proportional benefit formula, ensuring the public workers receive their appropriate benefits, which we recognize has been denied. We recognize that.

The Social Security trust fund is currently projected to become insolvent in 2033—2033, less than 10 years. We lead the country with the highest percentage of our population receiving Social Security benefits. There are a tremendous amount of people in Texas depending on it the same as my State of West Virginia. We need to make sure retirees are receiving their fair share, and we cannot do it at the expense of all beneficiaries and future generations.

I urge my colleagues to listen to my colleague here, my friend, the Senator from Texas, and how he has come

about putting this together, working together, knowing that it is something that can be done. It is a heck of a fix. We would hope that you would all support this amendment and be able to basically make a responsible—fiscally responsible—fix to a very serious problem that we have: keeping the solvency of Social Security for generations to come and taking care of the generation that now is basically depending upon it.

With that, I yield the floor to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I thank my friend the Senator from West Virginia who is standing here—we are standing here together—with a bipartisan plea to the Senate to act in a reasonable, fiscally responsible way.

Senator MANCHIN and I are also, in a bipartisan way, asking the Senate: Don't sell seniors down the river.

Look, we all know the U.S. Congress spends like drunken sailors. And, frankly, that is not fair to the sailors because at least they are spending their own money. But even in that context, what we saw earlier today was tragic.

The vote earlier today was designed to solve a real problem: the windfall elimination provision, the WEP provision. It was enacted in an effort to ensure Social Security benefits are paid fairly, and they recognized the amount that is actually paid into Social Security.

However, when the WEP was enacted, it got the formula wrong, and the result is, for thousands upon thousands of retired police officers and retired firefighters and retired teachers, they got shortchanged. A very significant number of those cops and firefighters and teachers are in my home State of Texas. I have heard from countless firefighters and cops and teachers who have raised that issue.

Since 2017, I have been fighting to fix the WEP problem. In 2017, I introduced legislation to fix the inequity and to treat our retired cops and firefighters and teachers fairly.

My legislation I have worked on very closely with KEVIN BRADY, a Republican in the House, then the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. He initially had an agreement with the Democrat ranking member on the House Ways and Means Committee to get this resolved, but, unfortunately, House Democrats backed out of that agreement. So we didn't fix the WEP in 2017. We didn't fix it in 2018. We didn't fix it in 2019, or 2020, or 2021, or 2022, or 2023.

And now, just days before Christmas, we step in with this bill designed to fix the inequities for retired police officers, firefighters, and teachers.

So what is the problem? The problem is this current bill simply repeals the WEP across board, which is a massive cost to Social Security. This bill imposes a cost on the Social Security

Trust Fund of \$190 billion—nearly \$200 billion.

What else does this bill do that we just voted on? It accelerates the insolvency of Social Security by 6 months. The Social Security system right now is scheduled to be insolvent within 9 years—by 2033. As a result of this vote, if the same 73 Senators who just voted for this provision stick with it, Social Security goes broke 6 months earlier.

What does that mean? When Social Security—if Social Security goes insolvent, there is an automatic benefits cut of over 20 percent that goes into effect automatically by operation of law.

So what did 73 Senators vote to do today? To throw Granny over the cliff, to hurt Social Security for every senior citizen in America.

Now, if that was our only choice, if our only choice was to treat the cops and firefighters and retired teachers fairly or do harm to Social Security and to seniors, I could understand people making that tradeoff. It is an ugly tradeoff, but I could understand it because we absolutely need to treat retired cops and firefighters and teachers fairly.

But there is another choice. The legislation that I introduced in 2017 and have been fighting to pass ever since, it is bipartisan legislation that I have introduced. I have it as an amendment to this bill right now. Senator MANCHIN, who is a Democrat, is a cosponsor.

What does my amendment do? It fixes the WEP problem—it fixes the windfall elimination problem—which means it corrects the unfairness for retired cops, for retired firefighters, and for retired teachers. But it does so at a much, much more affordable pricetag.

The Cruz-Manchin amendment would cost \$25 billion over the next 10 years—\$25 billion compared to \$190 billion. And, critically, the Cruz-Manchin amendment has been scored that over 75 years—which when you are dealing with Social Security, you typically look at the longer window—over 75 years, the scoring shows it has a negligible impact. It doesn't speed up the insolvency of Social Security by a single day.

The Senate has an option right in front of it: Take care of the cops. Take care of the firefighters. Take care of teachers. But at the same time, don't hurt the seniors.

I am confident that every Member of this body goes home to our States, and we tell senior citizens we are going to protect Social Security. Well, do you know what? If 73 Senators in this body continue charging ahead to blow a \$200 billion hole in the Social Security trust fund, every Senator who votes that way is breaking their promise to the seniors in their State.

Every Senator who votes to impose \$200 billion of costs on the Social Security trust fund, you are choosing to sacrifice the interests of seniors who paid into Social Security, who have earned those benefits, and who deserve to have them protected.

What is so frustrating is this should be easy, and this should be simple.

I could tell you, in the Republican conference, I urged my colleagues, I said: Listen, let's take this up and finally pass it early next year in the brand new conference. JOHN THUNE, the incoming majority leader, committed, if the Senate did not proceed on this bill today, to take up my amendment on the floor within the first 3 months of next year.

Listen, I understand the frustration of the people who have been fighting to get this problem fixed because they have been fighting and fighting and fighting, and it has never gotten there. So people are understandably frustrated by being treated unfairly. But we have a way to fix this problem, to put more money in the pockets of retired cops and retired firefighters and retired teachers but do so in a way that is fiscally responsible and that doesn't hurt every senior in America.

It saddens me that only 27 of us were willing to stand up and say we are going to keep our promise to protect Social Security. We are going to keep our promise to protect the seniors in West Virginia and Texas. We are not going to sell Granny down the river.

There is still a chance for this Senate to reconsider. It would be very simple to take this up. It would be very simple to schedule a hearing in the Finance Committee early next year. The incoming chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator MIKE CRAPO, committed to having a hearing on this legislation early next year. We could fix this problem without blowing a \$200 billion hole in the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. MANCHIN. Would the Senator yield?

Mr. CRUZ. I would happily yield to my friend from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Let me just say that I think what happened is we have a bill that is hard to vote against. It really is. And I understand why there were 73 Senators who voted for it.

Senator CRUZ has had this and worked diligently for many years on this, to fix the WEP. The bottom line is, it never came to committee here. It came out of the House and came right to the floor.

Now, whether they thought it was a feel-good vote or whatever, the only thing I am saying is, it is not a responsible position for us to take with the debt that we are carrying now and complicating it by adding more and more on.

We all talk about the fiscal responsibilities. Every one of us have fiscal responsibilities in our home—every one of our family members, every one of our constituents. We seem to have no constraint here whatsoever. And we saw that \$200 billion pricetag on this.

Is there a better way? You can be against something if you don't have a better way of fixing it. We basically have posed this piece of legislation because we can fix the inequities done.

That can be done and taking care of the people who got left behind and got shortchanged. We identify it. The bottom line is, we have a fix for it. Let us fix it.

If you wanted to fix it and have a good bill, you should have put it in committee. If it is not, it is going to be done next year with a commitment from the majority party. Let it be fixed, but don't throw another \$180 billion on top of it as debt—it is just irresponsible—and then tell your grandparents or your aunts and uncles who are depending on that Social Security check, like almost 500,000 West Virginians, that, you know, sorry, in 2032 now—maybe almost 6 months to a year earlier—you are going to have a 20-percent cut in your Social Security payment.

So if they are getting a thousand dollars a month, they are going to get \$800 in the next check. Why did it happen? How come? How can you let this happen?

We can fix that. We really can. All we are asking for is a consideration of this body to fix it and fix it right, take care of the inequities, take care of the people who have been shortchanged, but also take care of the people who are depending on this Social Security to be solvent.

Mr. CRUZ. I thank my friend from West Virginia, and I urge the body to listen to the very reasonable words from the Senator from West Virginia.

I will say, the Senator from West Virginia is retiring in just a few days. We are going to miss JOE MANCHIN in this body. We are going to miss a voice of reason on both sides of the aisle.

We have in front of this body a bipartisan amendment that fixes the WEP problem, that treats retired cops and firefighters and teachers fairly, but it does so while being responsible and not blowing a hole in the Social Security trust fund.

You know, my dad is 85 years old. My mom is 90 years old. Both of them rely on Social Security.

We have a solemn obligation to honor the promises we made to seniors. There is not a Senator in this body who hasn't promised seniors: I am going to protect Social Security.

Well, if the Senate goes forward and passes this bill, 73 Senators will be breaking their word. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Do the right thing. Do the responsible thing. Keep your word to the seniors in your State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

THOMAS R. CARPER WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2024

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I ask the Chair to execute the order of December 12 with respect to the House message to accompany S. 4367.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House:

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 4367) entitled "An Act to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.", do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 4367.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be up to 1 hour, equally divided.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the House amendment to S. 4367.

What my compadre over on EPW did not mention is the name of the bill. The name of the bill is the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024. And I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

Just last week, the House approved this bill by an overwhelming margin of 399 to 18. This bipartisan legislation is supported by a diverse group of more than 200 stakeholders, which illustrates the positive impact that the legislation will have on communities across this country.

I just want to spend a few minutes kind of discussing the great work of my colleagues in Congress and the benefits that the American people will have by the provisions in this bill.

At the heart of the legislation is the Water Resources Development Act of 2024. The enactment of biennial water resources legislation over the last 10 years has been critical to addressing the Nation's water resources needs.

In August, the Senate passed its version of this legislation by unanimous consent. That bill was developed based on more than 1,000 requests submitted by our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. Following Senate passage, Chairman CARPER and I worked with Chairman SAM GRAVES and Ranking Member RICK LARSEN of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to resolve the differences between the House and Senate-passed WRDA bill.

I am proud of the agreement that we were able to reach, and I want to thank my House colleagues for being such great partners. I would like to highlight some of the benefits of the WRDA 2024 bill.

It authorizes critical water resource studies and projects across the country. These studies and projects will support navigation along our waterways and at our ports. It will protect

communities from flooding and improve our environment.

This bill avoids one-size-fits-all solutions and maintains important flexibilities so that the Corps of Engineers and non-Federal partners can continue to address the unique water resources challenges across our Nation.

It also contains directives to the Corps to develop comprehensive implementation plans for this bill and for our prior WRDAs. This will enable the Corps to focus its energy and resources on fully implementing WRDA and prior WRDA provisions in order to better reflect the intent of this body and this Congress and previous Congresses.

I also want to highlight some of the ways this bill will help directly benefit my State of West Virginia. Just over 8 years ago, in June 2016, West Virginia experienced flooding in historic rates, which led to tragic deaths and devastation. This bill provides support for future projects identified by the Corps' feasibility study for flood risk management in the Kanawha River basin.

The legislation also increases the ability of the Corps to carry out smaller projects for emergency streambank and shoreline protection, ecosystem restoration, and debris and obstruction removal, which are critical to many areas of my State.

The bill also directs the Corps to expedite feasibility studies for the Upper Guyandotte and Kanawha River basins as well as to expedite projects in Milton as well as the Bluestone Dam in Hinton.

This bill supports many drinking water and wastewater projects throughout our State.

WRDA contains similar wins for States all across this Nation.

I am also glad to see, as part of this package, the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024. The Economic Development Administration is tasked with facilitating economic development and creating jobs in distressed communities across the country. While EDA programs receive annual appropriations from Congress, the authorization for these projects expired in 2008. The legislation reauthorizes EDA programs at fiscally responsible levels for fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

This legislation reasserts congressional direction over EDA's funding decision; it enhances our oversight at the Agency; it preserves locally driven economic development decisions; and it ensures that funding from EDA is accessible to distressed communities.

It also codifies and authorizes dedicated funding for EDA's Assistance to Coal Communities Program, which was one of my top priorities for this legislation. This program ensures that communities in my home State of West Virginia which were decimated by the downturn of the coal industry have the resources that we need to recover and grow.

The bill also includes consideration of coal communities when EDA assigns EDA representatives. The legislation

also reauthorizes the regional Commissions that were expiring or have expired, and it expands the types of activities that those Commissions can carry out in their communities and modernizes their administrative procedures.

The bill also includes a provision to increase transparency and reduce waste across our Federal real estate portfolio.

And finally, the bill contains a provision that unlocks a significant backlog of funding in the TIFIA Program and provides the funding States need to use for transportation projects. It also includes provisions to prevent the backlog from occurring in the future.

In closing, I would really like to take a minute to thank the staff and my chairman, Chairman CARPER. But I also want to thank the staff at the various Federal Agencies that have helped with this legislation—helped us formulate it—and also the House and Senate legislative counsel. And I would like to thank as well the staff at the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as well.

I want to extend my appreciation to the EPW Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure led by Chairman MARK KELLY and Ranking Member KEVIN CRAMER for their and their staff's dedication to this.

I also want to thank, again, my friend Chairman CARPER. We have worked together—this is our, I think, second WRDA bill that we did together, and it is a fitting tribute to your decades of public service to have this piece of legislation named after you.

From Chairman CARPER's staff, I would like to thank Courtney Taylor, John Kane, Linnea Saby, Nicole Comisky, Ryan Smith, Claire Shanklin, Jordan Smallwood, and Tara Kroft. I would like to thank my staff seated behind me, many of them: Adam Tomlinson, Murphie Barrett, Libby Callaway, Dan Linkowski, Katherine Scarlett, Rebecca Hattar, Dom Rupp, and Jack Cline.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support the House amendment to S. 4367, the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. President, with the permission of the chairman—I told him that I wanted to mention one last thing before his remarks—I want to talk on a separate topic. I would like to pay tribute to my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, and our stalwart Republican leader, MITCH MCCONNELL.

Leader MCCONNELL leaves the leadership table at the end of this Congress as the longest serving Senate party leader in U.S. history.

Resilience, patience, and determination—these are the qualities we will remember the McConnell era by, an era that continues due to his foresight in ensuring conservative principles rule the day in the highest Court of the land.

If I had to distill the senior Senator from Kentucky's leadership style down

to twin pillars, I would say they were focus and more focus. He says it is the most important word in the dictionary for a reason.

As a member of his broader leadership team from my early days in the Senate and now as a member of the core leadership team as the Senate Republican conference vice chairman, Leader MCCONNELL has taught me many valuable lessons and values in his leadership.

One of the first lessons was that Kentuckians and West Virginians share more than a border; we also share a distinct sense of humor. Leader MCCONNELL leads with a sharp wit. His regular jokes at the leadership table will be missed. For example, he used to call former Senator Richard Shelby "Too Big to Fail."

Leader MCCONNELL leads with humility. He will be the first to remind you of his initial flop on the national stage when his idol, Ronald Reagan, called him Mitch O'Donnell.

Leader MCCONNELL leads with consistency. He has never missed a blue shirt Thursday.

And he leads with a tough eye, for sure. He has taken countless slings and arrows for his party and this institution, and all the while, I think he thoroughly enjoyed it.

He reminds me of my dad in a way. They both have framed cartoons of some of their biggest critics in their office.

He leads with moral and philosophical clarity. During more than a few of his 18 years, I am sure he will agree being majority leader was perhaps the hardest job in the country. He often referred to his job as that of a gravekeeper: Everyone may be under him, but nobody is listening.

I thank him for the unity he maintained and the clarity of his leadership.

So after 18 years atop Senate Republican politics, he leaves an indelible mark. I believe that the senior Senator calls that the long game. And as we know, he is not leaving the Senate; he will just be leading in different ways. He will return to the Henry Clay desk, a fitting place for him to finish his life's work here in the Senate. There, he will be continuing to face our national challenges with the same steely, conservative resolve that we have so grown accustomed to.

Between the demanding roles of the Rules Committee and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I am confident he will stay busy, and he has assured us that he will continue to thoroughly disappoint his critics.

So thank you, Leader MCCONNELL, for your leadership and your service as the Nation's longest serving Senate party leader.

I thank the chairman of our committee, Chairman CARPER, for letting me give this tribute to our departing Republican leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

S. 4367

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, before we vote on WRDA this afternoon, I

want to express my strong support for this bill, S. 4367, which my friend and colleague SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO has graciously named in my honor.

You could have knocked me over with a feather when we came to the end of the markup a couple of months ago in our committee on this legislation, and I asked if any of our members had another amendment they wanted to offer. No one spoke up but you, and you said that you would like to offer an amendment to name this bill in my honor.

It is undeserved but very much appreciated as I prepare to weigh anchor, as we say in the Navy, and sail off into the sunrise with my wife Martha.

The Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024, also known as WRDA—Water Resources Development Act—is the product of not days, not weeks, but months of hard work and partnership with you, Senator CAPITO, and your staff gathered here today as well as our House colleagues Congressman SAM GRAVES and Congressman RICK LARSEN.

This year, I am pleased to say that our legislation includes far more—far more—than just the WRDA legislation itself. This package also reauthorizes the Economic Development Administration for the first time in—get this—20 years. It also reauthorizes our Federal regional Commissions and includes important transportation and Federal building provisions to increase transparency and to reduce Federal waste.

Before we vote today, I would like to take a minute or two to discuss some of the important things this legislation will accomplish, if enacted, for the American people.

First, this legislation continues the tradition of timely passage of the Water Resources Development Act. As Senator CAPITO knows, we try to do this legislation, pass this legislation, formulate this legislation, every 2 years. We were right on the money, too, in terms of meeting that schedule.

Some of our colleagues know I am a Navy guy, the last Vietnam veteran serving in the U.S. Senate. Having said that, I have a deep respect for the Army Corps of Engineers. I like to say: Navy and Army—different uniforms but the same team.

In my State and, frankly, I think in all 50 States, the Army Corps of Engineers does extraordinary work for the American people. For example, the Corps manages our Nation's ports, our waterways, and our coastal systems. The work of the Corps is essential for sustaining America's commerce, while protecting our environment and our communities. The Corps restores our ecosystems in critical areas such as the bayous in Louisiana and the Everglades in Florida, which are home to not only a number of endangered species but are indispensable parts of our agricultural supply chain as well. The Corps also advances flood and storm management solutions across our country to protect vulnerable communities

like the bay beaches of Delaware. As the largest manager of our Nation's water infrastructure, the Corps and the biennial WRDA bill play a critical role in job creation, job retention, and in growth as well.

Enactment of the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 is essential for enabling the Army Corps of Engineers to meet the needs of communities throughout America. WRDA 2024 strengthens the Corps' ability to address diverse water resource needs throughout America. In fact, it authorizes water infrastructure projects, studies, and programs that will impact all 50 States. Let me say again. It will impact not just our States, not just the States that are represented on Environment and Public Works—all 50 States.

Every Senator in this body had the opportunity to participate with us on the committee to help make sure the views and needs of their States are reflected in this bill.

There are I think something like 200 feasibility studies and some 22 new or modified construction projects that are covered in this legislation.

Additionally, WRDA 2024 directs the Corps to expedite implementation of authorities provided by Congress in prior WRDAs. Increasingly powerful hurricanes, rising sea levels, and record temperatures underscore the need for the Corps to develop and execute a plan to fully implement past reauthorizations as soon as possible in order to better protect our communities. The water resource challenges facing our communities are already growing in number, and this bill will help us address it.

Additionally, WRDA 2024 also contains a full reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration for the first time in 20 years. Let me say that again—for the first time in 20 years.

Some will recall that the Economic Development Administration, or EDA, is a Federal Agency that invests in the development of distressed communities across America. Through its grant programs, the Economic Development Administration helps local communities plan for economic development activities, construct "last-mile" infrastructure, and mitigate the effects of short- and long-term economic challenges and disasters.

By reauthorizing this Agency, EDA, we have the opportunity to modernize this legislation, WRDA. We also have the opportunity to modernize the Economic Development Administration for today's challenges, while improving its ability to foster economic growth and build resilient supply chains.

WRDA 2024 also authorizes and updates the laws pertaining to certain Federal and regional Commissions and will establish two new regional Commissions—the mid-Atlantic regional Commission and the Southern New England regional Commission. The mid-Atlantic regional Commission includes Delaware under its purview.

Finally, WRDA 2024 includes important provisions to increase transparency and accountability, while also reducing Federal waste at the Department of Transportation and General Services Administration.

As we move today to consider the Water Resources Development Act of 2024, I am reminded of an old proverb that goes something like this: If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to travel far, go together.

That is what we have done. We have gone together. With this bill, I am proud to say we have chosen consciously that approach.

That is how we should approach much of our work in Congress—by reaching across the aisle to work together and find lasting solutions where possible to the problems we face as a nation. After all, bipartisan solutions are lasting solutions.

The bill before us today is a result of that partnership—not only between Members but also between our staffs.

Before I conclude today, I want to say thank you to Senator CAPITO's staff. She was nice enough to mention the names of some of the members of our staff on the majority side. I also want to mention the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers congressional affairs staff and the staff of the Senate legislative counsel. That includes Adam Tomlinson, Murphie Barrett, Libby Callaway, Dan Linkowski, Dom Rupp, Katherine Scarlett, Brett Jortland, Jack Cline, Dave Wethington, Amy Klein, Deanna Edwards, and Mark Mazzone.

I also want to take a moment and acknowledge the members of my own staff on the majority side and to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all their work, including late nights and long hours. Among them are Linnea Saby, Ryan Smith, Claire Shanklin, Jordan Baugh, Nicole Comisky, Jordan Smallwood, Tara Kroft, Courtney Taylor, and their leader John Kane.

In closing, let me urge all of our colleagues to join Senator CAPITO and me in supporting what we believe is an excellent bill—certainly not because my name is associated with it but because every State stands to benefit from the provisions it contains.

I close and add one last quick note. Almost every day, I travel back and forth on the train from Delaware to Washington. I talk to people coming and going. One of the things I hear the most is: Why can't you guys work together and get stuff done in Washington, the House and the Senate?

This legislation is living proof that we can do that and we can do it well. We have been doing it with this legislation for years and with a lot of other legislation that has emanated and come out of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

I want to commend Senator CAPITO for working with me and our Democratic and Republican colleagues to help make that happen, again, for the last 2 years.

In closing, let me urge all our colleagues to join Senator CAPITO and me in supporting what we believe is an excellent bill—certainly not because, again, of my name but because every State—every single State—stands to benefit from the provisions this legislation contains.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

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

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 327 Leg.]

YEAS—97

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Barrasso	Hagerty	Ricketts
Bennet	Hassan	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Romney
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Boozman	Hirono	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sanders
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Brown	Johnson	Schiff
Budd	Kaine	Schmitt
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kim	Scott (SC)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Lujan	Sullivan
Coons	Lummis	Tester
Cornyn	Manchin	Thune
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tillis
Cotton	Marshall	Tuberville
Cramer	McConnell	Van Hollen
Crapo	Merkley	Warner
Cruz	Moran	Warnock
Daines	Mullin	Warren
Duckworth	Murkowski	Welch
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murray	Wicker
Fetterman	Ossoff	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Paul	
Graham	Peters	

NAYS—1

Lee
NOT VOTING—2
Vance

Stabenow

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HANSEN). On this vote, the yeas are 97, the nays are 1.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the motion to concur is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

THE CALENDAR

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills, en bloc: Calendar No. 617, H.R. 6062, and Calendar No. 393, S. 2615.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be considered read a third time and passed and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

RESTORING THE ABILITY OF THE PEOPLE OF AMERICAN SAMOA TO APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO THE TERRITORIAL CONSTITUTION BASED ON MAJORITY RULE IN A DEMOCRATIC ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AS AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO AN ACT OF CONGRESS DELEGATING ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL TERRITORIAL LAW IN THE TERRITORY TO THE PRESIDENT, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER 10264, DATED JUNE 29, 1951, UNDER WHICH THE CONSTITUTION OF AMERICAN SAMOA WAS APPROVED AND MAY BE AMENDED WITHOUT REQUIREMENT FOR FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, SUBJECT TO THE AUTHORITY OF CONGRESS UNDER THE TERRITORIAL CLAUSE IN ARTICLE IV, SECTION 3, CLAUSE 2 OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

A bill (H.R. 6062) to restore the ability of the people of American Samoa to approve amendments to the territorial constitution based on majority rule in a democratic act of self-determination, as authorized pursuant to an Act of Congress delegating administration of Federal territorial law in the territory to the President, and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951, under which the Constitution of American Samoa was approved and may be amended without requirement for further congressional action, subject to the authority of Congress under the Territorial Clause in article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE MUNICIPAL LANDS RESTORATION ACT OF 2023

A bill (S. 2615) to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2615

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 “Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REVERSION OF CERTAIN LAND CONVEYED IN TRUST TO THE STATE OF ALASKA.

Section 14(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(c)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5) as subparagraphs (A) through (E), respectively, and indenting appropriately;

(2) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) (as so redesignated), by striking “(c) Each patent” and inserting the following:

“(c) CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN LAND BY VILLAGE CORPORATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each patent”;

(3) in paragraph (1) (as so designated), in the undesignated matter following subparagraph (E) (as so redesignated), in the first sentence—

(A) by striking “section 14(c) of this Act” and inserting “this subsection”; and

(B) by striking “There is authorized” and inserting the following:

“(2) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized”;

(4) in paragraph (2)(A) (as so redesignated), in the second sentence, by striking “The Secretary” and inserting the following:

“(B) FORM OF FUNDING.—The Secretary”;

and

(5) in paragraph (1) (as so designated)—

(A) in each of subparagraphs (A) and (B) (as so redesignated)—

(i) by striking “the” the first place it appears and inserting “The”; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(B) in subparagraph (D) (as so redesignated), by striking “the” the first place it appears and inserting “The”;

(C) by striking “existed as of” in subparagraph (D) (as so redesignated) and all that follows through “for” in subparagraph (E) (as so redesignated) and inserting the following: “existed as of December 18, 1971.

“(E) For”; and

(D) in subparagraph (C) (as so redesignated)—

(i) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(ii) by striking “in trust: *Provided, however, That the word*” and all that follows through “sentence,” and inserting the following: “in trust.

“(II) DEFINITION OF SALE.—For purposes of subclause (I), the term ‘sale’”;

(iii) by striking “one thousand two hundred and eighty acres: *Provided further, That any net*” and inserting the following: “1,280 acres.

“(iii) NET REVENUES.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Any net”;

(iv) by striking “community needs: *Provided, That the*” and inserting the following: “community needs.

“(ii) MINIMUM ACREAGE.—The”;

(v) by striking “(C) the Village Corporation” and inserting the following:

“(C) CONVEYANCE TO MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OR THE STATE IN TRUST.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Village Corporation”;

and

(vi) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) CASES IN WHICH CONVEYANCE SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subparagraph, if a Village Corporation, prior to the date of enactment of the Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2023, conveyed to the State in trust all or a portion of the acreage of land required to be conveyed under this subparagraph for the establishment of a Municipal Corporation in the future, and a Municipal Corporation has not been established as of that date of enactment, on formal resolution by the Village Corporation and the residents of the Native village requesting dissolution of the trust, the trust shall be dissolved and title to the land shall revert to the Village Corporation, subject to subclause (III).

“(II) ADDITIONAL LAND.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subparagraph, as of the date of enactment of the Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2023, a Village Corporation shall not be required to convey any additional land in trust under this subparagraph for the establishment of a Municipal Corporation in the future.

“(III) REQUIREMENTS.—In accordance with subsection (g)—

“(aa) the reversion of land to a Village Corporation pursuant to subclause (I) shall be subject to—

“(AA) valid existing rights created by the applicable trust; and

“(BB) any existing easements, rights-of-way necessary for public roadway access, or rights-of-way for access of holders of valid existing rights; and

“(bb) the Village Corporation shall assume the obligations of the applicable trust with respect to any lease or other use agreement applicable to the land on reversion of the land to the Village Corporation pursuant to subclause (I).”.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, this package contains two bills with broad, bipartisan support. One of those bills, H.R. 6062, is sponsored by Delegate AMATA RADEWAGEN of American Samoa. This bill will repeal a requirement that the Constitution of American Samoa can only be amended by an Act of Congress.

Repealing this provision will allow the people of American Samoa to amend their Territorial constitution without further congressional action, a right that they had before 1983.

In 2022, American Samoa held a constitutional convention and approved 5 of 11 proposed constitutional amendments. This marked the first time voters had approved amendments since the 1983 change requiring congressional approval. These amendments have been pending congressional action since December 2022. There is no need for further delay. We restore American Samoa’s self-determination in their constitutional matters by passing H.R. 6062.

In addition to this important bill affecting American Samoa, this package includes a bill, S. 2615, sponsored by Representative MARY PELTOLA and

Senator MURKOWSKI, to sunset an outdated requirement in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for village corporations to reconvey lands for municipal uses. This will free up lands for needs such as housing and help Alaska Natives realize the full intended benefit of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

On behalf of DELEGATE RADEWAGEN, Representative PELTOLA, and Senator MURKOWSKI, I thank my colleagues for joining me in passing these bills en bloc.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

THE CALENDAR

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 299, S. 2042; Calendar No. 280, S. 1760; Calendar No. 584, S. 2151; and Calendar No. 639, S. 5000.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendments, where applicable, be agreed to; that the bills, as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time and passed; that the committee-reported title amendment to S. 5000 be considered and agreed to; that the title of S. 5000, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills passed en bloc, as follows:

SLOAN CANYON CONSERVATION AND LATERAL PIPELINE ACT

A bill (S. 2042) to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CONSERVATION AREA.—The term "Conservation Area" means the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior (acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management).

SEC. 3. SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

(a) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—

(1) MAP.—Section 603(4) of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-1(4)) is amended by striking "map entitled 'Southern Nevada Public Land Manage-

ment Act' and dated October 1, 2002" and inserting "map entitled 'Proposed Sloan Canyon Expansion' and dated June 7, 2023".

(2) ACREAGE.—Section 604(b) of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-2(b)) is amended by striking "48,438" and inserting "57,728".

(b) RIGHT-OF-WAY.—Section 605 of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-3) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(h) HORIZON LATERAL PIPELINE RIGHT-OF-WAY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 202 and 503 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712, 1763) and subject to valid existing rights and paragraph (3), the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (referred to in this subsection as the 'Secretary'), shall, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this subsection, grant to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (referred to in this subsection as the 'Authority'), not subject to the payment of rents or other charges, the temporary and permanent water pipeline infrastructure, and outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area, powerline, facility, and access road rights-of-way depicted on the map for the purposes of—

"(A) performing geotechnical investigations within the rights-of-way; and

"(B) constructing and operating water transmission and related facilities.

"(2) EXCAVATION AND DISPOSAL.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Authority may, without consideration, excavate and use or dispose of sand, gravel, minerals, or other materials from the tunneling of the water pipeline necessary to fulfill the purpose of the rights-of-way granted under paragraph (1).

"(B) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the rights-of-way are granted under paragraph (1), the Secretary and the Authority shall enter into a memorandum of understanding identifying Federal land on which the Authority may dispose of materials under subparagraph (A) to further the interests of the Bureau of Land Management.

"(3) REQUIREMENTS.—A right-of-way issued under this subsection shall be subject to the following requirements:

"(A) The Secretary may include reasonable terms and conditions, consistent with section 505 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1765), as are necessary to protect Conservation Area resources.

"(B) Construction of the water pipeline shall not permanently adversely affect conservation area surface resources.

"(C) The right-of-way shall not be located through or under any area designated as wilderness."

(c) PRESERVATION OF TRANSMISSION AND UTILITY CORRIDORS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY.—The expansion of the Conservation Area boundary under the amendment made by subsection (a)—

(1) shall be subject to valid existing rights, including land within a designated utility transmission corridor or a transmission line right-of-way grant approved by the Secretary in a record of decision issued before the date of enactment of this Act;

(2) shall not preclude—

(A) any activity authorized in accordance with a designated corridor or right-of-way referred to in paragraph (1), including the operation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of any authorized utility facility within the corridor or right-of-way; or

(B) the Secretary from authorizing the establishment of a new utility facility right-of-way within an existing designated transportation and utility corridor referred to in paragraph (1) in accordance with—

(i) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and other applicable laws; and

(ii) subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be appropriate; and

(3) except as provided in the amendment made by subsection (b), modifies the management of the Conservation Area pursuant to section 605 of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act (16 U.S.C. 460qqq-3).

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

The bill (S. 2042), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

APEX PROJECT, NEVADA LAND TRANSFER AND AUTHORIZATION ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

A bill (S. 1760) to amend the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 to include the city of North Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act Amendments Act".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO THE APEX PROJECT, NEVADA LAND TRANSFER AND AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1989.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 2(b) of the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-67; 103 Stat. 169) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "As used in this Act, the following terms shall have the following meanings—" and inserting "In this Act:";

(2) in each of paragraphs (1), (2), (4), and (5), by inserting a paragraph heading, the text of which comprises the term defined in that paragraph;

(3) in paragraph (3), by inserting "COUNTY; CLARK COUNTY.—" before "The term";

(4) in paragraph (6)—

(A) by inserting "FLPMA TERMS.—" before "All"; and

(B) by inserting "(43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)" before the period at the end;

(5) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (7), (6), (4), (5), (2), and (8), respectively;

(6) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

"(1) APEX INDUSTRIAL PARK OWNERS ASSOCIATION.—The term 'Apex Industrial Park Owners Association' means the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association formed on April 9, 2001, and chartered in the State of Nevada (including any successor in interest)."; and

(7) by inserting after paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

"(3) CITY.—The term 'City' means the city of North Las Vegas, Nevada."

(b) KERR-MCGEE SITE TRANSFER.—Section 3(b) of the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-67; 103 Stat. 170) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence—

(A) by striking "Clark County" and inserting "Clark County, the City, or the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, individually or jointly, as appropriate,"; and

(B) by striking "Site" and inserting "Site and other land conveyed in accordance with this Act"; and

(2) in the third sentence, by striking "Clark County" and inserting "Clark County, the City,

or the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, individually or jointly, as appropriate.”

(c) **AUTHORIZATION FOR ADDITIONAL TRANSFERS.**—Section 4 of the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-67; 103 Stat. 171) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking “Clark County” and inserting “Clark County, the City, or the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, individually or jointly, as appropriate,”; and

(2) in subsection (e), by adding at the end the following:

“(3) **MINERAL MATERIALS SALE.**—Notwithstanding the requirements of part 3600 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act Amendments Act), the Secretary may sell, at not less than fair market value, without advertising or calling for bids and without regard to volume or time limitations, mineral materials resulting from grading, land balancing, or other activities on the surface of a parcel of land within the Apex Site for which the United States retains an interest in the minerals.”

(d) **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS.**—Section 6 of the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 (Public Law 101-67; 103 Stat. 173) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) **COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS.**—Each transfer by the United States of land or interest in lands within the Apex Site or rights-of-way issued pursuant to this Act shall be conditioned on the compliance with applicable Federal land laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.).”

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

The bill (S. 1760), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

UTAH WILDFIRE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT OF 2023

A bill (S. 2151) to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The bill (S. 2151) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2151

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 “Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL INSTITUTE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 5(b)(2) of the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6704(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) the State of Utah.”

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Section 5(e)(1) of the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6704(e)(1)) is amended by striking “and Colorado” and inserting “Colorado, and Utah”.

PROHIBITING THE USE OF AMOUNTS FROM THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN FUND TO IMPLEMENT A CERTAIN RECORD OF DECISION

A bill (S. 5000) to prohibit the use of amounts from the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund to implement a certain record of decision, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO ADDRESS POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF A CERTAIN RECORD OF DECISION ON THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN FUND.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation, and the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration, in consultation with the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Working Group, shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to explore and address the potential impact that the record of decision entitled the “Supplement to the 2016 Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan Record of Decision” and dated July 2024 (referred to in this section as the “record of decision”) may have on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund (referred to in this section as the “Fund”).

(b) **REQUIRED PLAN.**—The memorandum of understanding entered into under subsection (a) shall, using information derived from existing contracts, include the establishment of a plan—

(1) to explore and address the effects that the record of decision may have on the contents of the Fund;

(2) to analyze and address the longer-term impact that the record of decision may have on hydropower production at Glen Canyon Dam; and

(3) to protect the Colorado River Basin and any species listed as a threatened species or an endangered species under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533) in the Colorado River Basin from the effects of invasive species and sustained drought.

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

The bill (S. 5000), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

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

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund.”

The title of the bill (S. 5000), as amended, was agreed to.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I want to talk about two of the bills that we just passed unanimously today, and I want to thank my colleagues for passing them through UC. They are important pieces of legislation to Nevada. They are S. 1760, the Apex Area Technical Corrections Act, and S. 2042, the Sloan Canyon Conservation and Horizon Lateral Water Pipeline Act.

The first one, the Apex Area Technical Corrections Act, will streamline

the permitting process for new and existing businesses in the Apex Industrial Park in southern Nevada, creating new, good-paying jobs and supporting business growth in North Las Vegas.

I have been to the Apex Industrial Park, and I have seen firsthand the incredible opportunities there. We need to cut redtape and make it easier for new businesses to open their doors and hire hard-working Nevadans. The passage of this legislation today in the Senate will help get us on that path.

The second piece of legislation, which is the Sloan Canyon Conservation and Horizon Lateral Water Pipeline Act, will upgrade the outdated water infrastructure, protecting the water supply for more than 1 million people in southern Nevada.

Right now, almost 40 percent of Las Vegas is served with one water pipeline. A new, updated pipeline will improve the reliability capacity of the existing water system without pulling any more water from Lake Mead. This bill also expands the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area by more than 9,000 acres, growing this increasingly popular recreation site by almost 20 percent of its existing size.

These necessary improvements will make Nevada’s water infrastructure more sustainable and will protect the water supply for generations to come in southern Nevada.

Again, I thank my colleagues for joining me in passing these two pieces of legislation by unanimous consent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF ADEEL A. MANGI

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I rise today to give a speech that I have never given before. It is really important that I do it on the Senate floor, but it is like I have never done it before because I am actually giving a speech to two young children who may not watch this for years, but I want them to hear it from me. These are two young boys—Azmir and Zaaran—and I write them. I give a sort of open speech to them tonight, really out of joy and faith that is untroubled by my hurt and my sadness.

You see, I think something about this country that so many people have come to know who have seen the worst of America but still love America. They know how these emotions sit side by side—that you could hold sadness and joy next to faith in this Nation, even though there is disappointment. And what I rise to talk to these two young boys about is their dad.

Their dad is a man named Adeel Mangi. He is an extraordinary man. I have met many people from New Jersey, but this man was so extraordinary that the President of the United States of America chose him, because of his qualifications, to be a justice on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. That was why he was chosen. But he also happened to be a glass ceiling breaker; he also happened to be somebody who

was going to make American history as the first ever Muslim judge—a man of Muslim faith—to be on the circuit court.

Now, this is extraordinary that it is 2024 and we have never had someone of the Muslim faith, especially because we are a nation that says there are no religious tests; that we are found on this ideal of religious freedom—but somehow, with the millions of American Muslims and with Muslims being here at our founding and all through American history and with Muslims fighting in every war in American history, we have never had a Muslim ascend to the circuit courts.

I would like to read from a letter that your father wrote. It is really powerful. I wish I could read the whole thing.

I ask unanimous consent that the whole letter by Adeel A. Mangi be printed in the official RECORD of the U.S. Senate.

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

DECEMBER 16, 2024.

President JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BIDEN: I write to thank you for nominating me to the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. There is now no pathway to confirmation for any appellate nominees given the deal struck in the Senate “to save coveted appellate [seats]” for the next administration. But before I go, I have a few things to say. What I set forth here are my individual opinions.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Republican, spoke at the inauguration of a mosque in Washington, D.C. He said: “And I should like to assure you, my Islamic friends, that under the American Constitution, under American tradition, and in American hearts, this Center, this place of worship, is just as welcome as could be a similar edifice of any other religion. Indeed, America would fight with her whole strength for your right to have here your own church and worship according to your own conscience. This concept is indeed a part of America, and without that concept we would be something else than what we are.”

It was that vision of America that led me, 25 years ago, to make it my home. I saw in America a country where I could succeed based on my professional skill, hard work, and character—regardless of my faith or background. For years, in my work defending the civil rights of the LGBTQ+ community, or working with massive inter-faith coalitions on amicus briefs, I celebrated an America where we stand up for each other. And while I was successful in private practice as a commercial trial lawyer, I had no second thoughts when offered an opportunity to serve my adopted country. Nothing could be a greater privilege.

When my nomination then came before the Senate Judiciary Committee, I was prepared to answer any questions about my qualifications, philosophy, or legal issues. I received none. Instead, I was asked questions about Israel, whether I supported Hamas, and whether I celebrated the anniversary of 9-11. Even more revealing, however, was the tone. The underlying premise appeared to be that because I am Muslim, surely I support terrorism and celebrate 9-11. When I made clear that all these claims are false—that I condemn the Hamas attacks and all forms of terrorism, and indeed that it was my city

that was attacked on 9-11—the next Republican Senators up just repeated their performative outrage. There were children in the audience.

The pretext for these questions was that I had agreed to serve on an outside advisory panel for an academic center that was being established at a preeminent New Jersey Law School to combat bigotry and discrimination, including Islamophobia. I attended four meetings over four years where I focused on areas of academic research that could support civil rights litigation. Yet Senators sought to attribute to me the views of individuals that I do not know at university speaker events that I never even heard of. Muslims in America recognize well these sort of guilt-by-association attacks. Thereafter, advertisements were run deeming me an antisemite, a radical, and a terrorist sympathizer. Horrifying images were published with the Hamas flag substituted for my eyes or interspersing my face with footage of the twin towers on fire. And all of this, even while major Jewish organizations across the country condemned these attacks, ranging from the National Council of Jewish Women to the Anti-Defamation League, and over a dozen more. One of the largest Jewish groups put it this way: “Adeel Mangi, was questioned aggressively on thin pretext about his views on Israel, terrorism, and antisemitism, turning these serious issues into a tool of partisan attack. . . . American Jewish Committee (AJC) has joined several U.S. Supreme Court briefs led by Mangi and find him to be an able jurist, a person of integrity, champion of pluralism, and adversary of discrimination against any group.”

These attacks nonetheless continued endlessly for a simple reason. As Senator Whitehouse revealed on the Senate floor, this was an organized smear campaign fueled by dark money. But it did not end there. After Jewish groups came to my defense, these same attackers pivoted focus to a new absurdity, claiming that I supported the killing of police officers—silently underpinned, in my view, by the notion that as a Muslim I surely support violence, including against law enforcement. What was the ostensible basis for this ludicrous claim? I successfully litigated a landmark pro bono lawsuit—the Karl Taylor case—on behalf of the family of a mentally-ill incarcerated Black man who we alleged was choked to death by corrections officers after having been handcuffed. We secured a precedent-setting resolution that compensated the family and ensured cameras and microphones would be installed to make incarcerated persons and officers safer. My colleagues and I then agreed to serve on an advisory panel, which never met or had any responsibilities, for the not-for-profit organization that referred that case to my law firm, to provide legal advice on future similar pro bono cases that might arise involving suspicious deaths in prisons. In the event, we brought no other cases. This pro bono legal service aimed at enforcing the law apparently was enough for attackers to deem me an opponent of law enforcement.

As I detailed in a letter, this twisted attack—again based on outright lies, the actions of a person I never even met, or speaker events that I never heard of—is shocking and false. I am proud to have the support of a dozen police organizations, a group of Attorneys General from around the country, and a bipartisan group of current and former New Jersey Attorneys-General and U.S. Attorneys. Law enforcement groups that spoke to me before taking a position supported me. But others repeated slander without speaking to me. Some of those opposing police groups later did speak to me and then openly recognized that the attacks against me were wrong—and yet were instructed by their

leadership not to get involved. Meanwhile, history has recorded who raised a fist of solidarity to the protestors that later attacked law enforcement officers in our nation’s capital on January 6, 2021. And which lawmakers support them still.

Amidst all of this, countless additional and spurious online assaults were launched on a regular basis from within the extremist ecosystem; the staff of the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee took the extraordinary step of demanding information from my partners and my law firm; volleys were launched against even my private sector clients; and Senators, led by the Minority Leader himself, launched regular attacks on me online and on the Senate floor as an antisemite radical. I was even attacked for board service with the New York Legal Aid Society.

What can explain all of this? One commentator recounted my professional accomplishments and then observed: “But he also successfully fought efforts by two New Jersey communities to prevent the construction of mosques. He has served on the board of directors of the Muslim Bar Association and Muslims for Progressive Values. Clearly, he’s both an accomplished attorney and a proud representative of his religion. That’s what his Republican critics can’t tolerate. They will never accept someone who is so prominently associated with Islam.” Meanwhile, here is what it was not about: throughout this entire process, I was never criticized by anyone for a single statement that I ever uttered or a single word that I ever wrote.

I accepted these farcical attacks with the silence demanded of judicial nominees in service of my country. Others were not silent. Senator Booker eviscerated these attacks in an extraordinary and passionate address. They were condemned by almost 50 pro bono partners and chairs at leading law firms and legal organizations, over 125 civil rights groups, and dozens of bar associations. They were meticulously exposed in many newspapers, including two op-eds in the New York Times (first and second) and in the New Yorker. A historical parallel was drawn in The Atlantic to the attacks on Thurgood Marshall, and the attack campaign was decried in columns by prominent Muslim Americans, e.g., on CNN and MSNBC, and by Jewish Americans. My home-state newspaper of record in New Jersey, The Star Ledger, wrote five editorials: “GOP to NJ judge pick: Muslims need not apply”; “Ugly lies about antisemitism and terrorism: GOP smears NJ judge pick”; “Cowering in the face of anti-Muslim bigotry: Shame on Democrats.”; “First bigotry, now lies: This judge pick deserves better”; and “A MAGA judge for N.J.? You can thank Democrats.” A highly-respected Republican-appointed former judge of the Third Circuit wrote and spoke out in my support. And these attacks were demolished by John Oliver who concluded: “As with the Islamophobic attacks on Mangi, the evidence that he is somehow antipolice are laughably thin. It’s yet more six degree of separation nonsense.” Yet it was three Democratic Senators who surrendered to this campaign.

Two allied Senators from a state far from the Third Circuit announced their opposition ostensibly based on the attacks claiming I am against law enforcement. I will not assume the worst possible motivation for their embrace of this attack. But to me that leaves two possibilities: that these Senators lack the wisdom to discern the truth, which exposes a catastrophic lack of judgment; or they used my nomination to court conservative voters in an election year, which exposes a catastrophic lack of principle. One reportedly made the decision based on fear of an attack ad—and apparently not for the

first time. Meanwhile, a third Senator literally handed control of his vote to Republicans. To fetishize bipartisanship amidst an outrageous attack campaign is not a virtue—it is a preening abandonment of morality. But ultimately, none of these Senators had to reach a final decision and vote. Resurgent efforts after the election towards confirmation were derailed by the deal in the Senate that denied all circuit nominees a vote. My family and I were put through this astonishing prolonged process and yet in the end denied even a vote requiring Senators to show who they are. The strength of the Senate's collective commitment to principle stands revealed.

Our country faces an incoming tsunami of bigotry, hatred, and discrimination. It targets Muslims, Arabs, Jews, Black people, the LGBTQ+ community, and many others. And it always pretends to be something other than what it is. These forces are fueled not only by their proponents, but equally by the collaboration and silence of the spineless. They can be defeated only by those who lead voters with courage, not those who sacrifice principles for votes. But courage can be found outside of politics. American Muslims are part of this nation's fabric and will not cower. This campaign was intended to make it intolerable for Muslims proud of their identity to serve this nation. It will fail. Our Constitution forbids religious tests for any Office of the United States and American Muslims will cherish that fundamental American value, even if others apply it only selectively. And let me be clear: I will always be immensely proud of my faith as well as my pro bono legal work to challenge both denials of freedom of worship and the alleged killing of an incarcerated Black man. I have battled for justice, even if it meant there would be none for me.

This unfortunate fact remains: we have a fundamentally broken process for choosing federal judges. This is no longer a system for evaluating fitness for judicial office. It is now a channel for the raising of money based on performative McCarthyism before video cameras, and for the dissemination of dark-money-funded attacks that especially target minorities. Nominees pay the price—and so too does our nation. Who will give up the rewards of private sector success for public service, if the added price is character assassination and wading through a Senatorial swamp like this one? This process must be reinvented to protect nominees from threats both reputational and physical in an era of Congressional dishonor where disinformation reigns and all decency has been abandoned. I set forth this record of my experience and my opinions so that this playbook will be recognized the next time a Muslim is nominated to a prominent position of service.

Thank you for the principled and steadfast support that the White House nominations team provided to me throughout this process. That team is the embodiment of true and honorable public service. Thank you also for your historic support of exceptional judicial candidates who happen to be from minority communities. I am grateful for the unprecedented coalition of bar associations, lawyers, Attorneys General, unions, mayors, religious groups, civil rights organizations, the City Council of Jersey City, and countless individual citizens, who demanded my confirmation. And I am deeply appreciative of the support I received from minority law enforcement groups around the country, including those in New York and New Jersey, who acted with courage based on facts.

To return to President Eisenhower's words, Americans must now look at the story of this nomination, and ask themselves: is this who we are now? For my children, I hope America one day lives up to President Eisen-

hower's promise, even if not today. For my part, I entered this nomination process as a proud American and a proud Muslim. I exit it the same way, unbowed.

Respectfully Yours,

ADEEL A. MANGI.

Mr. BOOKER. So, here, he writes about his nomination:

When my nomination . . . came before the Senate Judiciary Committee, I was prepared to answer any questions about my qualifications, philosophy, or legal issues, [but] I received none. Instead, I was asked questions about Israel, whether I supported Hamas, and whether I celebrated the anniversary of 9/11. Even more revealing, however, was the tone. The underlying premise appeared to be that because I am Muslim, surely I support terrorism and celebrate 9/11. When I made clear that all these claims are false—that I condemn the Hamas attacks and all forms of terrorism, and indeed that it was my city—[my city]—that was attacked on 9/11—the next Republican Senators up just repeated their performative outrage. There were children in the audience.

These attacks, nonetheless, continued endlessly for a simple reason. As Senator WHITEHOUSE revealed on the Senate floor, this was an organized smear campaign fueled by dark money. But it did not end there. After Jewish groups came to my defense, these same attackers pivoted [their] focus to a new absurdity, claiming that I supported the killing of police officers—silently underpinned, in my view, by the notion that as a Muslim I surely support violence, including against law enforcement.

Now, your father goes on to detail not only how these incredible, outrageous smear attacks were false and that there was no basis for them but how he has actually been someone who has stood up in his legal career in pursuit of justice and has the support of dozens of police organizations, attorneys general from around the country, bipartisan groups of current and former attorneys general, law enforcement groups, and more.

He ends his letter with the conclusion that these tactics succeeded in stopping him from even getting a vote on the Senate floor, from ascending to the Third Circuit, and making history.

Your father—your father—concluded his letter by saying a truth: Our country faces an incoming tsunami of bigotry and hatred and discrimination. It targets Muslims, Arabs, Jews, Black people, the LGBTQ community, and many others.

And this is not in the letter, but I remind people that hate crimes are on the rise across our country.

Azmir and Zaaran, back to your father's letter:

And it always pretends to be something other than what it is. These forces are fueled not only by their proponents, but equally by the collaboration and silence of the spineless. They can be defeated only by those who lead voters with courage, not those who sacrifice principles for votes. But courage can be found outside of politics. American Muslims are part of this nation's fabric and will not cower. This campaign was intended to make it intolerable for Muslims proud of their identity to serve this nation. It will fail. Our Constitution forbids religious tests for any Office of the United States and American Muslims will cherish that fundamental American value, even if others apply it only selectively.

Your father continues:

I have battled for justice, even if it meant there would be none for me.

I read that line, Azmir and Zaaran, and it gave me chills because it reminded me of my own family and stories of people who fought for justice that they would never enjoy. It reminded me of the history in this country when suffrage leaders fought for the vote for Black men, the vote for suffrage for Blacks, and they would not enjoy it as women. It reminds me of so many Americans who still stood up for principles and ideals that our country proclaims, even when they would not enjoy them.

Azmir and Zaaran, your father continues:

This unfortunate fact remains: We have a fundamentally broken process for choosing federal judges. This is no longer a system for evaluating fitness for judicial office. It is now a channel for the raising of money based on performative McCarthyism before video cameras, and for the dissemination of dark-money-funded attacks that especially target minorities. Nominees pay the price—and so . . . does our nation. Who will give up the rewards of private sector success for public service, if the added price is character assassination and wading through a Senatorial swamp like this one? This process must be reinvented to protect nominees from threats both reputational and physical in an era of Congressional dishonor where disinformation reigns and all decency has been abandoned. I set forth this record of my experience and my opinions so that this playbook will be recognized the next time—

And there will be a next time—

a Muslim is nominated to a prominent position of service.

He ends with this:

To return to President Eisenhower's words, Americans must now look at the story of this nomination, and ask themselves: Is this who we are now?

To these two young boys he ends:

For my children, I hope America one day lives up to President Eisenhower's promise, even if not today. For my part, I entered this nomination process as a proud American and a proud Muslim. I exit it the same way, unbowed.

Azmir and Zaaran, I remember this day and the excitement I felt when I walked into that hearing room, this wood-paneled historic chamber. I remember how it signaled to visitors the gravity of the business that was about to be conducted within the walls. And you two were seated in the front row, just behind your dad. I remember the joy that I felt when I saw the two of you, that you were going to witness the ascendancy of your father to the highest court in the land, and you two were going to witness the smashing of a barrier and seeing your father—a proud American, who happens to be a Muslim—become the first.

I remember your smiles. I remember how they made my whole being smile. Your mother sat behind you beaming with pride. I sat on the dais so full of joy. And the hearing began.

I told your dad I didn't know why he asked you to leave the room. I wanted you to stay for the whole hearing. But

your mom and dad, wise beyond me, had you leave. At your young age then, I am glad you did not witness what then transpired. It was shameful. Not for your family, it was shameful for us as Senators. It was shameful for America.

You heard your father detail the remarks and the questions that were so degrading and demeaning. They weren't successful. They couldn't degrade or demean the character of your father, but they were degrading and demeaning—questions that have never been asked in all of American history to a nominee: "Did you support 9/11, the terrorist attacks," that he witnessed. How insulting was that? And they were repeated over and over, demeaning and degrading—attempting to, but your father's character can never be demeaned, can never be degraded because he stood tall on that day.

In the history of this country of so many women and Black men and immigrants and Irish and Italian and Catholics and Asian Americans, Japanese and Chinese who have been insulted and looked down upon and faced bigotry, your father, like generations of other Americans who were told they weren't good enough because they were different, your father stood in the saddle and took the assaults, and he never ever, ever backed down.

Calmly and repeatedly, he answered the inane questions, the darkness directed toward him, and he showed his light.

I would be remiss if I didn't tell you over and over again how brilliant your father is, how he got to that seat. Amidst thousands of talented lawyers across the country, your father stood out to the President of the United States as one of the best. He is a top litigator. He is cherished by his colleagues.

His legal acumen and intellect were part of the reasons I recommended him because all throughout my State, on both sides of the aisle, people told me how amazing your father was, how talented your father was, how this was a layup for the court, how he would elevate the judiciary.

And what people said about him wasn't just his legal acumen; they also talked about your dad's character—a man who lives by his principles, how he even stood up to the government when it was discriminating against others because they were different, how he represented people who had no one to stand up for their values.

He stood up for a man named Karl Taylor, who was held in prison and beaten to death by correctional officers. Not only did your dad win that lawsuit for Mr. Taylor's family, but he helped protect other incarcerated people in New York by having all the prisons agree to install video cameras to stop attacks like that one from ever happening again to protect other lives.

Your father has this unrelenting commitment to the ideal of fairness

and justice. He has modeled his life after that. He doesn't just believe these things, he acts in accordance with them.

New Jersey is lucky to have him on our State bar, and we would have been lucky to have him on the Third Circuit.

My mom said something about me that I think is funny. My mom says:

Behind every successful child is an astonished parent.

But I will never be surprised by the two of you. I think you two, knowing your parents, are going to grow up to be extraordinary lightworkers in this Nation.

James Baldwin said:

Children are never good at listening to their elders, but they never fail to imitate them.

I have this faith in the two of you. And the reason why I am doing this, standing on the Senate floor talking to two New Jersey children, teenage boys, 14 and 13, the reason why I am talking to you is because I know who you are, with only meeting you on that day, because you were raised by these modeled citizens, by these great Americans whose character shines amidst the darkness of the storm that your family just went through.

Your father was professionally attacked. For months and months and months, he was trolled on the internet. He faced streams of hate as people built entire million-dollar campaigns to try to discredit him. Yet your dad and your mom never faltered and never flinched, told the President of the United States that they would continue in the process if the President believed that it was still possible for him to serve his Nation.

It is these attributes of your parents that I know live in you. I guess I want you all never to stop believing like your parents do and not just the attributes that mark your family and distinguish it but in those attributes of our Nation that we can never stop believing in.

This great body failed your father. It failed the American people. It is one of the most painful chapters I have had in public life.

The American people deserve a government that just doesn't function in accordance with fairness but upholds the ideals that are so core to this country; that everyone is created equal, that there should be liberty and justice for all.

That is not what happened in this episode. It is not what happened to your dad. He was treated differently because of his faith. Bigotry was used to attempt to demean him. Lies were used to discredit him. The broken political system was used to dissuade and intimidate people from standing up for him.

It was a dark moment in the Senate's history, I tell you this. But your father, whose character I believed in before the process, has shown a character that inspires me now more than ever.

I want to ask you two to never stop believing in the ideals of this Nation because it is why your father is who he is. Your parents told me their fealty to America, their love of this country, has not faltered. It is this great tradition of people who love America so much, even when America doesn't love them back. It is people in this country, from McCarthyism to the bigotry and hate of slavery, who kept working to change this country and make it better.

I ask the two of you to embrace your parents' way, to love America, to believe in her, and to know that this Nation needs you and your family.

I believe sometimes we have the most difficult moments to make way for better days ahead. I believe in people and their potential and ability to make a difference.

We are in a moment right now where too many leaders in our country subscribe to a politics of division. We are in a moment where we are seeing a rise of hate. I think it is an inflection point, and I think this is the point—and perhaps yours is the generation—to take our Nation in a better direction.

I believe, in many ways, your dad's steadfast love of country and the fact that he is unbowed by this process, I think that that is, in many ways, the foundation that is going to help us as a nation go forward.

I want to end with a poem my parents read me. I told your dad—and I got emotional when I talked to him earlier today—that when I looked at the two of you, I saw my brother and me.

Cary and I were raised by two parents, the first ever to integrate an all-White neighborhood. My parents faced the same kind of awful indignities as many people who are different in that they weren't allowed to buy their house. They had to get a White couple to pose as them—I was just a baby at that time—in order to be the first Black family to move in.

On the day of the closing on the house, when the White couple didn't show up and my father did, and a lawyer—like your father—the real estate agent didn't capitulate; he actually punched the lawyer in the face and sicced a Doberman pinscher on my dad.

We eventually got the owners of the home to sell us the house and moved in, but my parents were conscious my entire childhood that there is hate in this world, there is bigotry in this world. It was the tunnel that you had to come through to be in the very house where you lived. But they never wanted us to stop loving America and loving other people. They wanted us to know that there were going to be times in life when you are going to face hatred and that would never define you. What will define you is how you respond to it.

What your father gave America is a master's class on how to respond to lies, bigotry, and hatred—organized and financed. What your father showed

is, in that darkness, he could bring light.

So my parents wanted me to be like your dad in life; that if I faced the worst bigotry and hate, that I did not stop loving, that I did not stop loving others and loving Americans. And they would find ways to inspire me.

So I want to read you all one of the poems my parents shared with me—not the whole poem but a few sections. It is by a woman named Maya Angelou, and it is a poem called “Still I Rise.”

You may write me down in history
with your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

To two young men, growing up in a great nation, to Azmir and Zaaran, I rise today to tell you that this is a great nation, to remind you that your father has made it greater, and to tell you that I am full of hope that the two of you will rise up and help our Nation redeem its difficult past and seize for itself an even greater future.

God bless the two of you. In sha' Allah, you two will make America even greater.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

AMERICA'S CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I understand that the Senate has received the House message to accompany S. 3791.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 3791) entitled “An Act to reauthorize the America's Conservation Enhancement Act, and for other purposes”, do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. BOOKER. I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 3791, and I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the motion?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 3791.

The motion to concur was agreed to.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

RECOGNIZING THE SECOND COMMEMORATION OF THE ANTI-LGBTQ+ ATTACK THAT OCCURRED ON NOVEMBER 19-20, 2022, AT CLUB Q, AN LGBTQ+ BAR IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 895 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 895) recognizing the second commemoration of the anti-LGBTQ+ attack that occurred on November 19-20, 2022, at Club Q, an LGBTQ+ bar in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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

Mr. BOOKER. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 895) was agreed to.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 19, 2024, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

AMENDING THE BROADCASTING AND RECORDING PROCEDURES OF THE SENATE

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 934, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 934) amending the broadcasting and recording procedures of the Senate.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BOOKER. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on adopting the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 934) was agreed to.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask unanimous consent 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 resolution is printed in today's (Legislative Day of December 16, 2024) RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

PROVIDING FOR CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 4367

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I now would like to ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 46.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 46) providing for corrections in the enrollment of S. 4367.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask further that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and 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 concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 46) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's (Legislative day of December 16, 2024) RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

FEDERAL AGENCY PERFORMANCE ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I understand that the Senate has received the House message to accompany S. 709.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask that the chair lay before the body the House message to accompany S. 709.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 709) entitled “An Act to improve performance and accountability in the Federal Government, and for other purposes”, do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. BOOKER. I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 709.

I know of no further debate on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion to concur in the House amendment to S. 709.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 118-2

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on December 18, 2024, by the President of the United States:

Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (Treaty Document No. 118-2); I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

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

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (the "Agreement"). I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Agreement.

The purpose of the Agreement is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), often referred to as the high seas, which are under threat from a multitude of stressors. The high seas includes ocean areas beyond countries' 200-mile exclusive economic zones and covers about two-thirds of the global ocean.

The Agreement will create a mechanism to establish marine protected areas in ABNJ, a vital step in the global effort to conserve or protect at least 30 percent of the global ocean by 2030. It will create a system for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of marine genetic resources from ABNJ. The Agreement also includes provisions ensuring that Parties conduct rigorous environmental impact assessments for their activities in ABNJ and provisions on capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology related to the Agreement. The Agreement is key to supporting the sustainable use of marine resources, maintaining the integrity of ocean ecosystems, and conserving marine biological diversity. Implementation of the Agreement will respect the competences of and not undermine other international bodies and will require consultations with those organizations to enhance cooperation and coordination on the conservation and

sustainable use of the marine resources of the high seas.

I believe joining the Agreement to be fully in the interest of the United States. I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Agreement and give its advice and consent to ratification.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.

THE WHITE HOUSE, December 18, 2024.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader and jointly with the Democratic Leader of the House, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117-263, appoints the following individual to serve as Co-Chairperson of the National Commission on the Future of the Navy: The Honorable Filemon Vela of Texas.

MORNING BUSINESS

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 24-1D. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 09-36 of July 17, 2009.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(5)(C) of

the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 24-1D. This notification relates to enhancements or upgrades from the level of sensitivity of technology or capability described in the Section 36(b)(1) AECA certification 09-36 of July 17, 2009.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosure.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-1D

Report of Enhancement or Upgrade of Sensitivity of Technology or Capability (Sec. 36(b)(5)(C), AECA)

(i) Purchaser: Government of Australia.
(ii) Sec. 36(b)(1), AECA Transmittal No.: 09-36; Date: July 17, 2009; Military Department: Air Force.

(iii) Description: On July 17, 2009, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 09-36 of the possible sale, under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), to continue participation in the USAF/Boeing Globemaster III Sustainment Partnership (GSP) which consists of support for Australia's fleet of four (4) Boeing C-17A Globemaster III cargo aircraft, contractor technical and logistics personnel services, support equipment, spare and repair parts, and other related elements of logistics support. The estimated cost was \$300 million. There was no Major Defense Equipment (MDE) associated with this sale.

On May 19, 2014, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 14-0C, under section 36(b)(5)(C) of the AECA, of the inclusion of additional Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) to support Australia's fleet of C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft, which increased from four (4) to six (6). The total case value was increased by \$150 million, resulting in a total case value of \$450 million. There was no MDE associated with this sale.

On December 1, 2017, Congress was notified by congressional certification transmittal number 17-0A, under section 36(b)(5)(C) of the AECA, of the further inclusion of additional funding to maintain Australia's participation in the USAF/Boeing Globemaster III Sustainment Partnership (GSP) through 2022. Additionally, Australia's fleet of C-17A Globemaster III cargo aircraft increased from six (6) to eight (8). Support included contractor technical and logistics support services; support equipment; spare and repair parts; and other related elements of logistics support. The total case value increased by \$400 million, resulting in a total case value of \$850 million. There was no MDE associated with this sale.

This transmittal reports the addition of the following non-MDE items: Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) services; major modifications and maintenance support; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total value of the new items is \$4.03 billion. The estimated total case value will increase by \$4.03 billion to a revised \$4.88 billion. There is no MDE associated with this sale.

(iv) Significance: This proposed sale will support Australia's ability to effectively maintain its current force projection capability that enhances interoperability with U.S. forces, well into the future.

(v) Justification: This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping to improve the security of an important major non-NATO ally and partner which contributes significantly to peacekeeping, humanitarian, and combat operations around the world.

(vi) Sensitivity of Technology:

The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is UNCLASSIFIED.

(vii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 17, 2024.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-34, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Norway for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$130 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-34

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Norway.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment* \$105 million.

Other \$25 million.

Total \$130 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case NO-B-VRY was below congressional notification threshold at \$2.79 million (no MDE) and included Precision Guidance Kit (PGK) cutaway models; fuze wrenches; enhanced portable inductive artillery fuze setters; GPS antennae and cables; improved Platform Integration Kits; PGK-associated hardware for testing; labor support; training aids; technical data and reports; U.S. Government technical assistance; incidental travel; transportation; PGK spare parts; equipment training; and related elements of logistics and program support. The Government of Norway has requested the case be

amended to include eight thousand one (8,001) M1156A1 PGK multi-option fuzes. This amendment will cause the case to exceed the notification threshold, and thus notification of the entire program is required. The above notification requirements are combined as follows:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): Eight thousand one (8,001) M1156A1 PGK multi-option fuzes.

Non-Major Defense Equipment: The following non-MDE items will also be included: PGK cutaway models; fuze wrenches; enhanced portable inductive artillery fuze setters; GPS antennae and cables; improved Platform Integration Kits; PGK-associated hardware for testing; labor support; training aids; technical data and reports; U.S. Government technical assistance; incidental travel; transportation; PGK spare parts; equipment training; and related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (NO-B-VRY).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None known.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: December 17, 2024.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Norway—M1156A1 Precision Guidance Kits

Fuzes

The Government of Norway has requested to buy eight thousand one (8,001) M1156A1 Precision Guidance Kit (PGK) multi-option fuzes that will be added to a previously implemented case whose value was under the congressional notification threshold. The original Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case, valued at \$2.79 million, included PGK cutaway models; fuze wrenches; enhanced portable inductive artillery fuze setters; GPS antennae and cables; improved Platform Integration Kits; PGK-associated hardware for testing; labor support; training aids; technical data and reports; U.S. Government technical assistance; incidental travel; transportation; PGK spare parts; equipment training; and related elements of logistics and program support. This notification is for eight thousand one (8,001) M1156A1 PGK multi-option fuzes. The following non-MDE items will also be included: PGK cutaway models; fuze wrenches; enhanced portable inductive artillery fuze setters; GPS antennae and cables; improved Platform Integration Kits; PGK-associated hardware for testing; labor support; training aids; technical data and reports; U.S. Government technical assistance; incidental travel; transportation; PGK spare parts; equipment training; and related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total program cost is \$130 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a NATO Ally that is an important force for political stability and economic progress in Europe.

The proposed sale will improve Norway's capability to meet current and future threats and enhance its interoperability with U.S. and other allied forces. This proposed sale will enhance Norway's artillery and mid-range fire capability. Norway will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be Northrop Grumman Innovation Systems, located in

Dulles, VA. There are no known offset agreements in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Norway.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-34

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The M1156A1 Precision Guidance Kit (PGK) is a cannon artillery fuze which uses the Global Positioning System to increase the delivery accuracy of standard 155 mm high explosive ammunition. The NA37 M1156A1 includes M-code capability and eliminates the need for an anti-tamper coating to protect critical KDP technology. It is also a height-of-burst fuze, which uses a proximity sensor to cause the round to burst in the air over the enemy, increasing lethality.

2. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

3. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures that might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that Norway can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of Norway.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR THE INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, this explanation reflects the status of negotiations and disposition of issues reached between the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence for the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025.

The explanation shall have the same effect with respect to the implementation of this Act as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a conference committee.

I ask unanimous consent that the explanatory statement for the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 be printed in the RECORD.

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

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT ON THE INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

The following is the Explanatory Statement to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 ("the Act"), which has been included as Division F of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025. The Explanatory Statement

reflects the result of negotiations between the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (together, “the Committees”). The Explanatory Statement shall have the same effect with respect to the implementation of the Act as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a conference committee.

The classified nature of U.S. intelligence activities prevents the Committees from publicly disclosing many details concerning their final decisions regarding funding levels and policy direction. Therefore, the Committees have prepared a classified annex—referred to here and within the annex itself as “the Agreement”—that contains a classified Schedule of Authorizations and describes in detail the scope and intent of the Committees’ actions.

The Agreement authorizes the Intelligence Community to obligate and expend funds as requested in the President’s budget and as modified by the classified Schedule of Authorizations, subject to applicable reprogramming procedures.

The classified Schedule of Authorizations is incorporated into the Act pursuant to Section 6102 of the Act. It has the status of law. The Agreement supplements and adds detail to clarify the authorization levels found in the Act and in the classified Schedule of Authorizations.

This Explanatory Statement incorporates by reference, and the Executive Branch shall comply with, all direction contained in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (S. Rept. 118–181) and in the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Report to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (H. Rept. 118–662). The Agreement supersedes all classified direction in the classified annexes to accompany S. Rept. 118–181 and H. Rept. 118–662 related to programs and activities authorized by the Schedule of Authorization.

The Executive Branch is further directed as follows:

STUDY ON THREATS POSED BY CITIZENSHIP-BY-INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

The Committees are concerned with the threats to the United States posed by citizenship-by-investment programs operated by foreign governments. A recent Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report highlighted the ease of identity laundering, bribery and corruption that result from these programs, as well as the freedom of movement offered to malign actors, sanctioned individuals, weapons and human traffickers, and terrorists. The FATF and OECD report noted that these programs “make it challenging for compliance professionals at [financial institutions] or other businesses to engage in accurate due diligence,” undermine visa controls and sanctions enforcement, and facilitate the movement of individuals who have violated the law to other jurisdictions to avoid arrest.

The Committees therefore direct the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the heads of any other elements of the Intelligence Community the Director considers appropriate, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, to submit to the Committees a study on the threat posed to the United States by foreign citizenship-by-investment programs and the investments allowed under such programs; and provide to the committees a briefing on the results of the study.

The study shall include the following:

1. A detailed description of the threats posed to the national security of the United States by citizenship-by-investment programs;

2. The types of investments or contributions which an individual may make in exchange for citizenship under a foreign government’s citizenship-by-investment program, including investments in, or donations or transfers to, the government of a foreign country or any person, business, or entity in such foreign country, or for the benefit of a foreign country;

3. The use of such programs to evade sanctions or taxes, facilitate or finance crimes related to national security, including terrorism, weapons trafficking or proliferation, cybercrime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and espionage, or any other activity which furthers the interests of a foreign adversary or undermines the integrity of the immigration laws or security of the United States, or undermines the United States and its interests through any other means identified by the Director;

4. The foreign countries whose citizenship-by-investment programs pose the greatest threat to the national security of the United States;

5. Recommendations for any additional resources or authorities necessary to counter such threats; and

6. A description of opportunities to counter such threats.

STUDY ON THREAT POSED BY FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN UNITED STATES AGRICULTURAL LAND

The Committees note that foreign ownership and investment in U.S. agricultural land—which includes farmland, pastures, and forest land—has grown almost 50% since 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). While foreign investors in U.S. agricultural land are required to submit forms describing their transactions to USDA by the *Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978* (7 U.S.C. §3501) (AFIDA), AFIDA was not designed to identify potential national security concerns.

The Committees therefore direct the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in coordination with the elements of the Intelligence Community the Director considers appropriate, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, to (1) submit to the Committees a study on the threat posed to the United States by foreign investment in agricultural land in the United States, and (2) provide to the committees a briefing on the results of the study.

The study shall include the following:

1. Data and an analysis of agricultural land holdings, including current and previous uses of the land disaggregated by sector and industry, held by a foreign person from a country identified as a country that poses a risk to the national security of the United States in the most recent annual report on worldwide threats issued by the Director pursuant to section 108B of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. §3043b) (commonly known as the “Annual Threat Assessment”), a non-market economy country, or any other country that the Director determines to be appropriate;

2. An analysis of the proximity of the agricultural land holdings to critical infrastructure and military installations;

3. An assessment of the threats posed to the national security of the United States by malign actors that use foreign investment in agricultural land in the United States;

4. An assessment of warning indicators and methods by which to detect potential threats from the use by foreign adversaries of agricultural products for nefarious ends; and

5. An assessment of additional resources or authorities necessary to counter threats identified during the study.

INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC COERCION BY THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

The Committees direct that, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research shall submit a classified intelligence assessment to the Committees that (1) outlines economic coercion efforts by the People’s Republic of China in the Indo-Pacific region, and (2) describes measures that have been, or could be, taken to enhance the resilience of countries in the region to such coercion.

CLASSIFIED ANNEX TO REPORT ON MISSION EFFECT OF CIVILIAN HARM

Section 6323 of the Act requires the DNI, acting through the National Intelligence Council, to submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report examining the extent to which civilian harm that occurs during counterterrorism operations informs analyses of the Intelligence Community on the mission success of campaigns to degrade, disrupt, or defeat foreign terrorist organizations.

The Committees direct that this report include a classified annex, to be submitted to the Committees, that provides an inventory of (1) collection gaps and challenges that may affect the analysis of the success or failure of campaigns against terrorist groups, and (2) actions taken by the DNI to mitigate such gaps and challenges.

REPORT ON ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER DEDICATED TO STRATEGIC COMPETITION

Section 6307 of the Act, among other things, codifies the National Intelligence Management Council and expresses the sense of Congress that the DNI should create a role in the Council for a National Intelligence Manager dedicated to the People’s Republic of China.

The Committees direct the DNI, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and in consultation with the heads of elements of the Intelligence Community determined appropriate by the Director, to submit to the Committees a report that examines the potential effects of establishing a new national intelligence center dedicated to strategic competition, which would:

1. Integrate all-source intelligence on the plans and intentions of strategic competitors;

2. Synchronize intelligence collection efforts among the elements of the Intelligence Community;

3. Optimize resource investments made by elements of the Intelligence Community in support of strategic competition;

4. Integrate the work of other national intelligence centers that is relevant to strategic competition; and

5. Inform the President, Congress, and other policymakers as they craft and execute the United States’ approach to strategic competition.

The report shall seek to incorporate lessons learned from previous Intelligence Community reorganizations, including those undertaken pursuant to the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (P.L. 108–458). The report shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE WORKFORCE

The Committees find that—

1. From its inception, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) has met joint warfighter requirements because of a workforce that includes Intelligence Community

and Department of Defense civilians and uniformed service members;

2. The NRO has achieved success, in part, because the Department of Defense has consistently fulfilled its longstanding commitment to assign Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Guardians to positions at the NRO;

3. The NRO is negatively affected—and its ability to meet warfighter requirements diminished—when the United States Space Force does not assign Guardians to the NRO at a rate that meets the NRO requirements;

4. The NRO and the Space Force jointly benefit from Guardian assignments at the NRO; and

5. The NRO and Space Force are negatively affected by the Space Force's uneven emphasis on developing space operators without similar emphasis on developing Guardians with space acquisition and engineering expertise.

Therefore, the Committees direct the DNI and the heads of any other departments and agencies the Director deems relevant to provide quarterly updates to the appropriate congressional committees on the status of the Department of Defense fulfilling its commitment to assign uniformed personnel to the NRO.

INCREASED EFFORT AND RESOURCES IN THE FIELD OF GEOMATICS

The Committees find that—

1. The Intelligence Community and the broader United States Government require professionals with advanced training in geomatics and geodesy, and the preservation of these skillsets is crucial to advancing geospatial intelligence tradecraft for the United States for national security and military operations;

2. The Intelligence Community should use existing authorities to engage in novel ways with academic and industry partners to ensure the Intelligence Community's demand signal for geomatics and geodesy professionals is received by the largest possible number of United States citizens while also seeking to foster a culture of academic excellence and research to propel the field of geomatics forward at the pace of innovation;

3. By engaging with academic and industry partners, the Intelligence Community can help speed the reversal of the current trend wherein the United States not only produces fewer geomatics scientists and engineers compared to its global competitors and potential adversaries, but such competitors and adversaries also provide them with training and expertise that could be used against the United States;

4. There is abundant opportunity for the Intelligence Community to advance its growing need for geomatics and geodesy professionals by partnering with American universities and researchers with proven experience in diverse fields who can lead the way to solving the United States most vexing geomatics challenges; and

5. The Intelligence Community must balance the increasing demand for recruiting the best geomatics and geodesy talent while still ensuring a dedicated and patriotic workforce with allegiance to the Constitution and the United States Government.

REMEMBERING MITSUYE ENDO TSUTSUMI

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, today I rise to honor the late Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi on the 80th anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision in her case *Ex parte Endo* for her courageous contributions to civil rights.

Mitsuye Endo was born on May 10, 1920, in Sacramento, CA. After grad-

uating from Sacramento Senior High School, she attended secretarial school and began a clerical job with the California Department of Employment. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ms. Endo was fired from her State civil service job due to her race. She joined a lawsuit challenging California's wrongful termination of civil servants with Japanese ancestry, beginning her fight against the unjust treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

After Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mitsuye Endo and over 120,000 other Japanese Americans were forcibly removed and incarcerated in desolate camps in the interior of the country. They were incarcerated behind barbed wire and armed guards under the pretense that they posed a threat to national security on the basis of their race. Ms. Endo and her family were incarcerated for 3 years, first at Tule Lake, CA, and later at Topaz, UT, both euphemistically referred to as "Relocation Centers."

Mitsuye Endo stood up for what she knew was right and filed a lawsuit challenging her incarceration in July 1942. While her case was pending in the Supreme Court, the government offered her an immediate leave permit, which would have resulted in the dismissal of her lawsuit. She refused to accept the permit, even though it meant she had to remain incarcerated for over 1 more year. She stated, "The fact that I wanted to prove that we of Japanese ancestry were not guilty of any crime, that we were loyal American citizens, kept me from abandoning the suit."

On December 18, 1944—80 years ago, today—the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in Mitsuye Endo's favor, holding that "concededly loyal" Japanese Americans could not be imprisoned without cause. Ms. Endo's case played a crucial role in ending incarceration; news of the Court's pending decision prompted President Roosevelt to announce the closure of the camps just 1 day before the Court's decision.

Even after her passing in 2006, Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi's legacy of courage and integrity lives on in the thriving Japanese American communities across the country.

Thank you, Mitsuye Endo Tsutsumi, for your contributions to this Nation.

RECOGNIZING TENNESSEE'S 134TH AIR REFUELING WING

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, for almost a century, the U.S. Armed Forces' Distinguished Flying Cross has honored airmen who have demonstrated heroism and extraordinary achievement in aerial flight. Earlier this month, 11 members of the Tennessee Air National Guard's 134th Air Refueling Wing joined this distinguished group of honorees for their courageous actions in defense of Israel.

After Iran fired more than 300 drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles

toward the Jewish state on April 13, 2024, the aircrews of the 134th jumped into action to help defend our cherished ally, supplying tens of thousands of pounds of fuel for U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles that worked to intercept the threats. To accomplish this feat, the aircrews flew into dangerous airspace without onboard defensive systems or advanced situational awareness tools, facing great risk while ensuring the fighters could remain focused on their mission. With the 134th's support, U.S. Forces joined our coalition partners and Israeli defenses in eliminating nearly 99 percent of inbound drones, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles, saving countless lives.

On behalf of all Tennesseans, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 134th Air Refueling Wing on this well-deserved honor. Through their skill, determination, and valor, these 11 Airmen served our Nation admirably while helping defend our ally in a moment of great danger.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR MICHAEL MARFUT

Mr. KING. Madam President, today I wish to recognize MAJ Michael Marfut, U.S. Army, for his outstanding work on behalf of the people of Maine and the Nation as a 2024 Department of Defense Legislative Fellow serving in my Washington, DC, office.

Over the past year, Mike has been integral in shaping my foreign policy and defense priorities. He helped secure several provisions in the fiscal year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act—FY25 NDAA—that will make our country stronger and safer. Mike led my staff in orchestrating important appropriations for the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. He also helped lead an excellent congressional delegation to the Antietam Battlefield. His contributions to office morale and our collective work product are emblematic of his good character, competence, and strong work ethic.

Throughout his tenure in my office, Mike demonstrated a level of professionalism and hard work I have come to expect—but not take for granted—from Department of Defense Legislative Fellows. Indeed, he follows a long line of accomplished military officers who have made impactful contributions to my office and U.S. national security policy. Over the course of the year, Mike prepared and advised me on wide-ranging and complex matters under consideration before the Senate Armed Services Committee. His attention to detail has served me well; Mike managed over 400 individual authorization and appropriation requests and over 600 markup amendments. He brought his operational and leadership expertise to assist me in the Strategic Forces Subcommittee briefings and deliberations which resulted in critical

funding authorizations and legislation. His fingerprints lay throughout the NDAA in the form of legislation and report language. Mike was my lead expert on matters of blast overpressure and military suicide prevention resulting in at least six provisions becoming law. He also served as the subject matter expert on cybersecurity certification requirements, ensuring important oversight matters were included in the NDAA. Furthermore, he helped secure important funding for advanced research impacting Maine from Aroostook to York County. In addition, he became my go-to lead for monitoring the horrific war in Ukraine and Israel where he provided clear-headed and thoughtful analysis and liaised with representatives from the White House, State Department, and Department of Defense to convey my positions and concerns. His candor and honest assessments provided critical insights during this fraught time in U.S. history, and our Nation is better because of it.

On behalf of my colleagues and the U.S. Congress, I thank Mike for his dedicated service to my staff, the State of Maine, the U.S. Army, and the Nation. Part of what makes the U.S. military the greatest in the history of the world is that servicemembers like Mike dedicate their lives to service and sacrifice for their country. Major Marfut does not do it alone, so I also acknowledge the support of his family—his wife Alexandria and his children, Maria, Audrey, Grace, and George. I wish them all the best in what I know is a bright future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO STEVE CLARK

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise to honor the achievements of Steve Clark of Fayetteville, AR, whose work as the executive director of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce has contributed to the tremendous growth and success of the city and greater northwest Arkansas.

Mr. Clark recently retired after 16 years at the chamber, but his hard work and stewardship will continue to impact the area's direction for generations to come.

Fayetteville is best known as the home of the University of Arkansas, which is a critical economic engine for the city. However, the university is only part of the community's success. It also features approximately 4,000 businesses and a population estimated to grow by six people per day.

During his tenure at the chamber of commerce, Clark worked to grow economic opportunities in research, technology, and healthcare, while also supporting the city's existing business community. In addition, his commitment to inspiring the next generation of leaders created new opportunities for young people. He expanded the chamber's leadership program to in-

clude schools throughout the county and deserves tremendous credit for more than 1,000 people having participated in the Leadership Fayetteville Program. In addition, Clark led establishment of the Northwest Arkansas Fab Lab, where high school students can become certified robotics technicians.

Clark is a native Arkansan, born and raised in Leachville. Before his chamber career, he was the longest serving attorney general in Arkansas, chief of staff for Gov. David Pryor, and worked as an assistant dean of the University of Arkansas School of Law. He was also a municipal judge in Brinkley and founded InnerCare, a national behavioral health company.

I am grateful for Clark's dedication to our State and his many contributions to the continuing growth of Fayetteville, the region, and the Natural State. I wish him the very best in his retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO THE HENDERSON FAMILY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to honor the achievements of Murry and Dee Henderson of Keiser, AR, who have been recognized as the 2024 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year.

This award is a proud reflection of the Henderson family's hard work and dedication to Arkansas' farming community and their many contributions to our State's top industry for over 23 years. They have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in agriculture that encompasses community leadership and engagement, resource and energy conservation, and efficiency of production.

The Hendersons' farm stretches across 4,000 acres, yielding diverse crops including cotton, rice, and soybeans. In addition to their farm, the family owns and operates Lepanto Crop Service, providing aerial application to 50 farmers across four counties.

As participants in the USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program, the Hendersons have actively incorporated a conservation-oriented focus, including utilizing soil moisture sensors to conserve water resources and cover crops to help prevent soil erosion.

Since 1947, the Arkansas Farm Bureau's Arkansas Farm Family of the Year Program has highlighted the first-class agriculture producers our State is blessed to host. The Hendersons' contributions to their community and Arkansas' farm industry are no exception.

Murry and Dee, as well as their two children Bryce and Macy, are incredibly hard-working and represent our State well, while embodying the tenets of the Farm Family of the Year Program.

As Arkansas Farm Family of the Year, the Henderson family will be competing with nine other State winners to vie for the Sunbelt Ag Expo

Southeastern Farmer of the Year title in Moultrie, GA. I join my fellow Arkansans in wishing them the best of luck.

Congratulations again to the Hendersons for their accomplishments, and I wish the family continued success in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING 50 YEARS OF ARKANSAS NUCLEAR ENERGY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Entergy's Arkansas Nuclear One powerplant in Russellville. Since 1974, Arkansas Nuclear One has served as our State's only nuclear powerplant, providing communities and businesses with electricity for over half a century.

Arkansas Nuclear One has a proven history of delivering safe, reliable, and affordable nuclear energy for the Natural State. With an estimated 1,800 megawatts of combined capacity between the two units located on Lake Dardanelle, it provides enough energy to the electric grid to power 1 million households and businesses.

As our State experiences continued industrial and commercial growth, we can expect our energy sector to increasingly develop and support increased demand statewide.

Arkansas Nuclear One's operations employ over 1,000 full-time workers and hundreds of additional contractors who contribute to the region by supporting local businesses, restaurants, and more. Further, Entergy supports over 175 Arkansas companies through the exchange of materials and services, totaling an estimated \$12 million in annual expenditures, which has a significant impact on our businesses and communities, with Arkansas Nuclear One contributing over \$190 million to Arkansas's gross State product and generating \$21 million in State and local tax revenue.

Plant employees have become integral members of the community through their involvement with volunteer work. Entergy has awarded over \$100,000 to nonprofits in the area, and Arkansas Nuclear One employees partnering with Entergy have donated over \$230,000 to the Arkansas River Valley United Way to bolster the financial stability, health, and education of vulnerable communities. Entergy also participates in other local nonprofits, such as the Salvation Army's Angel Tree Program that provides Christmas gifts for children across the country, Summer Food for Kids, and other educational initiatives.

Our State is fortunate to have access to nuclear energy in this capacity, and the region particularly enjoys substantial benefits because of Arkansas Nuclear One.

As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I am pleased to highlight Arkansas Nuclear One as a strong component of an all-of-the-above energy agenda. As we celebrate the reactor's 50th anniversary, our State and local communities

will continue to value its role in the production of safe, affordable, and reliable American energy for many years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
(RETIRED) WILLIAM D. COBETTO

● Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to the remarkable career of Major General (Retired) William D. Cobetto, the former Commander and Assistant Adjutant General—Air, Illinois National Guard, who will retire on January 31, 2025. After retiring from the Illinois Air National Guard in 2015, Major General Cobetto returned to the Illinois Department of Military Affairs in 2019, as a legislative liaison and currently serves as the Chief of Staff—Illinois Department of Military Affairs.

As the assistant adjutant general, Major General Cobetto was responsible for the command, control, and operations of plans and programs affecting more than 3,000 Illinois Air National Guard personnel located at the 126th Air Refueling Wing at Scott Air Force Base, the 182nd Airlift Wing at Peoria, and the 183rd Wing at Springfield, IL. His broad range of responsibilities included insuring combat readiness and mission capability of the three major air bases comprised of flying wings, command and control facilities, logistics, and mission support units. Throughout his entire career, Major General Cobetto led by example, providing a steady hand through some of the most tumultuous times in the history of our State and our Nation. The Illinois National Guard is better because of General Cobetto's service.

Major General Cobetto received his commission in 1985 from the Academy of Military Science, Knoxville, TN. During his career, he has served in several key positions. As commander, 183rd Fighter Wing Mission Support Group, he directed and monitored support activities and units ensuring cohesive integration of functions and resources. Prior to that, he provided sound fiscal guidance as comptroller, 183rd Fighter Wing. Of special note, General Cobetto was mobilized in 2003 and served at the Pentagon assisting the Air Force Crisis Action Team and the Secretary of the Air Force Financial Management. During his time as chief of staff for the Illinois Department of Military Affairs/Illinois National Guard, he coordinated the efforts and resources of Illinois Department of Military Affairs to support the State and Federal missions given the ILNG. He further serves as the agency's main point of contact with the Governor's office and other State and Federal Agencies that work with the ILNG. General Cobetto was previously assigned as the legislative liaison.

Major General Cobetto's leadership, determination, and commitment have no doubt changed lives and helped to make our country safer. As his service career ends, may he continue to be

“Always Ready, Always There!” and forever take pride in knowing that his exemplary efforts and unwavering professionalism contributed greatly to the success of the Air Force, the Illinois National Guard, and the National Guard mission.●

RECOGNIZING IOWA SPRING
MANUFACTURING

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

In 1976, James Bianco founded Iowa Spring Manufacturing to create and deliver large, heavy-duty metal springs for agricultural and mechanical equipment and overhead garage door industries. Before starting the business, James lived in Des Moines and worked as a salesman for an Indiana-based mechanical spring company. He leveraged his experience and long-standing relationships to start his own spring manufacturing business.

James and his wife Kathy began with a single machine and consulted an engineer to bring their vision to life. By 1979, the company relocated its headquarters to Adel to accommodate its growing operations. James managed Iowa Spring Manufacturing for more than 25 years and stepped down as CEO in 2002, handing over the reins to his son Tim Bianco, who joined the business full-time in 1989.

Iowa Spring Manufacturing continues to expand its products to manufacture and deliver metal springs for agriculture, construction, and recreational industries. In 2007, the business launched a garage door spring division named Southern Atlantic Spring in North Carolina. With operations in three States, the company maintains over 450,000 square feet of manufacturing space, including their new 60,000-square-foot facility in Adel, which opened in April 2023. Under Tim's leadership over the last 20 years, Iowa Spring Manufacturing has grown from 30 employees to more than 200 employees, taking American-made springs across the Western Hemisphere.

Iowa Spring Manufacturing is a member of the Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Farm Equipment Manufacturing Association. Additionally, Tim sits on the executive board of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI), as well as the board of the Spring Manufacturing Institute. In 2021, ABI awarded Tim with the Legend in Manufacturing Award. Locally, Iowa Spring Manufacturing is a dedicated supporter of the Adel Public Library and Adel High School. Across its locations in Iowa, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, the company also works to support the local

fire and emergency services. Next November, Iowa Spring Manufacturing looks forward to celebrating its 49th anniversary in Iowa.

Iowa Spring Manufacturing's commitment to providing the country with reliable, American-made equipment is clear. I want to congratulate this family and the team for their dedication to keeping American-made metal springs available across the United States. I look forward to seeing their continued success.●

RECOGNIZING LAKEFRONT LIVING

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

In 2018, Stacy Rowson started Lakefront Living after working as an embryologist for 13 years. She initially focused on selling custom sand and engraved vases for weddings and unity ceremonies, she expanded her business over time and moved it out of her home and into a rented space in Pleasantville, IA. In 2019, Stacy purchased and transformed an old grocery store into the brick-and-mortar storefront where Lakefront Living remains today.

While sand creations were the foundation of the business, Stacy's entrepreneurial spirit drove her to explore new possibilities. A suggestion from a community member sparked the idea to invest in a direct-to-film printer, opening the door to designing and printing custom products.

Today, Lakefront Living specializes in customizable apparel, accessories, and gifts—all crafted in-house. The business has six community-based employees who assist Stacy with the design process. From custom tumblers to soaps and bags, Lakefront Living also plays a key role in creating much of the merchandise for the local high school. The company collaborates with small businesses across the Midwest to bring unique gifts and decor to the store. Lakefront Living also hosts parties, painting workshops, and charcuterie-making classes.

Lakefront Living's dedication and impact on the community has not gone unnoticed. The business is an alumnus of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program and has won several awards, including the 2021 Pleasantville Business of the Year and placing second in the Red Rock Startup Pitch Contest. This year, the Marion County Economic Development Commission also recognized Lakefront Living as the Best Small-Town Retail Store and the Best Hobby and Special Interest Store in Marion County. Stacy also plays an active role in the Pleasantville community through her involvement with the Pleasantville FFA

Alumni Association, Pleasantville Community School District High School Boosters Club, and the Liberty Evangelical Free Church youth group. Additionally, Stacy cofounded the Pleasantville Christmas on the Square, an annual event that takes place on Small Business Saturday. Next year, Stacy and her team look forward to celebrating Lakefront Living's fifth anniversary.

Lakefront Living's desire to create customized quality products is clear. I want to congratulate Stacy Rowson, her family, and the team at Lakefront Living for not only offering unique, quality products, but also working to uplift other small I look forward to seeing their continued success in Iowa.●

TRIBUTE TO SUSAN SEGAL

● Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to honor the tremendous career of Susan Segal, the chief judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, who is retiring after over two decades in public service. Judge Segal has served on the Minnesota Court of Appeals since 2019 and as the chief judge since 2020.

Judge Segal has also been a steadfast friend and mentor who has been a guiding force in my career. We got to know each other back when I was a summer associate at her firm. Susan—like her late mom Gloria—became an incredible mentor to me throughout my legal career, giving me advice on everything from handling tough cases to navigating the challenges of being a woman in law at the time.

After I was elected to serve as Hennepin County Attorney, Susan joined my team as my chief deputy in charge of the civil division. No matter what case the civil division was handling at any given moment, I could always count on Susan for thoughtful, honest advice.

Her devotion to following the facts and doing what is right brought her to the Minneapolis City Attorney's Office after we left the Hennepin County Attorney's Office following my election to the U.S. Senate. As city attorney, she fought for the people of Minneapolis on issues of public safety, victim support, and managed an office of over 100 dedicated public servants. She also managed the office's criminal division, which typically handled over 15,000 criminal prosecutions per year.

And after decades of serving Minneapolis and Hennepin County, it was no surprise that Governor Walz appointed Susan to serve on the Minnesota Court of Appeals in 2019 and no surprise that she was elevated to chief judge just months after taking her seat on the bench.

As chief judge, Susan has served our State with dignity, grace, and fairness, ruling on matters ranging from affordable housing to voting rights and ensuring that the voices of all who enter her courtroom are heard.

I thank Judge Segal for her leadership, her friendship, and for being a true minister of justice. Susan, congratulations on your retirement.●

TRIBUTE TO RONALD W. WILLIAMS

● Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I rise to honor the career of Columbia County Commissioner Ronald W. Williams. First appointed by then Gov. Bob Graham in 1981, Mr. Williams is the first Black Columbia County commissioner and the longest serving county commissioner in the history of the State of Florida. He has also served as the Columbia County chairman for a total of 11 years. Mr. Williams was born in Columbia County and graduated from Richardson High School in 1962. As a true lifelong Floridan, Commissioner Williams represents the best of what Florida has to offer. I want to congratulate him on his dedication to public service and thank him for everything he has done for the people of Columbia County.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a treaty which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:54 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills without amendment:

S. 1147. An act to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to provide for grants in support of training and education to teachers and other school employees, students, and the community about how to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report child sexual abuse among primary and secondary school students.

S. 3448. An act to reauthorize the Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to support Holocaust education programs, and for other purposes.

S. 4107. An act to require Amtrak to report to Congress information on Amtrak compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 with respect to trains and stations.

S. 5355. An act to ensure that the National Advisory Council on Indian Education includes at least 1 member who is the president of a Tribal College or University.

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

H.R. 115. An act to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc

consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes.

H.R. 670. An act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a website to promote awareness of available resources for individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1101. An act to amend the Lumbee Act of 1956.

H.R. 3396. An act to require the standardization of reciprocal fire suppression cost share agreements, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5401. An act to provide a one-time grant for the operation, security, and maintenance of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center to commemorate the events, and honor the victims, of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and for other purposes.

H.R. 6127. An act to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, and for other purposes.

H.R. 7938. An act to amend the Klamath Basin Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2000 to provide the Secretary of the Interior with certain authorities with respect to projects affecting the Klamath Basin watershed, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8012. An act to establish the Jackie Robinson Ballpark National Commemorative Site in the State of Florida, and for other purposes.

H.R. 8308. An act to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003.

H.R. 8931. An act to redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park.

H.R. 8946. An act to convey the reversionary interest of the United States in certain land in Sacramento, California.

H.R. 9516. An act to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for lifetime National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes for family members of members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving their country.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 115. An act to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for en bloc consideration in resolutions of disapproval for "midnight rules", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3396. An act to require the standardization of reciprocal fire suppression cost share agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 8308. An act to reauthorize the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 8931. An act to redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 8946. An act to convey the reversionary interest of the United States in certain land in Sacramento, California; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 9516. An act to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for lifetime National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes for family members of members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving their country; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 6127. An act to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC-6851. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect Rule" (RIN0970-AD10) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 26, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3312. A bill to provide a framework for artificial intelligence innovation and accountability, and for other purposes.

S. 3879. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a standard methodology for identifying the country of origin of red snapper imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 4178. A bill to establish artificial intelligence standards, metrics, and evaluation tools, to support artificial intelligence research, development, and capacity building activities, to promote innovation in the artificial intelligence industry by ensuring companies of all sizes can succeed and thrive, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment:

S. 4596. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a public awareness and education campaign to provide information regarding the benefits of, risks relating to, and the prevalence of artificial intelligence in the daily lives of individuals in the United States, and for other purposes.

By Ms. CANTWELL, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with amendments:

S. 4769. A bill to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop voluntary guidelines and specifications for internal and external assurances of artificial intelligence systems, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. LEE:

S. 5576. A bill to limit eligibility for Federal benefits for certain immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 5577. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to add a bankruptcy chapter relating to the debt of individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 5578. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to reform certain forfeiture procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 5579. A bill to prevent covered vehicle manufacturers from accessing, selling, or otherwise selling certain covered vehicle data, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 5580. A bill to regulate monitoring of electronic communications between an incarcerated person in a Bureau of Prisons facility and that person's attorney or other legal representative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 5581. A bill to strengthen and expand efforts to identify, include, and advance untapped potential in the United States' international affairs workforce to strengthen national security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FISCHER, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 5582. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the biodiesel fuels credit and the biodiesel mixture credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BUDD):

S. 5583. A bill to express findings relating to the recreational trails program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 5584. A bill to support foreign assistance programs and diplomatic initiatives to counter violence in the Western Hemisphere; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HEINRICH:

S. 5585. A bill to reauthorize the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Act of 1994, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 5586. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for a percentage of student loan forgiveness for public service employment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 5587. A bill to establish in the Department of Homeland Security the Task Force on the Reunification of Families, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 5588. A bill to prohibit drilling in the outer Continental Shelf, to prohibit coal leases on Federal land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 5589. A bill to establish a grant for the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 5590. A bill to redesignate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 5591. A bill to designate the Holcombe Rucker Park National Commemorative Site in Harlem, New York, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 5592. A bill to amend the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to prohibit bank holding companies from facilitating fossil fuel production from new sources, or from facilitating transactions that would provide funds for the construction of new or expanded fossil infrastructure that would drive such production, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 5593. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to expand the Magnet Schools Assistance Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 5594. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support innovative, evidence-based approaches that improve the effectiveness and efficiency of postsecondary education for all students, to allow pay for success initiatives, to provide additional evaluation authority, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 5595. A bill to amend the Act of June 22, 1948; considered and passed.

By Mr. LUJÁN:

S. 5596. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to increase the Federal cost share for supplemental nutrition assistance program administration to improve staffing and retention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 5597. A bill to amend the Deepwater Port Act of 1974 to improve community outreach, public participation, and the consideration of community and environmental impacts with respect to the issuance of a license under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 5598. A bill to prohibit and require notifications with respect to certain investments by United States persons in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 5599. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to conduct a project to improve forecasts of coastal marine fog; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 5600. A bill to authorize programs for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for fiscal year 2025, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 5601. A bill to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather research, support improvements in weather forecasting and prediction, expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 933. A resolution calling on the United Nations Security Council to enforce the existing arms embargo on Darfur and extend it to cover all of Sudan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. Res. 934. A resolution amending the broadcasting and recording procedures of the Senate; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REED:

S. Con. Res. 44. A concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Con. Res. 45. A concurrent resolution affirming the nature and importance of the support of the United States for Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Con. Res. 46. A concurrent resolution providing for corrections in the enrollment of S. 4367; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 971

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 971, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to remove the Medicaid coverage exclusion for inmates in custody pending disposition of charges, and for other purposes.

S. 1375

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1375, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to apply additional payments, discounts, and other financial assistance towards the cost-sharing requirements of health insurance plans, and for other purposes.

S. 1673

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from New

Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1673, a bill to amend title XVIII to protect patient access to ground ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 1747

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1747, a bill to repeal the Alien Enemies Act.

S. 2112

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2112, a bill to make the Care Compare internet website and its data more accessible by individuals using search engines.

S. 2235

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2235, a bill to amend the Animal Health Protection Act to provide compensation for poultry growers and layers in control areas, and for other purposes.

S. 2243

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2243, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools and other programs, including social work, physician assistant, and chaplaincy education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative and hospice care.

S. 2362

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2362, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for notification by manufacturers of critical drugs of increased demand, and for other purposes.

S. 2569

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2569, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to clarify that the possession, sale, purchase, importation, exportation, or transportation of drug testing equipment that tests for the presence of fentanyl or xylazine is not unlawful.

S. 2574

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2574, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, to repeal certain limits on leave for married individuals employed by the same employer.

S. 2740

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Michigan

(Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2740, a bill to help small businesses prepare for and combat cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes.

S. 2815

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2815, a bill to provide for a wage differential program to support new nursing school faculty members.

S. 3124

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3124, a bill to expand and improve the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant Program to ensure legal assistance is provided for survivors in proceedings related to domestic violence and sexual assault, and for other purposes.

S. 3530

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3530, a bill to retain Federal employees who are spouses of a member of the Armed Forces or the Foreign Service when relocating due to an involuntary transfer, and for other purposes.

S. 3535

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3535, a bill to support empowerment, economic security, and educational opportunities for adolescent girls around the world, and for other purposes.

S. 3984

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3984, a bill to amend the State Justice Institute Act of 1984 to authorize the State Justice Institute to provide awards to certain organizations to establish a State judicial threat intelligence and resource center.

S. 4515

At the request of Mr. ROMNEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4515, a bill to combat foreign terrorist acquisition of unmanned aerial systems, and for other purposes.

S. 4661

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4661, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to include information on improper payments under Federal programs, and for other purposes.

S. 4679

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4679, a bill to amend title XLI of the FAST Act to improve the Federal permitting process, and for other purposes.

S. 4907

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont

(Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4907, a bill to improve weather research and forecasting by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 4989

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 4989, a bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to permit the use of certain electric vehicle charging stations at rest areas, and for other purposes.

S. 5408

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor 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.

S. 5439

At the request of Mr. KELLY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5439, a bill to provide for water conservation, drought operations, and drought resilience at water resources development projects, and for other purposes.

S. 5473

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 3332

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3332 intended to be proposed to H.R. 5009, a bill to reauthorize wildlife habitat and conservation programs, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 5581. A bill to strengthen and expand efforts to identify, include, and advance untapped potential in the United States' international affairs workforce to strengthen national security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to introduce the American Foreign Affairs Talent Expansion Act, or the American FATE Act, legislation that can serve as a blueprint for my colleagues who hope to promote diversity in diplomacy and development in the future.

Throughout our Nation's history, the diplomats who have conducted our foreign policy and diplomacy have never represented the full spectrum of the population of the United States.

While the Biden administration has made important strides in changing this dynamic, the senior ranks of the Department of State and many of our

international affairs Agencies still fit the old "pale, male, and Yale" description.

This is certainly nothing new, and that is why for close to two decades, I have led and supported legislative and other efforts to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in our international affairs and national security institutions and Agencies.

From the Biden administration's equality and racial equity Executive orders to my own introduction of the 2019 National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act and recurring annual appropriations requests, I have fought for underserved and marginalized communities throughout my Senate career.

That includes serving as the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly's inaugural Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance for 57 countries.

I have supported the placement of chief diversity officers at our foreign affairs Agencies.

I have backed career pipelines named after former colleagues like the State Department Charles Rangel and USAID Donald Payne Fellowship Programs.

I have pushed for partnership opportunities with historically black colleges and universities and minority businesses.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which I chair, has shaped a values-based foreign policy built upon diverse expertise.

Whether it is our State Department Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism or the Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice or establishing a transatlantic institute focused on representation and inclusion honoring former colleague Representative Alcee L. Hastings, the proof is in the pudding, and the advances we have made span both sides of the aisle.

Senator MARCO RUBIO, a longtime member of the committee, is nominated to be the next Secretary of State and, if confirmed, will be the first Latino to serve in this role.

My successor, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, is continuing to make history by shattering yet another glass ceiling as the first woman in leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As far as we have come, however, we still have a way to go.

The legislation I am introducing today creates a framework for the future.

It will uphold the principles of the merit system in international affairs Agency recruitment, hiring, promotion, and leadership practices, including fair and equitable treatment of personnel without regard to political affiliation.

It will strengthen career pipelines by expanding paid internships and midcareer employment opportunities in the Foreign Service.

It commends the work of our locally employed staff at our embassies and

bolsters efforts to retain top talent in the United States and overseas.

It will expand business, research, and partnership opportunities, including opportunities for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

And it will strengthen equity and anti-discrimination efforts overseas.

The promise of equal opportunity for all is enshrined in our Constitution and intrinsic to American values.

Our Nation's rich cultural diversity is a strength that should be at the heart of how we conduct diplomacy and development efforts overseas.

So, before I leave the Senate, I call on my Democratic and Republican colleagues to bring our country together to ensure all perspectives and voices are heard.

I urge my colleagues to continue to advance American values by codifying diversity, equity, and inclusion principles in our international affairs and national security infrastructure and overseas policies.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 933—CALLING ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL TO ENFORCE THE EXISTING ARMS EMBARGO ON DARFUR AND EXTEND IT TO COVER ALL OF SUDAN

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 933

Whereas the conflict between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, that began on April 15, 2023, has resulted in tens of thousands of Sudanese civilian casualties, and likely more, and millions of Sudanese people exposed to unspeakable trauma;

Whereas the violence taking place in Sudan against civilians echoes the horrors of the genocide in the country's Darfur region that began in the early 2000s;

Whereas, in July 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution United Nations Security Council Resolution 1556 (2004), which imposed an arms embargo against all non-governmental entities and individuals, including the Janjaweed, operating in Darfur, and mandated that all states shall take the necessary measures to prevent their nationals or entities operating from their respective territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft, from supplying non-governmental entities or individuals operating in Darfur arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts;

Whereas in March 2005, the United Nations Security Council arms embargo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591 (2005) was expanded to include all belligerents in Darfur, including the Government of Sudan;

Whereas, in October 2010, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1945 (2010) was

adopted, which strengthened the arms embargo by deciding that all states shall ensure that any sale or supply of arms and related materiel to Sudan not prohibited by United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1556 (2004) and 1591 (2005) are made conditional upon the necessary end user documentation so that States may ascertain that any such sale or supply is conducted consistent with the measures imposed by those resolutions;

Whereas, on September 11, 2024, the United Nations Security Council renewed United Nations Security Council Resolution 1556 (2004);

Whereas state actors and non-state actors across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Europe are providing weapons and material support to the RSF and SAF for operations in Darfur and across Sudan;

Whereas a September 9, 2024, report from Human Rights Watch noted that according to the Arms Trade Database, maintained by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), weapons and equipment from other countries have arrived in Sudan between 2004 and 2023;

Whereas, on January 15, 2024, the United Nations Panel of Experts on Sudan presented credible reports to the United Nations Security Council of newly established supply lines to the RSF through neighboring countries.

Whereas there are credible reports that multiple countries are supplying weapons and other dual-use items to the SAF;

Whereas a 2024 report by the Department of State-affiliated Conflict Observatory describes regular cargo plane deliveries of weapons from foreign nations to the RSF in Darfur via Amdjarass, Chad, and to the SAF via Port Sudan, Sudan;

Whereas two 2024 reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch identified defense articles in Sudan, including 8 kinds of small arms manufactured in 6 different foreign countries, 6 kinds of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) manufactured in 8 different foreign countries, 5 kinds of ordnances and projectiles manufactured in 6 different foreign countries, and several other types of materiel related to weapons manufactured in 7 different foreign countries, which increase the lethality of the conflict;

Whereas these weapons have been observed both inside and outside Darfur, including Gedaref, Northern and Southern Kordofan, Khartoum, and El Gezira state, all areas that are under either SAF or RSF control and where the Fact-Finding Mission documented atrocities, child recruitment, heavy shelling, or sexual violence;

Whereas the conflict has led to the partial or complete destruction of cities across Sudan, including El Geneina, El Fasher, El Obeid, Kadugli, Nyala, Wad al-Noura, Zalingei, and even the capital Khartoum;

Whereas one or both parties to the conflict have participated in mass atrocities in all of these cities;

Whereas the provision of armaments to the RSF and SAF prolongs this conflict and the needless suffering among civilians in Sudan;

Whereas both the RSF and SAF have continued to use internet shutdowns as a tool of control and repression, further isolating and exacerbating the suffering of civilians and the ongoing humanitarian crisis;

Whereas, on December 6, 2023, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken determined that the SAF and the RSF have committed war crimes and that the RSF and its allies have committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing;

Whereas, in September 2024, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, authorized by the United Nations Human Rights Council, reported that it had found reasonable grounds to believe that

both the SAF and the RSF have committed war crimes and the RSF and allied militias have committed crimes against humanity;

Whereas the Fact-Finding Mission has documented the use of explosives with wide area effects in densely populated areas, particularly in Khartoum and Darfur, that has resulted in deaths, injuries, extensive destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and other critical infrastructure, and the Fact-Finding Mission has found that the SAF and the RSF have failed to take sufficient measures to minimize the impact of attacks on civilians;

Whereas the supply and provision of weapons to parties involved in crimes against humanity and other atrocities could implicate state and non-state actors supplying weapons used in such atrocities;

Whereas, while no reliable fatality figures exist, according to the United States Special Envoy for Sudan, as many as 150,000 people may have died in the first year of the war, and according to advanced statistical estimates from researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, at least 60,000 people have died in Khartoum state alone;

Whereas women and children have been subjected to torture and extreme sexual violence in Darfur, Northern and Southern Kordofan, Khartoum, and El Gezira states;

Whereas the Fact-Finding Mission reports that children are being forcibly recruited, trained, and armed by the SAF in Khartoum, River Nile, Kassala, Gedaref, Sennar, and Red Sea states, and by the RSF in the Darfur, Kordofan, and Khartoum states;

Whereas the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/826, submitted to the United Nations Security Council on November 18, 2024, by Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom, and calling for a nationwide ceasefire, increased protection of civilians and the unhindered flow of humanitarian aid across Sudan and garnered support from 14 out of 15 United Nations Security Council members;

Whereas only one individual has ever been sanctioned for violating the Darfur arms embargo pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591 (2005); and

Whereas the Fact-Finding Mission has recommended that the United Nations arms embargo be expanded to cover the entire country: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the atrocities committed by the warring parties in Sudan, including those that may amount to genocide by the RSF and allied militias against the Masalit people and other non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur;

(2) calls for an immediate end to the war and all violence and atrocities in Sudan;

(3) calls on the United Nations Security Council—

(A) to expand the Darfur arms embargo to apply to all territory and actors within the internationally recognized borders of Sudan;

(B) to expand the Darfur arms embargo to include dual-use equipment under the list of prohibited material;

(C) to establish a more stringent sanctions enforcement regime to ensure actors violating the current Darfur arms embargo are held accountable; and

(D) to establish a mechanism for unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid and a mechanism to protect civilians;

(4) calls on the United Nations General Assembly to pass a resolution that calls for a nationwide ceasefire, recognizes the atrocities taking place in Sudan, and calls for a more effective and inclusive arms embargo on Sudan, unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid across Sudan, and a mechanism to protect civilians; and

(5) calls on the United States Govern-

(A) to increase support for civil society and local organizations that are monitoring and documenting atrocities and weapons deliveries into Sudan as well as delivering humanitarian resources to vulnerable communities;

(B) to increase and develop improved mechanisms for monitoring and documenting atrocities and weapons supply chains into and across Sudan; and

(C) to press the United Nations, the African Union, and other allies and partners—

(i) to condemn the atrocities taking place in Sudan;

(ii) to call for a more effective and inclusive arms embargo on Sudan;

(iii) to work to ensure unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid across Sudan;

(iv) to support a mechanism to protect civilians; and

(v) to use their influence to pressure the SAF and RSF to end this conflict.

SENATE RESOLUTION 934—AMENDING THE BROADCASTING AND RECORDING PROCEDURES OF THE SENATE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mrs. FISCHER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 934

Resolved,

SECTION 1. BROADCASTING AND RECORDING PROCEDURES OF THE SENATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Senate Resolution 28 (99th Congress), agreed to February 27, 1986, is amended by striking all after the resolving clause and inserting the following:

“SECTION 1. BROADCASTING AND RECORDING PROCEDURES OF THE SENATE.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Senate hereby authorizes and directs that there be broadcast coverage of proceedings in the Senate Chamber and recordings of such proceedings.

“(b) TYPE OF COVERAGE.—The broadcast coverage described in subsection (a) shall be provided—

“(1) in accordance with provisions of this resolution;

“(2) continuously, except for any time when the Senate is conducting a quorum call, or when a meeting with closed doors is ordered; and

“(3) subject to the provisions pertaining to the Senate gallery contained in the following rules of the Standing Rules of the Senate:

“(A) Paragraphs 6 and 7 of rule XIX.

“(B) Paragraph 1(n) of rule XXV.

“(C) Paragraph (2) of rule XXXIII.

“SEC. 2. SUPERVISION OF BROADCAST COVERAGE.

“The broadcast coverage of Senate proceedings shall be supervised and operated by the Senate.

“SEC. 3. VIDEO BROADCAST COVERAGE.

“The video broadcast coverage of Senate proceedings shall follow the Presiding Officer and Senators who are speaking, clerks, and the Chaplain of the Senate except during rollcall votes, when the cameras shall show the entire Chamber.

“SEC. 4. BROADCASTING AND RECORDING IMPLEMENTATION.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The broadcast coverage and recording of Senate proceedings shall be implemented as provided in this section.

“(b) ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL DUTIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, shall—

“(A) construct necessary facilities for broadcast coverage (including a control

room and the modification of Senate sound and lighting fixtures);

“(B) employ necessary expert consultants; and

“(C) acquire and install all necessary equipment and facilities to—

“(i) produce a broadcast-quality ‘live’ audio and color video signal of Senate proceedings; and

“(ii) provide an archive-quality audio and color video recording of Senate proceedings.

“(2) APPROVAL REQUIRED.—In carrying out the duties specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (1), the Architect of the Capitol shall not enter into any contract for the purchase or installation of equipment, for employment of any consultant, or for the provision of training to any person, unless the same shall first have been approved by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

“(c) SERGEANT AT ARMS AND DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE DUTIES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate shall—

“(A) employ such staff as may be necessary, working in conjunction with the Senate Recording Studio, to operate and maintain all broadcast equipment installed pursuant to this resolution; and

“(B)(i) make recordings of Senate proceedings; and

“(ii) make copies of recordings as requested by the Secretary of the Senate under paragraph (3) and, as soon thereafter as possible, transmit the copies of recordings to the Secretary.

“(2) COMPLIANCE WITH SENATE RULES AND PROCEDURES.—The Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate, in carrying out the duties specified in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1), shall comply with appropriate Senate procurement and other regulations.

“(3) AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE.—The Secretary of the Senate is authorized to obtain from the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate recordings of Senate proceedings and, as soon thereafter as possible, transmit such recordings to the Librarian of Congress and to the Archivist of the United States.

“SEC. 5. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF RECORDINGS.

“(a) PROHIBITION ON USE FOR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN PURPOSES.—The use of any recording of Senate proceedings for political campaign purposes is strictly prohibited.

“(b) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), any recording of Senate proceedings furnished to any person or organization shall be made on the condition, agreed to in writing, that the recording shall not be used for political campaign purposes.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—Any public or commercial news organization furnished a recording described in paragraph (1) shall be subject to the provisions of paragraph (1) but shall not be required to enter into a written agreement.

“SEC. 6. AVAILABILITY OF BROADCAST COVERAGE.

“Broadcast coverage of Senate proceedings shall be made available on a ‘live’ basis and free of charge to—

“(1) any accredited member of the Senate Radio and Television Correspondents Gallery;

“(2) the cable system of the Architect of the Capitol; and

“(3) such other news gathering, educational, or information distributing entity as may be authorized by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

“SEC. 7. BROADCASTING PROHIBITION.

“Official noting of a Senator’s absence from committees while the Senate is broadcasting is prohibited.

“SEC. 8. CLOSED CAPTIONING.

“Closed captioning for broadcast coverage of Senate proceedings shall be provided as directed by the Committee on Rules and Administration.

“SEC. 9. BROADCASTING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Any changes in the regulations made by this resolution shall be made only by Senate resolution.

“(b) COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION.—The Committee on Rules and Administration may adopt such procedures and such regulations, which do not contravene the regulations made by this resolution, as the Committee deems necessary to assure the proper implementation of the purposes of this resolution.

“SEC. 10. FUNDING.

“Such funds as may be necessary (but not in excess of \$3,500,000) to carry out this resolution shall be expended from the contingent fund of the Senate.”

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Senate Resolution 444 (99th Congress), agreed to July 15, 1986, is repealed.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 44—DIRECTING THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL H.R. 5009

Mr. REED submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 44

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall make the following corrections:

(1) In the table of contents in section 2(b), strike the item relating to section 5705 and insert the following:

Sec. 5705. Readmission requirements for servicemembers.

(2) In the table of section 601 regarding basic pay for enlisted members, in the entry relating to a member in pay grade E-5 with over 2 years, strike “3,317.10” and insert “3,466.50”.

(3) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 3 years, strike “3,480.90” and insert “3,637.50”.

(4) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 4 years, strike “3,638.40” and insert “3,802.20”.

(5) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 6 years, strike “3,789.00” and insert “3,959.40”.

(6) In such table, in the entry relating to a member in such pay grade with over 8 years, strike “3,964.20” and insert “4,142.40”.

(7) In the table of contents preceding section 5705 and insert the following:

Sec. 5705. Readmission requirements for servicemembers.

(8) Strike section 5705 and insert the following:

SEC. 5705. READMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS.

Subsection (a) of section 484C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091c(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) DEFINITION OF SERVICE IN THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.—In this section, the term ‘service in the uniformed services’ means service (whether voluntary or involuntary) on active duty in the Armed Forces, including such service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve.”

(9) Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2025 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.”

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 45—AFFIRMING THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR SYRIA

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 45

Whereas in December 2024, following decades of pressure and sacrifice by the Syrian people and from international condemnation, the al Assad family’s era of heinous war crimes and authoritarian rule ended and Bashar Assad fled to Moscow, where Putin granted him political asylum;

Whereas, as a result of the opportunity his departure has presented to the Syrian people, the United States reaffirms its support to all the Syrian people, and urges an inclusive and peaceful transition by Syrians, for Syria.

Whereas national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples, including Alawites, Armenians, Druze, Yezidis, Kurds, Shabak, Turkmen, and historic Christian communities (including Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and Melkite peoples) among others, have been integral components of the long cultural lineage of Syria;

Whereas these same religious and ethnic minorities have made, and continue to make, invaluable and significant contributions to the social, economic, and political fabric of societies across the Middle East and the world, including the United States;

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (referred to in this preamble as “ISIS”) is responsible for carrying out a brutal campaign of violence against members of all faiths in Syria and Iraq;

Whereas ethnic and religious minorities were subjected to innumerable atrocities by ISIS, including forced religious conversion, kidnapping, slavery, human trafficking, unlawful forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, torture, sexual violence, and sex trafficking, among other crimes;

Whereas the Secretary of State declared on March 17, 2016, and on August 15, 2017, that ISIS is responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and other atrocities against religious and ethnic minority groups in Syria and Iraq, including Shia Muslims, Christians, and Yezidis, among other religious and ethnic groups;

Whereas the Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-300) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to ensure that assistance for religious and ethnic minorities is directed towards those who—

(1) have the greatest need, including minorities who the Secretary of State declared were targeted for genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes; and

(2) have been identified as being at risk of persecution, forced migration, genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes;

Whereas members of these religious and ethnic minority communities continue to

face daily insecurity, discrimination, hardship, and violence from state and non-state actors;

Whereas Syrian opposition forces have repeatedly signaled their intent to respect the rights and dignity of religious and ethnic minorities in Syria, but there have been incidents of members of such minorities fleeing their homes while there is documented violence and expulsions against Kurdish communities by elements of the Syrian National Army;

Whereas the restoration and stabilization of all regions of Syria will provide an opportunity for its longstanding diverse ethnic and religious communities to flourish;

Whereas the Syrian Democratic Forces (referred to in this preamble as the "SDF") has been a critical partner to United States and allied counter-ISIS and broader counterterrorism efforts in Syria, and the United States should continue to support and partner with the SDF;

Whereas the SDF has played a critical role in securing and maintaining ISIS detention facilities and ensuring that ISIS terrorists do not pose a renewed threat to the region or United States allies or partners;

Whereas the search continues for Austin Bennett Tice, an American journalist, who was kidnapped in Syria on August 14, 2012; and

Whereas the Syrian Democratic Council—
(1) serves as the civil administration for much of northeast Syria; and
(2) has provided critical public services and maintained civilian infrastructure in that region throughout the Syrian conflict: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) commits to protecting and upholding the internationally recognized human rights of members of all religious and ethnic minority communities in Syria;

(2) calls for an inclusive and peaceful political transition process in Syria that preserves and protects the rights and livelihoods of all Syria communities, including its religious and ethnic minority communities;

(3) supports the preservation, documentation, and restoration of—

(A) religious and cultural heritage sites in Syria; and

(B) community buildings of religious and ethnic minority communities in the region;

(4) calls upon all state and non-state actors—

(A) to cease any and all support for, or commission of, all current violence in Syria; and

(B) to refrain from future violence and acts of reprisal or repression against all Syrians, including religious and ethnic minority communities in Syria;

(5) encourages the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development—

(A) to advocate for the protection of religious and ethnic minorities in Syria; and

(B) to engage in appropriate steps, including targeted sanctions relief and development programming to support humanitarian needs, development, and reconstruction in Syria, including in religious and ethnic minority communities; and

(6) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to finding and securing the release of Austin Tice.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 46—PROVIDING FOR CORRECTIONS IN THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 4367

Mr. CARPER (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following con-

current resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 46

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That in the enrollment of S. 4367, an Act to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes, the Secretary of the Senate shall make the following corrections:

(1) In paragraph (2) of section 203(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. 2231(d)) (as added by section 1109(a)(3)(C)), strike "maximum Federal cost" and insert "Federal share of the cost".

(2) In section 204(c)(1) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. 2232(c)(1)) (as amended by section 1110(a)(1)), strike "United States funds" and insert "United States".

(3) In section 1142(3), strike "in paragraph (4) and inserting the following" and insert "by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following".

(4) In section 1203(a)(1), strike "food" and insert "flood".

(5) In paragraph (2) of section 1113(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 4232; 110 Stat. 3719; 136 Stat. 3781) (as added by section 1355(1)(B))—

(A) in the paragraph heading, strike "RECONNAISSANCE STUDY" and insert "PRE-DESIGN PLANNING COSTS"; and

(B) strike "a reconnaissance study carried out by the Secretary" and insert "pre-design planning costs".

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3343. Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for Mr. DAINES) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3373, to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the time period during which licensees are required to commence construction of certain hydropower projects.

SA 3344. Mr. BLUMENTHAL proposed an amendment to the bill S. 5136, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3343. Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for Mr. DAINES) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 3373, to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the time period during which licensees are required to commence construction of certain hydropower projects; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF TIME TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION OF CERTAIN HYDROPOWER PROJECTS.

(a) DEFINITION OF COVERED PROJECT.—In this section, the term "covered project" means a hydropower project with respect to which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a license before March 13, 2020.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF EXTENSION.—Notwithstanding section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806), on the request of a licensee of a covered project, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may, after reasonable notice and for good cause shown, extend in accordance with subsection (c) the period during which the licensee is required to commence construction of the covered

project for an additional 4 years beyond the 8 years authorized by that section.

(c) PERIOD OF EXTENSION.—An extension of time to commence construction of a covered project under subsection (b) shall—

(1) begin on the date on which the final extension of the period for commencement of construction granted to the licensee under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) expires; and

(2) end on the date that is 4 years after the latest date to which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is authorized to extend the period for commencement of construction under that section.

(d) REINSTATEMENT OF EXPIRED LICENSE.—If the time period required under section 13 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 806) to commence construction of a covered project expires after December 31, 2023, and before the date of enactment of this Act—

(1) the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission may reinstate the license for the applicable project effective as of the date of expiration of the license; and

(2) the extension authorized under subsection (b) shall take effect on the date of that expiration.

SA 3344. Mr. BLUMENTHAL proposed an amendment to the bill S. 5136, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Plum Island Preservation Study Act".

SEC. 2. PLUM ISLAND PRESERVATION STUDY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(2) STUDY AREA.—The term "study area" means the consolidated Federal asset commonly known as "Plum Island" in the State of New York and all improvements on and to the Federal asset, including—

(A) the Orient Point facility; and

(B) all real and personal property, all transportation assets, and all associated infrastructure that support—

(i) Plum Island operations; and

(ii) access to Plum Island.

(b) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a study to determine the appropriateness of—

(A) designating all or a portion of the study area as a unit of the National Park System or a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System; or

(B) providing protection for the resources of the study area by other means.

(2) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(A) evaluate the national significance of the study area;

(B) consult with interested Federal agencies, State or local governmental entities, private and nonprofit organizations, or any other interested individuals; and

(C) identify cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives considered.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report that describes—

(A) the findings and conclusions of the study; and

(B) any recommendations of the Secretary.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator Chuck Grassley, intend to object to proceeding to H.R. 8753, a bill to direct the United States Postal Service to designate single, unique ZIP Codes for certain communities, and for other purposes, dated December 18, 2024.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BOOKER. 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 FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 10 a.m., to consider pending nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session

of the Senate on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 2 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 18, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the privileges of the floor be granted to the following member of Senator SINEMA's staff: Kelsie Hovenden.

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

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I am grateful to stand here tonight.

I ask unanimous consent that floor access be granted to my communications director Jeff Giertz, the father of two amazing daughters and whose Christmas card was so moving to me. He should be home with them at this late hour, but I hope you will give him permission to be on the floor without objection.

And to my chief of staff Veronica Duron, who does not have two beautiful daughters but who has a lot of plants that need watering, she should probably be home doing that, but I

would like to get her permission to be on the Senate floor as well.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today momentarily, that it recess until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 19; further, that all time during adjournment, recess, morning business, leader remarks, and consideration of the House message to accompany S. 4367 count as postcloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 82.

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

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:38 p.m., recessed until Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING DR. JENNIFER
OLSEN

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Jennifer Olsen for her many years of outstanding service promoting the health and wellbeing of caregivers in Georgia and across the Nation. As 2024 comes to a close, Dr. Olsen will retire as Chief Executive Officer of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers (RCI) after six years of impactful service.

Under the leadership of Dr. Olsen, RCI, which is based at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia, has called for a robust public health strategy to support our Nation's caregivers at all levels of government. Following in the footsteps of our former first lady and RCI's late founder Mrs. Rosalynn Carter, Dr. Olsen led the call to place caregivers at the heart of our Nation's public health strategy. By shedding light on the stories and everyday struggles of caregivers and their families, Dr. Olsen also championed the creation of an Office of Caregiver Health in the federal government—an initiative I am pleased to support. Year-on-year, Dr. Olsen made tremendous strides in her efforts to improve working conditions for caregivers in every state in the Nation.

Prior to joining RCI in 2018, Dr. Olsen managed the Ending Pandemics in Our Lifetime initiative at the Skoll Global Threats Fund; co-created the internationally utilized Epihack™ process; and served as Fusion Division Director in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Olsen also directed disease surveillance activities for G-8 and G-20 summits, State of the Union Addresses, the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, and Democratic and Republican National Conventions. In addition, she advised on the development of a Federal Interagency Information Collection Plan for the 2009 H1N1 Influenza outbreak and served with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Dr. Olsen has accomplished so much throughout her life and career, but none of it would have been possible without the Grace of God and the love and support of her family.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said the purpose of life "is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." Dr. Olsen has lived a life well spent, serving those who care for others. Her unwavering service has transformed RCI, enabling it to successfully carry on Rosalynn Carter's legacy on behalf of family caregivers nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian; and me, along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District, in recognizing Dr. Jennifer Olsen's extraordinary career of service to

America's caregivers. May God continue to bless her and her family as she moves to the next chapter of her remarkable life.

TRIBUTE TO LESA SOBEK

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Lesa Sobek, who is stepping down from the Menifee City Council after many years of serving in that role. Lesa has been a true leader in Menifee for decades and served as an effective advocate for her community.

Along with her husband, Jim, and three children, Lesa has been a resident of Menifee, California, for more than 30 years. Lesa spent many years working for the Menifee Union School District in various roles, where she helped develop a literacy program known as GREAT (Grandparents, Reading, Enriching, and Tutoring). Lesa successfully advocated for the establishment of the Menifee Military Banner Program, which honors the community's veterans and military service members from past to present.

After serving as on the Planning Commission, Lesa was elected to serve on the Menifee City Council in 2015. She was later re-elected to serve as the Council Member representing District 3 in 2016 and again in 2020. On the Council, Lesa worked with her colleagues and city staff to support residents and local businesses. She has championed youth programs, senior citizens, and increased awareness about domestic violence and backed many efforts for Menifee's local shelter.

Lesa clearly possesses a passionate belief in public service and a dedication to the community she has served so faithfully. I know I speak on behalf of all residents in expressing my heartfelt thanks and praise for Lesa's significant contributions to Menifee. I wish Lesa and her family the very best in the years to come.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHONTEL M. BROWN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in the House of Representatives, the Congressional Black Caucus and people across the country in extending my gratitude, appreciation, and congratulations to the great Congresswoman BARBARA LEE as she prepares to leave the House of Representatives.

As a friend, mentor, and collaborator to so many of us, Congresswoman LEE will be truly

missed in the House of Representatives. However, Congresswoman LEE's legacy and impact will long endure—not just in these halls, but in the lives of the people that she fought for.

I am honored to have served alongside Congresswoman LEE. Her incredible life and career connects us to so many landmark moments and shining heroes of the fight for civil rights and justice, including Shirley Chisholm, John Lewis, and Ronald Dellums.

Congresswoman LEE championed causes that were right before they were popular, causes that were difficult before they were easy, and causes that were marginalized before they were mainstream.

As we face the inauguration of a new president, there will be calls for Democrats to capitulate on our principles. However, Congresswoman LEE showed us time and time again that we should always listen to our constituents, vigorously advance our values, and never stop standing up for liberty and justice for all. We endure by championing what is enduring.

Mr. Speaker, we need more Barbara Lees in this institution. As we celebrate her legacy, may we all draw upon her courage, compassion, and foresight, and her unstinting defense of the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.

I thank Congresswoman LEE for all that she has done for our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Ms. BROWNLEY. Mr. Speaker, during the week of September 9th to September 12th, I was unable to travel to Washington, D.C. due to an illness. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call No. 401—YEA; Roll Call No. 402—YEA; Roll Call No. 403—NAY; Roll Call No. 404—NAY; Roll Call No. 405—YEA; Roll Call No. 406—YEA; Roll Call No. 407—YEA; Roll Call No. 408—NAY; Roll Call No. 409—YEA; Roll Call No. 410—YEA; Roll Call No. 411—NAY; Roll Call No. 412—YEA; Roll Call No. 413—NAY; Roll Call No. 414—YEA; Roll Call No. 415—NAY; Roll Call No. 416—YEA; and Roll Call No. 417—NAY.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF VAN A. HURST

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank my constituent, Van A. Hurst of Kent, Washington, for his advocacy on an important issue that will impact thousands of transportation workers. This

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

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

week, the House of Representatives will consider the Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act.

This legislation addresses a long-standing issue affecting transportation workers like truck drivers, pipeline operators, longshoremen, and warehouse managers. These workers are often required to obtain multiple TSA-managed credentials, each with different expiration dates, fees, and redundant background checks. Not only is this process duplicative and time-consuming, but workers also bear the financial burden of maintaining these credentials, preventing them from fully participating in the workforce.

The Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act cuts through red tape by allowing workers to apply existing valid background checks to multiple credentialing programs. This will significantly reduce costs and administrative hassle for these essential workers.

Mr. Hurst, a former truck driver and Teamster, met with my office to share his expertise and firsthand experience with this issue. His advocacy played a key role in shaping this bipartisan, commonsense legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as the House considers this critical legislation, I want to thank Mr. Hurst again for his leadership on this matter. It is an honor representing him in Congress, and I am proud that this legislation has passed the Senate and is on its way to becoming law, bringing much-needed relief to our Nation's transportation workers.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JUDGE LAURINE BLAKE

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Laurine J. "Lauri" Blake of Bonham, Texas. Judge Blake has faithfully dedicated herself to serving and protecting our community.

Judge Blake received her bachelor's degree in criminal justice studies from the University of North Dakota in 1987. She began her distinguished public service career as a police officer for the City of Dallas after graduating at the top of her police academy class. In 1993, Judge Blake earned her Juris Doctor from Southern Methodist University School of Law and was selected to serve as the Assistant Criminal District Attorney for Collin County. Over the next eleven years, she rose up the ranks to become the First Assistant District Attorney in Grayson County and successfully helped prosecute numerous criminals to keep our communities safe.

In 2004, Judge Blake was elected as District Judge for the 336th Judicial District Court in Fannin County, making history as the first female judge elected to this district court. Under her leadership, she established a rehabilitation program for parolees struggling with addiction and worked closely with Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates to protect child welfare. For her outstanding work, she received the Better Leader Award from the Texoma Council of Governments and the Texas CASA Judicial Innovation and Leadership Award. I am pleased to recognize Judge Blake today

for the positive impact she has made on our community.

I have requested the United States flag to be flown over our Nation's Capitol in recognition of Judge Blake's exceptional service to the people of North Texas. I thank her for all she has done.

CELEBRATING THE SERVICE OF THE HONORABLE MICHAEL C. BURGESS

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. MCCAUL. Madam Speaker, it's a privilege to recognize my colleague and dear friend, Congressman MICHAEL BURGESS. For over 20 years, Dr. BURGESS has served with dedication, determination and an unbreakable commitment to his constituents, Texas, and to our great nation.

When MICHAEL came to Congress, he brought with him a physician's expertise, a sharp intellect, and a deep sense of duty. But beyond those skills, he brought something rare in this chamber: humility and grace. Whether working on complex healthcare policies, immigration issues or standing up for his district, MICHAEL has always been a steady hand and a thoughtful voice.

I've seen MICHAEL's leadership firsthand, especially when he stepped up to chair the powerful Rules Committee. In his first act as the Rules Committee chairman, he achieved something remarkable—passing the most bipartisan rule in congressional history. That's pretty rare. In fact, I think it may be the first and only time.

But MICHAEL's impact goes beyond the Rules Committee and legislative wins. His work with families, especially those facing life's hardest battles, speaks volumes about his character.

MICHAEL worked with me and joined the Congressional Childhood Cancer Caucus that I chair, to help pursue legislation that would bring new and innovative care to help eradicate childhood cancer. He introduced me to Sadie Keller, a Childhood Cancer survivor and my star lobbyist. Together, we wrote a book called *Better Angels*, detailing our journey together. MICHAEL helped me give a voice to fighters like Sadie, who never had a voice in Congress. As a physician, he knew the importance of fighting for these children. His work with the Childhood Cancer Caucus has brought hope to so many, and that's a legacy we will never forget.

MICHAEL's intellect, judgment, and his demeanor will be missed. He has shown us what it means to serve with integrity and dedication.

I thank him for his service, his friendship, and his unwavering commitment to the House of Representatives, Texas, and the United States.

HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

HON. JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN. Mr. Speaker, for the last eight years, I've had the privilege and honor to serve the people of Puerto Rico as their sole Member of Congress.

During this time, we faced significant challenges. In early September 2017, a few months into my first term, Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Irma, followed two weeks later by Hurricane Maria—the strongest hurricane to make landfall on the Island in over 80 years—which completely devastated our communities, destroyed our infrastructure, and produced the largest power blackout in U.S. history.

In late 2019, Puerto Rico's southern region began experiencing a seismic sequence that ended with a 6.4 magnitude earthquake on January 7th, 2020. This further damaged public and private infrastructure and left residents of the area in a constant state of fear and uncertainty.

And in 2020, like the rest of the world, we were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These were all formidable challenges for Puerto Rico that needed to be addressed with a strong sense of urgency, and we met them head-on.

Working alongside my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, we secured historic levels of federal funding to assist Puerto Rico's recovery process. These include nearly \$73.5 billion in hurricane-relief funding, \$1.6 billion to address the impact of the earthquakes, and close to \$44.1 billion in pandemic relief allocations.

As we worked to respond to these emergencies, we also had to focus on other competing but equally important priorities. Chief among them was addressing the Medicaid funding gap that provides health care coverage for 1.5 million residents in Puerto Rico.

I'm proud that during my time in Congress we were able to secure \$29.5 billion to stabilize Puerto Rico's Medicaid program while increasing the federal matching rate, more recently from 55 to 76 percent.

I'm also proud that we were able to address longstanding disparities under federal programs to help combat poverty and grow the economy. For example, we were able to include Puerto Rico in the Child Tax Credit for families with one or two children, who did not previously qualify, and secured a \$600 million annual federal funding allocation to supplement the Island's local Earned Income Tax Credit.

I'm also pleased to have secured \$33.7 million in Community Project Funding for 29 local projects across Puerto Rico. And as a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I supported the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, under which Puerto Rico is expected to receive at least \$2.2 billion over five years.

I've also introduced legislation to provide the Island equal treatment under critical programs like SNAP, Medicaid and Medicare, SSI, and EITC.

I've led efforts to resolve our political status dilemma and end our territorial status. This is

the underlying reason behind most of the social, economic, and fiscal challenges we've faced and what allows the federal government to treat our 3.2 million American citizens unequally under federal laws and programs.

I led negotiations on the Puerto Rico Status Act, which passed the House with bipartisan support in December 2022 and would have authorized a binding plebiscite among the constitutionally viable, nonterritorial status options—statehood or independence.

This bill served as the basis for the local referendum held this past November 5th, in which Puerto Rico supported statehood with 57 percent of the votes. This is the fourth time since 2012 that we have voted to express our desire to become a permanent part of the Union.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the issues I have worked on, but I just want to thank the people of Puerto Rico for giving me the opportunity to serve as their voice in Congress.

I also thank my colleagues, who've worked with me, visited the Island, and have taken the time to understand and support our needs and federal priorities.

I thank my family, especially my husband, José, and our children, who inspire me to work harder every day.

There is much to be done and much progress to look forward to in Puerto Rico. As I begin to serve as Governor early next year, I look forward to remaining engaged with Congress to continue advocating for the Island, responsibly expedite the use of recovery funds, and foster economic growth.

HONORING DR. DANIEL N. BAKER
FOR THREE DECADES OF OUT-
STANDING LEADERSHIP AND
SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT

HON. JOE NEGUSE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Dr. Daniel N. Baker, who, for the last three decades, has served as the Director of the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP), one of the longest-established and top-funded research institutes at the University of Colorado Boulder. In this position, Director Baker has been instrumental in advancing LASP and the university into an epicenter of space science research and aerospace workforce development crucial to Colorado and our Nation.

Director Baker simultaneously serves as a professor in three University of Colorado Boulder departments, including Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences, Aerospace Engineering Sciences, and Physics. During his tenure, Director Baker has published more than 900 papers, edited nine books, and won numerous prestigious awards for his research and leadership. He also has continuously contributed to the international advancement of topics in space physics.

Director Baker has built LASP into one of the top academic space research centers and the only one in the world to send an instrument to explore every planet in our solar system. Under his leadership, LASP grew from approximately 180 to 750 employees, about

one-quarter of whom are students. Over the years, the institute has provided hands-on training on numerous NASA missions for hundreds of CU Boulder students. Some of these students have returned to LASP as employees, while others now work at NASA centers and in aerospace businesses across the country, extending Director Baker's legacy for decades to come.

Under his guidance, CU's laboratory has helped revolutionize our understanding of the cosmos, conducting numerous important missions, including NASA's Cassini mission to Saturn, the New Horizons mission to Pluto, and SNOE, one of the space agency's first small satellite missions.

Director Baker's contributions will continue to be felt in Colorado, across the country, and throughout the world for decades to come. I want to congratulate him as he shifts to a new focus on space policy at the university and thank him for his stellar service to our community, Colorado, and the Nation.

HONORING REPRESENTATIVE
CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

HON. DAN NEWHOUSE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a dedicated leader, public servant, and good friend—Congresswoman CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS.

For nearly two decades, CATHY has been a champion for the people of Washington's 5th Congressional District and a powerful voice for rural America. From delivering for our veterans to advancing clean energy initiatives, she has left a lasting mark on our Nation.

Outside of her hard work as a Member of Congress, CATHY is a good friend. Over the years, we have joined forces in protecting the Pacific Northwest's hydropower operations and even hosted a high-turnout "Save the Dams" rally together in 2022 for the Lower Snake River Dams. I'll never forget shaking cowbells as we rallied the public behind our precious dams.

As she begins her well-deserved retirement, I extend my gratitude for all the work she has done for the Washington Delegation and wish her the very best for this next chapter of her life. I thank CATHY, for her service to our Nation and the communities across Washington's 5th Congressional District. She will be missed.

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN JOHN
MCKEE SPRATT, JR.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great South Carolinian and good friend. Congressman John McKee Spratt, Jr. transitioned to eternal rest on December 14, 2024, in York, South Carolina. His compassion, generosity, and wisdom will be remembered and cherished by all who were fortunate to meet him.

John Spratt was born on November 1, 1942. He grew up in York, South Carolina, a small

mill town where his family has roots dating back to the Revolutionary War. John was a precocious child, known for his inquisitiveness and curiosity. After graduating from York High School in 1960, where he served as Student Body President, John attended Davidson College and pursued a degree in history. John's peers at Davidson saw the same intellect in him as his friends did in York, and similarly elected him Student Body President of the university. After graduating, he studied philosophy, politics, and economics on a Marshall Scholarship at Oxford University before attending Yale Law School in 1966. Following law school, he served three years as an Army Captain at the Pentagon, earning a Meritorious Service Medal. In 1971, John returned home to York to practice law at his father's firm and pursue various business interests. Over the next decade, he became a leader in the York community.

John's exposure to politics came at a young age. His father was an influential figure in the York County and South Carolina Democratic Parties, and he encouraged John's participation in the political process. Although John served as a delegate to the 1964 Democratic National Convention, it wasn't until nearly two decades later, in 1982, that he pursued elected office. When Representative Ken Holland of South Carolina's 5th Congressional District decided not to seek reelection, John won the Democratic primary handily and breezed through the general election to become the 5th District's Representative. He would hold that seat for the next 28 years.

A man of profound decency, extraordinary intelligence, and an unmatched work ethic, John became one of Congress's most effective legislators. He never feared working across the aisle to get things done and perfected the art of finding common ground while standing firm on his principles. His unique ability to find that common ground allowed him to fend off challengers time and again even as the political environment in South Carolina shifted beneath him.

During his service on the House Armed Services Committee, John chaired multiple subcommittees and eventually became the second highest-ranking Democrat. His interest in nuclear issues led him to lead the first foreign delegation to the Soviet Union to tour nuclear weapons plants, and he played a central role in passing the 1992 moratorium on U.S. nuclear testing. John also played a key role in helping the Catawba Tribe gain long-sought federal recognition, bringing together Catawba leaders and local landowners to negotiate a deal that met both sides' approval.

John's proudest accomplishments in Congress came when he assumed the powerful role as the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee in 1997. When President Bill Clinton expressed support for a balanced budget, John and his friend Erskine Bowles, Clinton's Chief of Staff, were tasked with negotiating with Republicans on a bill that preserved critical investments in education, health care, and social programs while cutting government spending. The resulting Balanced Budget Act of 1997 created the first federal budget surplus in 30 years and the budget hasn't been balanced since.

When Democrats regained the House majority in 2006, John became chair of the House Budget Committee. When President Barack Obama made health care reform a

central focus of his first term, it was the House Budget Committee, with John as Chair, that helped shepherd the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act through Congress in 2010. John knew his role in pushing the bill forward would likely cost him his seat in Congress—and it did—but it was a price he was willing to pay for the good of the country.

John is survived by his childhood sweetheart and wife of 56 years, Jane Stacy Spratt; three daughters, Susan, Sarah, and Catherine; and five grandchildren. When he retired from Congress, John returned to his home community of York and served as a Visiting Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at Winthrop University and on the board of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Mr. Speaker, serving in this Body with John Spratt was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. He was a friend and confidant, a colleague and counselor, a mentor and partner. His love of country and respect for humanity were always on display. He was an inconspicuous genius and the most ordinary, extraordinary person I have ever known. I will always remember his wise counsel, quick wit, and endless kindness. John represented the best of America, and America is better off because of him. We will miss John dearly, and may he rest in peace.

RECOGNIZING JUDGE WILLIE EARL
LOCKETTE

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and pleasure to extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to an exceptional community leader and outstanding public servant, Judge Willie Earl Lockette, on the occasion of his retirement as the Chief Judge of the Superior Court of Dougherty County.

A native of Turner County, Georgia, Judge Lockette received his bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Fort Valley State College (now University) where he began his lifelong journey as a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Following his time at Fort Valley State College, Judge Lockette completed his juris doctorate degree from the University of Illinois, College of Law at Champaign.

For almost three decades, Judge Lockette has been a distinguished jurist and public servant in Dougherty County. He has built quite an impressive career, which began with his position as a Staff Attorney with the Albany, Georgia Regional Office of Georgia Legal Services Programs, Inc. (GLSP), where he litigated federal and state cases on behalf of indigent Georgians. In 1991, he was appointed as an Associate Judge of the Magistrate Court of Dougherty County, and in 1993, he was appointed to Chief Judge. In 1996, Lockette declared his candidacy for Judge of the Superior Court of Dougherty County, and won a decisive victory over a well-established, well-financed opponent. Judge Lockette's win was historic. With his election he became the first African American to win a county-wide contested election in the Dougherty Judicial Circuit. Judge Lockette would go on to win six additional terms, be-

coming the Chief Judge of the Superior Court in 2009.

In addition to his legal background, Judge Lockette has served in several other leadership roles in the Albany-Dougherty County community. In 2001, he answered the call to gospel ministry and went on to become an ordained minister. For 12 years, he served as a Pastor's Assistant at the New Grove Missionary Baptist Church. Today, Judge Lockette is the Pastor of the Greater Pines Chapel Missionary Baptist Church where he continues to shepherd his congregation and serve the greater community. Additionally, for nearly 10 years, Judge Lockette served as an Adjunct Professor of Political Science, History and Public Administration at Albany State University.

In addition to his extensive career, Judge Lockette was the recipient of several awards and distinctions. He was the inaugural recipient of the coveted Dan Bradley Award for Public Service and has also been nominated for appointments to several judgeships, to include the Georgia Court of Appeals, the United States Magistrate Court, and the United States District Court.

Judge Lockette has accomplished so much throughout his life, but none of this would have been possible without the Grace of God and the love and support of his wife, Helen Hamilton Lockette and their four children, 12 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren.

Sir Winston Churchill often said: "You make your living by what you get; you make your life by what you give." Southwest Georgia is truly a better place because of Judge Willie Lockette's service to his community as an attorney, judge, pastor, professor, and neighbor. His dedication and his expertise as a public servant are unparalleled, but his heart for helping others has made his life's work truly special.

On a personal note, Judge Lockette has been my friend for many years. He never told me what he thought I wanted to hear; he told me what he thought I needed to hear. I will forever cherish his sage counsel and advice which has been invaluable to me as I have served in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 765,000 people of Georgia's Second Congressional District, in extending our sincerest appreciation and best wishes to Judge Willie Earl Lockette upon the occasion of his retirement from an outstanding career of public service.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN JEFFRIES

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and congratulate Riverside County Supervisor Kevin Jeffries for his 12 years of dedicated service to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. Kevin will be stepping down from the Board of Supervisors this month, marking the end of a decades-long career in public service.

Kevin has been a resident of Riverside County since 1971 and was a successful small business owner. His first foray in public service came in 1977 as a Volunteer Fire

Captain for the Riverside County Fire Department. Just a few years later, in 1980, Kevin was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of a Local Park & Recreation District. Eager to improve local water infrastructure and protect residents from water and sewer rate increases, Kevin successfully ran for a seat on the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Board of Directors in 1990, and on the Western Municipal Water District Board of Directors in 1998.

In 2006, Kevin was chosen by voters to represent Riverside County in the California State Assembly. In Sacramento, Kevin took on the challenging task of fighting to stop the regulatory and tax onslaught on California's small businesses. In 2012, Kevin was elected to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. As Supervisor, Kevin has made an effort to balance Riverside County's growth with investments in necessary infrastructure and public safety. Thanks to his advocacy, Riverside County continues to be a source of affordable housing, safe family-friendly communities, and economic opportunity, and is well-positioned for years to come.

On a personal note, I count Kevin as a close friend. I have appreciated his advice, humor, and support over the years and look forward to many more. I thank Kevin for his friendship, leadership, and his lasting impact in creating a better future for Riverside County.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
OWATONNA MAYOR TOM KUNTZ

HON. BRAD FINSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. FINSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Tom Kuntz, a friend and fellow southern Minnesotan who has served the Owatonna community for the past twenty years.

In 2004, Tom was elected Mayor of Owatonna, where he found his true calling in public service. Throughout his five-term tenure, Owatonna experienced remarkable growth, with a revitalization of the city's downtown area, the relocation of Owatonna Hospital, an expanding industrial park, completion of the four-lane U.S. Highway 14 project between Owatonna and Dodge Center, and the construction of a new, state-of-the-art high school—just to name a few.

Tom has been a fixture in Owatonna for decades, fiercely advocating for the city's economic growth and development, bringing his vision to the role of mayor. A good leader knows it's not about the position, it's about listening to people. Tom listens more than he speaks, and in his twenty years as mayor, has undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of many Owatonnsans, displaying the kind of leadership we should show to our kids and grandkids. He is a true embodiment of who we are in southern Minnesota.

Tom not only leaves behind enormous shoes to fill, but also a legacy that Owatonna will remember for generations.

I congratulate Tom on his well-deserved retirement, and wishing him and his wife, Shelby, the best in this next chapter.

CONGRATULATING THE MACON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM ON WINNING STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JOHN W. ROSE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Macon County High School football team for securing their first state championship.

The Tigers advance to the playoffs often. They've done so 20 times in the last 55 years. But this year they captured the big Class 4A BlueCross Bowl Title after defeating Melrose 45 to 15.

Twin brothers, Zach and Gabe Borders are credited as standouts. Gabe ran for 117 yards and completed his team's only pass for a touchdown. His brother, Zach, earned MVP after his 250-yard performance, which included four rushing scores in the second half. The Tigers were fortunate to have both brothers on the field, especially considering Zach has undergone surgery and pins after multiple breaks to his collarbone.

I would now like to recognize everyone who carried the team to victory. Players included: Anthony Johnson, Cooper Carlisle, Isaac McClard, Baylon Hesson, Zach Borders, Kelby Wheeler, Bradyn Hasse, Gabe Borders, Kelen Hire, Kilian Jetton, Ty Young, Michael Bentley, Andrew Comer, Corey Underwood, Bradley Crawford, Mathew Wheeley, Hunter Jones, Taylen Swaffer, Luke Gammon, Braylon Flowers, Brennan Flowers, Jayden Cook, Michael Pelico, Braxton Boles, Tanner Gilmore, Tre McClain, Dakota Ridgeway, Hadyn Hasse, Trey Gann, Roberto Perez, Logan Tirjan, Mathew Brawner, Koen Kindle, Lamoney Mosley, Cooper East, Kade McKinney, Eli Gammon, Kellan Craft, Corbin Stephens, Dakota Hackert, Nicholas Goodrich, Owen Pitts, Dawson Whittemore, Brody Frye, Ethan Parker, Levi Edgmon, Jaxon Frye, Bo Warner, Hunter Griggs, Cooper Dunn, Emmerson Hubbard, Gavin Johnson, Ethan West, Bryson Wauford, Javier Rodriguez, Courtland Shrum, Zvi Rotstein, Colton Clark, James Clark, Aedan Hopson, Brock Buckalew, Wyatt Walrond, Ruben Valdez, Dayton Demmink-Harwood, Christian Sanchez, Dylan Stone, Jeremiah Vaughn Gilpin, Tyler Mossbarger, Gael Amaral Sanchez, Dillon Crutchfield, and Camren Miller.

I'd also like to recognize Head Coach Kyle Shoulders and assistant coaches: Isaac Belton, Lionel Borders, Sean Corbitt, Chris Escamilla, Ethan Jenkins, Ty Lowhorn, Brandon Nix, Jack Painter, Brandon Robertson, Drew Scott, Eli Stephenson, Chase Whittemore, and Spencer Young.

I congratulate all the players, the coaches, and their families. And congratulations to all who prayed over the health of the senior class.

HONORING MRS. CLEOPATRIA PRYOR

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor an extraordinary woman, Mrs. Cleopatria Pryor, in celebration of her 100th birthday.

Mrs. Pryor, known as Opatria to her friends, has been an unwavering advocate for justice, equality, and civil rights, dedicating herself to ensuring a brighter future for generations of African Americans in her community. As we commemorate a century of life, we recognize her invaluable contributions to the civil rights movement and her lifelong commitment to service.

Born on December 29, 1924, in Lafayette County, Mississippi, Mrs. Pryor grew up witnessing firsthand the harsh realities of systemic racism, which sparked her determination to fight for change. As a young mother of 11, she acted to secure bus service for Black children in Marshall County, strengthening equal access to education. Her advocacy didn't stop there. In 1966, she played a pivotal role in integrating Holly High School, where her children became two of the first Black students to attend.

Mrs. Pryor also led efforts to increase voter registration in Marshall County, traveling door-to-door to ensure African Americans could exercise their right to vote. Her work was instrumental in the elections of Osborne Bell and Lawrence Autry who served as the first African American sheriff and school superintendent in the county.

Mrs. Pryor was a lifelong homemaker known for her gardening and cooking just as well as for instilling in her children the values of justice and service she held dear. Her legacy of courage, resilience, and advocacy continues to inspire generations, especially through her encouragement for others to engage in their communities and exercise their rights.

Today, we celebrate Mrs. Opatria Pryor not only for the profound impact she has made in her community but also for the countless lives she has touched with her compassion, leadership, and dedication to justice. She is a true pioneer, and her contributions will continue to inspire generations to come.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and legacy of Mrs. Opatria Pryor as she celebrates her 100th birthday. We are grateful for her tireless commitment to making the world a better place for all.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF HENRY C. GARRETT, JR

HON. MICHAEL CLOUD

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Henry C. Garrett, Jr., a devoted Chief of Police, Mayor, husband, and father who passed away on December 8, 2024, at the age of 84.

Mayor Garrett dedicated over 30 years to the Corpus Christi Police Department, rising

from patrolman in 1963 to Chief of Police in 1989, earning the title "*The People's Chief.*" After retiring in 1996, he continued serving his community as a three-term City Council Member and later as Mayor for two terms, from 2005 to 2009.

Above all, Mayor Garrett was a loving husband, father, and leader whose life exemplified service and a deep commitment to his community. His contributions have left a lasting impact on Corpus Christi, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, so many of America's public servants today—especially our police officers—have a tremendous responsibility of serving our constituents and to do so with grace and integrity. All who knew Henry Garrett would tell you: he exemplified what it meant to be a public servant. His was a life well lived.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to Mayor Garrett's family and all who were blessed to know him. May God bless and comfort them during this time.

JAMUL INDIAN VILLAGE LAND TRANSFER ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. DARRELL ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 17, 2024

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, S. 3857, the *Jamul Indian Village Land Transfer Act* is a technical correction to my bill, H.R. 6443, which passed out of the House by voice in April of 2024.

The bill is a traditional fee-to-trust agreement that will allow tribal members to move back onto their ancestral lands—so they can raise their families, carry forward their culture, and add to their history.

This is the right thing to do, the smart thing to do, and it empowers not government, but individuals to take new charge and best care of their lives.

I ask for passage of this bill, and I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, Ranker GRIJALVA, and Senator PADILLA for their support.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 502, on H.R. 7213.

CONGRATULATING THE BLAIR OAKS FALCONS, THE MISSOURI CLASS 3 FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize the Blair Oaks Falcons football team's remarkable achievement of clinching the Class 3 championship. They ended their

season with a 13–1 record and a come-from-behind 38–28 victory against Seneca High School. This championship is the culmination of all the work they put in and the great talent on this team.

This championship marks the sixth in program history and the fourth won within the last seven years. Coach Todd LePage and these student-athletes continue a tradition of winning at the highest level. This championship exemplifies what you can accomplish with unwavering determination, consistency, and teamwork.

I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Blair Oaks football team, coaches, and fans. Winning a championship is a collective effort that requires all hands-on deck. Their community recognizes and highly values their dedication and passion for football.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JUDY CHU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, on February 13, 2024, I was unable to cast my vote on:

H. Res. 863—Impeaching Alejandro Nicholas Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security, for high crimes and misdemeanors.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 43.

HONORING TROY A. MILLER'S SERVICE TO THE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION AND THE NATION

HON. MARK E. GREEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an individual whose dedication and sacrifice have helped to secure our Nation. I would like to recognize Troy A. Miller, a remarkable individual whose 31 years of service to this country have culminated in his final role leading U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) as the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner. In this position, he directed CBP's 65,000 employees in executing its three core missions of counterterrorism, border security, and trade enforcement, while facilitating \$4 trillion in trade and facilitating travel of over 410 million people through ports of entry.

As he prepares to retire, I rise to recognize a career defined by integrity, selflessness, and an unwavering commitment to public service. Every time he was asked to fill a critical leadership role, he quickly answered the call and served with distinction.

I also want to extend my appreciation to his family who have supported him throughout his incredible career. I offer my sincere thanks to his wife, Jennifer, and his daughter, Alexandria.

Troy led CBP, the Nation's largest law enforcement agency, through a myriad of challenges, to include the COVID–19 pandemic, surges of migration along the Nation's borders, and hurricane relief efforts.

Among his many notable achievements, Troy confronted the scourge of fentanyl by

evolving CBP to not only match but surpass the sophistication and persistence of the criminal organizations responsible for trafficking this lethal drug across our borders and into our communities. His efforts brought together coordinated intelligence and special enforcement operations to find and intercept fentanyl wherever it attempted to infiltrate our borders—whether in cargo, among travelers, or through small packages. Furthermore, he extended these efforts beyond our borders, taking the fight to local cartel leaders and dismantling the foreign supply chains responsible for aiding the proliferation of this criminal activity.

Troy also made his mark as a true champion of the dedicated CBP workforce. He was not only a fierce advocate for the agency's technology, infrastructure, and resource needs, but also a driving force in fostering a culture that prioritized the health and well-being of its people—CBP's greatest asset. Troy recognized the critical importance of mission readiness and understood the intense pressures associated with a career at CBP. He spearheaded the development and expansion of CBP's workforce care program, making significant investments in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of its personnel. He focused on removing stigmas, delivering services directly to employees across the Nation, and providing specialized support to help CBP's workforce navigate the tough operational situations they face every day.

Through his distinguished career at CBP, Troy made significant advancements to the national and economic security of the United States.

Between December 2021 and November 2022, Troy served as CBP's Deputy Commissioner, the agency's senior career official, responsible for overseeing the daily operations of CBP's expansive mission.

Prior to his role as Deputy Commissioner, Troy served as the Director, Field Operations for CBP's New York Field Office where he was responsible for CBP's national security, anti-terrorism, immigration, agriculture, and trade enforcement operations at two of the country's busiest international airports—John F. Kennedy International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport—the East Coast's largest container seaport in New York/Newark, and CBP's Pharmaceutical, Health and Chemicals Center of Excellence and Expertise.

Troy also served as the first Executive Director of the CBP National Targeting Center, where he expanded CBP's targeting, research, and analysis capabilities, and strengthened interagency and international coordination to screen, vet, and mitigate high-risk cargo and travelers. He established Counter Network and Counterterrorism Divisions within the National Targeting Center, transforming CBP's approach to identifying threat actors and dismantling the transnational criminal and terrorist networks that support them. Under his leadership, and pursuant to National Security Presidential Memorandum–9, the National Vetting Center was established as an interagency solution for vetting support and strategically located at the National Targeting Center. To this day, Troy's national security targeting expertise is recognized worldwide.

From 2013 to 2015, Troy served as the Acting Assistant Commissioner, Office of Intelligence and Investigative Liaison, where he ini-

tiated an organizational restructuring in direct support of field components and border enforcement entities that partner with them and promoted initiatives to transcend physical borders. In addition, he has held numerous leadership positions including Assistant Port Director, Seattle; Director of Targeting and Analysis, Office of Intelligence and Operations Coordination; and Director of the National Targeting Center-Passenger.

Troy began his federal career with the U.S. Customs Service in 1993 as a Customs Inspector. He received the Distinguished Executive Presidential Rank Award in 2016 and was awarded the Meritorious Executive Presidential Rank Award in 2021.

Troy's 31 years of devoted service to our great Nation is a shining example of a life to which we should all aspire and is deserving of our gratitude. His meaningful contributions to CBP have strengthened the organization and his legacy will be the foundation for future leaders. Troy will be missed, but we wish him well as he enters this new chapter of life alongside Jennifer and Alexandria.

HONORING MR. ALFRED WILLIAMS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Mr. Alfred Williams, a pioneer in the world of professional bass fishing and an inspirational figure in the ongoing struggle for racial equality in America.

Although federal laws and court rulings of the 1950's and 1960's mandated racial desegregation, the reality on the ground in many parts of the South, particularly in Jackson, Mississippi, remained starkly different. Persistent and often insurmountable barriers continued to divide communities. It was within this challenging environment that Mr. Alfred Williams grew up, demonstrating resilience, quiet determination, and extraordinary skill that would ultimately break barriers and inspire generations.

After bravely serving our country in the Vietnam War, Mr. Williams returned home and turned his attention to bass fishing. Entering a predominately white arena, he became a trailblazer, competing in bass tournaments where he was often the only Black angler in the field. Despite the obstacles he faced, he consistently demonstrated his talent and tenacity, earning victories and accolades that spoke louder than any words.

In 1983, Mr. Williams made history as the first Black angler to qualify for the Bassmaster Classic, the pinnacle of professional bass fishing. Competing against 42 of the world's best anglers on the Ohio River in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he finished in an impressive 10th place, surpassing legendary names like Hank Parker, Rick Clunn, Denny Brauer, and Roland Martin. This groundbreaking achievement opened doors for future Black anglers, paving the way for figures such as Ish Monroe, Mark Daniels Jr., and others to follow.

Mr. Williams was not only a pioneer in breaking racial barriers but also a visionary innovator in the sport itself. He is credited with popularizing the use of hollow-body frogs in

bass fishing. His innovative techniques, including modifications to weight, hook, settings, and lure design, revolutionized the effectiveness of these baits. These innovations were so impactful that Snag Proof incorporated them into its tournament models, further cementing his legacy in the sport.

Over the course of his extraordinary career, Alfred Williams competed in nearly 300 BASSMASTER and FLW events, achieving four pro-level victories, more than 200 tournament wins on Ross Barnett Reservoir, and numerous Top 10 finishes. Beyond his personal achievements, Mr. Williams has dedicated himself to mentoring and inspiring other African American anglers in Mississippi and across the Nation, becoming a beacon of hope and perseverance.

Mr. Speaker, Alfred Williams' legacy transcends the sport of bass fishing. He is a testament to the power of resilience, skill, and quiet confidence in overcoming barriers and achieving excellence. On behalf of the people of Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District and the entire Nation, I am honored to recognize and celebrate his contributions to our society.

HONORING CHANCELLOR DR. PHIL DISTEFANO'S CAREER OF LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

HON. JOE NEGUSE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate Dr. Phil DiStefano, a man whose 15 years of leadership as Chancellor of the University of Colorado Boulder and a half-century of dedication to CU Boulder have left an indelible mark on the university. I've had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact that Chancellor DiStefano's leadership has had on CU and across our state.

Phil's journey is nothing short of inspiring. A first-generation college student from Steubenville, Ohio, his academic and professional path has taken him from Ohio to the heights of leadership at one of our Nation's top universities. His journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and the potential that lies within each of us. While he may have started in Ohio, Colorado is his home today, and our state has greatly benefited from his presence.

Throughout his tenure as Chancellor, Dr. DiStefano was committed to making CU Boulder a nationally recognized research institution that shapes tomorrow's leaders and positively impacts society. Under his leadership, CU Boulder has awarded nearly 117,000 degrees and raised over \$2 billion in philanthropic gifts. Through his work in technology transfer, Chancellor DiStefano has paved the way for substantial growth in the university, including the creation of 40 startup ventures and the signing of 223 license and option agreements.

The university's research and innovation efforts have had a significant influence not only on the local economy but also on the entire Nation. Over the past five years, CU Boulder's commercialization activities alone generated a domestic economic impact of \$1.9 billion, supporting an estimated 11,545 jobs and contributing \$1.2 billion to the state's economy, and has ensured that CU Boulder remains at the forefront of research.

As Dr. DiStefano transitions to his new role as Senior Executive Director of the CU Boulder Center for Leadership, we know that his legacy of student success, faculty excellence, and campus sustainability has elevated CU Boulder to the top tier of academic institutions, making it a beacon of excellence across the country. I want to personally express my gratitude to Chancellor DiStefano for his service to our community, Colorado, and our Nation. His contributions will be felt for decades to come.

I thank Phil for his leadership and dedication to CU Boulder. It has been an honor to work alongside him.

HONORING CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER DANIEL T. PETERSON

HON. SUSIE LEE

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor the loss of retired Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Peterson—a champion for southern Nevada's veteran community.

Chief Peterson was a highly decorated Army Veteran and unrelenting advocate for those around him.

After flying helicopters in the Army for more than 20 years, he came home to serve as Commander of the Henderson Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, a member of the Henderson Vietnam Veterans of America, and attend as many Unaccompanied Veterans Burial Ceremonies as he could find. He also attended every Veterans Treatment Court graduation and never hesitated to offer his support to fellow veterans in need.

To be clear: it is impossible to sum up Chief Peterson's decades of service in just one speech on the House floor. That's part of the reason why I had the privilege of working with the Library of Congress for his story to be part of the Veterans History Project.

But while he has too many medals to name here, I can say this: Chief Peterson, you were a mentor, leader, a friend, a protector, and a servant to both southern Nevada and our entire country.

We all owe him a debt of gratitude, and we will all miss him.

TRIBUTE TO BILL ZIMMERMAN

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Bill Zimmerman, who is completing his term as mayor of the city of Menifee, California. Bill has been a true leader in Riverside County for decades and served as an effective advocate whose many tireless efforts to better our region will be missed.

Bill attended Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California from 1981 to 1984. In 1989, along with his wife Julie, Bill purchased a new home in the community of Menifee. After the town incorporated in 2008, Bill was appointed to serve on its first Planning Commission. He also served on the City's Parks, Recreation & Trails Commission. Bill was first elected to

serve on the Menifee City Council in 2012 to represent District 3.

In 2020, Bill was elected to serve as Menifee's directly elected mayor. As mayor, Bill has worked tirelessly to support the infrastructure and recreational opportunities required from a growing residential community. My office and I have been proud to work hand-in-hand with Bill and city staff to support these efforts with federal resources. In addition to his role at city hall, Bill serves on the Board for Boys & Girls Club, Menifee Valley Historical Association, and is President of the Antelope-Menifee Rural Center Board.

Bill clearly possesses a passionate belief in public service and a dedication to the community he has served so faithfully. I know I speak on behalf of all residents in expressing my heartfelt thanks and praise for Bill's significant contributions to Menifee. I wish Bill and his family the very best in the years to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. THOMAS R. SUOZZI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call Vote No. 388, my vote was mistakenly not recorded. I would have voted NO.

HONORING CATHERINE (KATIE) RICE

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of more than two decades of extraordinary public service by Catherine (Katie) Rice to the County of Marin Board of Supervisors, as an aide, supervisor, and president.

Supervisor Rice has deep roots in Marin County. Raised in Mill Valley, she graduated from Tamalpais High School and received degrees in both Liberal Studies and English from Sonoma State University. After college, she worked as a journalist for several North Bay publications and developed professional skills researching complex community issues. She settled in San Anselmo where she raised her three children and became an active community leader.

An effective advocate for high-quality education, land preservation, and environmental stewardship, Supervisor Rice co-founded the Ross Valley Schools Foundation, served on the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association Board, and assisted in the creation of a master plan for San Domenico School.

In 2003, Supervisor Rice expanded her public service work as an aide to former Marin County Supervisor Hal Brown. Her connections throughout the greater Ross Valley community made her an important asset to Supervisor Brown. After helping him win reelection, he chose Supervisor Rice to lead his office as Chief Aide, a role she held for eight years. When Supervisor Brown was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2011, she was appointed to his seat by Governor Jerry Brown. She was then officially selected by voters in 2012, 2016, and 2020.

Supervisor Rice is known for her critical thinking skills and professional style, always applying informed decision making and attention to the concerns of her constituents. She doesn't shy away from complicated issues. She has taken lead roles in a multitude of initiatives, including flooding in Ross Valley and developed a keen understanding of how to work with agency partners such as the United States Army Corp of Engineers.

Always steadfast in her values to protect our vulnerable communities, she was largely responsible for the completion of major projects including Project Homekey, permanent supportive housing in Larkspur, and the establishment of the Marin Wildfire Protection Authority, which organizes countywide wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts.

It was my privilege and honor to work with Supervisor Rice. She is not afraid to rise to the occasion and embrace complex challenges from mitigating sea-level rise and greenhouse gas admissions to improving community health and reducing homelessness. I appreciate her collaborative leadership style, strong work ethic, and wit.

Mr. Speaker, Katie Rice was a tireless advocate for Marin County and her legacy cannot be overstated. I respectfully ask that you join me in expressing my sincere gratitude for her decades of good work and in sending her best wishes on her next endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE PATRIOTISM OF JORDAN RAMIREZ

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the patriotism of Jordan Ramirez.

Jordan Ramirez resides in La Puente with his parents and older sister. He and his family started participating in 5K races when Jordan was 4. Their first race was at Disneyland, where Jordan dressed up as Captain America because he loved superheroes and would often talk about showing support for firefighters, police and military members.

Jordan broke a world record by doing seven marathons in seven continents by the age of 10. As he's gotten older, Jordan's mindset about showing his support to military and first responders has remained the same. When races were canceled due to the pandemic, Jordan found the walks to be another way to express that support.

When Jordan first began his appreciation walks in September 2020, his father, Dimas Ramirez, created an Instagram account to document the journey, called "thankyouforyourservicewalk."

The account has connected Jordan with many of the departments they have honored, and continues to be a means for other first responder departments' requests to build morale.

Jordan's purpose behind the walks is twofold: to thank first responders for their service,

and to show appreciation and respect for what they do. The walks are different from the marathons he's run because with those, he would "usually just run for the fun of it, but the walks . . . it's doing something else for our military and first responders."

Most of these walks are in southern California, but the walks have also taken him to San Francisco, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

Jordan is currently a high school sophomore and working on his next goals: earning a nomination to the Naval Academy to become an officer in the Marine Corps and then to become a firefighter.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the incredible contributions and patriotism of Jordan Ramirez.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DAVID WINNACKER

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Winnacker as he retires from his role as Chief of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

David has worked tirelessly to promote public safety and improve quality of life for residents of the East Bay. David served with the Fresno Fire Department and Alameda Fire District before joining the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) in 2017. David also served in the Marine Corps and remains in the Marine Corps Reserves. He has earned the rank of Colonel, serving as the Commanding Officer for the Fourth Reconnaissance Company and as the Deputy Commander of the Twenty-Third Marine Regiment.

During his time with MOFD, David has shown his dedication to mitigating wildfire risk and making our community safer. Under his leadership, MOFD developed a strategic plan to implement early warning systems and provide real-time fire spread modeling. He has worked to expand MOFD's outreach to the community, providing critical education and resources to property owners to implement fuels mitigation techniques at their homes. Further, he has worked collaboratively with local elected officials, insurance industry representatives, and other key stakeholders to improve emergency preparedness throughout the fire district. David's efforts have been critical in reducing wildfire risk and keeping residents safe.

Please join me in congratulating Chief Winnacker on his well-deserved retirement after years of outstanding service.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MARK ROSS

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Mr. DeSAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with Representative JOHN GARAMENDI to

recognize Mark Ross as he retires from his role with the Martinez City Council.

Throughout his life, Mark has been a strong advocate for the City of Martinez in California and has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Contra Costa residents. Mark grew up in Martinez, attending Alhambra High School, and earned his degree in English Literature from UC Berkeley. He went on to start Ross Company Realtors where he has helped guide clients through Contra Costa's real estate market for the last 30 years.

Mark has been a devoted public servant and has continually shown his commitment to Martinez residents. He has served on the Martinez City Council since 1996 where he has been critical in fostering a strong sense of community throughout the City. During his time on Council, he has worked to improve public safety, bolster Martinez's historic downtown, and protect Martinez's open spaces and environment. Further, Mark has spent much of his time focusing on California's environment. He played a critical role in the Alhambra Creek Restoration Project, which has helped to protect the watershed and native plant life. Additionally, Mark has served as a Director on the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) board since 2001, where he has worked on reducing emissions, supporting the health and safety of Bay Area residents, and leading regional efforts to address the challenges associated with climate change.

Please join me and Representative GARAMENDI in thanking Mark Ross for his many contributions to our region and in congratulating him on his well-deserved retirement.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 19, 2024 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 5009, Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025.

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 4367, Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

(Legislative Day of Monday, December 16, 2024)

Routine Proceedings, pages S7121–S7185

Measures Introduced: Twenty-six bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 5576–5601, S. Res. 933–934, and S. Con. Res. 44–46.

Pages S7179–80

Measures Reported:

S. 3312, to provide a framework for artificial intelligence innovation and accountability, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 3879, to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a standard methodology for identifying the country of origin of red snapper imported into the United States, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 4178, to establish artificial intelligence standards, metrics, and evaluation tools, to support artificial intelligence research, development, and capacity building activities, to promote innovation in the artificial intelligence industry by ensuring companies of all sizes can succeed and thrive, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

S. 4596, to require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a public awareness and education campaign to provide information regarding the benefits of, risks relating to, and the prevalence of artificial intelligence in the daily lives of individuals in the United States, with an amendment.

S. 4769, to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop

voluntary guidelines and specifications for internal and external assurances of artificial intelligence systems, with amendments. **Page S7179**

Measures Passed:

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 44, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009. **Page S7133**

Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act: Senate passed S. 4576, to amend the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015, to reauthorize the Colorado River System conservation pilot program. **Page S7133**

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Extension: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of S. 3373, to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to extend the time period during which licensees are required to commence construction of certain hydropower projects, and the bill was then passed, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S7133–34**

Hickenlooper (for Daines) Amendment No. 3343, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7134**

Drought Preparedness Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4385, to extend authorization of the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7134**

Water Monitoring and Tracking Essential Resources (WATER) Data Improvement Act: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5770, to reauthorize certain United States Geological Survey water data enhancement programs, and the bill was then passed. **Page S7134**

Modernizing Access to Our Public Waters Act: Senate passed S. 3123, to provide for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways among Federal land and water management agencies, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7145–46**

Land Manager Housing and Workforce Improvement Act: Senate passed S. 5125, to provide for certain improvements to the housing and workforce programs of Federal land management agencies, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7146–48**

Connect Our Parks Act: Senate passed S. 2018, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7148–49**

Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act: Senate passed H.R. 5443, to establish a policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction. **Page S7149**

Salem Maritime National Historical Park Redesignation and Boundary Study Act: Senate passed S. 961, to redesignate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Massachusetts, as the “Salem Maritime National Historic Park”. **Page S7149**

Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Access Act: Senate passed S. 4209, to provide greater regional access to the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in the State of Maine. **Pages S7149–51**

Amending the Act of June 22, 1948: Senate passed S. 5595, to amend the Act of June 22, 1948. **Page S7145**

North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act: Senate passed S. 1088, to authorize the relinquishment and in lieu selection of land and minerals in the State of North Dakota, to restore land and minerals to Indian Tribes within the State of North Dakota, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7153–55**

Big Bend National Park Boundary Adjustment Act: Senate passed S. 1059, to adjust the boundary of Big Bend National Park in the State of Texas. **Page S7155**

Nulhegan River and Paul Stream Wild and Scenic River Study Act: Senate passed S. 432, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream in the State of Vermont for potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system. **Page S7155**

Deerfield River Wild and Scenic River Study Act: Senate passed S. 608, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Deerfield River for potential addition to the national wild and scenic rivers system. **Pages S7155–56**

Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Museum Artifacts Act: Senate passed S. 4129, to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7156**

Plum Island Preservation Study Act: Senate passed S. 5136, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of Plum Island, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S7156**

Schumer (for Blumenthal) Amendment No. 3344, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7156–62**

Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act: Senate passed S. 2620, to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park System, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7151–52**

Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act: Senate passed S. 4994, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi. **Page S7153**

American Samoa: Senate passed H.R. 6062, to restore the ability of the people of American Samoa to approve amendments to the territorial constitution based on majority rule in a democratic act of self-determination, as authorized pursuant to an Act of Congress delegating administration of Federal territorial law in the territory to the President, and to the Secretary of the Interior under Executive Order 10264, dated June 29, 1951, under which the Constitution of American Samoa was approved and may be amended without requirement for further congressional action, subject to the authority of Congress under the Territorial Clause in article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution. **Page S7165**

Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act: Senate passed S. 2615, to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide that Village Corporations shall not be required to convey land in trust to the State of Alaska for the establishment of Municipal Corporations. **Pages S7165–66**

Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act: Senate passed S. 2042, to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7166**

Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act Amendments Act: Senate passed S. 1760, to amend the Apex Project, Nevada Land Transfer and Authorization Act of 1989 to include the city of North Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Apex Industrial Park Owners Association, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S7166–67**

Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act: Senate passed S. 2151, to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act. **Page S7167**

Upper Colorado River Basin Fund: Senate passed S. 5000, to provide for a memorandum of understanding to address the impacts of a certain record of decision on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute and the committee amendment to the title. **Pages S7167–71**

Club Q Shooting Anniversary: Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 895, recognizing the second commemoration of the anti-LGBTQ+ attack that occurred on November 19–20, 2022, at Club Q, an LGBTQ+ bar in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S7171**

Broadcasting and Recording Procedures of the Senate: Senate agreed to S. Res. 934, amending the broadcasting and recording procedures of the Senate. **Page S7171**

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 46, providing for corrections in the enrollment of S. 4367. **Page S7171**

Measures Considered:

Social Security Fairness Act—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions. **Pages S7131–33**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 73 yeas to 27 nays (Vote No. 326), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Pages S7137–38**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that all time during adjournment, recess, Morning Business, Leader remarks, and consideration of the House Message to accompany S. 4367 count post-cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S7185**

House Messages:

Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025: By 85 yeas to 14 nays (Vote No. 325), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 5009, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2025 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, after taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S7121–31**

Withdrawn:

Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 3317 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), to add an effective date. **Page S7131**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

Schumer Amendment No. 3318 (to Amendment No. 3317), to add an effective date, fell when Schumer motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Schumer Amendment No. 3317 (listed above) was withdrawn. **Page S7131**

Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act: By 97 yeas to 1 nay (Vote No. 327), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 4367, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, by the order of the Senate of Thursday, December 12, 2024, 60 Senators having voted in the affirmative. **Pages S7162–65**

America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act: Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 3791, to reauthorize the America's Conservation Enhancement Act. **Page S7171**

Federal Agency Performance Act: Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to S. 709, to improve performance and accountability in the Federal Government. **Page S7171**

Appointments:

National Commission on the Future of the Navy: The Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader and jointly with the Democratic Leader of the House, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117–263, appointed the following individual to serve as Co-Chairperson of the National Commission on the Future of the Navy: The Honorable Filemon Vela of Texas. **Page S7172**

Removal of Injunction of Secrecy: The injunction of secrecy was removed from the following treaty:

Agreement Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (Treaty Doc. No. 118–2).

The treaty was transmitted to the Senate today, considered as having been read for the first time, and referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed. **Page S7172**

Cheeks and Murillo Nominations—Agreement:

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the cloture votes with respect to the nominations of Benjamin J. Cheeks, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California, and Serena Raquel Murillo, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, occur upon disposition of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions. **Page S7123**

Messages from the House: **Page S7178**

Measures Referred: **Page S7178**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S7179**

Executive Communications: **Page S7179**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7180–81**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Page S7181**

Additional Statements: **Page**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S7184–85**

Notices of Intent: **Page S7185**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S7185**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S7185**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—327) **Pages S7131, S7137–38, S7164–65**

Recess: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and recessed at 8:38 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2024. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S7185.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

CLIMATE-DRIVEN INSURANCE CRISIS

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the climate-driven insurance crisis, after receiving testimony from Benjamin J. Keys, University of Pennsylvania Wharton School, Philadelphia; Ernest Shaghalian Jr., Butler and Messier Insurance Agency, Pawtucket, Rhode Island; and Robert P. Hartwig, University of South Carolina Darla Moore School of Business, Columbia.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of James Bernard Coughlan, of Illinois, who introduced by Senator Durbin, and Halie L. Craig, of Pennsylvania, who was introduced by Senator Cruz, both to be a Member of the United States International Trade Commission, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

RESTORE PATENT RIGHTS ACT

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Intellectual Property concluded a hearing to examine S.4840, to amend title 35, United States Code, to establish a rebuttable presumption that a permanent injunction should be granted in certain circumstances, focusing on restoring America’s status as the global IP leader, after receiving testimony from Jacob Babcock, NuCurrent, Chicago, Illinois; Joshua Landau, Computer and Communications Industry Association, Washington, D.C.; Kristen Jakobsen Osenga, University of Richmond School of Law, Richmond, Virginia; and Jorge L. Contreras, University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law, Salt Lake City, Utah.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 47 public bills, H.R. 10465–10511; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 135; and H. Res. 1619–1621, were introduced.

Pages H7358–59

Additional Cosponsors:

Pages H7361–62

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 4043, to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to make the District of Columbia eligible for certain wastewater infrastructure grants, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 118–897);

H.R. 9135, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to require certain air carriers to develop and regularly update an operational resiliency strategy, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–898);

H.R. 1209, to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–899);

H.R. 5798, to restore the right to negotiate matters pertaining to the discipline of law enforcement officers of the District of Columbia through collective bargaining, to restore the statute of limitations for bringing disciplinary cases against members or civilian employees of the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–900);

H.R. 7867, to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to establish a limit for the total amount of additional unfunded regulatory costs that may be imposed in a fiscal year, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–901, Part 1);

H.R. 7533, to improve retrospective reviews of Federal regulations, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–902);

H.R. 4428, to require a guidance clarity statement on certain agency guidance, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–903);

H.R. 262, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the publication, by the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, of information relating to rulemakings, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–904, Part 1);

H.R. 7532, to amend chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code, to establish Federal AI system

governance requirements, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–905);

H.R. 3230, to amend the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 to provide for regulatory impact analyses for certain rules, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–906, Part 1);

H.R. 1319, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop long-distance bike trails on Federal land (H. Rept. 118–907, Part 1);

H.R. 3562, to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to reauthorize Forest Service flexible partnerships, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–908, Part 1);

H.R. 3049, to provide for the exchange of certain Federal land and State land in the State of Utah (H. Rept. 118–909);

H.R. 5582, to provide for white oak restoration, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–910, Part 1);

H.R. 6342, to promote and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for members of the Armed Forces and veterans on Federal recreational lands and waters, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–911, Part 1);

H.R. 5015, to amend the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, to enter into contracts, grants, and agreements to carry out certain ecosystem restoration activities, and for other purposes, with amendments (H. Rept. 118–912, Part 1);

H.R. 7003, to amend the National Landslide Preparedness Act to reauthorize such Act, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–913, Part 1);

H.R. 3283, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to report to Congress on any barriers to establishing online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–545, Part 2);

H.R. 4235, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to establish a wildfire technology testbed pilot program, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–914, Part 1);

H.R. 6012, to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to permit removal of trees around electrical lines on National Forest System land without conducting a timber sale, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–915, Part 1);

H.R. 7516, to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to address liability for payment of

charges or costs associated with provision of purchased/referred care services, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–916, Part 1);

H.R. 3269, to modernize Federal firearms laws to account for advancements in technology and less-than-lethal weapons, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–917, Part 1)

H.R. 1419, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to issue a new rule removing the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from the Federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife (H. Rept. 118–918);

H.R. 215, to provide long-term water supply and regulatory reliability to drought-stricken California, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–919);

H.R. 3173, to provide for transfer of ownership of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada, to authorize the disposal of certain Federal lands in northern Nevada for economic development, to promote conservation in northern Nevada, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–920, Part 1);

H.R. 6994, to require the reopening of covered recreation sites closed due to a natural disaster, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–921, Part 1);

H.R. 7408, to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–922, Part 1);

H.R. 5482, to prevent energy poverty and ensure that at-risk communities have access to affordable energy, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–923, Part 1);

H.R. 934, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out activities to suppress wildfires, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–924, Part 1);

H.R. 4374, to nullify Public Land Order No. 7923, withdrawing certain land in San Juan County, New Mexico, from mineral entry (H. Rept. 118–925);

H.R. 188, to direct the Secretary concerned to coordinate with impacted parties when conducting a forest management activity, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–926, Part 1);

H.R. 2989, to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 118–927, Part 1); and

H. Con. Res. 34, expressing disapproval of the withdrawal by the Secretary of the Interior of approximately 225,504 acres of National Forest System

lands in Cook, Lake, and Saint Louis Counties, Minnesota, from disposition under the United States mineral and geothermal leasing laws (H. Rept. 118–928).
Pages H7356–57

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Strong to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.
Page H7321

Recess: The House recessed at 11:47 a.m. and reconvened at 12 p.m.
Page H7332

Recess: The House recessed at 12:50 p.m. and reconvened at 1:30 p.m.
Page H7339

Suspensions—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures. Consideration began Tuesday, December 17th.

Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act: S. 1351, to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 373 yeas to 33 nays, Roll No. 512; and
Pages H7339–40

Jamul Indian Village Land Transfer Act: S. 3857, to take certain land in the State of California into trust for the benefit of the Jamul Indian Village of California, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 369 yeas to 37 nays, Roll No. 513.
Page H7340

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Detection Equipment and Technology Evaluation to Counter the Threat of Fentanyl and Xylazine Act: Concurred in the Senate amendments to H.R. 8663, to require the Science and Technology Directorate in the Department of Homeland Security to develop greater capacity to detect, identify, and disrupt illicit substances in very low concentrations, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 404 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 514;
Pages H7340–41

Beagle Brigade Act: S. 759, to authorize the National Detector Dog Training Center, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yeas-and-nays vote of 381 yeas to 20 nays, Roll No. 515;
Pages H7341–42

DHS Intelligence and Analysis Oversight and Transparency Act: H.R. 8664, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct an annual audit of the information systems and bulk data of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department; and
Pages H7343–44

Transportation Security Screening Modernization Act: S. 3959, to require the Transportation Security Administration to streamline the enrollment

processes for individuals applying for a Transportation Security Administration security threat assessment for certain programs, including the Transportation Worker Identification Credential and Hazardous Materials Endorsement Threat Assessment programs of the Administration. **Pages H7345–48**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:58 p.m. and reconvened at 6 p.m. **Page H7348**

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009: The House agreed by unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table and agree to S. Con. Res. 44, directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009. **Page H7348**

Commission on the Future of the Navy—Appointment: The Chair announced the joint appointment by the Democratic Leader and Majority Leader of the Senate the following to serve as Co-Chair of the Commission on the Future of the Navy: Honorable Filemon Vela. **Pages H7348–49**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Research Security and Accountability in DHS Act: H.R. 9748, to require the Under Secretary of the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a Department-wide policy and process to safeguard research and development from unauthorized access to or disclosure of sensitive information in research and development acquisitions; and **Pages H7342–43**

TSA Commuting Fairness Act: H.R. 8662, to reduce commuting burdens on Transportation Security Administration employees. **Pages H7344–45**

Recess: The House recessed at 7:11 p.m. and reconvened at 10:31 p.m. **Page H7354**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, December 19th. **Page H7354**

Senate Referrals: S. 1097 was held at the desk. S. 1144 was held at the desk. S. 1277 was held at the desk. S. 1299 was held at the desk. S. 3022 was held at the desk. S. 3373 was held at the desk. S. 3502 was held at the desk. S. 3543 was held at the desk. S. 4181 was held at the desk. S. 4576 was held at the desk. S. 4654 was held at the desk. S. 5005 was held at the desk. S. 5130 was held at the desk. S. 5398 was held at the desk. S. 5575 held at the desk. **Page H7348**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on pages 7348.

Quorum Calls Votes: Four yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H7339–40, H7340, H7340–41, and H7341–42.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 10:31 p.m.

Committee Meetings

EXAMINING THE POLAR SECURITY CUTTER: AN UPDATE ON COAST GUARD ACQUISITIONS

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security held a hearing entitled “Examining the Polar Security Cutter: An Update on Coast Guard Acquisitions”. Testimony was heard from Vice Admiral Thomas G. Allan, Jr., Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, U.S. Coast Guard.

AMERICAN CONFIDENCE IN ELECTIONS: PROHIBITING FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “American Confidence in Elections: Prohibiting Foreign Interference”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

IP AND STRATEGIC COMPETITION WITH CHINA: PART IV—PATENTS, STANDARDS, AND LAWFARE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet held a hearing entitled “IP and Strategic Competition with China: Part IV—Patents, Standards, and Lawfare”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

REVISITING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FACE ACT: PART II

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government held a hearing entitled “Revisiting the Implications of the FACE Act: Part II”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

RESTORING CONGRESSIONAL POWER OVER VA AFTER LOPER BRIGHT ENTERPRISES V. RAIMONDO

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Restoring Congressional Power over VA After Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo”. Testimony was heard from Jonathan M. Gaffney, Supervisory Attorney, American Law Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

TRADE WARS AND TARIFFS

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine trade wars and tariffs, after receiving testimony from Edward Gresser, Progressive Policy Institute, Brendan Duke, Center for American Progress, and Erica York, Tax Foundation, all of Washington, D.C.; and Jeff Ferry, Coalition for a Prosperous America, Alexandria, Virginia.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, p. D1154)

S. 50, to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to give priority consideration to selecting Pensacola and Perdido Bays as an estuary of national significance. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–152)

S. 310, to establish an advisory group to encourage and foster collaborative efforts among individuals and entities engaged in disaster recovery relating to debris removal. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–153)

S. 1478, to designate United States Route 20 in the States of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming,

Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts as the “National Medal of Honor Highway”. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–154)

S. 2781, to promote remediation of abandoned hardrock mines. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–155)

S. 3475, to amend title 49, United States Code, to allow the Secretary of Transportation to designate an authorized operator of the commercial driver’s license information system. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–156)

S. 3613, to require Facility Security Committees to respond to security recommendations issued by the Federal Protective Service relating to facility security. Signed on December 17, 2024. (Public Law 118–157)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, December 19

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, December 19

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate expects to continue consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 82, Social Security Fairness Act, post-cloture.

Roll call votes are expected during Thursday's session of the Senate.

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

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