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Senate

(Legislative day of Monday, December 16, 2024)

The Senate met at 10, on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. Lisa Wink Schultz, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most merciful God, help us to remember that the Earth is Yours. You established it, and You will sustain it. Thank You that one day You will make a new Heaven and a new Earth. We long for a day when our broken bodies will be healed and our souls at rest.

Today, give our Senators clean hands and pure hearts to do Your will. May they be men and women who seek after You. As they come together to make decisions on funding the government, may they have Your wisdom to do what is best for the people they serve.

We pray in Your mighty 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

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT OF 2023—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the unfinished business.

The senior assistant executive 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.

riety Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, this morning, thanks to Republicans, we are less than 48 hours away from a Christmas shutdown. Unfortunately, it seems Republicans are in shambles over in the House. But as they try to piece things together, they should remember one thing: The only way to get things done is through bipartisanship—the only way.

Let me repeat: The only way to get things done is through bipartisanship.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT AT ARMS GENERAL KAREN GIBSON

Now, on the Sergeant at Arms, today, it fills me with immense gratitude to pay tribute and say thank you to the Senate Sergeant at Arms, General Karen Gibson, sitting right here.

None of us, no matter what we do, could get through the day without the individual responsible for maintaining order, enforcing security, and keeping everyone in the Senate safe. That is what the Sergeant at Arms does.

General Gibson took on this role in March of 2021, in the painful aftermath of the January 6 insurrection. By no means did she need to take this job. It was the Senate that needed her. We needed her three decades of leadership as an Army intelligence officer. We needed her steady hand and ability to change how organizations function. And, to this day, I thank God she answered my phone call.

General Gibson helped us get through those difficult months after January 6. She was a breath of fresh air, a boost in morale, a jolt of much needed confidence. She transformed how the Sergeant at Arms operates for the better.

Under General Gibson's watch, her team revitalized how the Senate ap-

proaches security and safety, from top to bottom. She increased how we share intelligence, communications, and planning with the rest of the Federal Government and State and local partners. She transformed the way the Senate handles moments of crisis. There is now a single Senate Operations Center that stands watch at all times and alerts us to potential threats or disruptions in realtime.

She was a godsend for other Senate staff across the Capitol Complex, introducing new emergency preparedness applications, new trainings, and new protocols staff could adopt to keep their offices safe and prepared.

Finally, she revolutionized how the Senate approaches cyber security, conducting the most comprehensive cyber security assessment ever. And every step of the way, she had a first-rate team by her side to help execute her vision.

And one other thing—a bit intangible—the morale of our Capitol Police Force has dramatically improved after the horrible day of January 6, and much of that goes to what General Gibson did. She made them feel needed and confident and loved and well-trained and prepared. And I can tell just from speaking to so many Capitol Police officers how much they appreciate her tenure and her candor.

So I am forever grateful to General Gibson for her four terms as our Sergeant at Arms. The Senate today is far more secure and far more prepared than the day she entered the role. My congratulations to her on a job well done, and the Senate thanks her—all of us, Democrat and Republican—for many years of service.

TRIBUTE TO ANN BERRY

Madam President, on Ann Berry, I also want to say thank you to our wonderful Secretary of the Senate, Ann

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



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Berry. Of the many talented and exceptional Senate officers I had the privilege of nominating as majority leader, Ann is one of the very best.

The job of Secretary of the Senate is one of the utmost important and indispensable jobs here in the Senate. In fact, just days after the Senate achieved its first quorum in 1789, one of its top priorities was to elect the very first Secretary of the Senate. Back then, the Senate's responsibilities were merely a fraction of what they are today. There is virtually nothing that happens in the Senate these days—legislatively, financially, administratively—that doesn't cross the Secretary's desk. So to hold such an extraordinary position that brings life to the Senate, you need an extraordinary human being who brings life to the job.

Where is she? She is probably just so busy doing her job; she is not here.

But, anyway, that is Ann Berry, to a tee.

From the moment Ann was sworn in, she has carried out her responsibilities as Secretary with unparalleled excellence and supreme professionalism. And she did it while making history as the first ever Black woman to serve as Secretary of the Senate.

Of course, Ann's success as Secretary came as little surprise to anyone who knows her background. She is a veteran of some of the most revered Senators to pass through this Chamber, the likes of Senators Leahy, Edwards, CARPER, Jones, and my mentor Senator Moynihan.

For the last nearly 4 years, Ann has been one of the most invaluable members of the entire Senate operation. She made our days easier, our operations smoother, and made the Senate work better for the American people. And that is perhaps the highest testament to a public servant.

So, Ann, on behalf of a grateful Senate, a grateful Democratic caucus, and a grateful majority leader, we say congratulations. Thank you. Job well done.

TRIBUTE TO DAN YOKEN

Madam President, now to Dan Yoken, whom I will so dearly miss.

Is he here somewhere? Where is Dan? Dan Yoken.

Socrates said:

The only good is knowledge and the only evil is ignorance.

If that is true—and I think Socrates was onto something—then this is going to be a particularly difficult good-bye for me to get through, because, today, it fills me with immense gratitude but also deep sadness to bid farewell and thank you to one of the most knowledgeable and trusted members of my team, Dan Yoken.

Officially, Dan has served as my Director of Rapid Response the entire time I have served in leadership, but in truth, he is far more than that. He is, in a word, the brain—the knowledge base—of our messaging and research operation. He is the truthkeeper, the facts sleuth, the go-to person when our

team needs something figured out right away.

But what sets Dan apart is that he also sees the big picture. He is not just looking at the little details. Anyone who excels at these things, by necessity, must possess a love of details—and Dan certainly does—but what makes him so effective is how fluidly, how effortlessly, how naturally he connects the details to the main thrust of what our team tries to do every day and to the larger picture of where we are headed as a caucus and as a country.

Dan is also a craftsman. There is no speech, no press release, no tweet, no video that doesn't pass through his careful touch.

A native of Nevada, Dan came to the Senate and earned his stripes as a young press assistant for the former leader, Harry Reid, whom we miss every day. Every single day, it was Dan's job to wake up early, read all of the news, and then brief Senator Reid personally on what was going on that day. If Senator Reid had a question, it was Dan's job to answer. If it was a specific detail he wanted, it was Dan's job to remember it.

For most people right out of school, that would pretty much be a baptism by fire, but for Dan, it was early confirmation that he belonged here in the Senate. In no time, he became Leader Reid's deputy communications director and then joined my team as the research director of the DPCC. And when I became leader, there was never a moment of doubt that I wanted Dan to come with me.

Running our messaging operation is not easy. It is a round-the-clock, 7-day-a-week commitment. I call him at all hours to ask him about this or that. It is stressful, ever-changing, thankless—and on top of that, they have to deal with me. It is not so easy sometimes, but every day, my team succeeds, and I succeed because Dan has always been there as a steady and stabilizing force. His knowledge of the Senate—its history, its Members, its operation—gives our work shape and form. All of this is possible because, deep down, Dan loves this institution and loves this great democracy.

Of course, anyone who knows Dan understands he loves many other good things as well. Just ask him, for example, about the Las Vegas Golden Knights and that time they came to the White House to celebrate their championship or ask him about the last Roots concert he went to or ask him about poker night or about the next time he is planning to organize a "Schumerland" outing to Audi Field. Ask him, certainly, about his wonderful family—about his beautiful, red-headed 2-year-old; his wife and his partner for so many years as well; and then ask him about their dog Daisy, who is a regular here in the Senate every Friday.

Ask him about any of these things, and you will see Dan for who he is—

someone who leads a rich life, someone who has a gifted mind, and someone who is loyal, kind, and thoughtful to all those he comes across. Having him on my team for so long has been a blessing to our office, to the Senate, to the country.

So, Dan, wherever you are—he is probably working as well—thank you, thank you, thank you. You know how much we will miss you. You know how much we love you. You know how much you will always be part of our Schumer family, and we can't wait to see what the future holds in store for you.

I yield the floor to the Republican leader.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO SHARON SODERSTROM

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, for months now, I have been calling the Senate's attention to the extraordinary people who have served me, this institution, and our Nation so well and for so long in the Republican leader's office.

Today, I have reached the end of the list. My one remaining task is to prepare our colleagues for a Senate without Sharon Soderstrom.

To tell the story of my chief of staff, you might start in 2010 when she assumed that title or in 2007 when she joined my team or, perhaps, back in 1999 when she set up in the Republican leader's suite for the first time. But if you want to make sense of the person I have been so fortunate to have at my right hand—the friend and counselor I have trusted so deeply for so long—it is worth starting at the beginning with the people who have made Sharon Soderstrom who she is.

Sharon grew up in Stony Brook, NY, on the campus of the Christian school where her father was a teacher and headmaster. In the house on campus, where Karl and Jean Soderstrom raised Sharon, along with her brother Mark and her sister Cheryl, faith and learning were unshakable cornerstones. Quite literally, the windows of Sharon's bedroom looked out on one side to the chapel and on the other side to the classrooms. When you hear about Sharon's upbringing for the first time, everything you know about her starts to make even more sense.

My seniormost adviser is a woman of integrity and a teacher who leads by example. And rather than reinvent the wheel, I think the best way to sum up her distinguished service is through some of the lessons that her favorite teacher—her dad—taught in the same way.

Lesson No. 1: Do meaningful work for a long time among peers who become lifelong friends.

A long time ago—I won't tell quite how long—Sharon began her meaningful work here in the Senate. As a junior legislative aide to a freshman Senator, the prospect of devoting her life to this institution might not yet have

crossed her mind, but the Senate was beginning to reel her in and work its will all the same.

Sharon likely wouldn't have allowed herself to have imagined that, someday, the Senate's sharpest minds would bring their weightiest questions to her or that, eventually, an entire institution would come to lean on her voluminous legislative knowledge, her plumb-and-true political analysis, and her wise personal counsel. And if she had, her deep humility wouldn't have let it show.

Instead, perhaps the sharpest and most singularly capable staff leader the Senate has ever seen chose to invest her time and talents in building teams, in mentoring colleagues, and in making a series of the highest profile principals look a lot smarter than we have deserved. She has spent her time in public service notching accomplishments of the greatest consequence on the most visible stage, all while nimbly deflecting the praise.

But what Sharon hasn't been able to dodge is the admiration of legions of colleagues, past and present, who count standing in the trenches with her among the greatest honors of their careers. It is no mystery why Sharon's calendar fills so quickly with invitations to celebrate weddings and birthdays, and it is no surprise how readily she clears her schedule to be with friends and colleagues in moments of grief. Our friend—our chief—has done meaningful work for its own sake, but she has got the admirers to prove it.

I will turn now to the second lesson from Mr. Soderstrom: Decide to live as a servant, and take every moment as an opportunity to practice.

Public service—it is there right in the name; yet the brand of gracious and selfless leadership that has become Sharon's calling card and the thoughtful courtesy which comes naturally to her, these are exceedingly rare.

I was reminded recently of an occasion years ago—at about this time in December—when one of the juniormost members of our front office team brought a familiar concern to Sharon. The cheapest flight she could find to get home for the holidays was non-refundable, and it was looking more and more like the Senate might have to spend Christmas at work. What should she do?

Sharon didn't hesitate. She told this young lady to keep her flight, to get home safely, and the team would make do. In fact, the team did make do, and Sharon was the first to volunteer to cover her shift at the front desk.

I am certain that no one who knows her would be surprised to hear this—certainly not any of us who have watched Sharon summon the strength—even when her enormous professional responsibilities have weighed heaviest—to be a loyal sister, a loving aunt to her nephew Karl, and a devoted caregiver to both of her parents in their final years.

May the RECORD reflect that the Senate's most influential staff leader chooses every day to live as a servant.

The third lesson is to laugh often and, as I am sure Sharon's dad would add, not just when there is cause to be joyful.

That means laughing even when you don't get the reference, as Sharon does good-naturedly when her colleagues use sporting analogies around the office. Of course, it helps that, almost invariably, such references are meant as compliments. It is like when they compare her legislative and procedural chops to Willie Mays' dual threat of speed and power or when a wise former colleague likened staffing the Republican leader's office around Sharon to building a starting lineup around a franchise player.

But in a job as strenuous and demanding as Sharon's, laughing often means finding levity in even the most confounding circumstances—for example: the time she and a colleague were leaving the White House after a completely fruitless negotiation in the middle of a government shutdown. As I understand it, after walking out the wrong exit, they heard a guard with a machine gun yelling: "Stop!" Without missing a beat, my top adviser turned to her colleague and remarked: If we just keep walking, this can all be over. (Laughter.)

Fortunately for me and for the entire country, even in the bleakest of stalemates, Sharon was just joking. Heeding these lessons isn't some simple, sure-fire formula for producing a prolific public servant in the mold of Sharon. Devotion to meaningful work is always good advice. And, yes, if more people practiced servant leadership and learned to laugh more, the world would be a much better place.

But let's be absolutely clear: Sharon Soderstrom is one of one. The combination of unflappable calm, unassailable integrity, unwavering conviction, and unshakable devotion that resides in my chief of staff is greater than the sum of its parts.

One of Sharon's former colleagues on that staff once described her office as an emergency room, where colleagues would wheel in stretchers heaped with big, thorny problems and a head doctor with nerves of absolute steel would begin to set things right.

Invariably, Sharon's steady demeanor inspired confidence in others. Her resolve bolstered morale, and from the most niche institutional matters to the heaviest questions of national policy, her utter and complete competence carried the day.

Now, I will admit I wasn't the first Member of the body to recognize Sharon's talents—not even the first Republican leader—but claiming dibs on Sharon and managing to keep her for so long have been among my proudest accomplishments.

Come January, the Senate will convene again. The 119th Congress will bring us a new slate of weighty busi-

ness, new moments of minor crisis, and new opportunities to better serve the Nation that we all love. But in the most trying moments and the most triumphant ones, a great many of us will feel like something is missing. We will miss having Sharon—the 101st Senator—on the case and at our sides.

Sharon, you have served the Senate with honor. You are the greatest at what you do. You have modeled the lessons of the ones you look up to most, and you have earned countless friends who look up to you. The proudest triumphs of my time in this office have been your doing, and I am forever in your debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that any Members or staff in the Chamber at this time be allowed to applaud for a period of up to 30 seconds.

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

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Republican whip.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the longest serving party leader in Senate history: Republican Leader MITCH MCCONNELL.

Over the course of a political career that began with a hard-fought race for student council president in his junior year of high school—a race, I might add, that he won with what would become his signature blend of hard work, intelligence, and determination—Mitch has built a legacy that will long, long outlast his time here in the U.S. Senate.

The day he became the longest serving party leader in Senate history, Leader MCCONNELL delivered a speech discussing past Senate party leaders and their characteristics, from the mastery of relationships demonstrated by Lyndon Johnson to the "tackle football" of Joseph Taylor Robinson. It got me thinking about some of the things that have characterized MITCH's tenure, and there are three of them that stand out to me, in particular.

First, there is MITCH's peerless knowledge of Senate procedure. I suspect few who have served in this body have developed the kind of knowledge that MITCH possesses of the most arcane details—and they are arcane—of Senate rules. But MITCH recognized early on that knowledge of Senate procedure could play a big part in success as a Senator, and he was right. And so, with his signature determination, he set out to acquire it and became an undisputed master.

Second, to that wealth of knowledge, he has added a fierce commitment to the Senate as an institution, a commitment I hope to emulate when I take the reins as majority leader next year.

There are a lot of people out there these days who would like to see the Senate turn into a copy of the House of Representatives, but that is not what

our Founders envisioned or what our country needs, and MITCH has served our entire country by fighting to ensure that the Senate maintains its institutional character.

Finally, perhaps the aspect of MITCH's tenure that stands out to me the most is the work that he has done to protect the rule of law by filling the judiciary with judges and Justices who understand what the role of a judge is: to interpret the law and not make it; to call balls and strikes, not rewrite the rules of the game.

During his time as majority leader, MITCH oversaw the confirmation of 234 men and women to the Federal bench—3 of them as Supreme Court Justices. And the effects of that will be felt for a long time to come in decisions up and down the judiciary that respect the law and the Constitution. That is no small legacy.

And MITCH can step down from his post knowing that no one has done more to preserve our legal system and the essential role that it plays in our Republic.

MITCH, it has been a great honor to serve with you. And I am grateful that, while you are stepping down from your role as leader, you will still be here in the Senate, bringing your mastery of Senate procedure to leadership of the Senate Rules Committee. Hopefully—hopefully—you won't mind a few knocks on your door for advice.

Thank you for your long and faithful service to our party, to the Senate, and to our country. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the years ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 935

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, last week, Joe Biden commuted the sentences of nearly 1,500 convicted criminals, including drug dealers, fraudsters, and corrupt public officials. These are not sympathetic figures. These are individuals who stole from the poor and poisoned the sick. They tore families apart and menaced communities. They were sent to jail. They belong in jail.

With this action, Joe Biden didn't just reward 1,500 criminals; he robbed hundreds of thousands of victims of the closure and justice they deserve. The cruelty of these commutations is only matched by the shameless incompetence of the administration that issued them. This administration admitted—it admitted—that Joe Biden didn't individually review these cases or, for that matter, did anyone else individually review the cases. Yet he nullified the verdict of thousands of jurors and judges anyway. He also disrespected the countless man-hours that Federal law enforcement and prosecutors dedicated to solving these cases.

The whole purpose of the Presidential pardon power is to correct individual and limited failures of the criminal justice system. It is in the na-

ture of the power in government itself. We are a legislature. We make generally applicable prospective laws for everyone. Can those laws, in certain cases, yield unjust outcomes? Yes, of course. That is the nature of the legislative power, and the reason an Executive has the pardon power, is to mitigate that injustice in specific, particular cases. It is not to make generally applicable pardons in a broad set of parameters, as White House officials have caused here—certainly not to blindly free hundreds of duly convicted criminals.

These blanket commutations demonstrate a gross contempt for our legal system and its traditions. To put President Biden's actions in context, he issued more commutations in a single day than Donald Trump, George Bush, and Bill Clinton issued in their entire Presidencies—combined.

Let's just talk about a few of the beneficiaries of Joe Biden's jailbreak: Jacqueline Mills stole \$3 million that was intended for hungry Arkansas kids and low-income families.

Dr. Meera Sachdeva defrauded Medicare by diluting chemotherapy drugs and reusing old needles on cancer patients. At least one patient—at least one—contracted HIV as a result.

Fraudster Paul Burks ran a nearly \$1 billion Ponzi scheme that robbed 900,000 investors of their money.

Drug dealer Wendy Hechtman and her husband manufactured and distributed superdeadly carfentanil, unleashing an epidemic of drug overdoses in Omaha.

Another drug dealer, Daniel Fillerup, killed a 31-year-old relapsing addict by selling her fentanyl, which is 50 times stronger than the heroin she thought she was buying.

Shaquan Hemingway trafficked heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, and guns for the vicious Jalisco New Generation Cartel.

Joe Biden even commuted the sentence of a serial killer, Virginia Gray, who is known as the "Black Widow" for murdering two husbands and a boyfriend and collecting insurance money.

Perhaps the President would have reconsidered this decision if he knew anything about Ms. Gray, but he didn't because, yet again, he and White House officials did not review individual cases on the merits. They didn't pick up the case file. They didn't talk to victims or families.

Then there is the parade of corrupt public officials, the worst of whom is Michael Conahan, the so-called "cash for kids" judge who accepted kickbacks in exchange for his role in sending more than 2,300 children to private detention centers, including an 8-year-old. Again, a judge in Pennsylvania sentenced more than 2,300 children to private juvenile detention centers in return for cash kickbacks. One man he sent to jail later killed himself. He was just 23 years old. His mother said that she is shocked and hurt by Joe Biden's commutation. Yet again, the President did not review the case individually.

President Biden also commuted the sentence of an Ohio commissioner who took \$450,000 in bribes. He even commuted the sentence of Rita Crundwell, a city comptroller from Illinois who embezzled \$54 million. Crundwell was responsible for not only the biggest city embezzlement scandal in the history of Illinois, she was responsible for the biggest municipal embezzlement scandal in the history of America up to that time.

Now, I understand that we have disagreements about criminal justice, and the Democrats don't always share my view on these things, but for years, we have heard lectures about the rule of law and how Joe Biden and Democrats are the defenders of democracy. Yet Joe Biden is the one commuting the sentences of the very public officials who most threaten the public trust in our democracy.

The American people also know that Joe Biden issued these commutations for a simple reason: It helps cover up the corrupt pardon that he issued to his corrupt son to protect his family.

I think we should condemn all of these pardons and certainly condemn the President for not individually reviewing the merits of the cases. But again, I understand my Democratic colleagues don't agree with that, so I only offer a resolution to condemn one pardon—simply one—maybe the worst of them all, the commutation of Michael Conahan, the "cash for kids" judge who took cash kickbacks and bribes to sentence more than 2,300 kids to private detention centers—the judge who put American children in jail for money. Surely, the Senate can condemn this single act of corrupt clemency.

Therefore, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 935, which is at the desk; further, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would like to clarify the record on President Biden's use of the pardon power, which is established in the Constitution in article II, section 2.

On December 12, President Biden commuted the sentences of nearly 1,500 Americans who were placed in home confinement under a bipartisan—bipartisan—provision of the CARES Act. These individuals were all convicted of nonviolent offenses and have complied with the terms of home confinement for more than 1 year.

This clemency is consistent with a long history of Presidents using a categorical approach to exercise the constitutional power of pardon. For example, President Kennedy pardoned all

first-time offenders convicted of violating the Narcotics Control Act of 1956. President Truman granted pardons to more than 1,500 men convicted of violating the Selected Service Act during the draft in World War II. President Carter provided a categorical pardon for hundreds of thousands of men who evaded the draft during the Vietnam war.

I understand that Senator COTTON is opposed to clemency in a particular individual's case, but if Senator COTTON is concerned about undermining the rule of law and robbing victims of justice, we should consider just a few of President Donald Trump's pardons.

For example, take President Trump's decision to grant clemency to at least 10 healthcare executives and doctors convicted in large-scale Medicare fraud schemes. These decisions wiped away years of prison sentences and restitution totaling hundreds of millions of dollars for some of the worst healthcare fraudsters in the history of the United States of America.

Consider one—Philip Esformes, who had been sentenced to 20 years in prison for involving himself in the largest healthcare fraud scheme ever charged by the Department of Justice. Esformes received more than \$37 million in a scheme involving \$1.3 billion in fraudulent claims. Following his commutation from President Trump, Mr. Esformes pled guilty to new Medicaid fraud charges. In October, he was arrested for domestic violence. He was at least the seventh person pardoned by President Trump to be charged with a new crime.

President Trump also used his pardon power to provide relief for his political loyalists, including his former campaign manager Paul Manafort, his National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, his former adviser Steve Bannon, and at least seven Republican Congressmen who had been convicted of crimes.

Bannon was charged with defrauding donors of more than \$1 million as part of a fundraising campaign reportedly aimed at supporting President Trump's border wall. Do you remember that? He ended up soliciting true loyalists and friends of Donald Trump, saying that he was going to raise money and build the wall that Donald Trump, as candidate, spoke of so frequently. Bannon actually used the money he raised to cover hundreds of thousands of dollars of his own personal expenses.

President Trump has now promised that he will pardon the January 6 rioters on day one of his new administration. He calls them "political prisoners."

You remember January 6, Mr. President. I will bet you the Senator from Arkansas remembers it, too. This insurrectionist mob beat down the doors of the Capitol, invaded this Chamber, and took control of this building—to the shame of our country to allow that to happen. And then along comes President Trump, who says: If I am re-elected, I will pardon them.

I would like to ask my colleague from Arkansas if he supports pardoning the following individuals who were prosecuted for wrongdoing on January 6:

David Dempsey, convicted of assaulting police officers by using "his hands, feet, flag poles, crutches, pepper spray, broken pieces of furniture, and anything else he could get his hands on" as weapons against the police.

How about Shane Jenkins, who was convicted of using two tomahawk axes to break into this Capitol Building and assaulting police officers by throwing a wooden desk drawer and a flagpole at them?

How about a Trump pardon for Kyle Fitzsimons? On January 6—he was convicted of five separate assaults against law enforcement, including one that caused career-ending, life-altering injuries to U.S. Capitol Police Sergeant Aquilino Gonell.

Kenneth Bonawitz—another, perhaps, beneficiary of a Trump pardon when he is sworn in as President again. Mr. Bonawitz was a member of the so-called Proud Boys. He assaulted at least six officers, including placing one officer in a chokehold and lifting him up by the neck. Bonawitz injured one officer so severely, the officer was forced to retire from the police force.

So if you want to talk about misuse of a Presidential pardon power, let's be fair, honest, and balanced. I don't recall the Senator from Arkansas or any single Republican colleague of his introducing similar resolutions to criticize any of President Trump's pardons, and I haven't heard any Senate Republican urging President-elect Trump not to pardon the January 6 rioters.

President Biden's commutations—directed at a group of individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to rehabilitation—are far more defensible than President Trump's use of pardon power during his first term and what he is planning from the beginning—the very first day, the day of his dictatorial rule, as he called it—the beginning of his second term.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. I heard a lot of very troubling cases from the Senator from Illinois. And it is true, I generally think Presidents have given out improvidential pardons over time, and I am not going to defend many of those cases of pardons. For instance, I am not going to defend Jimmy Carter pardoning draft dodgers indiscriminately, mostly rich and privileged kids who didn't do their duty, when poor kids from places like Yell County, AR, or south Little Rock were doing their duty in Vietnam like my father was.

But we are not here to talk about Vietnam draft dodgers or who President Trump pardoned or who he might pardon. There is a resolution pending on the floor that specifically condemns Michael Conahan, the "cash for kids"

judge, who took cash kickbacks to sentence children to private juvenile detention centers.

Some words about this judge:

I do feel strongly that President Biden got it absolutely wrong and created a lot of panic.

Some children took their lives because of this.

Frankly, I thought the sentence the judge got was too light.

He deserved to be behind bars, not walking as a free man.

Strong words. Not my words. Those are the words of Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro who, again, called Joe Biden's clemency decision absolutely wrong.

The senior Senator from Minnesota joined Governor Shapiro and said that she, too, disagreed with the President's decision. She said that she "did not like that one."

Even the chairman of the West Virginia Democratic Party publicly condemned President Biden's commutations and specifically singled out the commutation of Judge Conahan, the "cash for kids" judge.

This resolution is not partisan. It is not sweeping. It is common sense. It is about a single egregious case that happened because of egregiously bad judgment.

The President and his aides set broad parameters. Apparently, those parameters kicked back 1,500 cases, and they didn't even have the time and the decency to say: Now, let's look at these cases and see if each one of these people deserves a pardon.

Maybe if one was an elderly, non-violent offender who had redeemed himself, whose victims had forgiven him—I could understand clemency in that case, not the "cash for kids" judge.

It is only 1,500 cases. They have thousands of lawyers running around the Department of Justice. Could they not individually look at these cases? I guess not. It is just another example of how Democrats have spent 8 years of accusing Donald Trump of doing this, that, or the other dastardly thing when, in reality, they are doing much worse.

We heard the Senator from Illinois talking about a pardon for political loyalists. Who could be more of a political loyalist than a President's own son? And that is what Joe Biden did. His first big post-election pardon—pardon his son, not just for specific crimes to which he had pleaded guilty or for which he had been convicted, gun crimes and tax crimes, but for all crimes—all crimes—that he committed or may have committed for 11 years. That is almost twice the length of a similar pardon President Ford gave to President Nixon, which I think, although condemned at the time, most people would now view as an act of political courage.

I don't think anyone in retrospect is going to think that Joe Biden pardoning his son for every crime he might have committed against the

United States for 11 years is ever going to be seen as an act of political courage or if he does the same thing for his brother or any other members of his family before noon on January 20.

Starting next year, I really won't have time for crocodile tears about President Trump's pardon decisions if the Senate can't bring itself today to condemn one—just one—single egregious case of abuse of the pardon power: the "cash for kids" judge who sentenced 2,300 children to private detention centers in return for cash kickbacks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

AMERICA'S NATIONAL CHURCHILL
MUSEUM NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARK ACT

FORT ONTARIO HOLOCAUST REFUGEE
SHELTER NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PARK ESTABLISHMENT
ACT

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on March 5, 1946, President Harry S. Truman of Missouri invited a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill, to Fulton, MO, Westminster College, to deliver a speech.

The two men actually traveled to the speech together over land by train, and it was really a remarkable occasion. By this time, of course, Churchill was in retirement—or a brief retirement; he was to return to public office some short time thereafter. And Churchill might have chosen, at that speech in Fulton at Westminster College, to talk about any number of things. He might have talked about his legacy, as many people do in Washington, DC, these days. He might have told stories about the recently won Second World War. But, instead, he gave one of the most significant speeches of the 20th century, a speech that defined with moral clarity unparalleled the challenges of the second half of the 20th century. He called it the "Sinews of Peace" speech, but it came to be known ever after as "The Iron Curtain" speech.

It was in Fulton, MO, that Churchill so famously said that an iron curtain has descended across the European continent, and he went on to say that the struggle against Soviet communism would be the great moral challenge—and, of course, the national security challenge—the great cause of free peoples everywhere in the second half of the 20th century.

He was absolutely correct. And that speech set the tone; it set the agenda; it set the moral framework for the decades that followed, culminating, of course, with President Reagan's own victory over Soviet communism in which he led this country to triumph and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which would come over four decades after Churchill visited Fulton.

Now, interestingly, when Churchill came to Fulton that day and to Westminster College, they didn't have a space big enough for him, other than the Westminster College gymnasium. So Churchill gave his speech in the gym there at Westminster College.

In the years that followed, as the speech became progressively more famous, as Churchill's prophetic insight became more and more recognized, the residents of Fulton decided that it would be fitting to create a memorial there on the college campus at Westminster College to commemorate that speech. And so they settled upon something interesting. In 1966, 20 years after the speech had first been delivered, the residents of Fulton transported from London the bricks of a church, a parish church in London called St. Mary Aldermanbury that had been destroyed in the Blitz of 1940 when Churchill was Prime Minister, when England stood alone against the Nazi scourge. The residents of Fulton transported those bricks from that church that had been destroyed to Fulton, MO, to the Westminster campus, and they rebuilt the church right there on the campus of Westminster.

Here it is now, as it stands today. And there is a statue of Churchill right next to it.

The thing about this church is it was first built in the 11th century. The first mention we have of it is in 1181 when it was a parish church in the city of London. It was actually destroyed once before in the Great Fire of London in 1666, and then it was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren before it was gutted again by the Blitz in 1940.

So here it stands today in Fulton, MO, on the campus of Westminster College, a monument to Winston Churchill, yes, but also a monument to the great bonds between the United States and the United Kingdom, to our shared struggle to free the world of tyranny in the 20th century and to our shared victories together across that great century.

And today, Mr. President, I am here on this floor to ask consent to pass legislation to designate this memorial as a national historic landmark to make sure that, from now on, the America's National Churchill Museum, as it is called in Fulton, will stand recognized by this country as a national historic landmark and that the National Park Service will continue to help maintain it and to study future potential designations for the site.

So we are going to pause, I understand, for one moment, and then I will ask permission to pass the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, during World War II, Fort Ontario was the only U.S. refugee shelter for people fleeing the Holocaust. Let me say it again. Fort Ontario was the only U.S. refugee shelter for people fleeing the Holocaust. It gave them a safe haven.

It gave them strength. It gave them hope that when they needed it the very most, we were there. And it was one of the first places where American residents would ever hear firsthand accounts about what happened during the Holocaust.

In fact, there are still residents in this and other communities today who remember the experiences of living in or outside of Fort Ontario at a time when nearly 1,000 Holocaust refugees were living there and receiving medical care, food, and education.

Located along Lake Ontario in Oswego, NY, the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Center was supposed to be the first of many temporary relief camps across the United States during World War II, but it was the only one that came to fruition.

For years, I have been working with the local community members to honor and preserve it. I have visited them. I have heard their stories. I have learned about the importance of the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter to them and their families and the larger community.

This site has long played an extraordinary role in our Nation's history, and its story deserves to be part of the National Park System. Establishing the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historic Park would give this site permanent protection, and it would help to make sure it is preserved and enshrined in the site's legacy of hope, compassion, and resilience for future generations.

I want to thank Congresswoman TENNEY and former Congressman Katko for helping lead this effort. And I also want to thank Senator HAWLEY for his partnership and the Senate for passing this bill.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 630, S. 4607; Calendar No. 589, S. 2742.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendments, where applicable, be 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, all en bloc.

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

The bills were passed en bloc as follows:

AMERICA'S NATIONAL CHURCHILL MUSEUM NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK ACT

A bill (S. 4607) to designate the America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark, 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. 4607

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 "America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CITY.—The term "City" means the city of Fulton, Missouri.

(2) COLLEGE.—The term "College" means Westminster College, located at 501 Westminster Avenue in the City.

(3) LANDMARK.—The term "Landmark" means the America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark designated by section 3(a).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of Missouri.

SEC. 3. AMERICA'S NATIONAL CHURCHILL MUSEUM NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK.

(a) DESIGNATION.—America's National Churchill Museum located at the College, including the Winston Churchill Memorial listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is designated as the "America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark".

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the State, the City, and the College, may enter into cooperative agreements with appropriate public or private entities, for the purposes of—

(A) protecting historic resources at the Landmark; and

(B) providing educational and interpretive facilities and programs at the Landmark for the public.

(2) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide technical and financial assistance to any entity with which the Secretary has entered into a cooperative agreement under paragraph (1).

(c) NO EFFECT ON ACTIONS OF PROPERTY OWNERS.—Designation of the America's National Churchill Museum as a National Historic Landmark shall not prohibit any actions that may otherwise be taken by a property owner (including the College and any other owner of the Landmark) with respect to the property of the owner.

(d) NO EFFECT ON ADMINISTRATION.—Nothing in this section affects the administration of the Landmark by the State, the City, or the College.

SEC. 4. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a special resource study of the Landmark.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under this section, the Secretary shall—

(1) evaluate the national significance of the Landmark;

(2) determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the Landmark as a unit of the National Park System;

(3)(A) consider alternatives to that designation for the preservation, protection,

and interpretation of the Landmark by the Federal Government, the State, the City and other affected units of local government, or private and nonprofit organizations (including the College); and

(B) identify cost estimates for any Federal acquisition, development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives described in subparagraph (A); and

(4) consult with interested Federal agencies, the State, the City and other affected units of local government, private and nonprofit entities (including the College), and other interested individuals.

(c) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall conduct the study under this section in accordance with section 100507 of title 54, United States Code.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to carry out the study under this section, 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—

(1) the results of the study; and

(2) any conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary.

FORT ONTARIO HOLOCAUST REFUGEE SHELTER NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ESTABLISHMENT ACT

A bill (S. 2742) to establish the Fort Ontario National Monument in the State of New York 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 "Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park Establishment Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MAP.—The term "map" means the map entitled "Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park Proposed Boundary", numbered 962/194.681, and dated September 2024.

(2) NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.—The term "National Historical Park" means the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park established by section 3(a)(1).

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of New York.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF FORT ONTARIO HOLOCAUST REFUGEE SHELTER NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (3), there is established in the State as a unit of the National Park System the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park.

(2) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the National Historical Park is to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations resources associated with the stories of the 982 refugees from World War II who were housed at Fort Ontario from August of 1944 until February of 1946.

(3) CONDITIONS OF ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) DETERMINATION BY THE SECRETARY.—The National Historical Park 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 from land identified as "Proposed Boundary" on the map to constitute a manageable park unit.

(B) NOTICE.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary makes a determination under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the National Historical Park.

(4) MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(5) BOUNDARY.—The boundary of the National Historical Park shall include any land or interests in land acquired by the Secretary under this section.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the National Historical Park in accordance with—

(A) this section; and

(B) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(i) sections 100101(a), 100751(a), 100752, 100753, and 102101 of title 54, United States Code; and

(ii) chapters 1003 and 3201 of title 54, United States Code.

(2) AGREEMENTS.—

(A) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—In accordance with section 101702 of title 54, United States Code, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State or other public and private entities to provide interpretive and educational services within the National Historical Park.

(B) INTERPRETATION AND RESTORATION AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into agreements to identify, interpret, and restore nationally significant historic or cultural resources located on non-Federal land within the boundary of, or in close proximity to, the National Historical Park.

(C) PUBLIC ACCESS.—Any cooperative agreement entered into under subparagraph (B) to provide assistance to non-Federal land shall provide for reasonable public access to the non-Federal land.

(3) ACQUISITION OF LAND.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may acquire land and interests in land located within the boundary of the National Historical Park by—

(i) donation;

(ii) purchase with donated or appropriated funds; or

(iii) exchange.

(B) LIMITATION.—Any land owned by the State or a political subdivision of the State may be acquired for inclusion in the National Historical Park only by donation.

(4) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Not later than 3 fiscal years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Secretary, in consultation with the State, shall complete a general management plan for the National Historical Park in accordance with—

(A) section 100502 of title 54, United States Code; and

(B) any other applicable laws.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2742), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read a third time, and passed.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I yield the floor. 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last week, I came to the floor to speak

about a new acronym that we are becoming more and more familiar with—DOGE, or the Department of Government Efficiency—that will be led by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. One of the priorities I am looking forward to working with DOGE on to accomplish, as a founding member of the caucus, is to reform and, hopefully, revitalize the Pentagon.

As I have said repeatedly, we are living in one of the most dangerous times since World War II. So it is absolutely critical that our systems at the Pentagon are operating in top-notch shape. But as we know, as of now, many of the acquisition processes the Pentagon follows are similar, if not identical, to those followed by the Soviet Union back in the day. If you know your history, the United States beat the Soviet Union when the wall fell and when the Soviet Union collapsed. So it is obvious that their model doesn't work very well, and neither did their system of military procurement.

But, as I mentioned last week, where and how we spend our money is just as important as how much we spend. We seem to be fixated on the "how much" but not how and where the money is spent. Preparing for the strategic competition we are in the midst of is not as simple as just increasing the percentage of the spending of GDP. We need to make sure that the money that is spent is spent efficiently and accurately, meeting the needs of the world—the dangerous world—we live in.

The end of the Cold War brought us a peace dividend, but one consequence of that victory was the overwhelming consolidation of the defense industrial base and the weakening of our supply chains. In the early 1990s, we had several hundred companies participating in our national defense industrial base. Today, we have five. The lack of competition in this area, combined with our penchant for requiring unique defense systems, has hampered our bargaining power and led to waste and abuse.

The use of cost-plus contracts shifts the risk of cost overruns to the government. As a result, it is not unusual to find projects delayed by years and running hundreds of millions of dollars over budget. Take, for example, undersea autonomous vehicles. Boeing was contracted to deliver five Orca vehicles for about \$379 million in 2022. Yet here we are \$620 million later with an anticipated delivery date of 2025. If we keep going at this rate, we simply will not be prepared for the confrontation from the authoritarian axis that is quickly coming our way.

But the good news is this story doesn't have to end the way the Soviet Union did. We are, after all, the United States of America, and I am optimistic we can learn from the mistakes other countries have made in the past to win this strategic competition with the axis of authoritarians. I am hopeful that by implementing reforms, we can

pivot from the path we are on to one of peace through strength. Ultimately, the goal should be deterrence, preventing the next war.

The Pentagon should move away from cost-plus contracts toward reliance on fixed-price contracts. Under a fixed-price model, cost overruns are borne by the contractor instead of the buyer, which, in this case, is the Pentagon. This is just a commonsense best practice that should be the standard model to incentivize productivity and efficient operations. Newer, nontraditional defense companies like Anduril and Palantir, as well as Elon Musk's SpaceX in my home State of Texas, have made a strong case for this commonsense business approach.

These companies have leveraged billions of dollars in our capital markets, perhaps our greatest strategic advantage when compared to our adversaries, to produce quality defense items at unmatched scale and speed.

They also provide important and critical jobs across a variety of skill levels, often in a low-cost-of-living, high-growth opportunity area. This helps revitalize our towns and communities in need of new industries to reinvigorate their job markets.

This model underscores the need to transition away from our centralized, Soviet-style acquisition process, first created in the 1960s, to a more agile model which leverages the private sector to strengthen our national defense.

In addition to shifting our model for procurement and acquisition, we need to change the risk-averse culture at the Department of Defense. I don't mean taking unnecessary risks; I mean taking calculated risks where called for and where indicated.

Newer entities, such as the Defense Innovation Unit or the Office of Strategic Capital, are willing to assume greater risks since they understand the need for rapid acquisition. Their ability to identify and adopt commercial technologies, for example, is one area where procurement and contracting offices should be emulating. Rather than having the DOD create elaborate requirements with multiple overlays of bureaucracy and review, our officials should be looking for existing products and technologies that substantially meet the needed requirement.

The Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 actually requires these officials to do that. The fact that they are reluctant to do so underscores the need to reform the culture of acquisition and procurement.

While these are all needed updates that must happen, I am optimistic that the Pentagon can and will, with our help and encouragement, make progress in all of these fronts in order to be prepared for the challenges that our country faces ahead.

One reason I am optimistic is because of some of these reforms that are already underway as they have been included in the National Defense Authorization Act. And I am proud to have championed several of them.

Two of my bills included in the NDAA would enhance our procurement capabilities. One is the Capability-Based Trade and Unconventional Resource Engagement—or CAPTURE Act—which will create a pilot project permitting contracting officers to use alternative analyses to better determine the value of products produced by nontraditional defense contractors.

And then there is my Encouraging Qualitative Upgrades and Innovative Procurements—or EQUIP—Act, which will permit combatant commanders to use the defense modernization fund to procure commercial technologies.

Lastly, my Enable IC Partnerships Act will encourage public-private partnerships in acquisition and develop workforce talent. This will help address the lack of competition and innovation within the government and within the country.

These reforms, I believe, are a start, but our work is not yet complete.

I am confident that under new leadership, including that of Secretary-designate Hegseth, in collaboration with people like Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy at the Department of Government Efficiency, we can continue and build on this process and make additional needed reforms at the Pentagon, again, with the goal of preventing the next war or reestablishing deterrence—something we have not done now, as evidenced by all of the hot spots around the world, ranging from the Middle East to North Korea to China to Russia.

I look forward to working with all of my colleagues and with each of these individuals to help them rebuild our military into the powerhouse that has long defined American strength.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, today's farmers across the country are facing significant financial losses for most commodities planted during the 2024 crop-year. It is a dire situation. Basically, they are in trouble.

I have been saying this for a while now: For the sake of American food security, national security, and rural prosperity, Congress must pass economic assistance for our farmers before the end of this year.

That is why I am asking Congress to pass a stand-alone economic assistance package for our farmers, no strings attached.

This isn't for the lobbyists, special interests, or liberal pet projects; it would go directly to the people who feed, clothe, and fuel the United States of America and the world.

It is for the American farmers who are desperate. They are in desperate need of help to survive. This economic assistance certainly won't help farmers make a profit. They have no chance. It won't even help them break even.

Right now, many farmers won't be able to secure financing and renew

their operating loans to keep their farms running for another year. Again, they are in trouble. This funding would only help farmers cover part of the 2023 and 2024 losses for American producers.

For crops grown in my State of Alabama specifically, the expected losses this year are over \$200 per acre. Cotton producers are in worse shape, with losses of approximately \$373 per acre. Peanut farmers' losses are next, at almost \$198 per acre. Other crops, such as corn, soybean, and rice are also facing devastating financial losses.

These losses are occurring after farmers have produced bumper crops, which have yielded some of the best crops producers have seen in many, many years.

This indicates that a major economic disaster is looming for our producers and our country. If this dire situation continues, the American agricultural industry will face permanent—permanent—damage. American farming as we know it could cease—I repeat, cease—to exist.

Regardless of the region, State, crop, or weather pattern, there is one thing every farmer is subject to; that is, the law of economics. And right now, it is economic disaster for our farmers across this country and all States.

The math is simple. With production costs and interest rates at an alltime high, farmers' expenses are exceeding their profits. Under President Biden's leadership, cost for feed is up 22 percent; fertilizer, up 34 percent; fuel, up 30 percent. On top of that, labor is up 40 percent, and interest is up 54 percent on crop loans—54 percent. You can't make these numbers up.

Input costs are skyrocketing while commodity prices have plummeted—absolutely plummeted—and are expected to continue falling.

According to the 2022 USDA agriculture census, our Nation has lost over 25,000 producers in just the last few years.

According to the USDA net farm income, this year is projected to decline 4.1 percent from 2023. This follows a shocking—listen to this—a shocking 22.6-percent decline from 2022 levels. These figures represent over \$40 billion in lost revenue for America's hard-working producers.

No business—not one business—in this country can survive like this. Our farmers and our farms are no different. This is the largest 2-year decline in farm income in the history of this country—the history of the country.

In Alabama alone, we have lost nearly 2,000 producers and over 3,200 farms in just the last few years. This will cause farms to get bigger, not smaller.

The economies of scale will continue to push out small- and medium-sized growers, resulting in further consolidation of the agriculture industry. The little guys, in other words, they can't compete. We cannot allow these terrible trends to continue.

American farmers are rapidly approaching a steep financial cliff. Many

will go off the ledge, never to recover unless Congress throws them a lifeline and pulls them back to safety.

This supplemental funding needs to happen in addition to a long extension of the farm bill. It has to be extended.

I continue to stand with Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member BOOZMAN in emphasizing the need to pass a strong farm bill with an adequate farm safety net in the upcoming Congress.

However, the truth is that even if we did pass a new farm bill—which would be improved, hopefully—containing increased reference prices for title I commodities, assistance would not reach farmers until October 2026. It will be a little too late for the farmers this year, for thousands of them.

Most farmers who wish to plant crops in 2025 need renewed access to credit before the end of this month. With many balancing checkbooks in the red—some for the second, third, and fourth year in a row—farmers will have a difficult time securing financing without improved certainty within the agriculture sector.

So while a 1-year farm bill extension is important, it does not provide the needed certainty for bankers and creditors to extend farm loans for this coming planting season. By failing to extend the adequate financial lifeline to farmers, now our farmers will—and I repeat—will not survive until the fall of 2026. It will be over.

It is a sad reality. At the end of the day, it is not their fault. They work 365 days a year, 7 days a week, and put their hard-earned money as well as borrowed money into their farms.

The supplemental assistance I am advocating for today will only serve as a bandaid to slow the bleeding until they get a farm loan and plant next season's crop.

I am hearing from producers all over Alabama and across the country about the dire state of the farm economy. Producers can't pay employees or their bills for seed, chemicals, and fertilizers. They can't pay it. I have never seen it this bad, never.

Lawsuits have already started—suing farmers for something that they don't have. Farmers have bumper crops of cotton, peanuts, corn, and beans. Yet they are still on the brink of bankruptcy. Something is wrong.

This isn't about commodity versus commodity or region versus region; it is about the survival of the American farmer and the communities that rely on them. It is about saving the hard-working men and women who play a critical role in feeding and clothing and fueling not only the United States but, folks, the entire world.

Congress cannot defy the laws of economics, but it can pass a stand-alone economic assistance package for our farmers to help them survive another year. This is perfectly within our power. There will be no funny business for this economic assistance, just a straight up-and-down vote to see who

stands with our farmers, the food for this country, and the world.

Democrats always try to hold emergency funding for farmers hostage, like we have this year, and they want projects to go along with the funding, basically holding us hostage, holding these farmers who have worked hard and put their own sweat and blood into this crop that they have had.

Farmers from every corner of the country need us now, more than ever. There is not going to be another chance for a high percentage of this farming group that are farming this year—it is not going to happen—which is why I am calling on the House and the Senate to put politics aside. I am begging: Put politics aside.

I wish I could have farmers standing up here today. They would be telling you the same thing. They don't like handouts. They like to work for the money that they make; they always have. That is why they are special. But they need a no-strings-attached economic plan.

I know President Trump will do everything he can in his power to assist American farmers when he is sworn into office. Our next Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins, will deliver for our farmers as soon as she is sworn in. But until then, I ask the Senate to stand up and stand with an economic assistance package to throw our farmers a lifeline. They deserve it. They need it. And it is not just for them; it is for the entire country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4444

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, with only days left in the 118th Congress, I come to the floor to fight on behalf of my rural Montana communities. S. 4444, the Crow Revenue Act, is a win for Montana, and it is one that cannot wait any longer.

The bill is pretty simple. It swaps minerals between the Crow Tribe, the Federal Government, and the Hope family and ensures that both the Crow Tribe and Musselshell County will continue to receive much-needed revenue from mineral development.

Let me be clear: If this bill does not pass and is not signed into law this year, there will be dramatic consequences for Montana communities. If we don't act before the end of the year, there will be 100 high-paying mining jobs lost in Roundup, MT. And unlike the show "Yellowstone," where it looks like everybody has helicopters and fancy barns and fancy houses, this part of our State—and most of Montana—fights every day to make ends meet.

And, by the way, these 100 jobs that will be lost is after 700 jobs were lost at the Stillwater mine in Columbus, MT, a few months ago. We can't afford another layoff of hard-working miners.

Furthermore, both Musselshell County and the Crow Tribe will see cuts in their revenues, leading to fewer services for their communities.

The Crow Revenue Act is a long-term fix to a real problem that is happening in my State. It has the strong support of community leaders, county commissioners, the Governor, other locally elected officials, and, very importantly, the Crow Tribe.

I ask my colleagues to stand with me and support our rural and our Tribal communities.

Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 4444 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the Daines substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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 Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I am all for considering bills that have gone through the regular process for consideration. In the past month alone, I have been on the floor several times to pass 12 bipartisan bills which advanced out of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs with unanimous bipartisan support.

The difference with this bill is it is not ready. It is just not ready for that consideration, and Senator DAINES knows that. The bill has not cleared the committee, and it is not for our lack of trying. It was only introduced a few months ago. And when it was fast-tracked to a hearing at the Senator's request, it was clear that there remained several open questions, and, as of today, many of those questions have still not been answered. And yet we are trying to pass this bill unanimously.

What is happening is that this would be recorded on the Senate floor as a 100-to-0 vote. This bill is not ready for that. The only circumstances under which—especially in Indian Affairs, but mostly in any other jurisdiction, the only way we pass something by unanimous consent is if it has been fully vetted and it is either so meaningless, right—a congratulatory resolution or something—and people just let them go; or it has been so thoroughly vetted that it is really ready and there are no objectors. That is not the case for this bill.

The Indian Affairs Committee has had its most productive years in history these past two Congresses, and we have done it through good-faith, bipartisan work and respecting not just,

generally speaking, the process but the bipartisan tradition of the committee itself. We don't have one rule for some bills and another for others. Every bill that has made it through this process is scrutinized by the committee, with feedback from Tribes and others. And if it can be considered, it generally passes out on a bipartisan basis. Actually, our standard is to try to pass these things unanimously, not just one Member of one party and all the Members of the other party. We try to get zero "no" votes. If there are any "no" votes, it won't pass by consent on the floor.

We have done everything that we can to oblige Senator DAINES and accelerate the consideration of this bill, but we cannot pass a bill that is still going through the process. The bill has no score. The bill has no score—something that has been required—sometimes to my chagrin—of every single bill that comes out of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. I don't love that standard because sometimes I just want to pass a bill, and sometimes the score is so de minimis that I think it is a little bit of a waste of time. That is not the case for this bill. It is going to score, and we don't have that score yet. And I am not going to make an exception for one bill. It hasn't had a committee markup, and there is no path in the House.

The Senate hotline ran barely a day ago, and offices are still reviewing it. I want people to understand what that means. That means that offices that are not on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs are just getting emailed about this bill. For them, it is an issue of first impression. They are being asked to ask their boss: Do you vote yes on this bill that you haven't even analyzed? Do you vote yes on this bill, and there is maybe 2 days—maybe more but let's assume 2 days left in the actual Congress?

This is an attempt to circumvent our normal procedures. That is not how we do things here. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The Senator from Utah.

AMENDING TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE, TO AUTHORIZE HOLDING COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DIVISION OF UTAH IN MOAB AND MONTICELLO

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 8666 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8666) to amend title 28, United States Code, to authorize holding court for the Central Division of Utah in Moab and Monticello.

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

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 8666) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

GUARDING READINESS RESOURCES ACT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of S. 4511 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4511) to provide for the crediting of funds received by the National Guard Bureau as reimbursement from States.

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

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

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

The amendment (No. 3345) 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 "Guarding Readiness Resources Act".

SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF FUNDS RECEIVED BY NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU AS REIMBURSEMENT FROM STATES.

Section 710 of title 32, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(g) TREATMENT OF REIMBURSED FUNDS.—Any funds received by the National Guard Bureau from a State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, or the Virgin Islands as reimbursement under this section for the use of military property—

"(1) shall be credited to—

"(A) the appropriation, fund, or account used in incurring the obligation; or

"(B) an appropriate appropriation, fund, or account currently available for the purposes for which the expenditures were made; and

"(2) may only be used by the Department of Defense for the repair, maintenance, replacement, or other similar functions related directly to assets used by National Guard units while operating under State active duty status."

The bill (S. 4511), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT OF 2023

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about commitment—commitment across our Nation—in each of our States and towns and cities and in the villages in Alaska, and the men and women who have made a commitment to their neighbors and to strangers and to the broader community. These are our teachers. They are our nurses. They are our firefighters, emergency responders, and police—public servants who manage applications for Federal and State benefits like SNAP, unemployment, and disaster assistance. They ensure that our elections are well run. They get our streets paved and plowed. They have made their commitment to serve. And for many of these public servants, their States have opted out of Social Security, and so they are not paying into the system.

But many of them have had other jobs in the past or will have other jobs in the future. These are jobs that will require them to contribute into Social Security. In many cases, they have contributed to Social Security for an entire career before taking on a job in public service. And then, when they retire—when folks retire, you assume that the Social Security benefits that you have paid into you are going to be receiving. These are benefits that people are entitled to receive, benefits that they are entitled to as the spouse or the survivor or both.

But for decades now, the commitment that these public servants have given to their communities and to our Nation has been returned with two acronyms that have had devastating consequences for, unfortunately, far too many Americans: GPO and WEP. For many in my State of Alaska, these are like swear words—GPO and WEP, government pension offset and windfall elimination provision.

The Social Security benefits of spouses, widows, and widowers were first cut by the GPO in 1977. Then, in 1983, Congress went after the benefits of the retirees themselves with the WEP. These two provisions have been responsible for reducing Social Security benefits from hard-working Americans who have earned them and then from their spouses, widows, and widowers.

And it is in Alaska where the highest number per capita of teachers and public employees are impacted. So when you look at the map of the United States and those areas where you have the highest negative impact from the WEP provision and the GPO provision, it is, unfortunately, in my home State of Alaska.

And it might not sound like a lot—15,156 Alaskans who are impacted by either GPO or WEP or both. These are all their stories. These are all individual Alaskans who have stories about how this has impacted them—like the retired teacher who is just one paycheck away from homelessness because, after serving for years as a teacher, she lost

two-thirds of her earned Social Security benefits because of WEP; or the young Alaska widow who is in dire financial straits following her husband's recent unexpected death, simply because of GPO or WEP; or the senior citizen who taught for over 25 years, then turned to commercial fishing, and then he worked for BLM and the U.S. Forest Service—this is a career track that you see with a lot of Alaskans. His Social Security was cut by over 30 percent. So now, at 82 years old, he is still working to make ends meet. This is not retirement, folks.

These aren't hypotheticals. These are real stories from Alaskans who have reached out to me asking me, as their Senator, to help them. I have been hearing from these folks for the entire tenure that I have been here in the U.S. Senate—hearing about the disparate impact on Alaskans, hearing about the inequity, the unfairness: I have earned these benefits, and yet I am not able to receive the full benefit. Where is the fairness in that?

And so I have not just listened to my constituents; I have responded and stepped forward. In every single Congress since I have been here in the U.S. Senate, I have cosponsored legislation to eliminate GPO and WEP, and proudly so. But it has been very frustrating because, over these 22 years now, I have got constituents who are saying: This is happening to me in realtime right now.

And I have to say: This is hard. This formula is not right. We get it. We have got to address it, but this is going to be expensive. So until we are able to do more wholesale reforms, I don't know how we are going to be able to help you in the Senate.

That is not a satisfying answer to that teacher, to that firefighter, and to that widow.

So I was so pleased to be able to cast my vote yesterday to move to passage of the Social Security Fairness Act. I am proud that 72 of us here in the Senate joined together, and I am truly looking forward to final passage of this important measure before I return home.

And when I get home, I will be able to tell school districts that you are going to have a better chance. It is going to be a little bit easier for you to recruit and retain good teachers and principals because the disincentive to work in a State that is impacted by GPO and WEP is going to be gone for us in Alaska.

I will also be able to tell firefighters and the police and EMS responders that they are not going to have the burden of knowing that their retirement is going to be less secure or their spouse's retirement will be less secure after years of putting themselves on the line in service to our communities.

And I will be able to tell my neighbors and the folks I meet in the grocery store and in the community meetings that their service is not more of a sacrifice than it should be.

I am proud of the work that we have been able to do on behalf of Alaskans and for over 800,000 Americans in other States who are affected by GPO and the over 2 million people in the States who are impacted by WEP.

In the next Congress, it is going to be up to all of us to look at Social Security's solvency from a larger perspective, to work on it, debate on it, and vote on ways to ensure that this vital retirement program is going to continue to ensure that Americans are able to retire with dignity and security.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to talk to my colleagues about something that is happening right in front of our eyes. It is a set of events that aren't random—they are connected to one another—that threaten to destroy this country that we love.

Everybody can see it, but for some reason—maybe the exhaustion of the aftermath of a brutal election, maybe the distraction of the Christmas season, maybe just an instinct to flee instead of fight—there are far too many people who are denying to themselves what they are seeing.

What is happening right now is that Donald Trump and his billionaire advisers are unfolding for the country in real time a plan to transition this country from a democracy to a restrictive oligarchy, where political opposition is silenced, where the media isn't free, and where government just exists to enrich a small cabal of elites that surround the man in charge.

I know a lot of my colleagues do see how these dots exist and how they connect, and I know, in your gut, a lot of you see the specter of the disaster that is coming. But if you don't, I want to spend just a few minutes laying it out.

To make things simple, I am just going to focus on three events that happened in the last 7 days: the recommendation by House Republicans that Trump critic Liz Cheney be subject to criminal prosecution, the lawsuit filed by Trump against an Iowa pollster and an Iowa newspaper, and the decision by ABC to pay Trump \$15 million to get rid of a bogus lawsuit.

First, the recommendation from House Republicans that Liz Cheney be prosecuted. Liz Cheney was a member of the January 6 Commission that tried to find some accountability for the assault on this Capitol that resulted in people dying, that resulted in an officer with blood running down his face running into this Chamber to rescue us before the violent rioters got ahold of us.

Donald Trump did not like that narrative that he had something to do with, that he inspired the January 6 riot. He doesn't even like the narrative that January 6 was a riot. His events are opened by the January 6 choir in commemoration of the events that day.

What happened this week is that Donald Trump made good on his promise. He said during the campaign that he was going to use the military, law enforcement, and the National Guard to deal with “the enemy within.” When asked who “the enemy within” was, he said: NANCY PELOSI, ADAM SCHIFF, Democrats.

Now, people laughed it off during the campaign because that doesn't happen in America. We don't use law enforcement to lock up your political opposition. But that is exactly what is being recommended when it comes to Liz Cheney. Liz Cheney did nothing criminal. There is not even a whiff of a criminal allegation. She was just in charge of a Commission that Donald Trump opposed. But House Republicans, taking orders from Donald Trump, just recommended that the next administration, the next Department of Justice, criminally prosecute Liz Cheney.

By the way, Liz Cheney won't be the last. There will be other political opponents of Donald Trump who are referred for prosecution.

Now, that would be laughable today under an FBI and a Department of Justice that doesn't lock up people for political reasons, but Donald Trump is changing the guard at the FBI. He is putting in someone loyal to him as the next Attorney General. The person he is going to put in at the FBI wrote a book about how important it was to eliminate from government anybody that doesn't line up with the political priorities of the President. He has said that the people who ran fair elections in 2020 should go to jail because if you didn't run an election that resulted in Donald Trump being elected, then you did something wrong.

This week, the House recommended Liz Cheney for criminal prosecution. Donald Trump cheered that recommendation. And we are getting ready to vote on an Attorney General and a Director of the FBI who have made clear that they are ready to eagerly prosecute Trump's political opponents.

This is really important to talk about because this is one of the key ways that democracies fall all around the world. It, frankly, doesn't take hundreds of political prosecutions; it only takes a handful before ordinary, average Americans just decide that they would be better off staying quiet instead of facing potential harassment or intimidation or a jail sentence for speaking out the way that Liz Cheney did.

The second thing that happened in this last week was that Donald Trump filed a lawsuit against a pollster in Iowa. The grounds of the lawsuit are simple: He didn't like the results of the poll. The poll said the Iowa race was close. The poll ended up being wrong, but he is suing the pollster and the newspaper because he was upset that that poll helped galvanize opposition to him.

That poll, which suggested that race was close, got a lot of people to donate to his political opponent. It gave people in Iowa some hope that maybe a Democrat could win. That is not allowed in Donald Trump's world. It is not allowed in Donald Trump's world for anything to be in service of his political opposition. So he is filing a lawsuit that has no chance of succeeding because he wants to try to intimidate journalists and the press into submission.

Whether we like it or not, it just is true that maybe in the future, a pollster who has a poll in front of them that shows a race closing, shows a race that is favorable to Democrats, won't publicize that poll out of fear of a lawsuit.

Connected to that lawsuit is the third thing I want to talk about: the decision by ABC to pay Donald Trump \$15 million to settle a bogus lawsuit—a bogus defamation lawsuit—that would have never succeeded in court. But ABC, for whatever reason, decided it would be better for them to just pay Donald Trump to make it go away.

You are seeing repeated decisions by people in the media to just go along with Donald Trump rather than risk his ire, rather than potentially put their profits at risk if Donald Trump and his regulatory Agencies turn against them. You saw Jeff Bezos tell his newspapers not to endorse KAMALA HARRIS. You have seen an effort by Comcast to divest itself from MSNBC. You have seen ABC pay off Donald Trump \$15 million. Over and over again, you see members of the press starting to decide it is just better not to fight him.

These three things taken together show you the playbook: Threaten political opposition with jail, throw a few of them into jail to show you are serious, sue and intimidate and harass anybody that does anything that is helpful to your political opposition, and intimidate and harass the media in the hopes that they will just go away and stop criticizing you.

I don't think it is a coincidence that during this period of media harassment by Donald Trump, when Liz Cheney was referred for criminal prosecution, all the headlines played it totally straight. None of the headlines suggested that the criminal prosecution was bogus, it was built on lies, it was built on no understanding of the law. The headlines just said: Liz Cheney referred for criminal prosecution.

I think it is really important that we lay out what is happening here because this is how a democracy vanishes, but I think it is also equally important to talk about why Donald Trump and Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy and all of his billionaire friends are engaged in this very coordinated early attack, even before he is sworn in, to try to intimidate his political opposition and bully the press.

The reason they are doing this, the reason they are trying to suppress dis-

sent, is because they are preparing to steal from us. Donald Trump and his billionaire buddies want to be in charge of government so that they can make themselves more wealthy at our expense. They want government contracts. They want to privatize government programs. They want to get bigger regulatory breaks. They want lower taxes.

Donald Trump and his billionaire cronies want government to serve them, but they know the only way they get away with that is if no one holds them accountable. So in order to steal from us, they have to silence political opposition, intimidate activists into submission, and try to get the press to fold. If they do that, then they can get away with using government as a mechanism to enrich themselves.

If you want further proof of their agenda, look what is happening right now, today, as we speak: Republicans and Democrats had a deal to keep the government open and operating, to fund much-needed disaster assistance, and it was killed yesterday by the two billionaires closest to Donald Trump. When asked as to what their alternative was, they said: Raise the debt ceiling. Donald Trump said: Raise the debt ceiling. You will have my support for a continuing resolution if you raise the debt ceiling.

Why do they want to raise the debt ceiling? It is easy. They want to pass a huge tax cut for the billionaires in charge of Donald Trump's government. That is their agenda—big, big tax cut for billionaires and corporations. But the only way you can do that is if the debt ceiling is raised. The only way you can get away with that is if you can borrow more money on the backs of ordinary, average, everyday people in order to pay for that tax cut.

So we are seeing the agenda of the Trump administration before they are even sworn in, in front of our eyes: Rig the rules in order to make the billionaires richer, and telegraph that as your No. 1 priority to Congress.

Listen, there aren't just democracies and dictatorships in the world. There are dozens of countries that occupy a gray zone in between those poles, countries where there are still elections but the media and the political opposition are so weak—weak because they have been beaten into submission by the regime—that the people actually have no power. There are elections, but the same group, the same man, the same family wins every time.

America has been, for almost all of our history, a functioning, robust democracy where the party or individual in power changes regularly because people hold all the tools necessary to choose their leaders. But that could change in a heartbeat, so quickly, but without any one galvanizing moment, that the transition might just be missed by all of us. You could just wake up one day and find out that the rules of democracy have been so rigged that Republicans or the Trump family

never ever lose again and billionaires get to steal from all of us without any accountability.

I know that sounds hard to believe. I admit that I might be wrong about all of this. America's democracy is the longest existing democracy in the history of the world. It has proven to be resilient. It is filled with grit. It has survived challenges before. But like every one of us eventually disappears from this planet, so does every democracy. Every democracy has a last day.

If you look around the world, the steps that lead to the termination of a democracy—the termination, end of self-governance—are shockingly similar from country to country. The wealthy people who control the media and the economy fold into the regime. Better to join than to fight. The citizens get scared of joining up with the opposition movement because they are fearful of harassment. Better to stay quiet than fight.

If we don't speak out more loudly and more boldly about the events of the last week and the way we are seeing a purposeful, detailed roadmap constructed by Donald Trump and his billionaire friends to transition a democracy to an oligarchy; if we don't fight like hell against these nominees, especially those going to the Department of Justice that will execute this assault on democracy, then our Nation, very soon, could easily befall the same as these other destructed democracies.

The survival of our 240-year experiment is facing, right now, one of its most severe tests, and I just think it is time that everybody woke up to that and pulled their heads out of the sand.

I yield the floor.

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

THE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. 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. 457, H.R. 1555; Calendar No. 532, S. 4404; Calendar No. 533, S. 4634; Calendar No. 534, S. 4803; Calendar No. 535, H.R. 1823; Calendar No. 536, H.R. 3354; Calendar No. 537, H.R. 6810; Calendar No. 538, H.R. 6983; Calendar No. 539, H.R. 7180; Calendar No. 540, H.R. 7385; Calendar No. 541, H.R. 7417; Calendar No. 542, H.R. 7606; Calendar No. 543, H.R. 7607; Calendar No. 544, H.R. 7893; Calendar No. 568, H.R. 5867; Calendar No. 569, H.R. 6162; Calendar No. 570, H.R. 6188; Calendar No. 571, H.R. 6633; Calendar No. 572, H.R. 6750; Calendar No. 573, H.R. 8057.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to the measures, en bloc.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills en bloc 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:

CORPORAL MICHAEL D. ANDERSON JR. POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 1555) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2300 Sylvan Avenue in Modesto, California, as the "Corporal Michael D. Anderson Jr. Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

COMMANDER DELBERT AUSTIN OLSON POST OFFICE

The bill (S. 4404) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 840 Front Street in Casselton, North Dakota, as the "Commander Delbert Austin Olson Post Office" was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 4404

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

SECTION 1. COMMANDER DELBERT AUSTIN OLSON POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 840 Front Street in Casselton, North Dakota, shall be known and designated as the "Commander Delbert Austin Olson Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Commander Delbert Austin Olson Post Office".

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE BELL POST OFFICE

The bill (S. 4634) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 154 First Avenue East in Jerome, Idaho, as the "Representative Maxine Bell Post Office" was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 4634

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

SECTION 1. REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE BELL POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 154 First Avenue East in Jerome, Idaho, shall be known and designated as the "Representative Maxine Bell Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Representative Maxine Bell Post Office".

FIRST LIEUTENANT RICHARD ARNE KOSKI POST OFFICE

The bill (S. 4803) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 31143 State Highway 65 in

Pengilly, Minnesota, as the "First Lieutenant Richard Arne Koski Post Office" was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 4803

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

SECTION 1. FIRST LIEUTENANT RICHARD ARNE KOSKI POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 31143 State Highway 65 in Pengilly, Minnesota, shall be known and designated as the "First Lieutenant Richard Arne Koski Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "First Lieutenant Richard Arne Koski Post Office".

SPECIALIST JUSTIN DEAN COLEMAN MEMORIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 1823) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 207 East Fort Dade Avenue in Brooksville, Florida, as the "Specialist Justin Dean Coleman Memorial Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 3354) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 220 North Hatcher Avenue in Purcellville, Virginia, as the "Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS MAJOR THOMAS B. MCGUIRE POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 6810) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 518 North Ridgewood Drive in Sebring, Florida, as the "U.S. Army Air Corps Major Thomas B. McGuire Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

NELL PATTEN ROQUEMORE POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 6983) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15 South Valdosta Road in Lakeland, Georgia, as the "Nell Patten Roquemore Post Office" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

KINGSLAND 'JOHNNY CASH' POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 7180) to designate the facility of the United States Postal

Service located at 80 1st Street in Kingsland, Arkansas, as the "Kingsland 'Johnny Cash' Post Office" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**JOHN MERCER LANGSTON POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7385) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 29 Franklin Street in Petersburg, Virginia, as the "John Mercer Langston Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**EDWIN L. DRAKE POST OFFICE
BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7417) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 135 West Spring Street in Titusville, Pennsylvania, as the "Edwin L. Drake Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**CARLTON H. HAND POST OFFICE
BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7606) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1087 Route 47 South in Rio Grande, New Jersey, as the "Carlton H. Hand Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**GEORGE HENRY WHITE POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7607) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at Block 1025, Lots 18 & 19, Northeast Corner of US Route 9 South and Main Street in the Township of Middle, County of Cape May, New Jersey, as the "George Henry White Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**ALBERT TURNER, SR. POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7893) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 306 Pickens Street in Marion, Alabama, as the "Albert Turner, Sr. Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**COLONEL JOSEPH WILLIAM
KITTINGER II POST OFFICE
BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 5867) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 109 Live Oaks Boulevard in Casselberry, Florida, as the "Colonel Joseph William Kittinger II Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**LABRUCE 'BRUCE' TIDWELL POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 6162) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 379 North Oates Street in Dothan, Alabama, as the "LaBruce 'Bruce' Tidwell Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**NANCY YOUNT CHILDS POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 6188) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 420 Highway 17 North in Surfside Beach, South Carolina, as the "Nancy Yount Childs Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**ARMY SSG RYAN CHRISTIAN
KNAUSS MEMORIAL POST OF-
FICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 6633) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9355 113th Street in Seminole, Florida, as the "Army SSG Ryan Christian Knauss Memorial Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**MILTON F. FITCH, SR. POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 6750) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 501 Mercer Street Southwest in Wilson, North Carolina, as the "Milton F. Fitch, Sr. Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**LITTLE SAIGON VIETNAM WAR
VETERANS MEMORIAL POST OF-
FICE**

The bill (H.R. 8057) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9317 Bolsa Avenue in Westminster, California, as the "Little Saigon Vietnam War Veterans Memorial Post Office" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

HOUSE BILLS

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills, en bloc: H.R. 6116, H.R. 7158, H.R. 7507, H.R. 7508, H.R. 8641, H.R. 8717, H.R. 8841, H.R. 8868, H.R. 8909, H.R. 8919, H.R. 8976, H.R. 9285, H.R. 9322, H.R. 9421, H.R. 9544, H.R. 9549, H.R. 9580, H.R. 9600, H.R. 9775, H.R. 10065, and H.R. 6244.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to the measures, en bloc.

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent that these 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:

**BENJAMIN BERELL FERENCZ POST
OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 6116) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14280 South Military Trail in Delray Beach, Florida, as the "Benjamin Berell Ferencz Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**LARRY LAVAGNINO POST OFFICE
BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7158) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 East Battles Road in Santa Maria, California, as the "Larry Lavagnino Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**WILLIAM E. AND ELSIE L.
BARRETT POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 7507) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 203 East 6th Street in Lexington, Nebraska, as the "William E. And Elsie L. Barrett Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

GLADYS P. TODD POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 7508) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1285 Emancipation Highway in Fredericksburg, Virginia, as the "Gladys P. Todd Post Office" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**WALTER FRANCIS ULLOA MEMO-
RIAL POST OFFICE BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 8641) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 401 Main Street in Brawley, California, as the "Walter Francis Ulloa Memorial Post Office Building" was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

**SGT BILL HOOSER POST OFFICE
BUILDING**

The bill (H.R. 8717) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20 West Main Street in Santaquin, Utah, as the "SGT Bill

Hooser Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FLOYD B. OLSON POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 8841) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 114 Center Street East in Roseau, Minnesota, as the “Floyd B. Olson Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CHIEF MICHAEL MALONEY POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 8868) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 609 Portsmouth Avenue in Greenland, New Hampshire, as the “Chief Michael Maloney Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ARMY 1ST LT. JOHN KUULEI KAUHAIHAO POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 8909) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 82-6110 Mamalahoa Highway in Captain Cook, Hawaii, as the “Army 1st Lt. John Kuulei Kauhiahao Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SFC SHAWN McCLOSKEY POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 8919) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 151 Highway 74 South in Peachtree City, Georgia, as the “SFC Shawn McCloskey Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CORPORAL MATTHEW A. WYATT POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 8976) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20 West White Street in Millstadt, Illinois, as the “Corporal Matthew A. Wyatt Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CAPTAIN MIGUEL JUSTIN NAVA POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 9285) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3913 Leland Avenue Northwest in Comstock Park, Michigan, as the “Captain Miguel Justin Nava Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

JUDGE JAMES R. WILLIAMS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 9322) to designate the facility of the United States Postal

Service located at 675 Wolf Ledges Parkway in Akron, Ohio, as the “Judge James R. Williams Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MAYOR ROB GORDON POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 9421) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 108 North Main Street in Bucoda, Washington, as the “Mayor Rob Gordon Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 9544) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 340 South Loudon Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland, as the “United States Representative Elijah E. Cummings Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ELIZABETH FURSE POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 9549) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 125 South 1st Avenue in Hillsboro, Oregon, as the “Elizabeth Furse Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

MILLIE DUNN VEASEY POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 9580) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2777 Brentwood Road in Raleigh, North Carolina, as the “Millie Dunn Veasey Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

JIMMY AND ROSALYNN CARTER POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 9600) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 119 Main Street in Plains, Georgia, as the “Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

OFFICER NOAH JACOB SHAHNAVAZ POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 9775) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 119 North Anderson Street in Elwood, Indiana, as the “Officer Noah Jacob Shahnavaz Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CAPTAIN ROBERT E. ‘BOB’ BATTERSON POST OFFICE

The bill (H.R. 10065) to designate the facility of the United States Postal

Service located at 802 North Tanchua Street in Corpus Christi, Texas, as the “Captain Robert E. ‘Bob’ Batterson Post Office” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

1ST LIEUTENANT ANDRES ZERMENO POST OFFICE BUILDING

The bill (H.R. 6244) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1535 East Los Ebanos Boulevard in Brownsville, Texas, as the “1st Lieutenant Andres Zermeño Post Office Building” was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO JON TESTER

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I have served on the House and now Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee since I came to Congress, so about 14 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and about 15 years in the U.S. Senate. It has been a privilege to serve as a member and, from time to time, a leader of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and, preceding that, the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

For the last 4, almost 5 years, Senator JON TESTER and I have led the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

Not only did JON and I both raise daughters and grow up in rural America, but we both share the same sentiment that there is no one we hold in higher regard than our Nation’s veterans. This shared sentiment has allowed us to work together for those we respect so much.

I will certainly miss the starting of our hearings in which Senator TESTER always said, “Hello, JERRY.” And you could hear that from time to time as we met going down the Senate halls.

I have worked with JON on the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs since 2013, and we have introduced and sponsored and cosponsored many, many pieces of legislation together. His leadership on the committee in recent years has resulted in major pieces of legislation that have now become law, that provide support and opportunities for veterans, their loved ones, and their caregivers.

Some of those landmark and historic pieces of legislation include, in the 115th Congress, VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018—a lot of words that really boil down to what we call the MISSION Act—designed to help make certain that services for veterans, wherever they live and whatever kind of services they need from the VA, are available to them.

In later Congresses, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020; Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, implemented and designed to make certain that we

reduce and eliminate the number of veterans who commit suicide; Fairness for Korean DMZ Veterans Act of 2019; a COVID fix for GI bill benefits to make sure our veterans, during COVID, were able to maintain their educational benefits while their schools were shut down.

Later in the 117th, the Joseph Maxwell Cleland and Robert Joseph Dole Memorial Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act; the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022—what we refer to as the PACT Act—designed to make sure those who encounter toxic substances in Southeast Asia and in Iraq and Afghanistan were eligible for benefits and healthcare; the Colonel John M. McHugh Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act of 2021.

Just within the last few days—in fact, within the last week—the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, an additional veterans' benefits improvement act.

I rise today here at my seat on the Senate floor to express my gratitude for the time that JON has spent in his career in improving the lives of veterans and reforming the VA system that millions of veterans rely upon.

JON TESTER has made a lasting impact on thousands of individuals, their families, and their caregivers, those who serve veterans, and those who are veterans, and their family members. He has made a lasting impact upon their lives and well-being and helped us keep our commitment to our promises that have been made to those who serve in our military.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize Senator TESTER's team for their extraordinary work. We all know in the Senate the importance of having a strong staff that researches well, that is intentional with our constituents and values what we do.

I would like to thank: Tony McClain, who is from Salina, KS, and who has led this committee for many years; Dahlia Melendrez; Carlos Fuentes; Elizabeth Mackenzie; Janko Mitric; Faye Fernandes; Bill Van Saun; Tess Wrzesinski; Abby Roubal; Weston Haycock; Liz Timmons; Cameron Kroetz; Katie Adams; and Jackson Haney.

Your work—each of you—your work on this committee didn't go unnoticed. Thank you for your kindness that you extended to me while you were serving the chairman of the committee. Thank you for your kindness to me when I was the chairman of the committee and you were serving the ranking member. We know that without your help, without your willingness to work with our staff and our team, we would not have been able to provide the benefits and critical resources that our veterans deserve and earned.

Finally, JON TESTER, certainly I say this on my behalf, but I say it also on behalf of the other Members of the Sen-

ate, certainly the other members of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and especially on behalf of our Nation's veterans, thank you. Thank you for your leadership, your friendship, and your dedication. Thank you for serving, as you did so well, our Nation's heroes.

KANSAS AVIATION

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, last month, we celebrated National Aviation History Month. We celebrated that across America, and I want to make certain that we recognize the air capital of the world and the State of Kansas and their contributions to the aviation industry both historically and still today.

My home State of Kansas is an aviation hub. It has a rich history in aviation manufacturing. This tradition dates back to a gentleman named Albin Longren, who developed Kansas's first aircraft, the Longren Flyer, which was fully designed, produced, and successfully tested in Topeka in 1911, less than a decade after the Wright Brothers' first historic flight.

Clyde Cessna went on to develop his pioneering aircraft, the Silverwing, in 1911, which was designed and built in Kingman County, KS. Clyde Cessna, Lloyd Stearman, and Walter Beech partnered to found the Travel Air Manufacturing Company, which would later be spun off into three companies with global recognition—the Cessna Aircraft Company, Stearman Aircraft, and the Beech Aircraft Company, all of Wichita, where they were headquartered.

Cessna, Stearman, Beech, and over a dozen other aviation entrepreneurs in Wichita produced 120 airplanes each week at the outset of Wichita's aviation dominance in the late twenties. It was then that Wichita earned its title as "Air Capital of the World."

During World War II, tens of thousands of Kansans contributed to the war effort by working in aircraft plants, making nearly 26,000 planes, including over 1,600 B-29 Superfortress heavy bombers.

Following the war, the Boeing Company started testing midflight refueling using the B-29 Superfortress and eventually delivered the KC-135 Stratotanker to the U.S. Air Force in the fifties—still one of the premier midflight refueling aircraft for the U.S. Armed Forces. Many of these tankers are stationed at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita and some at Forbes Field in Topeka.

Other than agriculture, the aviation and aerospace industries in Kansas support more jobs than any other sector, including more than 65,000 aerospace and defense jobs across more than 450 world-class suppliers.

Kansas is the global leader in general aviation, producing 35 percent of all general aviation aircraft in America and supplying 75 percent of all general aviation aircraft since the Wright Brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903.

If you fly on a private plane, you are flying on a plane that was either built

in Kansas or the parts were manufactured in Kansas.

At the end of November, Bombardier, which has its defense headquarters in Wichita, KS, delivered its first Global 6500 to the U.S. Army in support of its next generation of intelligences surveillance, and reconnaissance, the ISR platform. One week later, Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research received a Boeing 747-8i as part of a strategic partnership with Sierra Nevada Corporation on the Air Force's "doomsday" program. I would also like to highlight that NIAR, the National Institute for Aviation Research, a component headquartered on the campus of Wichita State University, was recently ranked by the National Science Foundation as the number one research and development expenditure university in the country for aerospace engineering.

Our State is also diversifying its aviation and aerospace work with companies like General Atomics and now has 17 Kansas manufacturers working on NASA's Artemis program.

We are also developing essential components for commercial space providers such as SpaceX, United Launch Alliance, Sierra Space, Rocket Lab, and Blue Origin.

Additionally, Kansas is home to Crew-9 astronaut Nick Hague of Hoxie, who is currently stationed at the International Space Station.

Museums across our State highlight our history, highlight our future. They include the Kansas Aviation Museum in Wichita, the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum in Atchison. I also should highlight the importance of Amelia Earhart being one of the Kansans who is a significant component of our aviation history and whose statue now resides here in the U.S. Capitol. There is a B-29 Museum in Pratt; the Mid-America Museum in Liberal; and the Cosmosphere—world renown.

Incidentally, when I talked to the Artemis astronauts, they brought up the topic and said: "Do you know that you have the best space museum in the world in Kansas?" And they were talking about the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson. It showcases the rich aviation history. They point to the continued legacy of excellence in aviation and aerospace in Kansas and represents a bright spot for our entire nation.

I wouldn't want to talk about aviation without talking about Kansas. Kansas has played a key role in cultivating America's leadership in aviation and is home to thousands of engineers and manufacturers who have supported America's aviation heritage now for more than a century. We are, and we will continue to be, air capital of the world not only because we build airplanes, but because we have leaders and students driving the industry forward with innovation, ingenuity, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

We will continue to be the air capital of the world because we have the educational institutions across our State

to train and educate engineers, flight mechanics, the whole array of the people necessary for the industries that are located in our State and that will soon locate in our State to have a highly trained, educated, motivated workforce for aviation today and in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Louisiana.

NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, the holiday season is upon us and should be a time filled with family, friends, and joy. But this year, it is filled with financial anxiety for many Americans. They are struggling to pay for their groceries, to heat their homes, struggling with property and casualty insurance.

But I am here to speak to those who are struggling to afford flood insurance. For over 50 years, Americans have relied on the National Flood Insurance Program, or NFIP, to be a safety net in case of disaster. The program covers 4.7 million homes, but the program has become unaffordable, unaccountable, and unsustainable. And without congressional approval, FEMA worsened this by implementing a new risk assessment program called Risk Rating 2.0.

This program dramatically increased premiums, even for those who had never flooded, and the skyrocketing prices brought on by Risk Rating 2.0 has left many Louisiana families and families in other States struggling with a financial burden.

This financial strain has caused 52,000 Louisianans to drop their coverage in just 1 year, leaving them with no way to protect their homes. About half a million Americans nationwide have dropped their coverage. And this was anticipated by this Risk Rating 2.0. When the National Flood Insurance Program put it in place, they, again, anticipated that up to 20 percent of the people would drop their coverage.

Now, during this holiday season, the financial burden of this program will only increase as Mom tries to give her kids a wonderful Christmas. That is why this month I introduced the Flood Insurance Affordability Tax Credit Act to give relief to Americans enrolled in NFIP. This legislation gives low- and middle-income households a real-time 33-percent refundable tax credit to combat the out-of-control flood insurance premium. It is not a permanent solution. We need serious reform. But cutting flood insurance bills by a third is a good place to start.

I am working on a comprehensive NFIP program that protects families from excessive premium hikes, strengthens flood mitigation efforts, simplifies the claims process by cutting redtape. While we work to fix the broken system—and believe me to say I am working hard to do this—this tax credit provides relief for current policy holders, and it provides a path for Americans who have been forced to

drop their coverage due to unaffordable premiums to reenroll at an affordable price.

It directs the Treasury Secretary to establish a program where premiums can be paid in advance. This benefits families when they need it the most, like now during the holiday season after a period of years of financial distress.

Parents shouldn't have to pick between putting food on the table, wrapping presents under the Christmas tree, or paying for flood insurance. And with a tax credit taking a third off of her flood insurance bill, the mother trying to keep this together won't have to make these sacrifices. She will be able to give her kids the merry Christmas that they deserve and protect the home they sleep in.

By the way, I am from Louisiana, but this isn't just true for families living in my State. It is true for families across the Nation. This year's hurricane season showed us flooding is possible in areas that don't typically make you think of flooding. Just think of the homes devastated by flooding in North Carolina.

Americans need relief from Risk Rating 2.0. That is not the question. And America needs to pass massive reform. However, perhaps most importantly, Americans expect us to guarantee that the National Flood Insurance Program will still be here come the new year. If nothing happens, this program expires at the end of this week.

I should correct that. For those who think that the government shutdown does not affect them, if the Government shuts down, the NFIP program will have a lapse. During that period, the program cannot sell or renew flood insurance policies or borrow from the Treasury to pay claims for existing policies. So my hope is that we can find this debt deal. I support Speaker Johnson in his attempts to do so, not the least of which is it preserves the National Flood Insurance Program for anyone that may call upon it during this intervening period.

So just frankly speaking, letting the program lapse, temporarily or long-term, should not be an option. It is often the only flood insurance option for many communities. And without it, we leave millions vulnerable. That is why I am working with the entire Louisiana delegation on legislation to reauthorize the program.

Today, I urge colleagues to support this reauthorization, giving their constituents peace of mind and protection this holiday season.

Finally, I urge colleagues to look to the future. Passing the flood insurance affordability tax credit would give relief to policyholders and reauthorizing the program are only the first steps, but they are critical steps this body must take. And unless we want to do a disservice to the American people and NFIP, we should not stop here.

When we come back in the new year, we should commit to reforming the

program to make flood insurance affordable again.

Every single one of my colleagues have constituents who rely upon the NFIP. If you look to this chart, every State in the union is shaded representing the number of NFIP claims each State has. Those in dark yellow have been hit hardest and have relied on NFIP the most. They all have at least \$1 billion in NFIP claims since 1978; and 44 States have had over \$50 million in claims over this time period.

It is clear Americans rely on the program. But if we continue down this path, the program goes bankrupt.

So my message to my colleagues representing States that rely on the National Flood Insurance Program—which is, frankly, all of us—let's find a way forward. My team has worked on a bipartisan permanent solution that rolls back Risk Rating 2.0, makes flood insurance affordable and accountable again. I encourage my colleagues to join me in the new year to get this done.

In the meantime, let our Christmas gift to Americans enrolled in NFIP be a lower flood insurance bill and peace of mind by reauthorizing the program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to confirm a bipartisan group of four nominees—two Republicans and two Democrats—to serve on the United States Postal Service Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors is an independent, bipartisan body that provides leadership, strategic vision, and oversight of the U.S. Postal Service.

Confirming these four nominees—VAL DEMINGS, Gordon Hartogensis, Bill Zollars, and Anton Hajjar—will give the board a full complement of nine Senate-confirmed governors.

The bipartisan board is most effective when fully staffed with individuals who bring a diverse range of perspective and experiences and all who understand the critical mission of the Postal Service.

These individuals each have strong leadership and management experience, and they have demonstrated their commitment to the Postal Service as workers and its customers.

As we know all too well in my State of Nevada, the Postal Service has been considering operational changes that will have severe impacts on service to communities not just in Nevada but across this Nation.

I was proud to lead the charge against Postmaster DeJoy's misguided effort to send Nevadans' letter mail out of State to be processed. But without sufficient oversight from a full Board of Governors, the Postmaster General will be able to pursue his agenda for the whole country unchecked.

I want to repeat that. Without a full Board of Governors, the Postmaster

General will be able to pursue his agenda for the whole country without oversight.

So it is more important than ever that we have a Board of Governors that is committed to ensuring reliable, timely mail delivery and that it will provide the necessary oversight of Postal Service leadership. That is why I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to confirm these four highly qualified nominees to the Postal Board of Governors.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in executive session, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of PN2289 and that the Senate proceed to the consideration of this nomination and Calendar Nos. 836, 837, and 840; that the Senate vote on the nominations in the order listed; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table without intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the Record; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, in reserving the right to object, the U.S. Post Office faces drastic financial losses. Last year, they lost \$6.5 billion. They are on target this year to lose \$9.5 billion. We should return these nominees and give President Trump the opportunity to review the Postal Service, to review the postal picks, to review the current situation, and allow him to determine who is best fit to fix the Postal Service.

For that reason, I will be objecting to each of these nominees.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, may I just say to the Senator from Kentucky that these nominees are bipartisan—two Democrat and two Republican. I believe it is far past the time that we allow our Postal Board of Governors to be filled.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Massachusetts.

CHILDREN AND TEENS' ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise today with deep disappointment and frustration at the House of Representatives' failure to take up my bipartisan, bicameral legislation with Senator BILL CASSIDY—the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act, COPPA 2.0.

Just a few months ago, the Senate passed COPPA 2.0 by a resounding vote of 91 to 3 as part of the Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act. It was a remarkable moment for a Chamber that has too often succumbed to partisanship on key technology issues. Young

people and families across the country finally had a moment to celebrate that their government was actually coming to their aid on a critical issue and that lawmakers from across the aisle could hold hands and recognize that the youth mental health crisis was raging in red and blue States alike.

This crisis demanded action, and the U.S. Senate was meeting the need and the moment with a popular children's and teens' privacy bill. Help, it seemed, was finally on the way. It was long overdue. For more than a decade, I have been fighting to strengthen online protections for our young people. In fact, if COPPA 2.0 were a person, it would have just turned 13 and would have aged out of our current privacy protections for children, which I first authored 26 years ago.

Over those 26 years, that law—the original Children's Online Privacy Protection Act—has been critical to protecting children online, but when I wrote COPPA, only birds tweeted, and "TikTok" was a sound that a clock made. Today, our children and teens confront a far more complicated and privacy-invasive online world—one that, according to medical experts and the Surgeon General, is contributing to a youth mental health crisis.

The stats are devastating. The stats are overwhelming. Listen to these stats. Listen to the problem we have in our country: More than one in four high school girls in the United States seriously considered suicide in 2023—one in four teenaged girls—and at least one in eight high school girls attempted suicide in 2023. Let me repeat it again. One in eight teenaged high school girls attempted suicide in 2023. Amongst LGBTQ+ youth, the number is more like one in five attempted suicide in 2023.

COPPA 2.0 cuts to the heart of the emergency. COPPA 2.0 bans targeted advertising to young people, ensuring that teenage girls stop being targeted with weight loss pills and other harmful ads.

It empowers parents and teens by giving them an eraser button to delete an ill-advised post, and it prevents companies from burying their heads in the sand and ignoring the children and teens on their platforms.

These policies specifically target Big Tech's financial incentives—profitable targeted ads—that keep kids and teens clicking, swiping, and scrolling on social media, even to their ill health. In fact, in 2022, the major Big Tech platforms earned nearly \$11 billion from U.S. users under the age of 18—\$11 billion—and those are 11 billion reasons to oppose any opposition to COPPA 2.0. But the tech companies—they want to monetize the young people in our country, and we know they are doing so at the expense of their mental health.

Who said it? The Surgeon General of the United States. Who said it? The pediatricians of the United States who are the experts on children and teenagers in our country—a mental health

crisis largely created by online social media.

So this is an incredible moment for us because, with that \$11 billion which the media companies and the big tech companies make, there are 11 billion reasons to turn their lobbying power on the House Republican leadership and concoct farfetched theories for why a bill that passed 91 to 3 on the floor of the U.S. Senate should not even receive a vote—at the height of a mental health crisis for young people in our country—on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, House Republican leadership capitulated to the pressure of Big Tech, with grave consequences for young people. The House had a rare opportunity to show families across the country that it cared about their children, about their teenagers; that money in politics didn't drive their decision making; and that our youngest and our most vulnerable came first and not Big Tech. House Republican leadership—they failed that test. They sat for months on the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act and then refused to even consider it for passage at the end of the year. They want to wait until next year and next year. We brought this bill out for three Congresses in a row.

This is not a new issue. It is a crisis. Everyone knows it is a crisis. Everyone knows that teenagers are getting addicted because of deliberate strategies by Big Tech to absolutely harm them. We know that, right now, if a teenaged girl has bulimia and she goes online to get information about it because she has only told her mother and father, that girl can be bombarded with ads from companies and from others because that information is now out there that she Google-searched.

Well, the impact on her psyche is dramatic if that happens, and it is happening every single day because Big Tech monetizes that girl's bulimia or anorexia problem. This is the bill that says you can't do that. If the parents want all of that information erased or they don't want the girl to be targeted with ads, you can't do it—91 to 3 on the Senate floor, no vote in the House for three Congresses in a row.

They always want to wait until next year for a Republican Congress or for a Republican President, yes, but what about right now? And are they actually going to do it next year? And while they wait, our young people will continue to suffer. Every day that this does not pass is another day where platforms can serve dangerous, targeted ads to children and teens. Every day that it does not pass is another day when parents and teens don't have the tools they need to protect themselves online.

Every day that COPPA 2.0 does not pass is another day when children and teens are suffering from suicide, from anxiety, from depression. This is the heart of the issue. This is the sinister side of cyberspace. This is the harmful side of it.

Are we going to do anything about it? Is it the Keynesian quality to the internet? It is the best of technologies and the worst of technologies simultaneously. It can enable. It can ennoble. It can degrade. It can debase.

Yes, these companies tout all the wonderful things that they are going to do, and they actually want to put it on steroids: AI. They are going to find a cure for cancer. They are going to do all these other wonderful things. We will see.

But at the same time, we don't have the safeguards built around the harm they are doing right now—the mental health harm to teenagers and children in our country. And it is only going to get worse—much worse—as AI injects itself into the system more and more: more suicide, more anxiety, more depression.

So it is a sad day for an institution that had a historic opportunity. And I commend the Senate leadership for making a decision in prioritizing the mental health of kids and teens. But I am deeply disappointed in the House of Representatives, where I proudly served for 36 years.

For decades, the House has lamented that the Senate's rules have prevented us from taking action on important issues. And I have made those arguments myself as a House Member years ago. But when the Senate did act on an issue critical to families and to parents across the country and when it acted decisively, House Republican leadership decided to play politics with the lives of teenage children in our country.

So to the kids and the parents and the advocates who have fought courageously for stronger online privacy rights for children and for teens, thank you. Don't go away. Keep your energy up. If you are knocked down, you are hurting, just come right back. Come back the same way the abolitionists came back, the same way the suffragettes came back, the same way the anti-Vietnam movement came back, the same way the same-sex marriage movement came back. Just get up again. We are right; they are wrong. We have to get this passed.

So I have been honored to be with you. It is a very disheartening moment—very disheartening. This is an ongoing, preventable crisis in our country. And if we don't act and act soon, we are going to have teenagers and children 20 years from now writing books about what their Congressmen, their Senators—an older generation—inflicted upon them, with no protections whatsoever. They will be talking about it. They will be writing about it.

Let me finish, again, by giving you the numbers. These are, without question, some of the most staggering numbers I have ever seen attached to one single preventable issue. One in four high school girls in the United States seriously considered suicide in 2023. Let me just say that. One in four seriously considered it. One in eight high school

girls in the United States in 2023 actually attempted suicide—one in eight. And one in five LGBTQ attempted suicide in 2023. And the Surgeon General, the pediatricians of our country implicate—point the finger at—social media, the self-image of these kids, as one of the leading causes. And we are not going to pass this legislation.

And the actions of the House and now from Elon Musk and others who are preventing this whole institution from working are going to ultimately expose all of these young people to images, ideas, that are, in fact, avoidable.

I thank you for giving me the time. And to all of those who worked so hard on this legislation over the last 2 years, please get up and get ready to come back again next year because this is a crisis in our country. This is something that these young people do not deserve, and their privacy cannot be monetized. It is just absolutely wrong and preventable.

With that, I yield back the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, West by God Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Blessed be West Virginia.

EXPANDING PUBLIC LANDS OUTDOOR RECREATION EXPERIENCES ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, in a moment, I am going to be asking for unanimous consent to pass the EXPLORE Act, a package of outdoor recreation legislation.

Let me just say this to you. This is something that we all agree on, both sides of this wonderful institution of Congress, because the House and the Senate are in agreement, there were changes that need to be made. We all agreed to get that done, but the bill we have before us is the House's version without—without—the changes that we have agreed to. And the reason for that, the House has already passed theirs.

And I understand my dear friend is going to be speaking on this, too, in the objection part of it. But I just would like for everyone to understand we have a chance, truly a chance. And I have, as chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—we have made a focus of supporting our public lands and the outdoor recreation economy, which is the fastest growing element of our economy in every State.

We all have beautiful venues in our States. We have all been able to take advantage of that, starting with the John Dingell Act and working all the way up to the Outdoor Recreation Act, and now the EXPLORE Act. It gives a chance for the vendors in those parks to be able to offer a true experience, and that is really what it is all about. I have no objections around all 50 States.

One of the first things we did was pass, as I said, the Dingell Act. We did

the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Just a year later, we passed the Great American Outdoors Act, which permanently funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund and provided nearly \$2 billion per year for 5 years to address the deferred maintenance backlog on our Federal recreational lands—most of our parks, our wonderful, beautiful parks.

The same year we passed the Great American Outdoors Act, Senator CAPRITO and I passed legislation designating New River Gorge National Park and Preserve in our home State, which, on the east coast, is now one of the most visited parks that we have. It is close to most of the population in the country. Since the designation 4 years ago, visitation has jumped more than 40 percent. People want to get out and enjoy this beautiful country that we all own.

A year later, in 2021, Senator BARRASSO and I introduced the America's Outdoor Recreation Act, which is the basis of the EXPLORE Act. It basically gives you the ability now to really do it. We reported that bill out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on a bipartisan basis. We tried very hard to pass that bill by the end of 2022, but ultimately we had some disagreements with the House. However, Senator BARRASSO and I were not ready to give up. We reintroduced the bill and were again able to report it out with a bipartisan voice vote.

Congressman WESTERMAN, who is with us today in the Chamber—and we appreciate having him over here—to his credit, introduced the EXPLORE Act last year, which includes nearly every provision of my bill and Senator BARRASSO's bill, along with some additional House priorities.

My and Senator BARRASSO's staff immediately got to work with the House to iron out the differences between the two bills, and we have had bipartisan, bicameral agreement on the negotiated text for more than 6 months. We have tried for months to get that passed, but it has been blocked along the way. This late in December, we are simply out of runway. Time is running out on us.

I am willing to pass the House version without those negotiated changes so it can be sent straight to the President's desk because we are accepting what has already been passed in the House, with the agreement with the House that every one of those changes will be done—every one of them. It is the only path we have available to us. This is our last shot to get this important legislation.

So, Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6492, which was received from the House and is at the desk; 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.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill (H.R. 6492) to improve

recreation opportunities on, and facilitate greater access to, Federal public land, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I want to thank my friend from West Virginia for his hard work on this very important matter.

I support the objective of this legislation. I also appreciate the commitment that the Senator from West Virginia has made and also that Congressman WESTERMAN has made to—if this bill were to pass today—incorporate the changes that have been negotiated to improve it in the next Congress. In particular, these are changes dealing with the deployment of resources for broadband. Those negotiated changes would significantly improve and ensure that it operates the way it is intended to operate. I appreciate that commitment.

As the Senator from West Virginia knows, I am pressing very hard right now to pass legislation that is very important to me and very important to Texans. It is legislation called the TAKE IT DOWN Act. The TAKE IT DOWN Act is bipartisan legislation that I authored, along with Democratic Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR, to protect women and to protect teenage girls and young girls from a growing epidemic of nonconsensual intimate images online, both actual photographs and also a dramatically escalating problem of deepfake AI images that target real people.

We are seeing every day more and more women and more and more teenage girls targeted with false deepfakes made using AI that appear to be explicit photographs, explicit videos. They are victimized. The TAKE IT DOWN Act makes the publication of those nonconsensual, intimate images a crime, a Federal felony. Critically, it puts a Federal obligation on the tech platform to remove those images, remove those videos when notified by the victim.

You have a right to protect your privacy and not to be victimized. The women have a right.

That legislation, the TAKE IT DOWN Act, passed the U.S. Senate unanimously 100 to nothing. Every Senator, Republican and Democrat, agreed with the bill. That legislation is now at the House, and House leadership placed the TAKE IT DOWN Act in the continuing resolution that was introduced earlier this week. It is in the bill. I am grateful for that.

As the Presiding Officer knows, as the Senator from West Virginia knows, the path to passing the continuing resolution has proven to be challenging, and House leadership right now is actively negotiating and trying to find a path forward.

I very much want the TAKE IT DOWN Act passed by whatever vehicle

gets it to the President's desk because we have an obligation to protect women and to protect teenage girls.

I have asked the House, as an alternative, to take up the TAKE IT DOWN Act on the suspension calendar. If it gets a vote on the floor of the House, it will pass. All it needs is a vote. So from my perspective, I am fine with it passing as part of the CR—if a CR passes with anything on it—or I believe it should pass on the suspension calendar and go to the President's desk.

The Senator from West Virginia and Congressman WESTERMAN have both committed to me to use their full force and persuasion and leverage to ensure that, one way or another, the TAKE IT DOWN Act will pass out of the House and get to the President's desk, because all of us want to protect our constituents. We have an obligation to do so.

Because the gentlemen in question are my friends and I trust their good-faith representations and because we are about to lose the good graces of the Senator from West Virginia, who has decided to ride off into the sunset and leave us to the nonsense of the swamp—both Senator MANCHIN and Congressman WESTERMAN have asked for a personal favor, that I not object, and therefore I do not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Texas object to the request?

Mr. CRUZ. I do not.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection—Merry Christmas—it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 6492) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, these are the relationships that we all should have. This is the good will, knowing that we want the TAKE IT DOWN Act. We have Senator BARRASSO here, who has worked so hard on this—his staff, my staff, your staff.

I can assure you, we are behind you a thousand percent. We going to get that done. I just pray to God that the House will accommodate what you are asking for because that bill is so important, the TAKE IT DOWN Act.

You and I cosponsored a bill yesterday that is very important and are working on that. But your graciousness on this, knowing how important it is—you have your vendors in your State—this allows us to finally get into our parks and maintain them, maintain our outdoor activity. It gives the vendors the ability now to get things permitted so they can offer the services people have been clamoring for, and we saw the demand that was coming during the pandemic.

This is really, really good news for our country.

I just want to thank you, my dear friend Senator CRUZ from Texas. God bless.

Merry Christmas to all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. And good night.

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, first, I want to express my gratitude to Senator CRUZ for his very gracious effort today on the floor of the Senate.

You talk about a champion, a mature, experienced, reliable, and responsible voice in this body—that is Senator CRUZ from Texas. What he just did today in deciding to not object to a piece of legislation that we worked on for so long was the right thing to do, and we credit him for that.

We also stand here saying that we want to do everything we can to ensure that his major piece of legislation is one that does get passed—out of Senate previously—out of the House, the TAKE IT DOWN legislation, and take it down to the White House, where it gets signed into law. It will be such a benefit to so many Americans.

We stand united in this Senate behind Senator CRUZ, who will soon be the chairman of the Commerce Committee, to thank him for his efforts and his help and his assistance on this bill today in this body.

I also rise to congratulate my friend and colleague Senator MANCHIN, who will be leaving this body, on the success here today.

If the Senator from West Virginia would like to head over to thank and shake hands and walk in front of me to congratulate and thank the Senator from Texas—

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

Mr. BARRASSO. I want to congratulate him on the success in the passage of the EXPLORE Act. This is great news for every State, all 50 States. It is certainly most important and very important to my home State of Wyoming.

As is often the case in this body but not often seen by the press and by the public, this bill is bipartisan. It is a first-of-its-kind recreation package, and it will boost our Nation's outdoor economy.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, outdoor recreation added over \$1 trillion to our national economy in 2023—\$1.2 trillion. That is 2.3 percent of our entire gross domestic product, our Nation's gross domestic product. This is a big deal.

In my home State of Wyoming, outdoor recreation contributed over \$2.2 billion to our State's economy. That is 4.1 percent of our State's gross domestic product. We have a strong outdoor legacy in Wyoming. We work hard to support the local communities. We try to do that by developing an outdoor recreation economy. We do it all across the State.

The EXPLORE Act that we have just passed here in the Senate—previously passed the House and will soon be on the way to the White House—is going to help Wyoming and help the rest of the Nation increase access to the great outdoors.

This legislation does several things. It streamlines and simplifies the permitting process for outdoor guides and outfitters.

Chairman MANCHIN and I began working on this legislation the last Congress. It is the result of years of work, bipartisan work. Senators east and west, north and south are committed to this legislation. It includes bills from many Members on the House floor as well as the Senate floor.

For example, this bill includes the Federal Interior Land Media Act. It is called the FILM Act. The FILM Act modernizes film and photography permitting on public lands. Now, you think that wouldn't be an issue, but it is. What we have seen is, currently, anyone who uploads a video at our national parks of the adventures they may have had as tourists—they put it up on a social media platform—and I know, Mr. President, your social media platform is heavily subscribed. People turn to it regularly. Well, they also do that at the national parks, put things on social media posts. Well, you know, in national parks right now, you have to obtain a permit and pay a fee. You wouldn't think that would be the case.

The Park Service hasn't enforced that requirement consistently, but it has been fining people whose videos become very popular. So you would find yourself in that position, Mr. President, had you gone to the national parks and posted something, knowing how popular your videos have become.

There are examples of families who have been fined by the Park Service for posting their vacation videos on YouTube. That is not right. So this bill updates the law by requiring Agencies to focus on actual impacts to park resources. That is not visitors' videos.

The FILM Act is a win for the First Amendment and for commonsense management of our public lands.

This piece of legislation—there are lots and lots of very good component parts of this. It also includes something called the Connect Our Parks Act. That bill ensures visitors to our national parks have access to cellphone service—realizing how vital that is to save someone's life if they find themselves lost, stranded, or they can't find their way back. It directs the National Park Service to assess where broadband and cellular service is lacking in each park. The Park Service will then develop a plan on how to improve these services over time. This has been long overdue.

The legislation also includes something called the CAPE Act. The CAPE Act is a conservation victory for, specifically, Grand Teton National Park's native bighorn sheep. Of course, Grand Teton National Park is in my home State of Wyoming. These iconic animals are threatened by nonnative mountain goats. Through coordinated efforts with the U.S. Park Service, volunteers play a major role in helping to conserve the bighorn sheep by culling the nonnative goats.

Current law gives discretion to the Park Service to donate the meat obtained during these wildlife management activities. Unfortunately, the rest of the animal goes to waste. The CAPE Act would allow the Park Service to donate the hides and the horns to the volunteers who help protect our native bighorn sheep.

Finally, let me conclude by reminding all those viewing today that Americans love to recreate outdoors. Whether it is hunting or fishing, hiking or skiing, we need to support these and many other activities by modernizing the very way that the government manages them.

The EXPLORE Act does this, and I am glad the Senate has passed it. I am grateful for the cosponsorship and the hard work and the work together I have done with Senator MANCHIN, and I am so very grateful that Senator CRUZ would come to the floor and, in such a gracious way, help us with the passage of this important piece of legislation on the Senate floor today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because the funding for the Federal Government is going to run out at midnight tomorrow night. And what is happening right now in the House is a manufactured crisis that has been created by Donald Trump, President-elect, and his billionaire friend Elon Musk, and their Republicans in the House of Representatives.

President-elect Trump hasn't even been sworn into office yet, and already he has thrown the government into chaos.

That is really unfortunate because the people who are going to be hurt the most are the ones that we serve as Representatives, as Senators, right here in Congress, and that is the American people. Shutting down the government just days before Christmas means that thousands of Federal workers will be forced to work without pay.

In New Hampshire, our farmers could lose out on disaster aid they need to recover from devastating crop losses last year. The health clinics vital to Granite Staters will shutter. The Coast Guard wouldn't get the funds it needs for repairs at Portsmouth Station. That is particularly important because what those Coast Guard ships do is to escort in nuclear submarines to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

And everyone in Congress should know that one of our most fundamental responsibilities as elected officials is to keep the Federal Government open and operating. Instead, we are here today facing our fifth lapse in funding in 11 years, all because there are a few extremists who are being egged on by an unelected billionaire and are refusing to do their duty. And Speaker JOHNSON is allowing them to push us to the brink.

We have seen repeatedly now that these shutdowns hurt the country. They hurt our States. They hurt our constituents.

The 2019 shutdown cost the American economy more than \$10 billion, and this shutdown, if it occurs, is likely to cost more than \$2 billion a week.

So, again, let me repeat that because for an incoming administration that claims to be focused on fiscal responsibility, that claims to be looking for efficiencies in government, what Elon Musk—the head of this Commission that is supposed to look for efficiencies—what he is doing is going to cost our country \$2 billion each week. That doesn't sound like fiscal responsibility to me.

And in New Hampshire, the effect of these shutdowns is felt across the State. If the government shuts down, small businesses across New Hampshire may be unable to sign new contracts, start new projects.

Just last year, 845 companies in New Hampshire received contracts from the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. And during a government shutdown, these small businesses and their employees will be adversely affected. They won't be able to plan for the future. That will cause real uncertainty on the business owners and on their employees. The supplemental emergency disaster funding would have addressed a number of critical needs that we have in New Hampshire.

Like many other States, New Hampshire has been hit by a number of disasters over the last few years. We have been more fortunate than some of the States that our colleagues represent because we haven't been hit in the same way that Florida, the Carolinas, and Virginia were by the hurricanes. But we still have very serious recovery needs. The disaster funding that has been paired with the continuing resolution would address some of New Hampshire's recovery needs.

As I mentioned earlier, this unnecessary crisis would block disaster relief from getting to the farmers in New Hampshire and across the country who urgently need it.

For example, in New Hampshire, our farmers experienced extreme losses in 2023 due to natural disasters from frost and flooding. I have heard from many apple growers, from our stone crops—apples, peaches—that some of those farmers lost from 80 to 100 percent of their crops in 2023. And while it doesn't seem like a lot of money and not huge farms like we have in some parts of the country, for those farmers who are affected, it is their livelihood. Unlike large single-crop farms in many other States, our small fruit and vegetable growers in New Hampshire typically don't have access to other Federal agricultural support programs. More than 90 percent of our farmers in New Hampshire don't have crop insurance because crop insurance doesn't work for our farms. That is why emergency disaster relief is just so critical.

Another example for us in New Hampshire is our Coast Guard Station in New Castle. It was severely damaged during January storms. The seawall was breached in a number of places and the boathouse was wrenched from its mooring. As a result, the station is in need of significant repairs.

The bill that has been negotiated and agreed to by Republicans and Democrats—the bill that the House now is saying they are not going to support—it would provide over \$210 million to repair Coast Guard facilities around the country, including the New Castle station in New Hampshire. Unless these supplemental funds are appropriated, the station in New Hampshire will be more susceptible to future storm damage and will need more extensive and expensive repairs in the future.

Again, that doesn't sound like government efficiency to me. It sounds like somebody is not paying attention.

And like almost every other State in the country, New Hampshire has been hit by a number of storms that have led to Presidential disaster declarations. Communities in our State are still rebuilding. So the \$29 billion that is in the Disaster Relief Fund are important for New Hampshire to ensure that this fund is solvent when cities, counties, and towns submit reimbursements.

The package that is on hold in the House also includes funding to address an emergency outbreak of spruce budworm that threatens forests in Maine and New Hampshire. And just to be clear, New Hampshire is the second most heavily forested State in the country after Maine. We know that this outbreak is coming from Canada. It is affecting our States, and it could have a major impact on our timber industry if we don't do something about it now. The funding in the bill would allow us to address this before it wipes out significant portions of our timber stand.

Last year, I met with a group of housing stakeholders, homebuilders, realtors, housing developers, tenant advocates to hear how a shutdown would worsen New Hampshire's existing housing crisis. We currently have a vacancy rate, a rental vacancy rate, of 0.6 percent. We know that a healthy housing market usually has about a 5-percent vacancy rate. So at 0.6 percent, we desperately need more housing. A shutdown will slow progress on new construction. It will risk hundreds of housing units that are under construction now at a time when we really urgently need them.

And for those low-income households who depend on mortgages that are backed by the Federal Housing Administration or U.S. Department of Agriculture, they may miss out on buying their first homes because they won't be able to get a loan.

We have also heard from nonprofit organizations in New Hampshire who have shared that 44 percent of adults that they serve are reporting food inse-

curity, even at our current funding levels for the Women, Infants, and Children Program. The WIC Program—Women, Infants and Children—helps feed more than 12,000 people in New Hampshire. And if we don't act now, funding to continue to support thousands of women and newborns will be at risk.

Let me say it again. This harm is being inflicted on women, children, and families, and it is avoidable. Our colleagues in the House—the Republican majority—could end this today. They could end it right now if they would pass the deal that they negotiated, that has been months in negotiations that both Democrats and Republicans in both the House and Senate have agreed to.

Furthermore, in terms of the Federal Government, it employs more than 2 million Americans in civilian activities across the country. Eighty percent of those Federal workers are outside of Washington, DC. In New Hampshire, there are about 5,000 Federal workers and a quarter of them are veterans. They are air traffic controllers. They are Forest Service rangers. They are Customs and Border agents. They are safety inspectors.

We have more than a million uniform military, including 1,100 in New Hampshire, who may be affected. They will be forced to work in defense and protection of our Nation without getting paid.

It is shameful, and it is unacceptable.

During the last shutdown, Federal employees had to visit food banks to help get meals when they missed paychecks. And there is no guarantee that the employees of Federal contractors will be able to get backpay. As we remember the last time, we had to pass specific legislation to ensure that those people who lost their pay were able to get reimbursed.

I have also had the honor of serving as chair of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee for the past year. Small businesses are the lifeblood of New Hampshire's economy. In fact, they account for more than 99 percent of all the businesses in our State. Two-thirds of the jobs that are created—not just in New Hampshire but across this country—come from small businesses. And yet the SBA has been unable to give out disaster loans for more than 2 months now. That leaves more than 10,000 hurricane survivors with approved loans that they are not going to get the funding for unless we pass this disaster funding.

This isn't a partisan issue. Thousands of families and businesses in Virginia, in North Carolina, in Florida, and Georgia are waiting for these funds. They are in limbo. And here we are, not even a week—less than a week—before Christmas, and we are saying to all those people who have been waiting for months: I am sorry. We are not going to fund you because billionaire Elon Musk said don't pass this legislation because it is too expensive.

Well, he needs to look at what the cost is of not passing that legislation. And should the Federal Government close, it is not hyperbole to say that we will be leaving our most vulnerable without proper care this Christmas.

I recently met with community health center leaders from New Hampshire. They talked about what they do in their communities. We know that our community health centers provide daily care for uninsured patients, for those who can't afford expensive health insurance, who live with terrible diseases like diabetes and cancer. Our community health centers are the cornerstone of our healthcare safety net, and they rely on Federal funding to keep their doors open and provide life-saving care to Americans.

But about 70 percent of community health center funding is going to expire if we don't pass the spending package. Should that funding disappear, health clinics across the country will be forced to close, and the communities they serve will suffer the consequences. The people who President-elect Trump promised to protect are the people who are going to get hurt.

And if a shutdown drags on, inspections and enforcements that prevent air and water pollution will cease. That puts public health at risk, especially in our most vulnerable communities.

And with a lapse in appropriations, the Forest Service has to stop issuing contracts, including for timber sales, which, in New Hampshire, even for a short period of time, can have ripple effects through our local economies because we have towns that depend on that timber economy.

A shutdown also leaves forest ranger stations in New Hampshire closed, right as we are starting winter recreation season.

And a prolonged Government shutdown will lead to delays for food assistance, for Meals on Wheels, where, in New Hampshire, we have more than 20,000 seniors who will be threatened by or are currently experiencing hunger if they don't get their Meals on Wheels. Nationwide, more than 1.5 million meals are provided in States each year.

So a shutdown needlessly risks health and well-being. And we know the other thing that is in the package that the House is objecting to is the extension of telehealth benefits for people who need it. Again, it is an effective, efficient way to provide healthcare, and they are objecting to it.

As chair of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that funds the Departments of Commerce and Justice, as well as our science Agencies, I am also concerned that 84 percent of Department of Commerce employees—about 44,000—will be furloughed if we can't get a continuing resolution done to keep the Government open. This includes National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration employees, who protect life and property, on the job. Also, we have 84 percent of Department

of Justice staff who would be considered essential workers but would be forced to work without pay.

In New Hampshire, we have a Federal prison in northern New Hampshire that is very important. It is a medium-security prison. And what we would be asking those correction officers and those other employees of the prison is to work without pay, to take an IOU until the Government is funded again.

So I think this is actually very simple. Democrats and Republicans negotiated in good faith. We agreed to keep the Government open through a negotiated process. We agreed to provide disaster relief and to support critical needs for working families. We were ready to vote so we could keep the lights on here, so we could turn the Christmas lights on at home for so many working people across this country. And now, because the world's richest man, Elon Musk, doesn't understand what this bill actually does or how Government works, we are facing a shutdown that is going to force Americans to work without pay during the holidays. It is going to leave communities in the lurch without the funding they need to rebuild from the recent natural disasters.

So I urge Speaker JOHNSON to do the right thing—stick to the agreement he made just this week. Let's bring this deal to the floor. Let's get this done, and let's help the people across the country who need the support that we promised.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I was scheduled a couple days ago to come here to the Senate floor to talk about what measures the United States could be taking now to help relieve the suffering in Sudan, and I plan to get to that topic. But since I planned to come talk about that, we have seen this disaster unfolding on Capitol Hill, where an agreement that had been reached in a bipartisan manner between Democrats and Republicans, between the House and the Senate, to prevent a government shutdown and to support critical priorities around the country, how that bipartisan agreement got blown up because of a tweet from Elon Musk, the richest man in the world.

And we don't know if he has just decided that he is going to be sort of the kingmaker on Capitol Hill. All I do know is that that was shortly followed by tweets from the President-elect and other members of the Trump family. Who is leading whom here, we don't know. All we know is that the end result is very bad for the American people because Federal employees provide all sorts of vital services, from air traffic controllers to nurses and doctors in veterans hospitals, to the people who look out for the safety of our food. Some of them will be prevented from coming to work. Others will be asked to go to work without their salary dur-

ing that period of time. All of that will disrupt the country, and all of that was avoidable. In fact, if the Speaker of the House had just stuck to the agreement that he had reached over a period of weeks, we would not be in this situation, sort of heading toward a government shutdown, with last-minute demands made by tweet.

In my State of Maryland, we had a provision to deal with the disaster of the collapse of the Key Bridge in Baltimore City. We all know the story there: A big ship hit the pylon and brought down the bridge. We lost a number of souls who had been working on that bridge.

We worked to get the debris out of the bottom of the river so that we could reopen the port, but the next step is to replace the Key Bridge. And just as the country came together to support the people in Minnesota after the collapse of the Minneapolis bridge, the Maryland delegation is asking the same of our colleagues. And we were heartened by the fact that Republicans and Democrats did come together in the spirit of "all for one and one for all" to help Maryland, just as we are helping other States—red States, blue States, purple States. And the bottom line—the important thing—is they are red, white, and blue States, and we are helping the people in all those States in their hour of hurt after disasters hit their States.

I heard our colleague from North Carolina, Senator TILLIS, who has worked very hard to get relief for the people of North Carolina, talking about how he doesn't plan to support any continuing resolution that doesn't include relief for the people of North Carolina. And that is the sentiment we should all share, not only because it is the right thing to do but because we recognized it was the right thing to do when we negotiated that bipartisan agreement.

So this moment should be a wake-up call to everybody as we look to the next 4 years because this Republic will be on very shaky grounds if one or two tweets can throw the whole place into disarray and lead us toward a government shutdown.

I will also point out that the fact that the President-elect asked for an early increase in the Nation's debt ceiling sent a very clear signal as to what his priority is. His priority is to cut taxes for very rich people and very big corporations. And to make that easier, they want to raise the debt ceiling now, rather than take responsibility for it themselves down the road. So this is a preview of what the priorities of the incoming administration are and the lengths that they are prepared to go to bring this place to a halt to achieve their goals.

And, by the way, I am sure that the richest guy in the world will just get even richer with those tax cuts that will be coming down the line.

So I really urge our Republican colleagues in the House to keep their word

and stick with the agreement that we reached. It is a compromise agreement. It has things in it that I would not have put in it, if I were to draft this myself, and it leaves things out that I would like to see included. That is the nature of compromise in divided government, which we have right now.

So I really hope that smarter, cooler heads will prevail and not, when they get a tweet that says, "Jump," say, "How high should I jump?" but to really think about whether that is the way to govern in the years ahead.

SUDAN

Mr. President, now I do want to turn to the matter that I had planned to talk about before this latest disruption, and that is the terrible, ongoing killings, starvation, and humanitarian disaster in Sudan.

Two weeks ago, I came to this Senate floor to discuss this same issue and to explain why I had filed what is known as a joint resolution of disapproval, or a JRD, to block the Biden administration's request to send offensive weapons, including advanced rockets and missiles worth \$1.2 billion, to the United Arab Emirates.

I was joined in filing the joint resolution of disapproval by my House colleague Congresswoman SARA JACOBS. She filed that on the House side.

And as I said when I introduced that joint resolution of disapproval, it was based on credible reports and investigations, including by the United Nations, that found that the UAE has been transferring arms to a group called the Rapid Support Forces, in Sudan, further fueling this terrible conflict that has already claimed thousands and thousands of lives and created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

And it is my view that the United States should use all of our leverage to help bring peace and stability to the people of Sudan. It is the right thing to do from a humanitarian point of view. It is also in America's interest to stop the fighting. And, certainly, the United States should not be rewarding any country—any country—that is fueling the conflict.

That is why Congresswoman JACOBS and I filed that JRD, because we want to use our influence to prevent the United Arab Emirates from sending weapons to the murderous RSF. And after we filed the joint resolution of disapproval, we wrote a letter to President Biden, dated December 2, 2024, outlining our goals—and, again, stressing the fact that the objective was not to end arms transfers forever to the UAE. The objective was to use our leverage to get the UAE to stop sending weapons to the RSF, which the United States has charged with war crimes and ethnic cleansing in Sudan.

So I am here on the floor, 2 weeks later, to say that, yesterday, we received a letter from the Biden administration—specifically, from the White House Coordinator for the Middle East

and North Africa, Brett McGurk—stat-ing—and I am going to quote here from the letter:

[T]he UAE has informed the Administration that it is not now transferring any weapons to the RSF and will not do so going forward.

The letter goes on to say:

The administration will work with relevant departments and agencies to monitor for indicators of the credibility and reliability of these assurances provided by the UAE. By January 17, I commit to providing you with the executive branch's up-to-date assessment in that regard.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to put this letter in the RECORD.

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

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL,
Washington, DC, December 18, 2024.

DEAR SENATOR VAN HOLLEN: Thank you for your letter dated December 2, 2024, concerning the Joint Resolution of Disapproval you filed on November 21, 2024, with respect to certain sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and in relation to reports of UAE's support to the Rapid Sudan Forces (RSF) in the ongoing conflict in Sudan.

The United States has been a global leader in trying to end this crisis, leading negotiation efforts twice in Saudi Arabia and once in Switzerland via the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS). As you know, the UAE has been a partner in ALPS. The UAE used its influence to bring the RSF to the negotiations in Switzerland while the Sudanese Armed Forces boycotted the talks.

The UAE has also been a humanitarian contributor throughout the war and other conflicts worldwide. The UAE continues to be a dominant humanitarian actor in Gaza, as one of the only countries operating on the ground, providing as much as \$828 million since October 2023, 42 percent of total aid provided in Gaza in that time period.

Despite reports we have received suggesting the contrary has occurred to date, the UAE has informed the Administration that it is not now transferring any weapons to the RSF and will not do so going forward. The Administration will work with relevant departments and agencies to monitor for indicators of the credibility and reliability of these assurances provided by the UAE. By January 17, I commit to providing you with the executive branch's up-to-date assessment in that regard.

Sincerely,

BRETT MCGURK,

Deputy Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, because we have achieved our objective, which is to get the UAE to provide those assurances to the Biden administration and to get the Biden administration to assure us that they will monitor compliance with those assurances, we will not be insisting on a vote on the JRD at this time, which is our right, because it is a privilege motion that can be brought up at any time.

But I want to thank the Biden administration, I want to thank the White House, and the National Security Council for working with us to achieve what I know are our mutual objectives, which is to prevent the RSD from getting arms from any party.

If you look at what is happening there, you will find the situation getting worse and worse. Since the brutal conflict in Sudan began between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces back in April 2023, a staggering 11.8 million people have been displaced within Sudan or fled to neighboring countries.

More than half the population—that is 25 million people—face acute food insecurity. And while the total casualty numbers have been difficult to determine, a study from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's Sudan Research Group estimates that more than 60,000 people have died in the Khartoum region alone between April 2023 and June 2024.

And in a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—a committee on which I serve—the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Tom Perriello, suggested that the total death toll could be as high as 150,000 people.

Both the RSF and the SAF have worsened this crisis, with both parties credibly accused of using starvation as a weapon of war by intentionally blocking humanitarian aid by reaching those most in need.

The United States has determined that both the RSF and the SAF have committed war crimes. The State Department has also concluded that the Rapid Support Forces have committed crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

I want to remind my colleagues that this organization—the Rapid Support Forces—traces its roots to the Janjaweed militias and is led by a man known as Hemedti, who, along with others in the RSF, participated in the genocide in Darfur in the early 2000s.

So these are bad people, and we should not be helping any country or sending arms to any country that is aiding and abetting their actions in Sudan.

And yet, that is what credible reports have shown. In January, a U.N. Panel of Experts documented credible allegations that the UAE was violating a Darfur arms embargo, which was first established back in 2005 to stop the genocide in Darfur. These findings have been corroborated by credible human rights organizations and an independent investigation by the New York Times, which found that the UAE smuggled weapons to the RSF under the guise of humanitarian aid.

That is why it was important that we act. The United States is trying to reach an end to the conflict. We should not be sending any weapons to any country that is helping fuel that conflict.

So I appreciate the administration's willingness to work with us to obtain such assurances from the UAE and to create an accountability mechanism to monitor its compliance with those commitments.

And I want to thank and remember my colleagues here, Senator CARDIN, the chairman of the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee, my colleague from Maryland; Senator SCHUMER, the leader, and their teams for working with us and the administration to get those assurances from the UAE and to create that accountability structure to monitor compliance with those assurances.

And while I will not be seeking a vote on the JRD today, if, in January, the administration determines that the UAE has not been compliant with those promises, commitments, and assurances, then, of course, we retain the right to refile the joint resolution of disapproval in the new Congress to block arms sales from the United States to the UAE—that \$1.3 billion sale.

As President Biden said in September of this year, "The United States will not abandon our commitment to the people of Sudan, who deserve freedom, peace, and justice. We call on all parties to this conflict to end the violence and refrain from fueling it, for the future of Sudan and for all the Sudanese people."

And that is why our message has been that any country that is supplying any actor in this brutal civil war must stop doing so. That is why Congressman JACOBS and I filed the joint resolution of disapproval against the proposed arms sales to the UAE because they have, based on credible allegations, been sending weapons to the murderous RSF. That is also why we will not seek a vote now on that JRD—because the Biden administration received those assurances that I just read out loud on the Senate floor from the UAE and has committed to monitoring them.

So let's hope this puts an end to the chapter of the UAE sending weapons to this murderous organization, where so many were responsible for the genocide in Darfur 20 years ago and who, today, according to the U.S. Government, are committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.

We should do everything in our power as a country to end that suffering. That is why we took the measure we did. That is why I am grateful that the administration worked with us to reach this point, and it is why we will continue to monitor this situation—to make sure that those arms shipments do not happen in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the concern everyone in this Chamber has about the jeopardy of disaster assistance to the communities that so desperately need it. We had an agreement. We had an agreement that was reached between House Republicans and Democrats—a bipartisan agreement—here in the Senate. And it was to provide desperately needed disaster relief to citizens who were in the eye of storms in Vermont, in North Carolina, in Iowa, in Texas—\$100 million.

And what that meant in Vermont was that communities that had put money out to fix culverts, to repair bridges, to realign roads, and who were expecting the money from FEMA in this disaster assistance suddenly are on hold. Will they get it? We don't know at this moment.

Farms, where farmers had lost their crops in July of 2023—and we had another flood in July of 2024—and where couples who were running these farms and making existential decisions about whether they could keep farming—and we need them; we need them to be able to keep farming; we need it for Vermont; and we need it to show respect for our farmers—are awaiting an answer as to whether this disaster relief will come through.

This is going to have a huge impact on Vermont. Our property taxpayers who suffer from enormously high property taxes will be pounded if that relief doesn't get back to those communities where they fronted money for that culvert repair, the bridge repair, and road repair; and our small businesses that have been hammered as well and are awaiting an answer on whether they can get relief from the assistance in that program; and homeowners who have been told that they can get money for a buyout because their home was destroyed in a flood—and what a horrible thing for folks to have to go through. A lot of that happened in July of 2023. But then to have to go through the constant uncertainty and bureaucratic delays that have been so rampant in FEMA, and we had this moment where \$100 billion was going to be available to help in Vermont and other States where this relief was necessary. And it is not right that after we have this agreement, negotiated on a bipartisan basis, it is pulled out from underneath us.

And, by the way, one of the great experiences I have had in the U.S. Senate was working with colleagues—my Republican colleagues like THOM TILLIS and like TED BUDD, from North Carolina—whose citizens suffered an enormous loss from what happened in Hurricane Helene. It wiped out bookstores in Asheville, restaurants in Asheville needing help. And it was so gratifying to me to see that all of us, whether we represented folks in a red State or a blue State, whether the constituents who were in need voted for Trump or Harris, it just didn't matter. Our obligation was to help them. And that is a basic responsibility that this Congress has when our citizens, through no fault of their own, suffer enormous economic loss as a result of a natural weather event.

We had this agreement. What happened? Literally, we had this agreement. Speaker JOHNSON signed off on it. Leadership here signed off on it. Mr. Musk sent out a tweet. He didn't like it, and he blew the entire thing up. And how is it that one person can have so much power to destroy something that the American people really need? A

\$277 million contribution to a campaign gets you a seat at the table—maybe the head seat at the table. And that, flatout, is wrong. The American people—those folks who suffered in Asheville, NC, in Lyndonville, VT—they are entitled to immediate action.

So we don't know what the next few hours are going to be, but what I know is that I will not abandon Vermonters. I will not abandon Americans who are counting on this disaster relief. I am going to hang in there to make certain that I do every single thing I can to help the Vermonters and the North Carolinians and the folks in Iowa and Texas and Louisiana who have been in the path of these terrible storms.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, in a few moments, I will be asking unanimous consent for a really special person to be the Federal Cochair of the Great Lakes Authority, but let me speak a little bit, first, about him.

Matthew Kaplan has been nominated to serve as the Federal Cochair of the Great Lakes Authority, and he really is an excellent choice for Cochair. I am so pleased that his nomination was reported out of the Committee on Environment and Public Works by voice vote in November. Matthew and I have a connection through his work for Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR, who is my partner in creating the Great Lakes Authority, which we successfully created back in 2022.

I am so proud that we secured the first batch of funding to be able to start the program earlier this year, and by combining Federal money with State resources, the Great Lakes Authority will serve as a new economic development agency for the Great Lakes Region. And let me say, most regions of the country already have an economic development authority; the Great Lakes are one of just a couple that have not had one over the years, so this fills that gap.

I am pleased that I was originally working on this with Senator Rob Portman here in the Senate, and our great MARCY KAPTUR has been its champion in the House.

This important partnership will give State and local governments the tools they need to promote economic development and job creation, restore and protect our Great Lakes, ensure the region continues to lead on manufacturing, and so much more.

Matt is a terrific nominee to lead the new authority. He was a key adviser to Congresswoman KAPTUR in her leadership of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, the bipartisan and bicameral Great Lakes Task Force, and in drafting the legislation to create the Great Lakes Authority. This experience will, undoubtedly, help him hit the ground running in his role as Federal Cochair. He is also eager to

be a changemaker on behalf of the region.

I urge the Senate to advance his nomination by unanimous consent so that Matthew can get to work.

With that, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in executive session, the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 834, Matthew Kaplan, to be Federal Cochair of the Great Lakes Authority; 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 actions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, I appreciate the passion and sincerity and hard work of my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Michigan, who is a dear friend whose presence I will miss here.

We have a situation in which we have got a new administration coming on board, and President-elect Trump has asked that we hold off on confirming additional Presidential nominees until he gets into office. It is an understandable request, but particularly in these circumstances, I agree with him.

On that basis, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

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

SUDAN

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, as I come to the floor today, as we all know, this is a time of incredible international instability. If you turn on the news, you are confronted with tragic images of conflict and displacement in Gaza and the West Bank; broader violence and upheaval in the Middle East, Syria, Lebanon; and the ongoing violence in Ukraine with Russia's illegal invasion.

Now, each of these crises deserve our attention. What many of us may not know is that if you look all across the world, in terms of in what conflict are there more people impacted daily—with hunger, humanitarian, or literally acts of war—where are there more deaths than Gaza, Ukraine, and the Middle East combined—that is the ongoing war in Sudan.

This is a conflict between two warring parties—no good guys here—fueled by external actors, in which violence has caused tens of millions to flee their homes, and it has left more than half of Sudan's population of 50 million literally on the brink of starvation.

The International Rescue Committee recently affirmed that this is “the biggest humanitarian crisis ever recorded.” Think about that—bigger than Darfur 20 years ago, bigger than—some of us will remember “We Are the World” and the horrible tragedy of starvation in Ethiopia. This is the biggest humanitarian crisis ever recorded.

Yet, for the most part, the Sudanese people feel forgotten by the world.

I rise today because this conflict must not be ignored and because America must lead—not back away—in times like these, when suffering and terror are at their peak.

At the heart of this crisis is the ongoing violence between the Sudanese Armed Forces, called SAF, and the Rapid Support Forces, RSF, fighting for control over this country. It is estimated that the fighting and resulting food crisis have killed upwards of more than 100,000 Sudanese and left literally millions on the verge of starvation.

Both SAF and RSF have inflicted horrible tragedies and atrocities on the people of Sudan. The State Department has accused members of both SAF and RSF of war crimes, while members of the RSF and allied militias stand accused of additional crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

A recent United Nations report documents “large-scale human rights and international humanitarian law violations” by both sides and also, particular to RSF, horrific alleged sexual crimes, including “widespread sexual and gender-based violence, rape, sexual slavery, abduction, and recruitment and use of children in hostilities.”

These atrocities, over nearly 2 years of conflict, have left the Sudanese population of more than 50 million in total—over 25 million of those in desperate need of food assistance. Health and sanitation conditions have contributed to spiraling outbreaks of cholera, malaria, dengue fever, and other diseases.

Our Ambassador to the United Nations said in recent months that this conflict and resulting conditions place millions of Sudanese “on the verge of a generational famine.” Due to these conditions, more than 14 million Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes, with large numbers actually seeking refuge in neighboring countries, which, again, risks broader destabilization.

I think one of the newest countries in the world—very poor—is South Sudan. If you are fleeing to South Sudan, Chad, or Ethiopia because Sudan is in such challenging states, that could lead to destabilization across all of east Africa.

And as much as we cite these statistics, the real truth is we don't really know because this civil war has, for the most part, completely excluded all outside media.

From what I have learned over the last year—and there are other Members of this body who have spoken on this issue—one thing is clear to me: This is a catastrophe. First and foremost, the Sudanese need humanitarian aid; and aid workers, humanitarian actors, and local Sudanese volunteers need safe access to respond. But despite public promises to the contrary, both SAF and the RSF have consistently erected physical and bureaucratic barriers to deny, delay, and otherwise hinder hu-

manitarian aid from reaching those displaced civilians, even, at times, targeting and literally killing aid workers.

As we mark the human tragedies of this conflict, we must also recognize the conflict's political tragedy. The outbreak of this violence a couple of years ago came just after the historic pro-democracy protests that swept parts of Sudan in 2019, when literally hundreds of civic, professional, and political organizations came to call for an end and actually got rid of then-President Omar al-Bashir's government. That government had lasted since 1989—for 30 years—and it had, again, a historic record of depriving citizens and trampling on human rights.

So what happened was these groups came together and ousted Bashir with the promise of a democracy. Yet both sides, after a year or so of some back and forth, instead started this warring civil war that, rather than bring democratic reform, has again brought unprecedented levels of violence, brutality, and deprecation.

Now, the Biden administration has helped. They are currently the largest donor of humanitarian aid and just today—just today—added \$200 million more to that humanitarian aid. The Biden administration—again, through the Special Envoy for Sudan, Tom Perriello—a former Congressman from Virginia, I might add—has leveraged sanctions to pressure actors fueling the conflict, and that has resulted in increased humanitarian access into the country and has particularly provided critical assistance to local responders, including the Sudanese Emergency Response Rooms, which are led by community members in Sudan who, oftentimes at risk of their own lives, have been truly incredible on the ground. They actually were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Yet, despite this aid, the violence continues to escalate, not deescalate; and starvation, disease, and death are increasing, not decreasing. So we can't just look at the current conditions and say anything other than the following: that we and, frankly, the world have come up short on this conflict. The vacuum created by the lack of a coordinated international response has been filled by a considerable degree of outside influence, with foreign governments and foreign entities, frankly, backing proxies on both sides.

Russia, always willing to spread mischief, is actually fueling parts of warring factions on both sides. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—in many ways our allies—they have supported humanitarian aid; but at the same time, they have almost created a proxy battle with UAE supporting the RSF and, oftentimes, Saudi Arabia and Egypt supporting SAF, which really needs to be called out.

Foreign business entities are profiting—literally billions and billions of dollars—from this conflict.

This week, I sent a letter to President Biden, along with Senator Risch and other bipartisan colleagues, urging the administration to take additional steps to ensure that humanitarian aid continues to flow and that the actual external parties who are fueling the conflict be held accountable, including, in particular, the administration to sanction business entities profiting from the illegal and illicit smuggling of Sudanese gold.

Many of us remember the conflicts in central Africa years ago with blood diamonds. In many ways in size and scale, the profiting coming from mining, extraction, and then smuggling of Sudanese gold dwarfs those other activities. The truth is, Sudan is one of Africa's largest gold producers and has a gold industry worth, literally, billions of dollars. And while both SAF and RSF control some of the mines, the RSF controls the vast majority. And over the past decade, its leadership has, frankly, funded a lot of itself by taking that gold and illegally smuggling it to then raise money for arms, for propaganda, and to fund their efforts.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has identified gold operations as “a vital source of revenue . . . for the RSF,” and as has been documented by the United Nations, these revenues go directly into fueling this conflict.

And while the true scale of this whole illicit gold network is obscured, the truth is, most of this gold is ending up in companies in the UAE. Reports have further linked not only this gold going to the UAE, but also, the notorious Russia Wagner group has been skimming off part of this and using these funds to support conflict from Wagner group not only in other proxy wars in Africa but also back to help Russia in Ukraine.

Finally, the Treasury Department has taken steps in recent months to designate certain commercial entities in the UAE for sanctions, but more can and must be done to disrupt these revenue streams. We must stop all of the revenue that is going to funding, again, the conflict where more people are displaced and die every day than in Gaza and Ukraine combined.

Through tools like the Global Magnitsky Act and Executive orders already in the books, the administration can and must hold to account not only the warring parties, but also these external actors who are aiding and abetting this conflict. And we must stop these foreign entities, some who are our allies, from arming these warring parties.

As I mentioned before, there are detailed and well-reported allegations from news organizations and from our intelligence community about foreign weapons and other support into the hands of both RSF and SAF. Media reports point to alleged involvement, as I mentioned, from many countries—Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt—into arms in this region.

And while there are decades-old arms embargoes that impact the Darfur region of Sudan, this new conflict is at a new scale and takes in wide swaths of the country that weren't in conflict in Darfur.

It is time for the United States, alongside its allies and partners, to urge the U.N. Security Council to expand the existing Darfur embargo across all of Sudan. We must make clear to all countries around the world that any foreign government or entity that is providing support for either side of this civil war, that allows it to continue to drag on—to have this massive, worst humanitarian crisis ever—those entities must be held accountable.

And beyond foreign actors ending support to warring parties, it is incumbent on all of these countries—all of these countries—many of which we have very close relationships with, to work towards a ceasefire and a civilian government in Sudan. There is also more that can actually be done here at home.

Last spring, my colleague Senator KAINE and I called on the Biden administration to issue a new temporary protective status—what we call TPS—for certain Sudanese individuals living in the United States who are unable to return to their country due to this conflict. I was pleased, in August of last year, that the administration took that step, allowing those individuals not to go back to this worst conflict in the world.

The problem is, that designation runs out next spring. And I call on the administration to extend that designation before they leave office.

One of the things that we are proud of in Virginia is that we are home to a large Sudanese diaspora. I am lucky enough to have part of that Sudanese diaspora—I am proud to have—work on my staff, one of my rising legislative assistant stars. I have heard from those members of that community on a regular basis that we have to do more.

In fact, the Sudanese people didn't ask for this war. They threw out a dictator of 30 years and said we ought to bring in a democracy. The rest of the world focused a little bit of attention, but, when it got messy, they turned away.

We need a government in Sudan that reflects the struggle that the young people and civil society groups brought in 2019 and not have that promise sniffed out.

We find ourselves about a month away from a new administration in Washington. I have worked and pledge to work with the incoming Trump administration where I can. I make the appeal right now. But Sudan should be one of those areas. We have to make sure that we show American leadership in this crisis.

The truth is, if we could actually resolve this major conflict in Africa, where we show that we care about Africans killing Africans—supported by outside forces that we call our allies in

certain ways—we can do remarkable things in terms of restoring America's image as a protector of democracy and the aspirations of people all over the world.

We have to also make sure that all of the international partners continue to work to bring humanitarian assistance and put their pressure, as well, on the funders and suppliers of the arms that go into this conflict.

There are more things the administration can do. The unfortunate truth is this probably won't be resolved by January 20. One of the things that was in the NDAA, that I know the President will sign, will be a more permanent status for the Special Envoy for Sudan. It is my hope that the Trump administration will choose someone of similar caliber to Tom Perriello to continue this critically important role.

Again, I want to thank friends like the incoming chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Jim Risch, who partnered with this. This is a bipartisan issue. We can't let it lie fallow any longer. We can't forget, when we turn on these images and we see Gaza, Ukraine, Lebanon and Syria, that there is something actually worse happening in Africa that we could help bring a conclusion to. I know we can do more. I pray we will do more.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3593

Ms. ROSEN, Madam President, I rise today to talk about a subject you know a lot about, as we share serving the great State of Nevada. I am here to talk about public land management in Nevada and the challenges that my State—our State—is facing as our communities continue to grow.

Some in this Chamber may be unaware, but my State of Nevada is unique. We have the highest percentage of land owned by the Federal Government. Eighty-five percent of our State is made up of Federal land. Let me repeat that: 85 percent. This means Nevada has to rely on Federal legislation to do things like making land available to provide more affordable housing, more schools, more parks, more churches, more fire stations, and police departments in every single county in Nevada.

Think about that. We need to pass bills here in Congress, in Washington, and have the President sign them into law to do local things that most other States can just have their local governments do.

That is why in Washoe County, the second largest county in the State, those types of everyday actions—well, they just haven't been taken in years, and we are starting to feel it.

Over the last few decades, Nevada has brought in new industries and created good-paying jobs in and around Washoe County. From Reno to Sparks, we are creating jobs in technology, critical minerals, battery recycling, and so much more. This is leading to an eco-

nomics and population boom that, frankly, is helping our residents prosper. But it is also placing a great strain on things like the supply of housing.

But, again, because 85 percent of Nevada is made up of public lands, Washoe County relies on resource management plans to grow our community. Well, I am sad to say this, but the current plans on the books—and you know this too well, Madam President—they are more than 20 years old. So even as the population of the county has grown more than twice the rate of the overall U.S. population in the last decade, we are using current plans over 20 years old. As our State grows and more people move in, it is critical that we take steps to manage responsible growth and development of our local communities so we protect our beautiful public lands and we support our Tribes and economic development, alike.

Without new Federal legislation, Washoe County is stuck. They are just stuck. It can't grow, it can't accommodate its increasing population, and it can't protect the spaces where people recreate or come to visit in our beautiful State.

For the last few years, I have been working closely with a diverse range of local stakeholders, from conservation and outdoor recreation groups to local governments and Tribal leadership, to draft a proposal that has the best balance. We released a working draft, and we took public input from Nevadans, and we developed my Truckee Meadows Public Lands Management Act, or, as we know it, the Washoe County lands bill.

I am going to tell you a little bit about the bill.

My bill is balanced. It is thoughtful. It has a thoughtful approach that I worked on for more than 4 years to do a few things. We have to allow for new economic development opportunities. We have to make more land available for affordable housing; this is on the top of everyone's list. We want to protect nearly 1 million acres of land for recreation in our gorgeous State. We want to convey parcels to local entities for public purposes, like schools and water treatment facilities. And we want to place some of our land into trust for three different Tribes in northern Nevada.

This bill has broad, local support from Republicans and Democrats, alike, in Nevada. I introduced the final version of this bill nearly 1 year ago. It has gone through a committee hearing. It has been marked up, and it has been passed out of committee. My team and I spent years discussing this legislation with relevant committees, and for months—literally, for months—we have been working to include this bill in a public lands package.

We have consistently reached out to Senators and staffs on both sides of the aisle to get the bill passed—a bill very specific to Nevada, for the benefit of Nevadans. And we have an open door for any recommended changes to get

this critical legislation across the finish line. And yet we still haven't been able to get a vote here in the Senate.

One thing I want to tell you for sure is I am not going to allow typical Washington gridlock like we have seen here to block this bill that my constituents—our constituents—are relying on for more affordable housing, stronger communities, and for protected lands.

So, today, I am taking matters into my own hands. I stand here, today, asking for my colleagues' cooperation to support the State of Nevada, to support our ability to grow and build our communities, and protect and preserve the beauty in our great State, and support the passage of my Washoe County lands bill by unanimous consent.

Notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 604, S. 3593; that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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 Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, reserving the right to object, this bill does two things my friend and colleague from Nevada mentioned. It would eliminate multiple-use management from hundreds of thousands of acres of Federal land. It would also grant authority to the Secretary of the Interior to convey thousands of acres of Federal land to local governments in Nevada. Other Western States are trying to do this exact same thing.

Former Majority Leader Harry Reid cut special deals in the past like this for Nevada. I am happy to work with my friend and colleague from Nevada, but Congress should not enact another special deal for Nevada when other Western States are seeking similar legislation.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I look forward to continuing to work with the Senator from Wyoming on approving this bill. But for me, today, it is beyond disappointing that Washington's business-as-usual approach is once again getting in the way of my bill passing.

The legislation would not cost any additional taxpayer money, and it would not directly impact any State other than Nevada. And it would allow Washoe County to be able to serve its business community, Tribal communities, and the people who live there. All it is going to do is protect our outdoor spaces, support local Tribal communities, and expand economic development opportunities, including the much needed affordable housing, desperately needed by so many.

Today's outcome is frustrating. I want to assure the people of Nevada that my colleagues and I will continue to work on this issue. It is not settled, and the fight to get Nevada lands for us to be able to use in smart ways is not over. I will reintroduce this legislation next Congress, and I will continue fighting until my Washoe County lands bill is passed and Nevadans are better able to responsibly build in and protect our State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. WYDEN. Notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 586, S. 2160 and H.R. 7938, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; that 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, all en bloc.

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

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

URBAN CANAL MODERNIZATION ACT

A bill (S. 2160) to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to authorize certain extraordinary operation and maintenance work for urban canals of concern, 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. 2. EXTRAORDINARY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE WORK PERFORMED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 9601 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (43 U.S.C. 510) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), and (7) as paragraphs (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), and (1), respectively;

(2) in paragraph (3) (as so redesignated), by striking “et seq.” and inserting “et seq.”;

(3) in paragraph (4) (as so redesignated), by striking “mean” and inserting “means”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:“(8) URBAN CANAL OF CONCERN.—The term ‘urban canal of concern’ means a transferred works or segment of a transferred works that is a canal reach—

“(A) the failure of which would result in an estimated at-risk population of more than 100 individuals, as determined by the Secretary, pursuant to the guidelines and criteria developed under section 9602(a); and

“(B) that is determined by the Secretary to be classified as an urban canal reach.”.

(b) EXTRAORDINARY OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE WORK ON URBAN CANALS OF CONCERN.—Section 9603 of the Omnibus Public Land Man-

agement Act of 2009 (43 U.S.C. 510b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “(a)” and all that follows through “The Secretary” and inserting the following:

“(a) AUTHORIZATION.—

“(1) PROJECT FACILITIES.—The Secretary”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) URBAN CANALS OF CONCERN.—The Secretary or the transferred works operating entity may carry out, in accordance with subsection (b), any extraordinary operation and maintenance work on an urban canal of concern that the Secretary determines to be necessary pursuant to the guidelines and criteria set forth in section 9602(a).”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

“(3) URBAN CANALS OF CONCERN.—Except in the case of emergency extraordinary operation and maintenance work carried out under subsection (c), of the total costs of extraordinary operation and maintenance work on an urban canal of concern conducted under subsection (a)(2)—

“(A) 25 percent shall be provided by the Secretary on a nonreimbursable basis;

“(B) 10 percent shall be provided by the applicable State or political subdivision of the applicable State in which the extraordinary operation and maintenance work is being conducted; and

“(C) the remaining amounts shall be advanced by the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (2), to be repaid by the transferred works operating entity in accordance with that paragraph.”; and

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (7) as paragraph (8); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following:

“(7) LIMITATION FOR URBAN CANALS OF CONCERN.—Not more than \$300,000,000 shall be made available from the Account to pay the Federal costs of extraordinary operation and maintenance work on urban canals of concern conducted under section (a)(2), unless an appropriations Act provides funds for payment of Federal costs for such purposes in excess of that amount.”.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2160), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

KLAMATH BASIN WATER AGREEMENT SUPPORT ACT OF 2024

A bill (H.R. 7938) 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, was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I am very pleased my legislation has just passed.

I particularly want to express my thanks to my colleague and friend, my neighbor, Senator BARRASSO, and staff John Tanner and others—Jack and Vincent and Kristin and Tori and

Sam—who have been a big help in this effort.

This legislation, by my Republican colleague from eastern Oregon, Congressman BENTZ, is a companion bill to my bill, S.482, which would uphold promises made by the Federal Government to farmers and Tribes in the Klamath Basin. The Klamath Basin is the subject of one of the largest river restoration projects in history.

As a result of this work, new habitats are being opened up to recover culturally important fish and wildlife and provide more flexibility for managing water deliveries to farmers in the Klamath Basin. The promise that was made to agricultural communities and agreed to by stakeholders in the Klamath Basin is that they would receive support for the work that must now be completed to avoid conflict, work like putting fish screens on water diversions.

I commend the House for passing this legislation on suspension, and I am really pleased that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are going to allow us to make sure that we don't lose this critical and timely opportunity to finally live up to a promise made to these local communities nearly a decade ago.

I will close with this. I promised that I would have an open-to-all townhall meeting in every county in my State. I just cleared townhall meeting No. 1,100. That means that 1,100 times, for 90 minutes, we just said we are going to throw open the doors of government and listen to folks. I am not giving any speeches or using any teleprompters or whatever, just letting people share their views.

And it was there that I heard about this idea, this idea that is being advanced now on a bipartisan basis. Congressman BENTZ, my colleague from eastern Oregon, myself, my home is in southeast Portland, urban and rural, Democrats and Republicans, coming together to do something that makes a lot of sense.

And I want to also, while I am making these remarks, thank my senatorial colleague Senator MERKLEY, who is a senior member of the Appropriations Committee. He has been doing so much good work on the Klamath over the years.

The passage of this legislation tonight is a good win for rural Oregon, long overdue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5509

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5509 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; 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 an objection?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, reserving the right to object. This bill is not the right response to address the permitting challenges at the Department of the Interior. The bill would create a duplicative database, and the database would lack privacy protections for sensitive business information. I am committed to addressing permitting challenges. This bill is not the right answer, and, therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

CONGRATULATING THE LOS ANGELES GALAXY FOR WINNING THE 2024 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 936, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 936) congratulating the Los Angeles Galaxy for winning the 2024 Major League Soccer Cup.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PADILLA. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 936) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's (legislative day of December 16, 2024) RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

NOMINATION OF SERENA RAQUEL MURILLO

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, as we conclude the final week of the 118th Congress, and we bring to a close the historic—truly historic—Biden-Harris administration, we look back on the biggest accomplishments of this body.

Now, serving on the Senate Judiciary Committee alongside my partners over the years, Senators Dianne Feinstein, Senator Laphonza Butler, and as of last week, Senator ADAM SCHIFF, I am particularly proud to have played a role in the confirmation of a nearly record number of President Biden's Federal judicial nominees.

Today, I want to ask for your support on the final two nominees that are awaiting confirmation by this body.

So first let me introduce to you Judge Serena Murillo, President Biden's nominee to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, the proud daughter of a

waitress and a Mexican-American farmworker who went back to school to become a teacher.

Judge Murillo was born in Pomona, CA. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of California-San Diego and earned her law degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. And after a year in private practice, Judge Murillo joined the District Attorney's Office in Los Angeles where she served as a prosecutor for the next 7 years.

In the District Attorney's Office, she served as both a trial and appellate attorney, and throughout her time there, she tried 68 cases to verdict. Now, since 2015, Judge Murillo has served as a judge on the Los Angeles Superior Court and was even appointed justice pro tem on the California Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, from 2018 to 2019.

Her deep experience across the whole spectrum of criminal and civil law, and her reputation for thoughtfulness, fairness, and hard work on the bench will make her a tremendous district judge if she earns this body's support. On her behalf and on behalf of the people of California, I ask for your "aye" vote for this nomination.

NOMINATION OF BENJAMIN J. CHEEKS

Madam President, now this week, we will also consider the nomination of Judge Benjamin Cheeks to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Judge Cheeks was born in Albany, GA, and raised by a single mother who worked multiple jobs to provide for him and his siblings.

Recognizing that education was the key to a better future, he worked hard and earned a full scholarship to attend the University of Miami, and he went on to earn his law degree from American University, Washington College of Law.

After law school, Judge Cheeks served as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan for 7 years. And then the light went off, and he made his way to California where he served as assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of California.

Three years later, he started his own criminal defense practice serving on a panel to represent defendants who could not afford private attorneys. And earlier this year, Judge Cheeks was unanimously selected by members of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District to serve as a magistrate judge. That says a lot. And it says a lot about the qualifications, the values, the approach, and the great service he will provide as a district judge with your support.

So two more-than-qualified, more-than-ready-to-serve nominees awaiting our confirmation. I ask you, colleagues, for your support.

TRIBUTE TO TONY CÁRDENAS

Madam President and colleagues, I rise today to congratulate and to thank Congressman TONY CÁRDENAS as he prepares to retire after 12 distinguished years of service in the U.S.

House of Representatives and 28 years in public service overall.

Since his time in the House, he has been a tremendous, aggressive, effective, and passionate member of the California delegation in particular, and one of the true stars of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

He is my fellow “tiger” from San Fernando High School. He was my first boss in politics, and, more recently—to the thrill of our wives—my roommate here in Washington. For many decades now, TONY has been a cherished friend and truly a brother in politics and in life.

TONY CÁRDENAS is a champion for the San Fernando Valley and has been for nearly three decades, and TONY’s story and legacy deserves to be celebrated and remembered. And that is why I choose to make these remarks today, so that they are a permanent record; yes, even here in the U.S. Senate.

Now, he was raised just a few blocks from where I grew up in the proud working-class community of Pacoima. ANTONIO “TONY” CÁRDENAS was born on March 31, 1963, the youngest of 11 children born to Andrés and Maria Cárdenas.

And, yes, TONY is just a few years ahead of me, but our stories followed similar paths. TONY’s parents and my father are from the same State of Jalisco in Mexico, and they immigrated to the United States in search of a better life—in pursuit of the American dream. Colleagues, that you know I fight so hard to defend.

We both attended Telfair Elementary School and went on to attend San Fernando high school. And when it came time to attend college, despite discouragement from some of our teachers, we both went on to college and earned engineering degrees.

Yet it is in part because of TONY and his passion and commitment to community that I left what could have been a very promising and fruitful career in engineering to pursue public service. When TONY first set out to make a difference and run for the State Assembly in 1996, he actually took a chance on me asking me to be his campaign manager. When he asked, I couldn’t help but be honest. I looked at him, and I said: Tony, I don’t know the first thing about running campaigns. I think he was equally honest because he looked right back at me and said: Well, I don’t know the first thing about running for office. But you know me; I know you. We are smart. We are committed. We are hard-working. We will figure this out together. And I think we kind of did.

I was pretty young at the time, like, literally, fresh out of college. But he took a leap of faith on me, and I took a leap of faith on him. Like many, many young people—right?—you are cynical about politicians and about government. But I knew who TONY was as a person. I knew his values. I knew his work ethic. I knew his moral compass, aside from having so much in

common growing up. And I knew just how committed he was to our community and to making change.

See, TONY had previously left engineering and entered real estate. He had his own very successful real estate company. He could have moved on to live anywhere else and been tremendously successful in the private sector, but he chose to leave that and enter public service to improve the quality of life of the folks that we grew up with.

And from his very first election to the State Assembly—and he was an underdog candidate, trust me, but he was successful—to the times when he and I worked together on the Los Angeles City Council to the last few years when we served together here in the Halls of Congress, I have been blessed not just because of his mentorship, not just because of his friendship, but to just have a front row seat to his public service career.

I have seen him, and I have been inspired by him and his fights for justice and opportunities for at-risk youth; him leading the charge in our Nation’s clean energy transition—again, something that started years ago in prior offices but has continued here at the national level through his work in Congress; and his advocacy for better access to mental health care. He has done so much in a number of policy areas.

But what I admire most is sort of the through line in his narrative and in his career that he has never shied away from a righteous fight. The most righteous fights, as you know, are often the most hard battles to fight. TONY never shied away from that, and he won a heck of a lot more often than he didn’t because it was the right thing to do.

And I also appreciate and reflect on his public service and the way he has gone about carving out a path for others to follow. When I mentioned his first run for the State legislature in 1996, I take you back to a time where, even in the State of California, there were not nearly as many Latinos in positions of power at the Federal or State or even the local level. But through the power of his example, he has opened the door for so many others—including me—to dream of running for office, to think of running for office, to actually run for office, to win the opportunity and to serve well. Yes, colleagues, entire generations of young Latino leaders now see running for office and having a say in the decisions that affect our communities as the norm, not the exception. And it is, in part—large part—because of the trailblazing legacy of TONY CÁRDENAS.

And I would be remiss if I didn’t take a moment to thank his wife Norma, and his four children—Vanessa, Cristian, Andres, and Alina—and the entire Cárdenas family for sharing him with us for all these years.

And while next month TONY will officially step away from his work in the U.S. House of Representatives, I have no doubt that his service to others is not coming to an end. It will continue.

I look forward to continuing to fight alongside him for many, many years to come.

I yield the floor.

(The PRESIDENT pro tempore assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. KAINE assumed the Chair.)

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair lays before the Senate a certificate of election to fill the unexpired term created by the death of the late Senator Dianne Feinstein of California.

The certificate, the Chair is advised, is in the form suggested by the Senate.

Hearing no objection, the reading of the certificate will be waived, and it will be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION FOR UNEXPIRED TERM

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that on the 5th day of November, 2024, ADAM B. SCHIFF was duly chosen by the qualified electors of the State of California a Senator for the unexpired term ending at noon on the 3rd day of January, 2025, to fill the vacancy in the representation from said State in the Senate of the United States caused by the death of Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Witness: His excellency our Governor Gavin Newsom, and our seal hereto affixed in the City of Sacramento, this 17th day of December, in the year of our Lord 2024.

GAVIN NEWSOM,
Governor of California.

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH.D.,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator-elect will now present himself at the desk, the Chair will administer the oath of office.

The Senator-elect, ADAM B. SCHIFF, escorted by Mr. WELCH and Mr. PADILLA, advanced to the desk of the President pro tempore; the oath prescribed by law was administered to him by the President pro tempore; and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Congratulations.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the motion to proceed to H.R. 82 be considered expired following the remarks of Senator LEE for up to 30 minutes; further, that following the motion to proceed vote, the Senate proceed to executive session; and further, that the cloture motions with respect to the Cheeks and Murillo nominations ripen at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 20.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.
The Senator from Utah.

H.R. 82

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Congress must address the challenges facing Social Security. Unfortunately, the Social Security Fairness Act fails on all counts and doesn't even come close to living up to its name.

Let's start with the flawed benefit calculation this legislation seeks to return to. The government pension offset, or GPO, and the windfall elimination provision, or WEP, were enacted to fix serious problems in how Social Security benefits were calculated. Before the WEP existed, individuals with mixed careers in public and private sectors often received more in Social Security benefits than they were entitled to receive.

Imagine two people, each earning \$85,000 annually in their respective primary jobs. One worked in the private sector and paid into Social Security, but the other person worked in the public sector, contributing to a State pension fund instead of Social Security. Both earned an additional \$10,000 a year from the side job that did pay into Social Security. Without WEP, the public sector workers would receive Social Security benefits as though they were a low-income earner, based solely on their \$10,000 in side income. This miscalculation would grant them overly generous Social Security benefits on top of their public pension and act contrary to and against the interests of other Social Security beneficiaries.

The GPO addresses a similar issue with spousal benefits. It ensures that spousal benefits are adjusted to reflect income from public pensions, preventing unfair overpayments under Social Security.

The WEP and the GPO are far from perfect. They are very imperfect. They were enacted at a time when Congress lacked access to the full data needed to make precise adjustments, but they were designed to fix real problems, and they do exactly that. If Congress repeals these provisions without replacing them with a better system, we will revert to a broken model that unfairly rewards some at the expense of others—and that is not ideal.

But let's talk about what this bill would mean for the solvency of Social Security.

Social Security is already on a dangerously unsustainable path. The trust fund, which has been raided time and time again by Congress, is projected to run out of money in the next decade, which would lead to across-the-board benefit cuts. This bill would not fix that. In fact, this bill would accelerate that crisis.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, repealing the GPO and WEP would cost \$196 billion over the next 10 years. It would push Social Security's insolvency up by 6 to 8 months, making an already dire situation worse. Con-

gress must focus on solutions that strengthen Social Security's financial health, not hasten its collapse.

Look, there is just no reason—certainly no legitimate reason—to force a vote on this issue right now before we have an administration that will prioritize meaningful, fiscally responsible reform. Republicans should focus on advancing solutions that align with our principles. We have an incoming Republican Senate majority and an incoming Republican President. We should stick to the principles that have gotten us elected and reelected.

This bill is fundamentally unfair. It is unfair to the vast majority of Americans who have paid into Social Security their entire working lives. About 96 percent of the workforce contributes to Social Security. They rely on it as an important part of their retirement security. This bill would force those workers—96 percent of them in America—to subsidize overly generous benefits for the 4 percent of the workforce—those who do not participate in Social Security—and, instead, contribute to noncovered pensions. Most State employees already pay into Social Security and would be harmed, not helped, by this legislation. The Social Security Fairness Act would reward a small minority at the expense of the vast majority of American taxpayers. That is not fair.

When we look at the overwhelming majority—96 percent—those who would be harmed by this—it is not fair to take something away from them to move up by 6 to 8 months the insolvency of the Social Security trust fund just to address the other 4 percent. Now, that is not to say that those 4 percent don't need to be addressed in some way, but the way that this bill does it isn't fair, and it is unsafe.

Look, the challenges of Social Security require solutions that prevent further mismanagement. The Social Security Fairness Act—a somewhat Orwellian name as I think about it—would take us back to a broken system, push the trust fund even closer to insolvency than it is already, and unfairly shift costs onto hard-working Americans.

I have been in this Chamber before when this body has voted to raid the Social Security trust fund. I have raised the alarm, and it has happened anyway. It is unpleasant; it is not an experience I care to revisit. But never have I seen us raid that fund to this degree—to the tune of almost \$200 billion. This is reckless, but it is worse than that; it is cruel.

We need real solutions that address the root causes of these challenges. Repealing the GPO and the WEP without fixing the underlying issues would be a step backward—a huge, painful step backward—and profoundly unfair. Congress has a responsibility to address Social Security's flaws with clarity and with courage. I urge my colleagues to reject this flawed legislation and commit to reforms that serve all Americans, not just a select few.

To reiterate, there is no reason why we have to rush this. This particular problem was many decades in the making. We can fix it. We can fix it responsibly. We don't have to rush it.

I implore my colleagues: You don't have to do this. We can fix this next year and fix it the right way. I ask my colleagues to oppose the motion to proceed.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE).

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 328 Leg.]

YEAS—73

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Hawley	Ricketts
Blackburn	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Boozman	Hoeben	Schiff
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Casey	Kim	Shaheen
Cassidy	King	Sinema
Collins	Klobuchar	Smith
Coons	Lankford	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lujan	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tester
Cotton	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cramer	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Mullin	Warnock
Durbin	Murkowski	Warren
Fetterman	Murphy	Welch
Fischer	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	
Hagerty	Peters	

NAYS—23

Barrasso	Grassley	Romney
Britt	Johnson	Rounds
Budd	Lee	Thune
Carper	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Paul	Young
Ernst	Risch	

NOT VOTING—4

Capito	Rubio
Manchin	Vance

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). On this vote, the yeas are 73, the nays are 23, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT
OF 2023

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 82) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session.

The Senator from Alaska.

THE CALENDAR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 128, S. 623; Calendar No. 626, S. 4451; Calendar No. 635, S. 4974; Calendar No. 298, S. 2020; Calendar No. 606, S. 3617; Calendar No. 632, S. 4851; Calendar No. 608, S. 3790; and Calendar No. 591, S. 2784.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills, en bloc.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported 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. 3790 be considered and agreed to; that the title of S. 3790, as amended, be considered and agreed to; 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:

AMENDING THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT TO EXCLUDE CERTAIN PAYMENTS TO AGED, BLIND, OR DISABLED ALASKA NATIVES OR DESCENDANTS OF ALASKA NATIVES FROM BEING USED TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS

The bill (S. 623) to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to exclude certain payments to aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives or descendants of Alaska Natives from being used to determine eligibility for certain programs, and for other purposes, 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. 623

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

SECTION 1. ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROGRAMS.

Section 29(c) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(c)) is amend-

ed, in the undesignated matter following paragraph (3), by striking subparagraph (E) and inserting the following:

“(E) an interest in a Settlement Trust or an amount distributed from or benefit provided by a Settlement Trust to a Native or descendant of a Native who is an aged, blind, or disabled individual (as defined in section 1614(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1382c(a)).”.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE RESERVATIONS FOR VISITOR EXPERIENCES FEDERAL LAND ACT

The bill (S. 4451) to require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land, 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 “Review and Evaluation of Strategies for Equitable Reservations for Visitor Experiences Federal Land Act” or the “RESERVE Federal Land Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **BOOKING WINDOW.**—The term “booking window”, with respect to a Federal reservation system, means the time period during which a reservation or lottery entry is available to the public.

(2) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term “Federal land” means—

(A) public lands (as defined in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

(B) National Forest System land;

(C) units of the National Park System;

(D) units of the National Wildlife Refuge System;

(E) sites administered by the Bureau of Reclamation; and

(F) sites administered by the Corps of Engineers.

(3) **FEDERAL RESERVATION SYSTEM.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “Federal reservation system” means any platform or method used by managers of Federal land to manage the quantity, type, distribution, and timing of recreational activities.

(B) **INCLUSIONS.**—The term “Federal reservation system” includes reservation, permit, lottery, metering, pricing, merit-based, and other similar management methods via online, telephone, paper, in-person, or other methods.

(4) **RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.**—The term “recreational activity” includes camping, backpacking, climbing, paddling sports, fishing, hiking, driving, and other recreational opportunities.

(5) **SECRETARIES.**—The term “Secretaries” means—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior;

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

(C) the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES STUDY OF FEDERAL RESERVATION SYSTEMS FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON FEDERAL LAND.

(a) **STUDY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretaries, acting jointly, shall, not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study of Federal reservation systems for recreational activities on Federal land.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—In carrying out the study under paragraph (1), the National Academy of

Sciences shall consult with the Secretaries to carry out the following:

(A) A review of the history of Federal reservation systems, such as recreation.gov, including a review of—

(i) the considerations, including data, that led to the establishment of the applicable Federal reservation system;

(ii) the iterations of the applicable Federal reservation system over time to meet the needs of the applicable Federal agency;

(iii) any visitor feedback provided with respect to the applicable Federal reservation system; and

(iv) scientific literature or studies examining the efficacy of Federal reservation systems, including user preferences with respect to Federal reservation system design and implementation.

(B) Based on available data and existing research, answer the following questions:

(i) What are the benefits and challenges of implementing Federal reservation systems to achieve management goals for Federal land, including resource protection, enjoyable visitor experiences, and sustainable operations and facility use?

(ii) What data are available, and what additional data are needed, to understand demand for recreation on Federal land? How can the data be used to balance visitor management and conservation goals?

(iii) What information is available regarding Federal land users and Federal reservation system users? What information is available or needs to be collected regarding demographics and characteristics of successful and unsuccessful applicants using the Federal reservation systems?

(iv) Do Federal reservation systems pose a barrier for certain communities, including international communities, and user groups to access appropriate recreation opportunities on Federal land? If so, what is the nature of any barriers identified?

(v) What best practices should be considered in Federal reservation system design, including visitation management system options and booking windows, options to respond to the needs specific to individual Federal land management units, and equitable access to recreational activities? What metrics can be used to record outcomes of Federal reservation system design?

(vi) How have fees been collected for Federal reservation systems over time to meet the needs of the applicable Federal agency? How are the revenues from fees for Federal reservation systems split between, and spent by, Federal land units, Federal agencies, and third-party contractors? How is the fee structure disseminated to users? How could dissemination of information with respect to the fee structure be improved?

(vii) What are the odds of success with respect to securing a reservation under Federal reservation systems? How are the odds of success disseminated to users? How could dissemination of information with respect to the odds of success be improved?

(viii) How are data, including data collected by contractors, on Federal reservation systems shared with Federal land managers, researchers, and the public? How can transparency be improved to inform the decisionmaking of users of Federal reservation systems?

(ix) How are Federal reservation systems incorporating and adapting to emerging technologies, such as geofencing, bots, or third-party websites monitoring and reselling reservations? Are Federal reservation systems resilient to cyber threats?

(x) How can Federal reservation systems be improved to reduce “no shows” and ensure that recreation sites are being used during periods of high demand? Would an increase in first-come, first-served opportunities increase equitable access to outdoor recreation on Federal land?

(b) **REPORT.**—The agreement entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include a requirement that, not later than 18 months after the

date on which the agreement is entered into, the National Academy of Sciences shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that describes the results of the study carried out under that subsection.

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 4451), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AMENDING THE JOHN D. DINGELL, JR. CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, AND RECREATION ACT TO REAUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL VOLCANO EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM

The bill (S. 4974) to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring 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. 4974

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

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL VOLCANO EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM.

(a) MODERNIZATION ACTIVITIES.—Section 5001(b)(2)(B) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 31k(b)(2)(B)) is amended by striking “Global Positioning System” and inserting “Global Navigation Satellite System”.

(b) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Section 5001(b)(3)(A) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 31k(b)(3)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii)(III), by inserting “(including new or existing cooperative agreements)” after “partnerships”; and

(2) in clause (iii)—

(A) in the clause heading, by striking “UPDATE” and inserting “UPDATES”; and

(B) in subclause (II)—

(i) in the subclause heading, by striking “UPDATE” and inserting “UPDATES”;

(ii) by striking “clause (i) to include” and inserting “clause (i)—

“(aa) to include”;

(iii) in item (aa) (as so designated), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

“(bb) not less frequently than once every 5 years after the date on which the management plan is submitted under that clause.”.

(c) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—Section 5001(b)(3) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 31k(b)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(F) IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE.—The Secretary shall establish an implementation committee that shall—

“(i) include representatives of—

“(I) each State agency or designee of a State agency subject to a cooperative agreement entered into under subparagraph (C);

“(II) institutions of higher education; and

“(III) each volcano observatory described in paragraph (1)(B)(i); and

“(ii) be responsible for providing to the Secretary recommended requirements, im-

plementation steps, and performance standards for the System.”.

(d) COORDINATION.—Section 5001(b)(3)(D) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 31k(b)(3)(D)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating clauses (ii) through (iv) as clauses (iii) through (v), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after clause (i) the following:

“(ii) the Chief of the Forest Service;”.

(e) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 5001(c) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 31k(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “\$55,000,000” and inserting “\$75,000,000”; and

(B) by striking “2023” and inserting “2033”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “2024” and inserting “2034”.

DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

The bill (S. 2020) to amend the Oregon Resource Conservation Act of 1996 to reauthorize the Deschutes River Conservancy Working Group, 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. 2020

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 “Deschutes River Conservancy Reauthorization Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF DESCHUTES RIVER CONSERVANCY WORKING GROUP.

(a) DEFINITION OF WORKING GROUP.—Section 301(a) of the Oregon Resource Conservation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-208; 110 Stat. 3009-534; 122 Stat. 836) is amended by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

“(1) WORKING GROUP.—The term ‘Working Group’ means the Deschutes River Conservancy Working Group composed of a board of directors of not fewer than 10, but not more than 15, members nominated by the group represented by the member, of whom—

“(A) 2 members shall be representatives of the environmental community in the Deschutes River Basin;

“(B) 2 members shall be representatives of the irrigated agriculture community in the Deschutes River Basin;

“(C) 2 members shall be representatives of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon;

“(D) 1 member shall be a representative of the hydroelectric production community in the Deschutes River Basin;

“(E) 1 member shall be a representative of 1 of the Federal agencies with authority and responsibility in the Deschutes River Basin;

“(F) 1 member shall be a representative of an agency of the State of Oregon with authority and responsibility in the Deschutes River Basin, such as—

“(i) the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; or

“(ii) the Oregon Water Resources Department; and

“(G) 1 member shall be a representative of a unit of local government in the Deschutes River Basin.”.

(b) REAUTHORIZATION; ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Section 301 of the Oregon Resource Conservation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-208; 110 Stat. 3009-534; 122 Stat. 836) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking “2016” and inserting “2032”; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by striking “5 percent” and inserting “10 percent”; and

(2) in subsection (h), by striking “2016” and inserting “2032”.

CAPE FOX LAND ENTITLEMENT FINALIZATION ACT OF 2024

The bill (S. 3617) to provide equitable treatment for the people of the Village Corporation established for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, 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 “Cape Fox Land Entitlement Finalization Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CAPE FOX.—The term “Cape Fox” means the Cape Fox Village Corporation, a Village Corporation for the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, organized pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.).

(2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land” means the approximately 180 acres of surface land within the Tongass National Forest in the State of Alaska, as generally depicted on the Map.

(3) MAP.—The term “Map” means the map entitled “Cape Fox Village Corporation Final Selection” and dated December 18, 2023.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 3. WAIVER OF CORE TOWNSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN LAND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 16(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1615(b)), Cape Fox shall not be required to select or receive conveyance of the approximately 185 acres of unconveyed land described in subsection (b) located within the township in which the Native Village of Saxman, Alaska, is located.

(b) LAND DESCRIBED.—The land referred to in subsection (a) is as follows:

(1) Approximately 40 acres in T. 74 S., R. 90 E., sec. 10, SWNE, Copper River Meridian.

(2) Approximately 144.57 acres in T. 75 S., R. 91 E., sec. 1, lots 1, 3, and 4, Copper River Meridian.

SEC. 4. SELECTION OUTSIDE EXTERIOR SELECTION BOUNDARY.

(a) SELECTION AND CONVEYANCE OF SURFACE ESTATE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, if Cape Fox submits to the Secretary a written notice of selection of the Federal land, the Secretary shall, on receiving that written notice, convey the Federal land to Cape Fox.

(b) CONVEYANCE OF SUBSURFACE ESTATE.—On conveyance to Cape Fox of the surface estate to the Federal land under subsection (a), the Secretary shall convey to Sealaska Corporation the subsurface estate to that Federal land.

(c) TIMING.—It is the intent of Congress that the Secretary complete the conveyances to Cape Fox and Sealaska Corporation under subsections (a) and (b), respectively, as soon as practicable after the date on which the Secretary receives a written notice of the selection of Cape Fox under subsection (a), but not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary receives that written notice.

(d) **ENTITLEMENT FULFILLED.**—The conveyance of Federal land to Cape Fox and the subsurface interest in the Federal land to Sealaska Corporation under subsections (a) and (b), respectively, shall be considered to fulfill the entitlement of—

(1) Cape Fox under section 16 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1615); and

(2) Sealaska Corporation to any subsurface interest in the Federal land under section 14(f) of that Act (43 U.S.C. 1613(f)).

SEC. 5. PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENT.

The conveyance of the Federal land under section 4 shall be subject to the reservation of a public easement under section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1616(b)) to allow for access to National Forest System land further inland on Revillagigedo Island from the George Inlet.

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 3617), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SCARPER RIDGE GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2024

The bill (S. 4851) to adjust the boundaries of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to include the Scarper Ridge property, 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. 4851

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 “Scarper Ridge Golden Gate National Recreation Area Boundary Adjustment Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. SCARPER RIDGE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

Section 2(a)(2) of Public Law 92-589 (16 U.S.C. 460bb-1(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(F) Land generally depicted as ‘Proposed Boundary Addition’ on the map entitled ‘Golden Gate National Recreation Area Proposed Boundary Addition’, numbered 641/193973, and dated July 2024.”.

ALASKA NATIVE VIETNAM ERA VETERANS LAND ALLOTMENT EXTENSION ACT OF 2024

The bill (S. 3790) to make additional Federal public land available for selection under the Alaska Native Vietnam era veterans land allotment program, 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 “Alaska Native Vietnam Era Veterans Land Allotment Extension Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF THE ALASKA NATIVE VIETNAM ERA VETERANS LAND ALLOTMENT PROGRAM.

Section 1119(b)(3)(B) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation

Act (43 U.S.C. 1629g-1(b)(3)(B)) is amended by striking “5-year period” and inserting “10-year period”.

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 3790), 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 extend the Alaska Native Vietnam era veterans land allotment program, and for other purposes.”.

The title, as amended, was agreed to.

AMENDING THE DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE PRESERVATION ACT OF 1992 TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARY OF THE DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The bill (S. 2784) to amend the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to adjust the boundary of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment, as follows:

(The part of the bill intended to be stricken is in boldfaced brackets and the part of the bill intended to be inserted is in italic.)

SECTION 1. DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

Section 101 of the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 410ww) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) **BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.**—In addition to the sites described in subsections (b) and (c), the boundary of the park is adjusted to include approximately 1 acre of land in Dayton, Ohio, depicted as ‘Proposed Addition’ on the map entitled ‘Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Addition’ [and dated February 2023], numbered 362/193,730, and dated June 2024.”.

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2784), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2784

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

SECTION 1. DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.

Section 101 of the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 410ww) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) **BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.**—In addition to the sites described in subsections (b) and (c), the boundary of the park is adjusted to include approximately 1 acre of land in Dayton, Ohio, depicted as ‘Proposed Addition’ on the map entitled ‘Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Addition’, numbered 362/193,730, and dated June 2024.”.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am really glad to see we can pass eight

bills by unanimous consent here. I want to thank my colleague from California Senator PADILLA, my colleague from Oregon Senator MERKLEY, and my colleague from Ohio Senator BROWN for helping to work to develop these pairs and to move them forward.

I also want to acknowledge the cloakroom teams—thank you very much; we appreciate that—as well as the ranking member and the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—Chairman MANCHIN and Ranking Member BARRASSO—and their committee for their assistance.

We have now passed a total of five Alaska lands-related bills in the past couple days. Just last night, my friend Senator HIRONO graciously offered a pair that included my legislation to sunset an outdated requirement in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for Native village corporations to help convey lands to the State of Alaska to be held in trust for municipal uses.

By sunseting this requirement and allowing our village corporations to regain title to these lands, it will help free up lands for pressing needs such as housing. I hear it all the time when I am out in the villages. We were able to move that measure.

We paired it with a bill from Congresswoman RADEWAGEN to allow American Samoa to more easily make amendments to its territorial constitution. I was out in American Samoa with a group of Members a couple of months ago, and this was a priority for the Congresswoman and for the Governor. So it is good news for them as well.

The four bills that we just moments ago passed are important as well. We have legislation to amend ANCSA to ensure that when aged, blind, or disabled Alaska Natives receive dividends from their settlement trusts, they do not inadvertently become ineligible for certain Federal assistance programs.

We have another bill that settles Cape Fox’s remaining land entitlement to remedy an injustice limiting where they can select lands. This has been going on for more than half a century here, so very important to the people down in the Cape Fox region.

Then we have my legislation to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, to provide for critical research and monitoring systems, upgrade existing networks, and install new detection technology. This helps in a State like mine or a State like Hawaii, where we have people who are living around volcanos.

We included legislation led by my colleague from Alaska Senator SULLIVAN to extend the Alaskan Native Vietnam Veterans Allotment Program for an additional 5 years. This is to ensure that eligible individuals and their heirs can receive their rightful lands. These are individuals who stood up, answered the call, served in Vietnam, and during their service were unable to make their Native selections. So remedying this has been a long cause of both mine and Senator SULLIVAN.

So we recognize that this is the end of the year, and all of these measures that have just passed all start with an S-dot, which means they are Senate bills. They are going to go to the House. They may not become law this year. We get that, although hope springs eternal around this place. But I am hopeful that the House can pass potentially some more bills by suspension. If they can't, we can revisit these in the new year, which are absolutely not controversial, but to get them across the finish line in this body is important. I know there are a lot of folks in these communities that are waiting for final action on that.

So I am pleased to be able to actually do some legislating here this evening.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 871, 873, 874, 530, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, and Space Force; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the en bloc nominations of Executive Calendar Nos. 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 871, 873, 874, 530, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, and Space Force?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc, as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Gregory J. Brady

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Johnny K. Davis

IN THE NAVY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Walter H. Allman, III
Capt. Wesley P. Bringham
Capt. Richard G. Burgess
Capt. Daryle D. Cardone

Capt. Cameron R. Chen
Capt. Matthew J. Duffy
Capt. John P. Friedman
Capt. William K. Gantt, Jr.
Capt. Michael R. Jarrett
Capt. David Loo
Capt. Gary G. Montalvo, Jr.
Capt. Davidtavis M. Pollard
Capt. Matthew T. Pottenburgh
Capt. William R. Reed
Capt. Karrey D. Sanders
Capt. Charles R. Sargeant
Capt. John W. Stafford
Capt. Thomas J. Zerr

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Andrew M. Biehn
Capt. Daniel L. Lannamann
Capt. Brian A. Metcalf

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Timothy S. Brady, Jr.
Col. Dustin J. Byrum
Col. Henry Dolberry, Jr.
Col. Lauren S. Edwards
Col. Christopher M. Haar
Col. Sean P. Hoewing
Col. Ryan M. Hoyle
Col. David C. Hyman
Col. Robert T. Meade
Col. Joel F. Schmidt
Col. Jeremy S. Winters

IN THE NAVY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (1h) John E. Dougherty, IV
Rear Adm. (1h) Jonathan E. Rucker
Rear Adm. (1h) Douglas L. Williams

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (1h) Thomas M. Henderschedt

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (1h) Christopher D. Alexander
Rear Adm. (1h) Bradley J. Andros
Rear Adm. (1h) Sean R. Bailey
Rear Adm. (1h) Brian H. Bennett
Rear Adm. (1h) Adan G. Cruz
Rear Adm. (1h) Christopher A. Kijek
Rear Adm. (1h) Max G. McCoy, Jr.
Rear Adm. (1h) Thomas P. Moninger
Rear Adm. (1h) Martin J. Muckian
Rear Adm. (1h) Gregory D. Newkirk
Rear Adm. (1h) Mark A. Schafer
Rear Adm. (1h) Nicholas R. Tilbrook
Rear Adm. (1h) Robert E. Wirth
Rear Adm. (1h) Michael S. Wosje

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Luke C.G. Cropsy

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Mark B. Pye

The following named Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Matthew C. Brown

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Tonri C. Brown

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Curtis A. Buzzard

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601, and for appointment as a Senior Member of the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations under title 10, U.S.C., section 71:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Brett G. Sylvia

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Marine Corps under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Ralph J. Rizzo, Jr.

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN2051 AIR FORCE nominations (242) beginning JUSTIN S. ALBERICO, and ending JONATHAN A. ZANNIS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2052 AIR FORCE nominations (98) beginning STEPHEN M. ADDINGTON, and ending JOSHUA J. WOLFRAM, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2053 AIR FORCE nominations (73) beginning LEE EDMOND AKERS, and ending MI-CHAEL GRAY YTTTRI, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2054 AIR FORCE nominations (92) beginning PHILLIP N. ALVAREZ, and ending STANLEY Y. WONG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2055 AIR FORCE nominations (11) beginning ERIC STARR BUSS, and ending JONATHAN M. WALKER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2056 AIR FORCE nominations (27) beginning STEPHEN V. S. ALEXANDER, and ending YESUN YOON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 9, 2024.

PN2135 AIR FORCE nominations (27) beginning LAKISHA N. ALBERTIE, and ending KERI L. YOUNG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 18, 2024.

PN2137 AIR FORCE nominations (16) beginning JOHN C. BATKA, and ending RICHARD

Y. K. YOO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 18, 2024.

PN2187 AIR FORCE nomination of Keith A. Schultz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

PN2188 AIR FORCE nomination of Francis X. Parr, III, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

PN2250 AIR FORCE nomination of Jay E. Butterfield, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2251 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning THOMAS A. HUTTON, and ending ROBERT D. MCALLISTER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2252 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning ROBERT L. BELL, and ending DANIEL J. BROWN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2253 AIR FORCE nomination of Gabriel R. Bultz, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

IN THE ARMY

PN2254 ARMY nominations (114) beginning CORA L. ALLEN, and ending 0003434384, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2255 ARMY nomination of Rafael J. Kaplan, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

IN THE COAST GUARD

* PN1534—2 COAST GUARD nomination of BENJAMIN J. SPECTOR, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 14, 2024.

* PN2130 COAST GUARD nomination of Alexander B. Currie, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 10, 2024.

* PN2131 COAST GUARD nomination of Holly A. Bergman, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 10, 2024.

* PN2132 COAST GUARD nomination of Jillian H. Beecher, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 10, 2024.

* PN2228 COAST GUARD nominations (7) beginning THOMAS E. ADAMS, and ending MARIE L. SEVIN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

* PN2229 COAST GUARD nomination of Jesse Collins, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

* PN2230 COAST GUARD nominations (209) beginning JASON A. ACUNA, and ending DAVID J. ZWIRBLIS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

* PN2231 COAST GUARD nominations (70) beginning RYAN G. ANGELO, and ending JEFFREY S. ZAMARIN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 12, 2024.

IN THE NAVY

PN2256 NAVY nominations (78) beginning CHRISTOPHER D. CARAWAY, and ending BRADFORD M. WINKELMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2257 NAVY nomination of Erik C. Hedval, which was received by the Senate

and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2275 NAVY nomination of Keith C. Braddy, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of December 2, 2024.

IN THE SPACE FORCE

PN2258 SPACE FORCE nomination of Kenneth N. Wooten, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PN2259 SPACE FORCE nomination of Brenda L. Beegle, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 18, 2024.

PRISON STAFF SAFETY ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 5062 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5062) to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes.

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

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

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

The amendment (No. 3349), 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 "Prison Staff Safety Enhancement Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2023, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice released a report titled "Evaluation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Efforts to Address Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Committed by Inmates Toward Staff" (in this section referred to as the "Inspector General report").

(2) The Inspector General report examined all sanctioned inmate sexual incidents in the Bureau of Prisons (in this section referred to as the "Bureau") between fiscal years 2015 and 2021, and found that inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault is widespread.

(3) The Inspector General report further found that the Bureau does not collect adequate data on inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault and that, because of the Bureau's inadequate data, the Bureau has not been able to identify the full scope of inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault.

(4) The Inspector General report further found that the Bureau does not have systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bureau's

strategies to mitigate inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault.

(5) The Inspector General report made recommendations to the Bureau to address the failures in the Bureau's data collection and mitigation efforts, but the Bureau has not implemented these recommendations.

SEC. 3. ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OF BUREAU OF PRISONS STAFF.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BUREAU.—The term "Bureau" means the Bureau of Prisons.

(2) CORRECTIONAL OFFICER.—The term "correctional officer" has the meaning given the term in section 4051 of title 18, United States Code.

(3) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The term "Inspector General" means the Inspector General of the Department of Justice.

(4) INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL.—The term "incarcerated individual" has the meaning given the term "prisoner" in section 4051 of title 18, United States Code.

(5) SEXUAL ASSAULT.—The term "sexual assault" means an act described in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of section 920 of title 10, United States Code.

(6) SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—The term "sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that explicitly or implicitly affect an individual's employment, unreasonably interfere with an individual's work performance, or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY BUREAU.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Bureau shall fully implement each recommendation in the report released by the Inspector General in 2023 titled "Evaluation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Efforts to Address Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Committed by Inmates Toward Staff".

(2) REPORT.—If the Bureau has not fully implemented each recommendation referenced in paragraph (1) by the deadline under that paragraph, the Bureau shall submit a report to Congress by that deadline that includes an explanation of the failure to fully implement each recommendation and a detailed timeline for full implementation.

(c) DATA ANALYSIS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date as of which the Bureau has fully implemented each recommendation referenced in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) the Inspector General shall request from the Bureau, and the Bureau shall provide, updated data on the number and prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault incidents perpetrated by incarcerated individuals against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau during fiscal years 2022 through 2025;

(B) the Inspector General shall conduct an analysis of the data described in subparagraph (A); and

(C) the Inspector General shall provide Congress and the Attorney General with the analysis conducted under subparagraph (B) and any additional recommendations, including analysis of whether the Bureau has taken sufficient steps to identify the prevalence and scope of sexual harassment and sexual assault incidents perpetrated by incarcerated individuals against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau and to mitigate such incidents.

(2) ANALYSIS OF PUNISHMENTS.—The analysis required under paragraph (1)(C) shall include an analysis of punishments for sexual harassment and sexual assault as of the date

of enactment of this Act in facilities controlled by the Bureau of Prisons, including data on the use of such punishments during the 5-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) RULEMAKING BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after receiving the analysis under subsection (c), the Attorney General shall promulgate a rule adopting national standards for prevention, reduction, and punishment of sexual harassment and sexual assault perpetrated by an incarcerated individual against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau.

The bill (S. 5062), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 4640 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4640) to strengthen trafficking victim assistance grant funding.

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

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

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

The amendment (No. 3350), 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 "Supporting Victims of Human Trafficking Act".

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Section 107(b)(2) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking "shall" and insert "may";

(B) in clause (i), by striking "three percent" and inserting "up to 7 percent";

(C) in clause (ii)—

(i) by striking "5 percent" and inserting "up to 10 percent"; and

(ii) by inserting "and strengthening program administration and budgeting" after "activities"; and

(D) in clause (iii), by striking "one percent" and inserting "up to 1 percent"; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), strike "75 percent" and insert "95 percent".

The bill (S. 4640), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. BENNET. I congratulate the President on his prodigious legislative accomplishments this evening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

VETERANS EXPEDITED TSA SCREENING SAFE TRAVEL ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 7365 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7365) to provide PreCheck to certain severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 7365) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FEDERAL REGISTER MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 714, H.R. 9592.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 9592) to amend title 44, United States Code, to modernize the Federal Register, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which was reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 9592) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

HOUSE OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 9487, which was received from the House.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 9487) to amend the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 to authorize the Legislative Counsel of the House of Representatives to designate more than one of the attorneys of the Office of the Legislative Counsel as a Deputy Legislative Counsel, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 9487) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, pursuant to Public Law 105-292, as amended by Public Law 106-55, Public Law 107-228, and Public Law 112-75, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Ariela Ruth Dubler of New York.

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY AND REPRESENTATION IN UNITED STATES V. WARNAGIRIS

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 937, 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. 937) to authorize testimony and representation in United States v. Warnagiris.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in this criminal case pending in Federal district court in the District of Columbia and arising out of the events of January 6, 2021, the prosecution has requested testimony from a Senate witness.

In this case, brought against Christopher Warnagiris, trial is expected to commence on January 15, 2025, and the prosecution has requested testimony from Daniel Schwager, formerly counsel to the Secretary of the Senate, concerning his knowledge and observations of the process, use of the electoral ballots and other documents during the proceeding, and constitutional and legal bases for Congress's counting of the electoral college votes. Senate Secretary Berry would like to cooperate with this request by providing relevant testimony in this trial from Mr. Schwager, who has previously been authorized to testify in prior cases arising out of the events of January 6.

In keeping with the rules and practices of the Senate, this resolution would authorize the production of relevant testimony from Mr. Schwager, with representation by the Senate legal counsel.

Mr. BENNET. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 937) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD (legislative day of December 16, 2024) under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO DABNEY HEGG

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dabney Hegg, who retired from the Senate earlier this year after serving for more than 25 years, the last 14 of which were on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Through her time in the Senate, Dabney left her fingerprints on so much of the crucial legislation to strengthen our Nation's transportation infrastructure and help Americans keep a roof over their heads.

Dabney first joined the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2010 under Chair Inouye, on the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. I had the great fortune of seeing her work up close for several years, first as the then chair of T-HUD, and the past 2 years as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. In 2015, Dabney was named clerk of the subcommittee. She served as clerk under Senators REED and SCHATZ, and we all can attest that she was an invaluable member of the team.

At a time when our Nation is grappling with an affordable housing shortage, aging infrastructure, and growing pressures from climate change, the investments we make in housing, transportation, and more have huge implications for our Nation's future. Dabney worked tirelessly to help the Senate make critical investments to address homelessness and the housing crunch, ensure communities have reliable roads, rails, and bridges, keep planes flying safely overhead, and maintain the infrastructure we need to stay strong and keep people safe.

Among her many accomplishments, Dabney helped negotiate the historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, multiple COVID relief and disaster recovery bills, and every single T-HUD appropriations bill since fiscal year 2011. She was a champion of improving everyday Americans' lives by fighting for Amtrak funding and improving rail safety, championing the

needs of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy so it can educate the next generation of mariners safely, always pushing to help individuals experiencing homelessness and survivors of domestic violence, and supporting our long-term disaster recovery efforts. For Dabney, the annual appropriations bill was an opportunity to do something good, move the ball forward inch by inch and year by year. In her last appropriations bill for FY 2024, under the direction of Senator BRIAN SCHATZ, who is chair of both T-HUD and Indian Affairs, Dabney helped to successfully secure a record \$1.3 billion for Native American and Alaskan Native housing programs, a 32-percent increase from the previous year.

Throughout her years on the subcommittee, she was a tireless champion for public transit, supporting and shepherding projects along in every corner of the country, including many critical transit projects in Washington State. The progress we made on those issues is part of an incredible legacy she has written into our Nation's laws through her work.

We all owe Dabney a debt of gratitude for working through many long nights and weekends and completing many hard negotiations in service of our Nation. As chair of the Appropriations Committee, I depended on Dabney's wisdom and counsel, and it is clear to all that her expertise, dedication, and ability to work across the aisle to make progress have made our country stronger. She is deeply missed.

On behalf of all the past committee leadership—and all the Senators and staff—who have worked with Dabney over the years and who know firsthand just how impactful her work and counsel have been, I would like to thank you, Dabney, for your service. You are missed, and we wish you all the best for what lies ahead. Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO ELLEN MURRAY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Ellen Murray, who retired earlier this year after serving many, many years on the Senate Appropriations Committee across two different periods and who has left her fingerprints on so much of the crucial legislation to support our communities, help families grow and thrive, open doors of opportunity for students and workers, as well as strengthen our economy and the financial well-being of working people across the country, who are the backbone of our economy.

In 1999, Ellen Murray joined the staff of the Senate Appropriations Committee on the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies and became the clerk of the subcommittee in 2000. In 2017, Ellen returned to the committee, after serving in the administration of President Obama, and was named clerk of the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee. Across the two subcommit-

tees, she served under Senators Harkin, COONS, and VAN HOLLEN, and we all can attest that she was an invaluable member of both teams.

Through global challenges and economic tumult—including a historic pandemic that posed a serious threat to our Nation's economy and to families' futures—Ellen was at the center of crucial work to secure critical investments that help our government and our economy keep running smoothly and help families stay healthy and safe. She has worked tirelessly to make sure we are meeting the needs of families on the ground and providing the resources our government needs to do the work for the American people, protect consumers and workers, enforce laws, advance lifesaving medical research, and keep our economy and our communities secure, growing and thriving—and make life a little easier for families to look after their kids, look after their health, and make ends meet.

Among her many accomplishments, Ellen helped negotiate countless appropriations bills, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and the CARES Act, and was a fierce advocate for good government. The progress we made on these issues is part of an incredible legacy she has written into our Nation's health, education, labor, and financial laws through her work. Ellen cared deeply about her work and the people around her. She advocated for her issues, but perhaps most importantly, she advocated for her team. She has left behind a legacy of mentorship and a community of appropriations staff who are that much better because of her influence.

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

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

REMEMBERING BOB GABLE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on November 29, 2024, the Commonwealth of Kentucky lost a towering figure in my home State's Republican Party with the passing of my dear friend Bob Gable. Today, it is my privilege to honor his extraordinary life and legacy.

A proud member of our Greatest Generation, Bob served his country as an officer in the Navy shortly after earning a degree from Stanford in industrial engineering. Bob had a deep sense

of patriotism and an instinct to lead early in life. Soon after his service, he and his beloved wife Emily settled in Stearns, KY, where Bob joined the family business, the Stearns Lumber and Coal Company. Known as the "last company town" in the Commonwealth, the business supported thousands in Kentucky's coal country and was an anchor of the region.

Bob's interest in politics began during these early years, working on the first Senate campaign of former U.S. Senate Republican Leader Howard Baker. Under Baker's wing, Bob made his political bones and discovered what would become a lifelong passion: serving the people and advancing conservative values. Eventually, Bob and Emily moved to Frankfort, where he served as an appointee of Kentucky Governor Louie Nunn, the Commonwealth's only Republican Governor for over half a century.

Though Republicans in the Commonwealth faced steep odds, Bob stepped up to lead, launching spirited bids for Senate in 1972 and for Governor in 1975. Never one to take himself too seriously, he became an early sensation on his first campaign for Governor with his now infamous truth bell, which he rang each time his opponent told a lie. Bob lost his bid for Governor, but his candidacy brought energy and dynamism Republicans in the Commonwealth desperately needed. Most of all, he was an optimistic champion of Republican values when the polls, voter rolls, and election results gave Republicans every reason to feel otherwise.

In 1986, Bob became the chair of the Republican Party of Kentucky, inheriting a party that held only one statewide seat and reportedly had only \$300 in the bank. As chairman, he planted seeds wherever and whenever, convincing budding Republicans across the State to get involved in races at every level. Slowly, brick by brick, his quiet, diligent work transformed our party from a super minority to a competitive minority to a majority. Bob would also serve our party on the Republican National Committee, where he became the longest serving State chairman of any State in the country.

Needless to say, much in our party and the Commonwealth has changed since Bob's entrance onto Kentucky's political scene, largely thanks to his unflappable focus and the groundwork Bob laid during his decades of service. While we remember Bob's trailblazing runs for higher office fondly, his true legacy lies in his relentless commitment to building our party and advancing the Republican cause in Kentucky. Whether it was a local race for county judge-executive or a statewide bid for U.S. Senate, Bob cast a wide net when it came to supporting his fellow Republicans. For so many distinguished leaders in Kentucky, Bob was the first call in a budding career, the early endorsement on a new campaign, or the quiet, steady voice encouraging them to run and serve.

For Bob, politics was truly a labor of love, but none of this work would have been possible without Bob's greatest love, his family. We owe Bob's late wife Emily and their three children James, Elizabeth, and John our gratitude for the time Bob gave to serving others. Anyone who was lucky enough to know Bob could see the immense pride he had in his family, his faith, and his country. On behalf of the Senate, I send sincere condolences to Bob's many friends and loved ones. We are grateful they shared him with us for so many years. Kentucky was made better as a result.

Mr. President, the "Kentucky Lantern" recently published an article on Bob's life and service. I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

BOB GABLE, A STANFORD-EDUCATED PATRON OF THE ARTS AND NAVY VETERAN, NEVER WON ELECTIVE OFFICE BUT HELPED LEAD THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF KENTUCKY OUT OF THE POLITICAL WILDERNESS

Gable, 90, died Nov. 29 at Baptist Health in Lexington.

A rare Republican supporter of abortion rights, Gable is being praised by Republicans, including U.S. Senate GOP Leader Mitch McConnell who called him a "titanic figure."

In a statement, McConnell said Gable's "unflappable focus and the groundwork he laid during his decades of service" were critical to the emergence of a competitive state GOP and Kentucky's transformation into a Republican stronghold.

Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, who served as Republican National Committee chair, said in a statement that Gable was "a leader and a driving force for the Republican Party in Kentucky and beyond. As state party chair, where I first knew him, he played a key role in advancing conservative principles and supporting the Reagan Revolution."

Gable, in his last of three runs for public office, teamed up in 1995 with an unlikely partner, the American Civil Liberties Union, to challenge a new (and short-lived) state law aimed at reducing money's influence on elections by publicly financing candidates for governor who agreed to abide by campaign spending limits. (The ACLU did not object to public financing but to other restrictions in the Kentucky law.)

Gable, who denounced public financing as "welfare for politicians," also said, "Money in politics is freedom of speech," presaging the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark Citizens United ruling in 2010 which obliterated restrictions on political money that had been in place for a century.

Robert Elledy Gable was born in New York City and grew up in Port Orford, Oregon, and later Tucson, Arizona, after his father's death, spending summers with family in Michigan and Minnesota and being educated at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, according to his obituary.

After graduating from Stanford University in 1956 with a degree in industrial engineering and serving as a Navy officer, Gable and his wife, Emily Brinton Thompson, moved to Stearns in McCreary County, where he helped lead the family business.

Gable's great grandfather, Michigan lumber baron Justus S. Stearns, had founded the town as a company headquarters after buy-

ing 30,000 acres of forest in Kentucky and Tennessee in 1902 where coal was soon discovered. Stearns also was a prominent Republican in Michigan and a philanthropist. The Stearns Lumber & Coal Co. built the Kentucky and Tennessee Railroad and the first all-electric sawmill in the U.S. while employing thousands of people living in 18 coal camps. It eventually amassed 215,000 acres.

In Stearns, Bob and Emily Gable raised their three children, and in 1964 Gable dipped his toe into politics in Tennessee. He ran logistics and the campaign headquarters for Republican Howard Baker's losing race for U.S. Senate. Two years later, he worked in the campaign that made Baker the first Republican since Reconstruction to win a U.S. Senate seat from Tennessee.

In a 1995 interview with Joe Gerth of The Courier-Journal, Baker recalled the 30-year-old Gable as "overeducated and underchallenged" in his job at Stearns. "He was a bright young man. Politicians have a way of keeping an eye out for bright young men and women," said Baker.

In 1967, Gable worked in the winning gubernatorial campaign of Kentucky Republican Louie B. Nunn, who made Gable his state parks commissioner; the Gables moved to Frankfort.

Eight years later, Gable was the underdog Republican nominee for governor against Democratic incumbent Julian Carroll, who had been lieutenant governor when Democratic Gov. Wendell Ford was elected to the U.S. Senate.

Gable, who had run for U.S. Senate in 1972, criticized Carroll for not opposing busing to integrate Louisville's schools and blamed Democrats for then-high inflation.

In the first-ever KET gubernatorial debate, Gable secured a lasting place in Kentucky political lore by bringing a bell—he called it the "truth bell"—on stage that he promised to ring every time Carroll lied. The debate rules prohibited props, and after the second clanging, moderator Al Smith said the debate would end unless Gable pocketed the bell, which he did.

Earlier in 1975 in a column published in his weekly newspapers, Smith wrote that Gable "grew up in an affluent family, but he is a serious-minded and hard-working young man who acts as if he feels compelled to devote part of his talents and fortune to public stewardship. . . . He is bright and articulate in advancing a fundamentally conservative viewpoint about government and business."

In 1986, Gable became chairman of the Republican Party of Kentucky (RPK) and served on the Republican National Committee, positions he held for seven years.

"When Bob first took the helm of our state party in 1986, the electoral challenges Republicans faced in Kentucky were daunting," said RPK chair Robert Benvenuti in a statement. "At that time, Republicans held only one statewide office and were in the extreme minority in the General Assembly. Yet Bob's unwavering commitment to our party guided us as we began laying the groundwork to reshape Kentucky's political landscape."

Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers praised Gable as "a leader when there were few Kentucky Republicans" and said "Bob gave me my first contribution when I decided to get into politics."

By then The Stearns Co., as it had been renamed, had moved out of coal and timber and into real estate development, selling its last coal mine in 1975 when coal prices were high. The economic challenges of the 1980s led to the company's eventual restructuring, says the obituary.

Part of Stearns' vast holdings had become the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, thanks to efforts in Congress by Tennessee's Baker and Sen. John

Sherman Cooper of Kentucky. Stearns was paid \$18 million for 60,000 acres which it sold to the federal government under threat of condemnation.

Gable also waged a long-running but ultimately unsuccessful legal battle against state and federal governments challenging restrictions on mining and logging and seeking compensation for mineral rights that the company had owned inside federal lands.

In his quixotic run for governor in 1995, he lost in the primary to the eventual Republican nominee Larry Forgy, who, unlike Gable, supported public financing and spending limits. Democrat Paul Patton won the general election and was reelected with token Republican opposition. Before the 2003 race for governor, the legislature ended public financing and spending limits.

Gable served on the boards of many businesses and organizations. He also chaired the Kentucky Arts Council and Kentucky Opera and served on the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts board. He served as the final board chair of George Peabody College for Teachers and oversaw its merger with Vanderbilt University, where he later served as a trustee. Nationally, he was president of the National Committee for the Performing Arts and a member of the President's Committee for the Performing Arts at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Gable and his wife Emily, who died in 2017, were avid travelers during their 58-year marriage. A member of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Frankfort, Gable also served on the Missions Board of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky.

He is survived by his children, James (Lisa Guillermin), Elizabeth Gable Hicks and John (Virginia Harris), as well as grandchildren Helen-Anne and Robert "Bo" Gable.

In 2017, Kentucky Republicans gathered to honor Gable at a tribute sponsored by the Republican Women's Club of Franklin County. Writing about the event in *The Courier-Journal*, political strategist and GOP commentator Scott Jennings reported that Gable brought the truth bell.

ANGOLA

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remarks delivered by President Biden on December 3, 2024, during his historic trip to Angola honoring the past and future of the Angolan-U.S. relationship, be printed in the RECORD.

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

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BIDEN HONORING THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE ANGOLAN-U.S. RELATIONSHIP

Mr. PRESIDENT. You are a brave crowd to come out in the rain. I brought my hat just in case. I don't have much hair to help me.

Leaders of Angola, government and civil society, students, young leaders, staff of the National Slavery Museum, distinguished guests, I sincerely mean this when I say thank you for being here in the rain with us today. Thank you for allowing me to be here. It's an honor—a genuine honor to be with you today in Angola.

I just got off the phone with the vice president, telling her I'm sorry she's not with me to be here today, you know, with you in Angola, the—a vibrant city. And—and I—look, not the

city. The city, I know, is not Angola, but in Angola in a vibrant city.

And I'm joined by members of the United States Congress, senior officials of my administration, and American business and civic leaders. We think that it's important that we get together. We thank all people of Angola for your warm hospitality, and I mean that s—please sit down if you have a seat. Don't—I'm sorry. I wasn't sure you all had seats.

We are gathered at a someln—a solemn location. Because to fully consider how far our two countries have come in our friendship, we have to remember how we began.

We hear them in the wind and the waves. Young women, young men born free in the highlands of Angola, only to be captured, bound, and forced on a "death march" along this very coast to this spot by slave traders in the year 1619.

In the building next to us, they were baptized into a foreign faith against their will, their names changed against their will to Anthony and Isabella. Then they were condemned to a slave ship bound for the Middle Passage, packed together in hundreds by hundreds. A third of those souls did not survive the journey. One third died on the way.

But Anthony and Isabella made it to the British colony in Virginia, where they were sold into servitude and became two of the first enslaved Americans in a place that, 150 years later, would become the United States of America. They had a son, considered the first child of African descent born in America: William Tucker.

It was the beginning of slavery in the United States. Cruel. Brutal. Dehumanizing. Our nation's original sin—original sin—one that haunted America and casts a long shadow ever since.

From the bloody Civil War that nearly tore my nation apart to the long battle with Jim Crow in the ni—to—into the 1960s for the civil rights and voting rights movement—which got me involved in public life—during which American cities were burned, to the still unfinished reckoning with racial injustice in my country today.

Historians believe people of Angola accounted for a significant number of all enslaved people shipped to America. Today, millions of African Americans have roots in Angola.

As I said at the U.S.-African Leaders Summit that held in Washington two years—I held in Washington two years ago, "Our people lie at the heart of the deep and profound connection that forever binds Africa and the United States together. We remember the stolen men and women and children who were brought to our shores in chains, subjected to unimaginable cruelty."

Here with us today are three Americans who are direct descendants of Anthony and Isabella, those first enslaved Americans—Afri—Africans in America. Wanda Tucker of Hamilton [Hamp-ton], Virginia. Wanda, are you there?

There you are, Wanda. God love you. Her brother Vincent and Carolita as well. Thank you for being here. We're going to write history, not erase history.

The Tuckers learned their family history around the dinner table. That history led Wanda here in Angola a few years ago. She did not know how to speak the language, but that didn't matter. When she arrived, Wanda said she felt something profound, like she'd come home. That was her comment to me. She called it the "connection without words."

Ladies and gentlemen, I am here today to honor that connection between our people and to pay tribute to the generations of Angolans and American families, like the Tuckers, who have served in government for over—I've served in government for over 50 years. I know I only look like I'm 40 years old, but I've been around hanging in the government for—I hate to admit it—or 50 years.

But in that 50 years, I've learned a lot. Perhaps most importantly, I have learned that while history can be hidden, it cannot and should not be erased. It should be faced. It's our duty to face our history: the good, the bad, and the ugly—the whole truth. That's what great nations do.

That's why I chose to speak here at the National Slavery Museum today, just as I toured. And that's why your president visited the National Museum of African American Culture in the—in Washington, D.C.—the second most-visited museum in the States—and he did it a few years ago.

He saw what I see: the stark contradiction between my country's founding principles of liberty, justice, and equality and the way we long treated people from Angola and from throughout Africa.

I've often said America is the only nation in the world founded on an idea. Most countries are founded based on race, ethnicity, religion, geography, or some other attribute. But in the United States, founded on idea, one embedded in our Declaration of Independence, and that is that all men and women are created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout their lives.

It's abundantly clear today we have not lived up to that idea, but we've never fully walked away from it either. And that's due in no small part to the determination and dreams of African Americans, including Angolan Americans.

The proud descendants of the diaspora who helped build my nation as they rebuilt their own families and their own sense of self. They were the forebearers as well—resilient, faithful, even hopeful—hopeful that joy would cometh in the morning, as it says in the Bible; hopeful that our past would not be the story of our future; and hopeful, in time, the United States would write a different story in partnership with the people brought here in

chains to my nation from Africa. It's a story of mutual respect and mutual progress.

That's the history that brings me here, the first American president ever to visit Angola. Over time—and I'm proud to be. Over time, the relationship became—between our countries has been transformed from distance to genuine warmth. Today, our relationship is the strongest it's ever been.

Throughout my presidency, it's been my goal—goal of the United States to build a strong partnership with peoples and nations across the continent of Africa—true partnerships aimed at achieving shared goals, bringing to bear the dynamism of America's private sector and the expertise of our government to support aspirations of African entrepreneurs, experts, leaders both inside and outside of government.

Because we know the challenge that define our age demand African leadership. One out of every four human beings on Earth will live in Africa by the year 2050. And the ingenuity and determination of young Africans in particular, like the young society leaders I just met with here today, will be undeniable forces in that human progress.

That's why I'm so optimistic, because of that generation. In no small part, it will be in their hands and the hands of people across Africa to expand access to clean energy, to tackle threats of global health, to grow global—a global middle class.

IN MANY WAYS, AFRICA'S—AFRICA'S SUCCESS IS AND WILL BE THE WORLD'S SUCCESS. AS I SAID AT THE UNITED STATES—U.S.—AFRICA SUMMIT: THE UNITED STATES IS ALL IN ON AFRICA'S FUTURE.

Two years ago, I pledged to deliver \$55 billion [billion] in new investments in Africa and to mobilize American businesses to close new deals with African partners. Two years ago, we are out way ahead of schedule. More than 20 heads of U.S. government agencies and members of my Cabinet have traveled to Africa, delivering over \$40 billion in investments thus far.

And we have announced nearly 1,200 new business deals between African and American companies—and American companies—total will be worth \$52 billion, including investments in solar energy, telecom, mobile finance, infrastructure, and partnerships with American airlines to expand opportunities for tourism so you don't have to fly to Paris to get here—although Paris is pretty nice.

Here in Angola alone, the United States has invested \$3 billion during my short presidency. We see the bonds between our countries across sectors, from clean energy to health care to sports. The American Basketball Association—National Basketball Association launched Basketball Africa League and Angola is the reigning champion.

And we see the impact of American culture across—African culture across the American culture, from music to

entertainment to fashion to arts and so much more.

Student exchanges between our countries are essential and must increase. Students in both countries can be—better understand one another if they know the country, if they visit the country, if they're educated in the other country. An increased connection between us makes a big difference.

Being all in on Africa means making sure African voices are heard at the tables that matter most. Under my leadership, the United States brought—we brought in the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 economies, and we insisted on more African representation among the leaders of the International Monetary Fund and other world financial institutions.

We've also pushed to ensure that developing nations do not—do not choose—have to choose between paying down unsustainable debt and being able to invest in their own people. And we're using our voice—our own voice to increase Africa's presence on the U.N. Security Council at the United Nations. That should happen. You can clap for that, folks. You should be in there.

The United States continues to be the world's largest provider of humanitarian aid and development assistance. And that's going to increase. You know, that's the right thing for the wealthiest nation in the world to do.

And today, I'm announcing over \$1 billion in new humanitarian support for Africans displaced from homes by historic droughts and food insecurity.

But we know African leaders and citizens are seeking more than just aid. You seek investment. And so, the United States is expanding our relationship all across Africa—from assistance to aid to investment to trade—moving from patrons to partners to help bridge the infrastructure gap.

I was told, by the way, when I got elected I could never get an infrastructure bill passed because the last guy spent eight years saying, "Next month"—four years saying, "Next month."

Well, guess what, folks? We've done it. A trillion—a trillion three hundred billion dollars for infrastructure to narrow the digital divide, drive inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

We're looking for partners who understand that the right question in the year 2024 is not "What can the United States do for the people of Africa?" It's "What can we do together for the people of Africa?" That's what we're going to do.

Nowhere in Africa is the answer more exciting than here in Angola. It starts with our governments, whose partnership is stronger, deeper, and more effective and active than any point in history. It's testament to your president, who had the vision to carry out this relationship—carry this relationship forward. And it's a testament to Angolan citizens across the private sector and civil society who have forged

strong bonds with your American counterparts.

And together, we're engaged in a major joint project to close the infrastructure gap for the benefit of Angolans, Africans across the continent, Americans, and the world. We'll all benefit, as you benefit. You're—you can produce much more agriculture, for example, than states that can't. You're going to increase their longevity, and you're going to increase your impact and profit.

It's called the Lobito Corridor. We're building railroad lines from Angola to the Port of Lobito, in Zambia and the DRC, and, ultimately, all the way to the Atlantic—from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. It'll be the first trans-continental railroad in Africa and the biggest American rail investment outside of America.

And I must tell you up front, with American press here, I'm probably the most pro-rail guy in America. I've ridden—I've ridden over 1,300,000 miles on a daily basis to my work, 210—20 miles a day for the last 50 years.

Well, I didn't do it as president. I stayed in the White House a lot.

But all kidding aside, folks, we can do this. We can do this. It's in our power.

It will not only generate significant employment, it will also allow individual countries to maximize their own domestic resources for the benefit of their people and sell critical minerals that power the world's energy transformation and our fight against climate change and to transport them in a fraction of the time and lower cost. A shipment that used to take over 45 days will now take 45 hours. That's a game changer. That increases profit. That increases opportunity.

The Lobito Corridor represents the right way to invest in full partnership with a country and its people.

As part of this project, we will install enough clean energy power to power hundreds of thousands of homes, expand high-speed Internet across—for millions of Angolans, which is a cost—as consequential today as electricity was two generations ago.

And we're investing in agriculture and food security, fulfilling the needs of countries without agricultural capacity and expanding opportunities for countries growing the crops; connecting farmers across the Lobito—along the Lobito Corridor to new markets, expanding opportunity and prosperity—you doing that, having the means to do it.

The United States understands how we invest in Africa is as important as how much we invest. In too many places, 10 years after the so-called investment was made, workers are still coming home on a dirt road and without electricity, a village without a school, a city without a hospital, or a country under crushing debt.

We seek a better way: transparent, high-standard, open-access investments that protect workers and the rule of

law and the environment. It can be done and will be done.

And, folks, the partnership between Angola and the United States also extends to supporting peace and security in this region and beyond.

Pl- —Pr- —President Lourenço, I want to thank him for his leadership and mediation in regional conflicts. I also want to thank him for Angola speaking out against Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. It matters. It matters when leaders speak out.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, I am in the final weeks of my presidency. You don't have to clap for that. You can if you want.

But I wanted to come to Angola. Although I've been chairman of the Africa America subcommittee for a long time, I had never made it to Angola. Because although I don't know exactly what the future will hold, I know the future runs through Angola, through Africa. I mean it sincerely. I'm not kidding.

I know that any nation that wants to thrive in the next century must work as partners with workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses here in Africa. I know that the connection between our communities, our universities, our sports, our civil societies, our families, our people will only grow deeper. We have to stay focused.

The story of Angola and the United States holds a lesson for the world: two nations with a shared history in evil of human bondage; two nations on opposite sides of the Cold War, defining struggle in the late part of the 20th century; and now, two nations standing shoulder to shoulder, working together every day for the mutual benefit of our people.

It's a reminder that no nation need be permanently a—the adversary of another, a testament to the human capacity for reconciliation, and proof that from every—from the horrors of slavery and war, there is a way forward.

So, I stand here today—I mean this sincerely—deeply optimistic.

When I—by the way, 20 years ago, when I was a senator, I had a cranial aneurysm. They s—got me to the hospital in time. I remember asking the doctor, "What are my ch—"—he said, "Oh, your chances are good. They're about 30 percent." When it was all over, he was deciding whether or not it was congenital or environmental. And I said, "I don't give a damn. I'm here." He said, "You know what your problem is, Senator? You're a congenital optimist." I am.

About the possibilities and progress that lie just beyond the horizon. Together, we can and will chart a futu-
 worther [future worthy] of great nations, worthy of the highest aspirations of our people. We just have to remember who we are: We're Angolans; we're Americans.

As I often say in Ameri- —to the American people: There's nothing—

nothing beyond our capacity if we work together. And today, I say to the people of Angola and all the people of Africa, there is nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.

Thank you. And God bless you and keep you all safe. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And thank you for waiting.

And I got my hat. Thanks, everybody. I really mean it. You're very patient.

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of our colleagues who will conclude their service in this body at the end of the 118th Congress: Senators MIKE BRAUN, SHERROD BROWN, Laphonza Butler, BEN CARDIN, TOM CARPER, BOB CASEY, JOE MANCHIN, MITT ROMNEY, KYRSTEN SINEMA, DEBBIE STABENOW, and JON TESTER.

Each of these colleagues and friends has made important contributions to our Nation. And while there is no greater job than being a U.S. Senator, it is a job that requires tremendous dedication and sacrifice. So I thank these colleagues and their families for all that they have done.

I had the privilege to serve with Senator MIKE BRAUN on the Senate Appropriations Committee, where we led the legislative branch subcommittee for 2 years. In the aftermath of the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, we were able to come together to make critical investments to improve the security of the congressional campus while also safeguarding Senators, Representatives, and staff working in their home States and districts. I appreciated MIKE's preparation, his thoughtful ideas, and his commitment to getting the job done. I know he will bring the same commitment as he leads the State of Indiana as its next Governor.

My dear friend Senator SHERROD BROWN has been a champion of working men and women for his entire life. He has done more to protect the jobs and livelihoods of autoworkers, steelworkers, construction workers, truck drivers, transit workers, and virtually every blue-collar profession than anyone serving in Congress today. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Ohio workers fighting to save factories and pensions. He stood up against unfair competition and bad trade deals. He fought to secure funding for Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and NASA's John Glenn Research Center. And with the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, he has championed investments that will benefit working people for years to come. I have been fortunate to be at SHERROD's side as he has quarterbacked Democrats on the Senate Banking Committee over the last decade, including 4 years as chairman. He guided us through the COVID-19 pandemic and through the largest bank failures since

the Great Recession. He worked on a bipartisan basis to crack down on fentanyl trafficking and to advance meaningful sanctions on our adversaries. He also worked with Vice President-elect VANCE and Senator BOB CASEY to advance bipartisan rail safety legislation in the wake of the derailment and fire in East Palestine, OH. Through his temperament and work ethic, SHERROD has been a real champion of working Americans. With two grandchildren in Rhode Island, SHERROD is already an honorary Rhode Islander, and I look forward to seeing him in the Ocean State frequently.

The prospect of succeeding a Senate legend and representing the Nation's most populous State with only 14 months to make a mark would have been intimidating to anyone. But Senator Laphonza Butler embraced the challenge, becoming a respected voice on the Judiciary, Banking, Homeland Security, and Rules Committees. She worked to champion the needs of her State, and she worked across the aisle on legislation to help advance the interests of children and families. I am delighted that in her final week in office she was able to secure passage of legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, a trailblazer for Congress and America.

In the tradition of Barbara Mikulski and Paul Sarbanes, Senator BEN CARDIN has been a smart, principled, pragmatic, and, most of all, effective Senator for the State of Maryland. With over two decades of service in the House before being elected to the Senate, BEN's policy expertise runs the gamut. Mastering the intricacies of the Tax Code, trade, Social Security and Medicare, he is also a leader on the international stage, where his advice and wisdom are often sought and followed. A champion of human rights and good government, BEN joined John McCain in originating the Global Magnitsky Act, which allows the United States to sanction foreign government officials who are human rights offenders. In the years since, he has worked to expand the Magnitsky Act to cover more regimes that were oppressing their own people. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he has been at the center of critical debates on Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict, providing wise, steady leadership on these very challenging topics.

Senator TOM CARPER has been a friend and great leader. He is the last of a generation of Vietnam veterans who have served in the Senate. As such, he has focused on supporting national defense and our veterans. He has also worked on eliminating waste and supporting smart investments in our transportation and water infrastructure. TOM has always found a way to work across the aisle on issues he has cared about. Indeed, as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, he led the effort to craft the bipartisan infrastructure law, which is

channeling funding into fixing our highways and bridges, as well as funding programs to get lead and other contaminants out of drinking water. He crafted the Water Resources Development Act of 2024, which is named in his honor. TOM has also been a leader on climate change, helping craft the Inflation Reduction Act and supporting climate mitigation and resilience efforts. His work in support of his dear friend and former colleague President Biden in support of this legislation over the last 4 years will make a huge difference for Americans for decades to come.

Senator BOB CASEY has been a champion of the most vulnerable: children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and people just trying to make ends meet. He has been a leading Senate advocate for addressing food insecurity, supporting programs like the emergency food assistance program (TEFAP) and SNAP. He is the author of the bipartisan ABLE Act, which allows individuals with disabilities to save funds for care and qualified expenses without jeopardizing their eligibility for other Federal assistance. And he has introduced legislation to expand and build on this successful initiative. BOB also wrote the Campus SAVE Act to create uniform reporting for sexual violence on college campuses. It is a testament to BOB's character that so many Pennsylvania's political leaders from both parties have praised his work ethic and commitment to helping the people of the Commonwealth.

Senator JOE MANCHIN has been at the fulcrum of power in the Senate over the last 4 years. In working to address the interests of his State, he has been unafraid to challenge and change orthodoxy. While his views may differ from others in our party, there is no doubt that he has done much to advance the goal all Democrats share: making life better for average Americans. Quite frankly, without his leadership, we would not have the bipartisan infrastructure law or the Inflation Reduction Act. And because of JOE's involvement, we were able to ensure that all of the investments in the Inflation Reduction Act were fully offset by ensuring that corporations and the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share of taxes. That is an important achievement, and JOE deserves full credit for it.

Senator MITT ROMNEY is an extraordinary American. Respected across the aisle, across the country, and throughout the world, he has held high office in two States: Senator for Utah and Governor of Massachusetts. He has been the Republican nominee for the Presidency. After becoming CEO of the Salt Lake Olympics organizing committee, he helped save the 2002 Winter Games from disarray and mismanagement, making it one of the most successful Winter Olympics ever. MITT really has done it all. He has even laced up the gloves and boxed with heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield. Now, the politics of Massachusetts and

Utah are vastly different, but MITT has shown that he can bring people with different outlooks together to get things done. And truth be told, the reforms to the healthcare system that he implemented when he was Governor of Massachusetts helped shape the Affordable Care Act at the Federal level. As a Member of the Senate, MITT has been a courageous defender of democracy, willing to put country ahead of party, even when it meant harsh criticism. I have been delighted to work with MITT, and I am proud to be joining in introducing his final piece of bipartisan legislation, the Preserving American Dominance in AI Act, which we will be working to pass next year.

Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA has been a skilled and pragmatic dealmaker, working on a variety of important bills from the bipartisan infrastructure law to the bipartisan immigration bill, which unfortunately, was scuttled at the last minute at the request of President Trump. I know that in her next chapter Senator SINEMA will continue to work hard to bring people together, build consensus, and solve problems.

Senator DEBBIE STABENOW has been a colleague, friend, and leader here in the Senate since she arrived in 2001. She has been a defender of the auto industry, helping U.S. automakers emerge from the Great Recession and turn to a new, greener future. She has also been at the forefront of revitalizing Michigan cities through initiatives like the New Markets Tax Credit and through investments to remove lead from drinking water. With Senator Roy Blunt, she helped expand the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Program nationwide under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and she has championed funding for community health centers along with Senator ROGER WICKER. And as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, she has fought to expand child nutrition programs, which have been so critical in reducing poverty over the last 4 years and in helping kids get a great start in life. I am going to miss Debbie and her ability to work hard and achieve results for people who need help the most.

Senator JON TESTER is a big man with a big heart. He will tell you he is just a simple farmer from Big Sandy, MT, and that is true. Running the family farm remains the center of his life and defines his character, but it is not the full story. His interests, knowledge, and intellect are wide-ranging and deep. He can speak with authority on complex banking, foreign policy, defense, and veterans issues, as well as agriculture. As a plain-spoken Westerner, he can put these complicated topics in terms everybody can understand, usually with a healthy dose of humor. But when it comes to hard work, JON is no-nonsense. He is a serious legislator, particularly as chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee. His work to pass the PACT Act has thrown a lifeline to veterans who

were exposed to toxins as a result of their service. Millions of veterans and their families are receiving lifesaving benefits as the result of his work. And without JON, it wouldn't have happened.

These colleagues have made the Senate and our Nation a better place because of their service. While their time in this body will be ending with the 118th Congress, I know each of them will continue to work to make a positive difference for the country.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH BENZING

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my longtime chief of staff, my campaign manager in 2012, and a proud daughter of the Midwest, Sarah Benzing.

Sarah grew up in Neola, IA, a town of about 800 people. There were just 36 people in her rural high school in the Tri-Center Community School District.

Sarah was raised by her parents Nick and Diana Benzing, in a family of farmers, truck drivers, and union members: AFSCME, IAM, NEA, UAW.

And Sarah has brought those working-class values to everything she has done throughout an accomplished career serving the public.

It is become a bit of a cliché to say that someone never forgot where they came from. Not only has Sarah never forgotten her roots, they are woven into every decision she makes and every job she has done.

She has worked all over the country, from Iowa to Massachusetts to Virginia to, of course, Ohio, which she adopted as her second home. Sarah has put working people at the center of all she does.

So many of the people who have worked with her in this office have shared stories about what makes her such an effective and admired leader and mentor.

She has a unique ability to quickly grasp and cut to the heart of any problem and to pull the right people together and empower them to solve it. She is not just a boss; she is truly a manager. She sees people's strengths and elevates them into the right roles to accomplish things as a team.

As a manager, she has always been there to help, but she also knows when the best way to help is to push you to meet your own potential.

It is easy to get caught up in the day to day stress of running an office or a campaign, and to lose track of actually managing staff. Sarah never does. She takes the time to invest in people, and the office serves Ohioans better for it.

A testament to that is how many of the people she has worked with who remain close personal friends.

Sarah brings a warmth and approachability to the office that could probably only come from both a Midwesterner and from someone who began her career as an organizer. Around the office, staff call her the People's Chief. You are just as likely to find her chatting in the front office with the staff

assistants as you are behind a closed door with the legislative director.

Swapping recipes, chatting about pets, remembering details about people's lives and their families, Sarah makes time for everyone and gets to know everyone who comes through this office.

And she brings the joy. She never takes anything, including herself, too seriously, and she makes this job fun whenever and however she can. Cookie competitions, book club, potlucks, even a mock Iowa caucus, work is never boring when Sarah is in charge. And her enthusiasm is infectious.

Over a decade as chief, Sarah has also become a master of this institution. She knows how to get things done.

And all of that stems from her judgment and her internal compass, always seeing this job through the eyes of workers.

When we first began working on the multiemployer pension crisis more than 7 years ago, most people in this town didn't want to touch it. No one thought it was solvable, and they thought it was too politically risky. A lot of staffers in this building probably would have advised me against getting involved. But Sarah dove in.

And one reason is that she didn't just sit in Washington discussing the policy. She actually met the people. She spent time in Ohio talking with Rita Lewis and Mike Walden and so many of the Ohio workers and retirees whose retirement security—pensions they earned and paid into—was about to be ripped away.

And in no small part because of Sarah's skill and commitment, we got it done.

For the rest of their lives, 100,000 Ohioans will get checks in the mail every month from the pensions they earned because of the work of this office, led by Sarah Benzing.

That was emblematic of how Sarah approached this job. She didn't stay in Washington. She came to Ohio as often as possible, traveling all over the State meeting with workers and small businesses owners and local leaders all over the State.

She is an excellent listener, and so often, the result of those conversations was legislation or other actions that made a real difference in people's lives. She paid just as much attention to our staff in Ohio as those in DC.

Sarah also understood that to get things done for Ohio, we had to work with our colleagues, regardless of party. Sarah forged bonds with and is respected by chiefs on both sides of the aisle.

She knew how important it was for Ohioans that their Senators work together for our State. For the majority of my time in the Senate, our counterpart was Senator Portman. Sarah and Senator Portman's chief forged a genuine and productive partnership, working together on everything from strengthening trade enforcement to protecting Lake Erie to securing resources for Ohio.

Sarah's time as chief has spanned multiple Presidents, two impeachments, a global pandemic. And through it all, Sarah has had an uncommon steadiness about her leadership.

Sarah has been a steady and visionary leader for this office—and for Connie and me, an invaluable confidant and friend.

We first met Sarah not in Washington, but in Ohio. We sat around our kitchen table with Connie and John Ryan and our dog Gracie, who took to Sarah immediately. Sitting there over homemade chili, with Gracie sitting next to Sarah as she scratched Gracie's ears, talking about Ohio and the campaign ahead—and about our families and about Sarah's hometown and about our pets, as the conversation wandered—it was so clear that Sarah belonged.

She would move to Ohio a few weeks later. And over the years, Sarah gotten to know that kitchen table well. She has become part of—at times, it feels like the heart of—a big extended family. And we have gotten to know her family; she is so devoted to her husband Erik and her stepchildren Jay, Daona, and Noa.

Sarah, thank you for a life of service to our country and the people who make it work and for nearly 15 years of friendship.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BROWN'S ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring our administrative team. Their hard work and dedication make our day-to-day operations possible.

They are the glue that holds our office together, from making sure staff have the technology they need to do their jobs, to making sure to ensuring that every day runs as smoothly as possible for staff and for the Ohioans who interact with our office.

Every single member of Team Brown depends on the administrative and operations team.

From the staff assistants who man the front desks, to the special assistants who oversee the interns, without your work, this office wouldn't have accomplished nearly as much or been able to do our best work for Ohio.

None of our work would be possible with our deputy chief of staff and long-time operations director, Mary Topolinski.

Mary joined our office at the beginning of 2009. From her first days on the job, it was clear that nothing fell through the cracks on Mary's watch. She was on top of everything. She was always thinking three steps ahead and had solutions even before problems arose.

Her job entailed more than anyone could ever realize, and she was always looking for new ways to help support the people who work here and the Ohioans we serve.

She always made sure staff was taken care of and had what they need-

ed, whether it was straightforward or complicated. And no matter how long it took, Mary was there.

When COVID struck and launched our office into uncertain times and almost every policy and procedure went out the window, Mary handled it with grace.

She made sure the office kept running smoothly as we transitioned to remote work. She made sure everyone had the information and support that they needed to keep doing their jobs and that there would be no interruption in service for Ohioans.

Because of Mary, we were able to keep serving Ohio in a moment when they needed us the most. Our constituent phone lines stayed on. Casework continued. Our worked never so much as paused. It was a hard time for everyone and for staff, and Mary was a rock.

When we returned to the office, the same was true.

Her dedication to this body extended beyond even this office. Mary was always working to make the Senate a better place to work, serving on committees to put in place new systems and technologies to support the work of every office.

As the operations director, Mary navigated delicate situations, sometimes had to have tough conversations, and always made sure our work remained centered on the people we serve.

She did it all with grace and thoughtfulness and care for her colleagues.

For Team Brown, Mary always showed up. Her door was always open, and she was always ready to offer advice or support or to just listen.

Mary understood that this office is more than just a place people work; it is a huge part of our staff's lives, and they do their jobs better when there is comradery and a little fun.

She planned happy hours and office events and staff outings, making sure everyone felt welcome and enjoyed themselves. She organized book club and holiday parties and celebrations for birthdays and staff departures and special events in people's lives.

For 15 years, Mary made this office run, and she made it thrive. Mary oversaw a team spanning from DC to Cleveland to Columbus to Cincinnati. Together, they made our work for Ohioans possible.

Anourath Arounlangsy, our deputy administrative director and lead intern coordinator, took care of everyone on the team. Whether coaching an intern through a difficult situation or providing staff with support, he missed no detail. Anourath sees through every single task assigned and catches mistakes before they happen. He works hard every single day and is a joy to be around.

Nelson Richardson, our systems administrator, has the difficult task of managing equipment and troubleshooting technology for dozens of staff. He does so without getting flustered or

frustrated, remaining calm in every storm. He is a natural leader, often lending an ear and offering sound advice to younger staff. Nelson is mission driven and a public servant at his core.

Marcus Nowling is a Columbus native and graduate of Denison University. As a special assistant, Marcus essentially served as chief problem solver. One of his many jobs was getting out thousands of handwritten notes from the Senator to Ohioans. Marcus was always a delight to work with.

Constituents and guests ready to meet with our office are greeted at the front office by Erik Gomez and Lila Jarouche, our two DC staff assistants. They both organize U.S. Capitol tours for Ohioans visiting our Nation's Capitol, get flags flown over the Capitol for constituents, have mentored interns, and answer hundreds of calls per week, among many other tasks.

Erik Gomez was a spring 2023 intern from Kent State University and was hired on that same semester as a DC staff assistant. He is passionate about public service and was named as a Top Staff Assistant on Capitol Hill last year.

Lila Jarouche is a recent graduate from the University of Toledo. She was selected as a fall 2023 intern and was also hired on as a full-time D.C. staff assistant where she excelled in constituent services, took on many legislative responsibilities, and generally excels in any task she is given.

Henry Binder and Bella Fletcher joined as special projects assistants and aided significantly in reviewing over 500 congressionally directed spending requests, had keen attention to detail, and worked diligently.

Dariah Williams, our State scheduler, began on Team Brown as a staff assistant, helping with constituent services, as well as special projects. Dariah's willingness to take on more and help the team however we needed expanded her role to State scheduling. Dariah cares deeply about Ohio and public service.

Helen Clark, a Cleveland staff assistant and intern coordinator, takes on every task given with gusto and has been called the beating heart of the Cleveland office. She wrote heartfelt congratulatory letters to constitutions. She handles detailed research and has a passion for bringing constituents and their families joy. Helen was key in planning our annual women's Conference and Propel Ohio events. Helen is a true public servant.

Playon Patrick is former intern turned staff assistant in our Columbus office. Playon excels at constituent services, particularly handling sometimes difficult phone calls. He has a keen eye for processes and has good ideas for making improvements.

As Cincinnati staff assistant, Willow Lopez was willing to take on anything given. She helped plan our annual women's conference as soon as she joined the office. Her attention to detail and care for the work made that

event a huge success. As a former teacher, Willow also excelled at aiding in our intern program. Training and mentoring interns is a natural skill for her.

None of the work in our office would have been possible without Diana Baron, our director of scheduling.

Earlier this year, we celebrated her 25 years of service to the people of Ohio. She is an institution in this office and an invaluable resource to every department.

From making sure I could meet with every Ohioan possible, to making it all over our State to roundtables and plant tours and picket lines and speeches and events, Diana was behind the scenes making it happen. From navigating confusing vote schedules to getting staff the information they need to do their jobs, Diana gets it done.

She is a thoughtful colleague who makes a true effort to get to know everyone on our team, and turns coworkers into friends—not to mention a legendary baker, and an avid traveler.

And over her 25 years, as our team has changed, Diana's dedication to Ohio and her respect for this institution has remained steadfast. For that, we are grateful.

TRIBUTE TO THE STAFF OF THE BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Banking and Housing Committee staff. Their hard work and dedication took a committee that once fought only for Wall Street and transformed it into a body focused on the issues that matter most to the people we serve.

All the important work we have done on the Banking and Housing Committee over the last decade would not have been possible without the leadership of our staff director Laura Swanson.

Laura is a lifelong public servant, a brilliant strategic mind, and one of my most trusted advisers. She puts workers at the center of everything she does and she has since the very beginning of her career.

Laura joined the committee in 2011, working for her home State Senator, Chairman Tim Johnson of South Dakota.

When I became the lead Democrat on the Banking and Housing Committee in 2015, I brought Laura onto my staff, and she rose to staff director in 2019. Laura is the first woman to ever hold the top job on this committee for a Democrat, and she has done this job for 6 years, longer than any of the six most recent Democratic staff directors. She has strategized with me through every crisis, every markup, every hearing.

As a manager, Laura cares about the whole person. Her door is always open to staff. As often as people ask her for work advice, they ask for a book recommendation or talk about music together or tell her about a recent trip.

Laura is kind, decent, and humble. And she is a good listener, a quality that is all too rare in this town. In meetings, she invites everyone to weigh in so that the best decision can be made with all the information we have. When we are faced with the toughest problems, Laura always finds a way through.

When I became chair, Laura and I took the opportunity to finally bring the focus of this committee back where it belongs: the people who make this country work.

We brought the CEOs of the country's largest Wall Street banks to testify every year for the first time in history. Same with the CEOs of the credit reporting firms, which hold tremendous power over people's abilities to buy a house or get a job and are almost never held accountable.

We confirmed a diverse slate of nominees to important positions, including the first Black woman and first Latina woman to serve as Federal Reserve Governor; the first woman of color to lead the Federal Housing Finance Agency; the first Black woman to lead EXIM; and more.

It is easy in this town to become angry or jaded or hopeless. Laura has resisted that and retained a refreshing eternal optimism. We owe it to those we serve to keep going. I will, and I know Laura will, too.

Thank you, Laura, for your 20 years of service in the Senate, 14 of those years on the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. I am grateful to have spent 10 of those years working together and learning from you.

Elisha Tuku is a brilliant attorney and a thoughtful colleague. He has worked for the Banking and Housing Committee for more than a decade.

Elisha's colleagues describe him as "the real deal." He has an unmatched, encyclopedic depth of firsthand knowledge about securities and the financial system. You can try to roll him with complicated lingo, but it won't work. It helps that he genuinely can't get enough of this stuff; he comes into work with Bloomberg radio in his headphones and leaves in the evening listening to financial news podcasts.

During negotiations of amendments or bill text, any time we needed to break through the legalese more quickly than should be possible, Elisha was there and got it done. When we would otherwise be stuck, he moves us forward.

Elisha works hard and thinks nothing of it. He is a dedicated husband and a wonderful father, while still making himself available to staff who need his help, day or night.

Elisha can get along with anyone, regardless of their political or policy views. He can make a friend in any setting. He genuinely cares about people and maintains connections over years and years.

In the Banking and Housing Committee offices, Elisha peeks his head

into colleagues' offices, greeting them after a weekend away, asking about knick-knacks on their desks, and sharing stories about his son. He is quietly generous; he sends his coworkers gifts when they become new parents, and then he sends holiday gifts for their children, never expecting anything in return.

Elisha's door is always open if people need a sounding board. The walls of his office are decorated with photographs he has taken while traveling. He has a quick wit and is always ready to go back and forth on a round of baseball trivia with me. Despite his love for the Yankees, I have to admit, he knows baseball.

We have been lucky to have him on staff for as long as we have. Thank you, Elisha, for your many years of public service and for helping to lead the committee staff.

Min Cheng came to the committee shortly after I became chairman in 2021 as the press assistant. In that role, and then as press secretary, she propelled the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee's digital presence into the future, designing a new logo, growing our social media following dramatically, and producing videos of our committee members' work to protect workers and their families' money. This summer she became the committee's communications director.

Min has always performed at the highest level in any role. She is thoughtful, creative, always calm, and a true talent in finding ways to explain the complicated topics this committee often grapples with. She has a gift for turning complex jargon into plain language, and she built strong relationships with journalists.

She is a quick learner and helpful sounding board who brings out the best in her colleagues. Min is also a good mentor to others on the communications team. And Min always brings an amazing, dry sense of humor to her work, a quick wit that cuts through some of the craziness of politics and lightens up the office whenever we all need it.

She also has a full life off the Hill that allows her to put her creativity to use. She is a talented musician—singing in a choir, playing in bands, and with her own solo music projects. Min married her husband Jack this fall. Min has a bright future, and I am excited to see where her talents and interests take her.

As oversight counsel, Mohammad Aslami helped lead our efforts to get talented, diverse nominees on the job in roles throughout our government that are crucial to protecting the public.

Shannon Bacon came on as an intern with the committee and was quickly brought on as a full member of the housing and transit teams. She has a real commitment to public service and a bright future.

Emily Blaydes came to us from a legal aid organization in Massachu-

setts, where she helped renters stay in safe, affordable housing. She has continued that good work on housing issues, including introducing the YIGBY Act during her several years with the committee.

Erika Calderon has spent her career in public service and leads the committee's work on consumer protection. A few years ago, while working in a previous office, she wrote and got passed into law a measure requiring carbon monoxide detectors in public housing, no doubt saving lives.

Homer Carlisle has worked for the committee for more than a decade, and was instrumental in negotiating and passing the bipartisan infrastructure law and ensuring it contained the strongest ever Buy America rules. If you are seeing the bridge in your town get repaired, new buses on the roads, or expanded terminals at your local airport, chances are, you can thank Homer. Homer has also taken on additional work in our personal office, taking the lead on holding Norfolk Southern accountable and working to make our railways safer.

From an intern in the Columbus office, to leading the committee's work on mortgages and single-family housing, Megan Cheney has been working with me to improve Ohioans' lives and lower the cost of housing for more than 13 years.

Over a decade ago, my office appointed Will Clayton to be a Senate page. Five years later, he interned in the Columbus office. He has pretty much been with us since, mentoring interns, assisting constituents, and helping everything run smoothly, both in our Washington, DC, office and on the committee staff.

Beth Cooper has worked on the committee staff for more than 15 years. It is not an exaggeration to say that her work on renters' issues, vouchers, and public housing has touched lives in every corner of Ohio and across the country.

I have seen firsthand that Ben Finrock's work ethic is like no other, as an intern and staff assistant in our DC office, and as my driver and press assistant on the committee. Whenever we need him, Ben is up before the sun rises and here past dinner with no complaints.

Sunny Glottmann has handled issues related to the Federal Reserve at a crucial time and led our work on bringing down prices and creating an economy that puts workers first.

Ann Peterson worked in the Obama administration, became an accomplished lawyer, and returned to government service to make our markets work better for families that are saving for and investing in their future.

As climate change disrupts communities and industries, John Richards brought decades of experience on Capitol Hill and at the Department of Energy to lead our work on climate risk.

Phil Rudd has worked for the committee for over a decade. Phil has

worked nonstop through weekends, evenings, and holidays to negotiate bipartisan agreement on the CHIPS and Science Act, every annual defense bill, and more.

We first brought Jeff Schroeder on as an intern, then again as a fellow—finally, we were lucky enough to hire him full-time last year. He managed a wide portfolio with a steady hand and deep policy knowledge.

Jonathan Tsentas is a sharp strategist and keeps a cool head during times of crisis. His decade of experience in the Senate served our office well this year.

Shanna Winters has worked on some big, historic bills in her time in Congress, including the FEND Off Fentanyl Act, legislation to curb the flow of fentanyl into our communities. She helped bring country music star Jason "Jelly Roll" DeFord to testify in support, helped secure a unanimous vote out of committee, and got the bill passed and signed into law within 1 year of introduction.

As a detailee from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Sean Young has been a core part of our team, writing hearing statements, conducting oversight, and managing a portfolio of important banking issues.

Serena Booth has used technical expertise and a consumer-first focus to lead the committee's work on artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies in financial services. Her future students at Brown University will be lucky to know her and to learn from her, just as we have been.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BROWN'S CASEWORK TEAM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the people in my office who are on the frontlines of our work serving the public: my casework team. Our casework team is the best in the country.

They have spent every day working to solve Ohioans' problems and make their lives a little bit easier. There was never an issue too complex, no case too daunting, no lengths we wouldn't go to serve an Ohioan in need.

Whether it was ensuring that a Social Security check came through on time, getting veterans the benefits and care they earned from their service, helping farmers and small businesses access Federal assistance programs, facilitating passports and visas, or working to connect constituents with a Federal Agency, this team is essential to our work for Ohio.

I am proud of the fact that in the 18 years I have been in the Senate, our casework team has assisted nearly 150,000 Ohioans with a Federal issue.

John Patterson has led our outstanding casework team throughout this term and has served in our office for all 18 years.

Fresh off my Senate campaign in 2006, John joined my Cleveland office as a staff assistant. After just 2 years,

he moved into a caseworker and scheduling role. Throughout his decade of service as a constituent advocate, John's deep commitment to the people of Ohio was clear, and at the beginning of this last term, John began leading casework team as our constituent services manager.

For the last 6 years, John has led the team through some of our busiest years, including when new challenges and cases arose during the pandemic.

John manages one of the largest casework teams in the country and setting them up for success. He gives thoughtful advice and lends an ear or a helping hand, while simultaneously maintaining his own caseload, often working late nights and weekends to get the job done.

That is because service is more than just his job; it is his life's mission. Service is at the heart of everything he does. He makes sure the constituent is at the heart of everything we do and always celebrates his team's successes. The casework stories he shares on our Friday staff calls brighten everyone's day and remind us why we are here.

Our office has received so many letters and voicemails thanking John for the work he did.

In one recent case, John was assisting a man from Akron who also owned a working farm. Norfolk Southern owned a rail crossing that ran right in front of the entrance to his farm and was in serious disrepair. He was afraid someone would get stuck on the tracks trying to get to work on the farm and be struck by a train.

For nearly a year, John worked every angle trying to get Norfolk Southern to fix its dangerous crossing. And because of his persistence, this October, John finally received word—and tremendous thanks—from the Ohioan that the crossing was fixed.

Those are the kinds of results John got.

One note we got from an Ohioan this summer, whom John helped in a passport emergency, said, "Without your inquiry, this would not have happened." We hear that over and over about John, on issue after issue.

John also understands that casework is more than just helping Ohioans with individual problems; good casework informs good policy.

Whenever John recognized patterns in our casework, he brought them to the larger team. When Iraq and Afghanistan veterans came to my office with their healthcare challenges, we wrote and passed the PACT Act. Today, tens of thousands of Ohio veterans and a million across the country have access to the healthcare they earned during their service because public servants like John Patterson went to bat for them.

In addition to his work, John Patterson leaves a lasting impression on his colleagues and the people he served.

His colleagues love hearing stories about his travels, including his annual trip to the Achiever Fest in Louisville;

that is a celebration of "The Big Lebowski" for those unaware. And he is known throughout the whole office for his love of rollercoasters that sends him to theme parks around the country.

His colleagues speak of his kindness and attentiveness and the joy he brought to his team, the Cleveland office, and my entire staff.

I thank John for his years of service to the people of Ohio.

Joe Henry started as an intern in my office and rose up through the ranks to become a leader on our casework team. For 18 years, he has been a role model to young staff with an interest in public service.

Joe joined my Cleveland office in 2007 where he first got a feel for working directly with constituents, answering their phone calls, receiving their letters, and greeting them at the front door. He then became a staff assistant in my Columbus office in 2008 and rose quickly.

In 2009, Joe joined the casework team as a constituent advocate and has dedicated his career to serving thousands of Ohioans ever since. Joe's an expert, plain and simple. He is an institutional source of knowledge for so many, both on my team and in other parts of the Federal Government, and his attention to detail and restless persistence are admired by all.

Joe manages one of the most difficult casework portfolios in our office. During the pandemic, Joe served as a liaison for every Ohioan who didn't get their stimulus check from the IRS. He helped thousands of constituents navigate student loan payment deferral and student loan forgiveness programs. He worked with small businesses and guided them through Federal pandemic assistance, like the Paycheck Protection Program that kept many Ohio small businesses open. No task was too tall, no letter too long, no case too complex for Joe Henry.

An elderly couple from Hamilton, OH, got answers from the IRS because of Joe Henry.

Grieving parents dealing with the loss of their son, who were convinced that their government had forgotten them, had their son's student loans forgiven because of Joe Henry.

The sheriff's deputy in Mansfield, who lives across the street from the house I grew up in, was able to pass on his G.I. benefits to his son because of Joe Henry.

Public service is more than just Joe's job. His passion for it shines through in everything he does. He started Propel, our annual student leadership conference for college and community college students. In his free time, he teaches civics at the Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs and fosters the next generation of public servants.

With a quick wit and a mastery of sarcasm, Joe has made a lasting impact on his colleagues and the people he has served. He is an avid fan of the

Columbus Crew, and he and his husband John can often be found cheering them on at games.

Joe Henry, thank you for your service to our office and to the people of Ohio.

And our casework team wouldn't be complete with all the advocates who have dedicated themselves to improving the lives of their Ohio neighbors.

Paulanne Oakes has been a fixture of our casework team for nearly 17 years. She carries limitless wisdom which she shares with all who get the chance to know her. Paulanne was the strongest advocate for those who are often overlooked and never got knocked down. She is warm and caring, with a calming presence that made her a natural at serving constituents dealing with frustrating and stressful situations. Her attitude and spirit brought joy to all who worked with her.

Blair Austin helped more than 1,700 constituents get their passports in less than 2 years, always with a smile on her face and an eagerness to help.

Christina Corrigan, the newest member of our casework team, served with distinction and worked to help immigrants and families in our State.

Brad Deane has served Ohioans for a decade and a half, demonstrating tremendous care for everyone he serves, and diligently working to secure resources for Ohio communities through Federal grants.

Christian Hill dutifully managed one of the most emotionally challenging casework portfolios, working with law enforcement agencies, victims of violent crimes and their families, and those who have been targeted by scams. He is also one hell of a driver.

Sue Klein, one of my dearest friends, leaves her mark on so many of my staff. Her care for our interns and younger staff, and her management of our military service academy nominations process has expanded so many on our team's faith in our country. Just don't get between her and the TV during a Browns or a Guardians game.

Zak Lingo lights up any room he walks into and has served Ohioans with distinction.

Seth Pringle has worked in my office since 2016, advocating for Ohioans. He is also a member of the Ohio National Guard and served in the U.S. Army. We are grateful for his service to our State and our country.

Evan Schalon is wise beyond his years. With patience, integrity, and a deep intuition, he showed up on day one ready to serve.

Logan Snell, our intake specialist and one of the newest members of our casework team, quickly integrated into the office and made himself an integral part of the team.

Meghann Tatz is exceptional. Whether in our Lorain or Columbus offices, she was always a strong ally for any Ohioan who walked in the door.

Meghan Vogel has been an outstanding public servant. The word we heard most often when reading her

feedback from constituents: “superstar.”

Casework is not glamorous. It doesn't get big headlines or show up in the papers. It is often some of the hardest work we do in my Senate office.

Every day, our advocates reach out to Ohioans who may be rightfully frustrated that their government isn't working as it should. They haven't gotten their Social Security; they have been denied certain benefits; they don't understand what the IRS is asking of them.

But our caseworkers have been there to listen and to help. And even more, our caseworkers have dedicated their time and their careers and their lives to making Ohioans' lives a little bit easier. We put constituents at the center of everything we do. And that is what our caseworkers dedicated themselves to every day in my office. I thank them all for their service to Ohio and to our country.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BROWN'S COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my communications team. All that we do in government—passing legislation, pushing for investment in Ohio, holding government and corporations accountable—doesn't mean much if the people we serve don't know about it and don't understand why it matters to their lives. That is what our communications team does.

Our communications staff interact every day with journalists in Ohio, treating reporters with the respect they deserve and an appreciation for the crucial work they do.

And they interact with Ohioans all over our State who want to know whether their government is serving them.

The comms team helps all of us think a little less about how something might sound in Washington and a lot more about how it will be understood by Ohioans.

Kevin Donohoe has led our communications team over the past 2 years with an appreciation for the importance and integrity of journalism and for how ordinary Ohioans get their information and interact with their government.

Kevin is the newest senior member of our team, but after only a few short months on the job, it seemed to most of us like he had been here forever. He fit seamlessly into Team Brown.

Despite being a quintessential New Englander, Kevin immediately made it his mission to not just learn about Ohio, but to really embed himself in the culture of our State. And he quickly earned the trust and respect of Ohio journalists.

Within a few short months on the job, Kevin had been to East Palestine, which was still reeling from Norfolk Southern's toxic train derailment. He had been to the grand opening of the Bit-O-Honey line at Spangler Candy

that the Butch Lewis Act made possible. And he was telling anyone who would listen about how cool our summer manufacturing camps are and the projects he saw kids working on in Dayton.

Kevin quickly—intuitively—understood the mission of this office. And he was able to translate that mission to the public and bring the work of government to the people who matter most: the people we serve.

Few are better at taking in large amounts of new information and being able to quickly articulate a vision and a strategy. Kevin is nothing if not a strategic thinker.

Kevin also brought out the best in a young, talented communications staff. He is excellent at providing people direction, while still giving them room to grow—to learn to do things themselves and to develop their own instincts.

He was the comms team's biggest advocate. He was always looking for opportunities for staff not just to thrive in their jobs, but to grow and to take on new challenges.

In this job, it would have been easy to hunker down and leave little room for fun. But that is not Kevin.

No one would ever accuse him of being low energy or taking himself too seriously; he is known for pacing the office with a baseball bat. One staffer even dressed as Kevin for Halloween, coffee stains and ruffled hair included. But we like ruffled in this office.

And that energy is infectious. Kevin never does anything halfway, and he has brought that combination of enthusiasm and focus to the entire team.

Katie Mulhall Quintela has served in my Senate communications shop since 2015, beginning her Senate career as my speechwriter and continuing to serve the people of Ohio and the Nation as a senior member of my Senate team.

Over the last decade, Katie has been a leader in advancing the dignity of work, having helped craft a strong message advocating for American workers and rallying against corporate greed. She and I have worked together to draft countless speeches, remarks, op-eds, and letters to the editor.

With every word, Katie always remembered who we were working for and speaking to. She helped elevate the voices of the people of Ohio and workers across the country here in Washington, making sure their stories were told. And she invited them into the conversation by cutting through the Washington jargon to ensure the focus was always the lives of the people we serve.

Together, often with Connie, we have poured over pages to get the words just right, whether in preparing for my March 3, 2017, speech at Ohio State University unveiling our plan, “Working Too Hard for Too Little,” or drafting a floor speech honoring Ohio workers or selecting the right words to nudge a CEO before the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee.

And in what is perhaps one of my favorite pastimes, we have kept the editorial department at the Wall Street Journal on its toes, calling out its anti-worker, free-trade-loving board at every opportunity. There is not a statement or public speech I have given in the last decade that Katie's work with me hasn't made better.

Katie is smart and collaborative. She is also my toughest critic. Her persistence and good advice are one of the reasons our office has been so successful and our message has always resonated with so many people across the country and State.

While her messaging advice and strong writing are her career, it is so much more than words on a paper to Katie. She is deeply committed to making our country a better place for working people and has been there for some of our toughest Senate battles and some of my proudest moments serving in the U.S. Senate.

Katie has gotten to know the pensioners and was a part of passing the Butch Lewis Act on their behalf. She learned the stories of veterans in our State and their spouses as we fought to pass the PACT Act. She shares those successes on behalf of Ohio and the American people.

Connie and I have come to know Katie and her family over the years, including her son Charlie, who even dressed up as me for Halloween. I am honored she chose to devote her career to the people of Ohio, and I will miss working with her each day.

Brian Lyons, a proud son of Youngstown, began as a press intern more than 4 years ago and worked his way up from intern to press assistant to press secretary. Few have grown more in their jobs than Brian, who is a gifted strategist, has built relationships with—and earned the respect of—reporters all across the State and has developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the Ohio press corps. His passion for this job and for Ohio workers is so clear in all that he does.

Elaine Vilem brought all of her passion for her home State—not to mention the Guardians—to this job. Her warmth and her ability to connect with anyone, combined with her stellar instincts and ability to think on her feet, made her a natural at organizing events across Ohio.

Maggie Amjad is the definition of a utility player. From her start as both a deputy speechwriter and press assistant, she quickly proved herself indispensable to the entire team—talented at both writing and press alike, ready to step up to any task, excel at it, and do it with enthusiasm.

Logan Basch's creativity is evident in all he does, getting our message out to Ohioans, from videos to newsletters to memes I have never even heard of on Instagram. Logan isn't just skilled at what he does; he is always ready to pitch in, stepping up to assist the rest of the team wherever he can.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BROWN'S
LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring a driving force on my staff, our legislative team.

Without their expertise and dedication and talent, we would not have been able to do the vital work we have done to fight for the dignity of work.

From the Butch Lewis Act that saved the pensions of 100,000 Ohio workers to the PACT Act that extended benefits for veterans exposed to toxins while serving our country to the \$35 cap on the price of insulin, the lives of Ohioans—of Americans—are better because of this team.

The work of our legislative team would not be possible without the leadership and guidance of our deputy chief of staff and, before that, our longtime legislative director Jeremy Hekhuis.

Jeremy joined Team Brown 2011 as our legislative director. And while he attended the University of Michigan for law school—something he never lets staff forget—Jeremy has been one of Ohio's best advocates. He understands this State and the issues that matter most to its people.

Over 14 years, Jeremy served as our legislative director, Banking Committee deputy staff director and deputy chief and counsel, and he pushed forward an agenda that put Ohio and the people who make this country work first. Without Jeremy's masterful maneuvering and endless knowledge, many of these wins wouldn't have happened. Anyone who has worked with Jeremy knows he is more than just an effective staffer; he is a force.

He always has another big idea, another path to try, another way to deliver for Ohio. Jeremy never gives up; his persistence is legendary.

Of course, big ideas don't mean much if you don't know how to get things done. Jeremy does; few understand how to make the Senate work better than Jeremy.

He knows that the biggest wins can be the result of the longest fights. He sees the value in the long game, and finding the right moment to spring into action, there is no one better at making sure everything is ready to go, and then seizing the right opportunity.

He has done it over and over again. It is how we expanded the Child Tax Credit, saved the pensions of 100,000 Ohioans, and expanded healthcare for veterans. It is how we got a new middle school in Piketon and FEND Off Fentanyl passed into law. Jeremy's fingerprints are on everything that has come out of this office and the Banking and Housing Committee—every bill, every letter, every investment, every win.

He worked alongside our legislative assistants and aides and pushed his team to consider every angle and every possible scenario to ensure they did their best work for Ohio. He is known for his late-night phone calls from the aisles of the grocery store and early

morning calls from the trail as he bikes into the office.

When I became ranking member of the Banking and Housing Committee in 2015, Jeremy took on double duty in our office, stepping up to serve as the deputy staff director on the Banking and Housing Committee, in addition to his work as LD. In this role, Jeremy served as the thread connector, coordinating work between the two teams and helping merge them into one larger operation.

His office door was always open to staff to ask questions or get his eyes on a memo or letter or speech. He was a resource for every department and a near expert on Ohio—and a whole lot of other unexpected subjects.

And in an intense and high stakes work environment, it can be hard to find people that always lead with kindness, but that is Jeremy. He always finds the good in people. He always finds the common ground. And he always finds a way to work with everyone. It is why he is so good at this job; this institution is built on relationships.

While he is the best at what he does in the Senate, the job he is most proud of is dad to Hannah, Isaiah, and Caleb and husband to Christine. His love of public service is only rivaled by his love of family and of music, craft beer, kimchi, and great food and good company.

We couldn't have delivered for Ohio without Jeremy. Jeremy, thank you for nearly a decade and a half of your big ideas and your exceptional service.

Our legislative team—and our whole office—couldn't function without our legislative director, Abby Duggan.

Abby joined our office in 2013 as a legislative correspondent. From Abby's first days on Team Brown, her talent, thoroughness, and attention to detail stood out.

It was no surprise that over the next 10 years, Abby worked her way up in the office becoming a legislative aide, then a legislative assistant, and eventually deputy legislative director before becoming legislative director.

Abby has the rare combination of care and compassion for the people we serve and for her colleagues, combined with a deep understanding of the technical parts of legislating.

Her legislative work focused primarily on our health portfolio working to expand access to healthcare for Ohioans and people across the country and to bring down drug prices and healthcare costs.

Her vigilant defense of the Affordable Care Act ensured that Ohioans had access to care they need. She worked alongside Governor Kasich's team to expand Medicaid and was instrumental in strengthening and extending the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP.

She also worked hard to secure a commitment to consolidate and upgrade Cincinnati's two aging National Institute for Occupational Safety and

Health facilities. The construction phase of that project is right around the corner.

As the addiction crisis strained communities across the country, Abby worked to deliver real solutions for Ohioans, from working with Senator Portman's team to pass the CRIB Act to increasing access to residential treatment programs for Ohioans who rely on Medicaid.

Much of Abby's work centered on fighting for Ohio children and the State's children's hospitals. She pushed for increased funding for pediatric research and fellowship programs to train the next generation of pediatricians. Legislation she helped write to prevent stillbirths and sudden unexpected deaths in infants and children is now law.

And because of Abby, people of all ages in Ohio are living healthier lives and have better, more affordable healthcare.

Many Ohioans probably recognize her from her work to support our office's Congressionally Directed Spending projects. Over the course of the past 3 years, the team has secured nearly \$500 million in funding to support more than 325 unique projects across Ohio.

Abby brings out the best in this team. She helped make this office the place it was.

Abby, in some sense, grew up in this office. She got married. She welcomed a son and dealt with all the challenges that come with being a new parent while doing a tough job.

On Team Brown, Abby is a steady presence and is always focused on how best to support the legislative team and mentor staff. Abby is a natural manager.

She has a keen eye for talent. She recognizes her team's strengths, meets staffers where they are, and creates opportunities to help everyone grow in their roles.

Abby has recruited many fellows to our office over the years—talented temporary additions to our staff who bring outside expertise, but who have often never worked in Congress before. Many of these former fellows were here this week, in the Gallery for my final floor speech.

Under Abby's tutelage, often after only a few months working in the Senate, these fellows were fully integrated into the office, introducing bills and shepherding legislation. That is the Abby touch.

As a manager, Abby always has the right solution, knows the right thing to say, and handles every situation with grace. She makes sure that everyone feels heard, that problems are resolved, and that the people we serve are at the center of every decision we make.

Abby, thank you for bringing your warmth and your passion and your skill to this job serving Ohioans for more than a decade.

Abby and Jeremy led a team of talented policy staffers with diverse interests and specialties all working to better the lives of the people we serve.

Chad Bolt led our tax portfolio, and the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit wouldn't have happened without Chad's work. He is also the reason the Social Security Fairness Act passed the House this year and will be voted on in the Senate later this week. Chad is the guy you want on your team; he is collaborative, a resource for junior staff and new team members, a creative thinker who gets it done, and an incredible kickball player.

Wes King covers our agriculture, energy, and environment portfolios. He writes more letters in a day than most Senate LAs do in a month, and they are always exactly what we need to fight for constituents. He is also the volunteer manager of his neighborhood community garden and brings in excess goodies from his garden for the staff to enjoy.

Drew Martineau, our defense and veterans staffer, is everyone's go-to guy. Every group who meets with the office raves about how excellent Drew is. And it is not just because he is a good listener who understands the policy; it is because he cares and follows through. Drew is also a great leader and leads by example, having worked his way up in the office from my driver in Ohio to a senior member of my legislative team. You can tell he was captain of his college baseball team, a tradition he has continued as captain of our office's softball league, where he has been a fearless leader and makes everyone in the office feel valued and included, especially our interns.

Brendan Flynn, our judiciary legislative assistant, is committed to constituent services, and it shows in everything he does. He always works to put Ohioans first, whether it is fighting the administration to get resources to communities in need or organizing a judicial commission process to ensure our Federal judges represent the best Ohio has to offer. He is always there to chat with his colleagues, especially if it is about theater, cooking techniques, or his hometown Las Vegas.

Kimberly Lattimore now covers our health portfolio and always makes constituents feel welcome and heard. Her passion for public health and fighting for vulnerable communities shows in the work she does every day. She recently became an aunt, and Kimberly has spent lots of time getting to know the newest member of her extended family.

Lyndsey Barnes, our economic adviser, is a committed public servant. I will always remember she said in her interview that the most important role in a Senate office is its casework team. She understands that this work is about helping people, about the dignity of their work. Lyndsey is from Buffalo and has dedicated the past decade of her life to improving the lives of folks living on and around Route 90, whether they be in western New York or Ohio.

The work of our legislative assistants is supported every day by our team of legislative correspondents and aides.

Amy Myers joined our team after years working for the residents of New Jersey, but quickly grew to know Ohio. Amy knows just about everyone on Capitol Hill and is always ready to help a colleague make a connection or share a story from a friend.

Francis Goins is passionate about serving his home State and advocating for policy to improve our Nation's healthcare system. He ran track in college and will be joining our armed services early next year, dedicating more of his career to serving our country in a different way.

Andy Dickson loves Ohio and meeting with constituents. He finds joy delivering for his home State every day. He always makes people feel comfortable and loves to hear about where they are from and what they love about Ohio. He also recently adopted a cat Denny.

Cierra Stewart has done an incredible job stepping in to fill in whenever we need her, whether it is because a team member leaves and we need coverage on the portfolio or we need someone to take the lead on the College Presidents Conference. She did a great job working on our Resolution to Declare Racism a Public Health Crisis. She has also dedicated her personal time to service organizations and others dedicated to building up congressional staff, including the SBLC and others. I am excited for her next adventure; Cierra plans to attend law school starting next fall.

Diop Harris, while originally from the State to the north of Ohio, served the people of Ohio for 3 years. He spent his time working on issues both in our personal office and partnering with my staff on the Banking and Housing Committee to make sure Ohioans who reached out to us with questions received an update on issues they care about.

Lila Jarouche worked both as a staff assistant and supported the legislative team. She excelled in every project she took on and is a natural leader. Her work improved our reach to Ohioans by responding to more than 100,000 pieces of mail in less than 2 months, and she stepped up to help staff my work on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China when I rejoined the CECC earlier this year.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR BROWN'S OUTREACH STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring our outreach team, the staff who are out and about every day in Ohio communities, listening to and working with the people we serve.

They make sure our work reaches every corner of Ohio, from Ashtabula to Cincinnati to Marietta to Toledo. Whether it is meeting with local governments or walking picket lines, visiting local businesses or representing our office at naturalization ceremonies or Eagle Scout dinners or neighborhood

festivals, these dedicated workers embedded themselves in Ohio communities, in every county all over the State.

I always said, I am an 88-county Senator. The outreach staff is a big reason why. And it is their conversations that help center our work on the issues that matter most to Ohioans.

John Ryan has served Ohio as my State director for 18 years, since I was first elected in 2007. But our paths had crossed long before, when I was in my early 20s. John had just been elected president of CWA Local 4309. I had been elected to the State legislature representing my hometown of Mansfield, OH. We began working together on behalf of workers across our State. John was an aggressive, creative, and fierce union activist who was widely respected not just by workers, but by everyone in Cleveland, even if he was picketing outside their business. His political savvy, intelligence, and kindness made him a force in the fight for labor, as he served in leadership roles, including as the president of the Cleveland AFL-CIO.

I learned so much about activism and advocacy from John. He is also the reason I made it to the U.S. Senate. In January of 2006, Connie and I asked him to run my campaign for the U.S. Senate. The campaign was struggling as we tried to get it off the ground. Campaign manager after campaign manager had turned us down. Then one night, Connie and I came up with the idea of John Ryan. Many people in this town were surprised that I was hiring a labor leader to run my campaign. But Washington would probably work a lot better if more people looked to the labor movement for leadership. Connie and I knew John's commitment to the dignity of work, his love for Ohio—and his vision for how our State and our country could truly live up to its promise.

Because of John, I won that race. And since then he has led our in-state team, taking only a brief leave of absence in 2011 when I asked him to help lead the effort to overturn S.B. 5, a bill in the statehouse that threatened union workers in Ohio.

John has dedicated his life's work to the labor movement and to fighting for all workers—in Ohio and across the country. He is always looking for every opportunity to make workers' lives better. He understands the tools to advocate for workers go beyond just legislation. He knew that there was always a phone call to be made or a private letter to be sent that might secure workers a raise or a union contract.

And whenever workers in Ohio faced a strike or organized a union, John was there—listening to them, providing his support and counsel, and ensuring that our office was doing everything we could—privately and publicly—to stand with workers as they fought for a voice in their workplace. Too many Senate offices just look out for the wealthy and powerful. John understood the difference this office could make, whether

it was helping workers resolve a dispute or encouraging an organizing drive or calling on a corporation to meet workers at the bargaining table.

John knows that grassroots organizing is at the heart of making change in this country. John was integral in passing the Butch Lewis Act, which restored the pensions of 100,000 workers after Wall Street gambled them away. Ohioans across our State have been able to retire with dignity and live with security because of John's tenacious advocacy.

John wasn't just an advocate for workers; he was a mentor to countless staff from the interns to team managers. He enthusiastically welcomed new staff, going out of his way to listen to their story and what motivated them to work in public service. He was always ready to share his vast network of Ohioans and the many friends he has in communities across our State.

John is a fierce advocate for Ohio. Over the past 18 years, he logged hundreds of thousands of miles driving to every corner of the State to meet one on one with community leaders and workers. No town was too big or too small. Every community was important to him, and he has a deep and vast knowledge of Ohio. He has such pride in being an Ohioan, and he understands that our state is so much more vast and diverse, with so much more culture and rich history, than the national caricature of the Rust Belt.

No community celebration was too small for him to show up and attend. He listened carefully to what communities needed, whether it was a new playground or help fighting a trade case that threatened to shut down a local employer, and he knew how to get it done.

A native Clevelander, John has been instrumental in the renaissance of our city. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of Cleveland—its history, its neighborhoods, its culture, the people who have made their mark on our city. And he has used that knowledge to advocate for Cleveland to be the world-class city it should be.

As an Ohioan, I am deeply grateful to John Ryan for his public service, for his fierce activism, for his roaring laugh and sharp instincts—and for his friendship.

Ann Longworth Orr first started in our office as our Toledo regional representative, before becoming our director of outreach and then our deputy state director.

Over the years, Ann and I have traveled across Ohio together, racking up hundreds of thousands of miles as we traveled to communities from Xenia to Ashtabula to Bryan to Marietta to Sandusky to Middletown.

On all those trips, Ann's empathy, her intellect, her sharp sense of humor, and her commitment to public service shone through. Ann cares deeply about Ohio and the mission of our office: to serve the people of the State she grew up in and calls home. Her remarkable

organizational abilities, her attention to detail, and her understanding of how to make things happen were crucial to what this office has accomplished for the people of Ohio.

Ann combines qualities that too many in public service lack. She is savvy and kind. A leader who starts by listening. Her many strengths are in forging coalitions, in creating a sense of belonging, and having the practical good sense about how to turn good ideas into reality.

Ann came to our office having been a rural organizer. In that role, she listened. She listened to people she disagreed with. She heard people talk about their futures, their dreams, their fears, and their hopes. They often had the opposite political views as hers, but she found common ground.

When she joined our staff, she brought that remarkable ability to really listen and solve problems to our office. Under her leadership, our office held more than 40 roundtables across Ohio with veterans to get the word out about the care and benefits they have earned from the PACT Act. She was crucial in organizing events and roundtables that elevated the voices of retirees who had seen their pension decimated by Wall Street, eventually leading to the passage of the Butch Lewis Act that saved the pensions of 100,000 workers.

Under her leadership, our office was able to bring together businesses, schools, and unions each year to put on dozens of summer manufacturing camps where kids could begin to imagine themselves as part of Ohio's manufacturing future. And it was in no small part because of Ann that every year our office brought together college students across Ohio for a daylong summit about leadership and public service.

Ann cares deeply about her colleagues and her staff. She has mentored so many—not just in Ohio, but in Washington. When someone new joined the office, whether in Ohio or in Washington, it was often Ann who welcomed them—and guided them. For staff not from Ohio, she helped teach them about the State she loves—and was always a calming presence, reassuring them that a field hearing would be a success or that a high-stakes meeting would go well.

She helped mentor a generation of outreach staff, quietly teaching them how to be effective and powerful public servants. She taught our staff how to listen to people and bring them together to solve problems. She taught them to work with labor and fight for working people. That mentorship is part of her legacy, and the staffers she trained will continue to serve our State and our country for decades.

She was also a great friend. Every day we were on the road, she got in the car—sometimes very early—with a delicious homemade smoothie and a smile. Even during the most challenging times, she found the joy in public service—and also the humor in it.

The wisdom and experience she brought to this office made me a better Senator—and made our State a better place for so many Ohioans.

Kam Anderson was a public school teacher who wanted to join my staff so he could have more impact in the community than in the classroom. He succeeded in so many ways to lift up the voices of the muted and bring together people to help resolve community issues in Southwest Ohio.

Anthony Eliopoulos served my Senate office as our senior veterans and military liaison, while also serving our country in the Army Reserves. He listened and learned at scores of veteran roundtables throughout the State and was a tireless advocate for veterans and Ohioans in the military.

Joyce Powdrill, my southwest Ohio director, connected our office with all kinds of people—from Cincinnati, Dayton, and Lima, to rural Ohio. She was relentless in standing up for social and economic justice and a fierce fighter for people often overlooked. Just this year, she organized a Women's Conference in Cincinnati that drew hundreds of participants eager to connect and grow as leaders. Joyce helped to resolve so many issues to make Ohio a better place to live and work.

As my central Ohio regional director for over a decade, Joe Gilligan brought to the office an understanding of the Ohio Statehouse, and was able to leverage his knowledge of State and local politics to better connect all levels of government to the Federal Government. He staffed me for countless meetings and events in the Columbus area and connected disenfranchised communities with our government. Earlier this year, Joe helped put together my Senate hearing in Columbus on fixing multi-employer pensions for 100,000 workers.

As my northwest regional representative, Erica Krause worked with leaders from Toledo to Bryan to Sandusky and everywhere in between. She brought together community leaders and public officials to make the Federal Government work better and to improve both rural and urban communities in her region.

In addition to being my central Ohio regional representative, Emma Speyer used her teamwork expertise to coordinate our statewide Propel Collegiate Student Leadership Conference, bringing together hundreds of college students and administrators to become more involved in their community.

Jordan Pennell, a Youngstown University graduate, wanted to stay in his hometown to put his considerable skills to use for his entire region. He served as my representative of the area from the Pennsylvania line to Lake County and the Mahoning Valley and special projects coordinator as well. Jordan was the "dot connector" for every public official, labor leader, community activist, and the business community in his region. Jordan also helped lead our efforts to expand our

summer manufacturing camps around the State.

Kaleb Knowlton served admirably as regional representative in Appalachian Ohio. Not long after he joined my staff, a train derailment in East Palestine threw the community into crisis. Kaleb stepped in to coordinate Federal assistance and build strong relationships with leaders to assure that we got them the support they needed and could advocate for changes in rail law to better protect communities.

JT Huffer-Cole has served with dedication as north central Ohio regional representative. He assisted with statewide events and helped coordinate some of the many summer manufacturing camps our office organized to show young people the careers available in American manufacturing.

25th ANNIVERSARY OF KACHEMAK BAY NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, or (KBNERR), has enhanced appreciation and understanding of Alaska's Kachemak Bay ecosystem for a generation, allowing for tremendous research, partnerships, and educational programs to develop. Given it is the 25th anniversary of the Reserve, it is appropriate to acknowledge the importance of protecting and studying the area, while also commending the work done across the National Estuarine Research Reserve System.

The establishment of this Reserve in 1999, which is the largest in the system, has ensured that 372,000 acres of Kachemak Bay's coasts and estuaries are studied through place-based learning and locally driven research questions. Research and long-term monitoring of the bay's complex ecosystem and surrounding watershed provide communities the information they need to be stewards of natural resources in the region and respond to changing conditions. Additionally, as a sentinel site for the Gulf of Alaska, work done at KBNERR informs natural resource management across Alaska and the Nation.

As part of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Alaska Center for Conservation Science, KBNERR researchers actively participate in community outreach and, through training and education programs, ensure that scientific information is available to decision-makers, the public, and younger generations.

KBNERR and its NERRS counterparts have contributed greatly to habitat protection and economic growth. Across the country, these Reserves have produced thousands of jobs and research positions, protected millions of acres of land, and secured the continued vitality of fisheries and natural infrastructure.

Thank you to the university and KBNERR staff and communities surrounding Kachemak Bay who make it

possible to enhance our appreciation and understanding of Alaska's coastal lands and waters, ensuring our natural resources remain healthy and productive well into the future.

RECOGNIZING THE YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF CINCINNATI BLACK ACHIEVERS OF 1984

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to issue a long-overdue correction to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on behalf of Ohioan Cornell Anderson.

In 1984, Mr. Anderson was selected as a Black Achiever by the YMCA of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. While former Ohio Representative Thomas Luken recognized Mr. Anderson's achievement in a statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on June 14, 1984, unfortunately, Mr. Anderson's name was listed incorrectly.

Today, I would like to issue a simple correction to ensure Mr. Anderson's name is captured correctly in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Representative Luken's original remarks can be found in Volume 130, No. 81 of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, beginning on page 16614. They are also listed here in their entirety, replacing Mr. Anderson's name with a corrected version.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have that statement printed in the RECORD.

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

RECOGNIZING THE YOUNG MENS CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF CINCINNATI BLACK ACHIEVERS OF 1984

Mr. Speaker, as Representative of the First Congressional District of Ohio, I ask my colleagues to join with me in saluting the Young Mens Christian Association of Cincinnati Black Achievers of 1984 on the occasion of the 6th annual awards dinner on June 15, 1984.

This program began in Cincinnati in 1979 for the purpose of developing and cultivating youths throughout Cincinnati in the areas of communications, self-awareness, college life, and family life. These are areas vital to the development of our youth today. The Black achievers serve as positive role models through voluntary interaction with the youths year round. They work closely with the YMCA in projects which stimulate the surrounding communities as well as the youths.

The purpose of the program is a commendable one. Our future depends on our young people and I am proud to salute the Black achiever adults and students who have made significant contributions to the business and industries of Cincinnati. I also commend the businesses who, through their financial contributions, make this program a success. I salute you and wish you much continued success in the future.

I salute the following Black achievers of 1984:

Cornell Anderson; Charles Bell, Jr.; David K. Brown; Charles V. Douglas; Denise Eaton; Shirley A. Echoles; Mitch A. Fraser; Barbara A. Gilbert; Donald Graham; Billy Grant; Harriette E. Harrington; Milton W. Hinton; Jacqueline Hinton-Cravanas; Algertha Howard; Harry Howard; Vernon L. Jackson;

Charles James; Barbara M. Johnson; Lawrence Johnson; Patricia Johnson; Brenda E. Key; Carolon Jones; Peter K. Knox; George E. Larry, Jr.; Kathy E. Lewis.

Carolyn Lindsay-Cooper; John Lomax; Ray D. Lotts; James E. Lowry; Renee M. McCollough; Larcine J. McDonald; Darryl L. Mobley; Larry B. Munday; Cheryl Murphy; Edward L. O'Neal; Pamela L. Page; Henry J. Partridge; Harvey M. Pickrum, PhD; David L. Pognard; Shari Lynn Smith-Johnson; Regina E. Sofer; Debrah Storms; Ronald Thigpen; Garland Thurman; Linda F. Tuck; Mark D. Walton; Clarence F. Warren; Debbye C. Williams; Mrs. Denise J. Williams; Harry J. Williams; Tyrone S. Williams; Stephen A. Wilson; Sally B. Ziegler.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DAVID BUGBEE

● Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize David Bugbee of Concord as December's Granite Stater of the Month. David, who is 71 years old, has been donating blood regularly since he was 17, helping countless Granite Staters and others in our region through this precious gift.

David was first inspired to donate blood by his father. As a child, David remembers going with his dad to regular blood donation appointments, although at the time he didn't realize that is what his father was doing. Eventually, he grew curious about the little square bandage he noticed his dad sporting after these appointments and asked what the appointments were. When he was 17 years old, David saw a flyer for a blood drive at his Manchester college and, remembering his dad's frequent donations, decided to go. After his first donation, David knew that this would be a meaningful way in which he could help others—and since then, he has given blood more than 200 times.

Donating blood is David's way of giving back to his community. Blood donations can be used for many different purposes in a hospital or emergency setting, and hospitals rely on volunteers like David to collect enough supply for patients in need. David has said that he counts himself lucky to have had jobs that have always allowed him to leave for blood donation appointments during the day. He does not find it a bother at all to give a pint of blood and has gotten used to the sensation, even saying that the period of rest that is required after donating can give him a little break in his day to sit down afterward and eat a snack. A lifelong Granite Stater, David regularly visits his donation center in Concord to give blood, and he appreciates the Red Cross workers who run the center. He has especially noticed that they always show their gratitude to those who donate.

David's selfless commitment to regularly donating blood is a great example of the Granite State spirit of helping other people in any way possible. As we celebrate the holiday season and reflect on ways in which we can support our fellow Granite Staters, I am proud

to name David December's Granite Stater of the Month.●

TRIBUTE TO JORGE RAMOS

● Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, earlier this month, Jorge Ramos stepped down after nearly four decades as anchor of Univision's primetime show, "Noticiero Univision." While his impact doesn't end here, I rise today to celebrate his nearly half century as an icon of Spanish-language news.

Jorge Gilberto Ramos Avalos was born on March 16, 1958, in Mexico City. He earned his degree in communication from Ibero-American University before getting his start as a journalist for Televisa in Mexico. But in those early days, a career as an independent voice in Mexican media was far from guaranteed.

After an early report by Ramos covering the Mexican Presidency was censored, Ramos made the difficult decisions to resign from his position, pack his bags, and even sell his red "vochito"—or Volkswagen—and head for Los Angeles.

But that dedication to journalistic integrity would serve him well. It guided him first to a local KMEX station and soon after to a position with what would later become Univision, a Spanish-language broadcaster with a growing audience in the United States.

In 1986, Ramos became a co-anchor of Univision's primetime show, broadcasting the nightly news to millions of Spanish-speaking Americans and immigrants. In 2007, he debuted his Sunday morning political show, "Al Punto," which he would host for the next 17 years.

Over the course of his career, Ramos became one of Latino America's most trusted sources of news, interviewing U.S. Presidents and other world leaders, covering wars and conflicts, and winning 10 Emmys for his reporting. In a changing United States of America, as a Mexican immigrant and eventually U.S. citizen, Jorge Ramos spoke to a growing Latino population who deserved equal access to quality news of the country around them.

On a personal note, as the proud son of immigrants from Mexico, I can hardly remember a time before Jorge Ramos seemed ever-present on our airwaves. But I remember the sight of a younger Jorge Ramos before the iconic silver hair, the stories he broke, and the trust he built with an audience who relied on him.

Today, we thank Jorge for his unwavering commitment to informing his audience, for holding our public leaders accountable, and for demanding greater access and resources for Spanish speakers.

While this marks the end of his time at Univision, as Jorge has said, "real journalists never retire." We eagerly await what comes next.●

TRIBUTE TO HOLLY ALLGOOD

● Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, on behalf of the people of Mississippi, I commend Mrs. Holly Allgood, who has devoted her career to serving our State's young people.

Holly is a native of Tupelo, MS, and she earned an undergraduate degree at Mississippi State University. She has faithfully supported the Bulldogs' football team, but nothing brings Holly more joy than watching her sons play sports. Her love for children extends to her students, as she cares for them in the classroom.

For 13 years, Holly has served in the Tupelo Public School District, giving back to the community that raised her. Today, she leads a special education class in the city's Early Childhood Education Center. Holly is guided by her mother's mantra: "All children can learn. You just have to find out how they learn best." Few embody that principle better than Holly. Every day, she works to give the gift of education to those at risk of being left behind.

However, it is an act of profound selflessness that entitles Holly Allgood to special recognition today. This year, she learned that one of her 5-year-old students urgently needed a liver transplant. For his whole life, he had faced a rare genetic disorder that necessitated this procedure. Holly signed up to be a donor. A perfect match for her young student, she traveled from Tupelo to Pittsburgh, PA, for a 6-hour, intensive liver transplant surgery. Holly's kindness saved the life of her beloved student.

Mrs. Allgood's story is a testament to the impact one person's amazing generosity can have. I join my fellow Mississippians in thanking Mrs. Holly Allgood for her daily work in the classroom and for her recent sacrificial, compassionate act of heroism.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:40 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, without amendment:

S. 759. An act to authorize the National Detector Dog Training Center, and for other purposes.

S. 1351. An act to study and prevent child abuse in youth residential programs, and for other purposes.

S. 3857. An act 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.

S. 3959. An act 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 message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 8664. An act 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.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 44. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 5009.

At 4:28 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the amendments of the Senate 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.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 5009. 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 enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The message further announced that pursuant to section 109(b)(2) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263), the Minority Leader announces the joint appointment with the Majority Leader of the Senate of the following individual to serve as a Co-Chairperson of the Commission on the Future of the Navy: The Honorable Filemon Vela of Houston, Texas.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY) announced that on today, December 19, 2024, she had signed the following enrolled bill, which was previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 4199. An act to authorize additional district judges for the district courts and convert temporary judgeships.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 8664. An act 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; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1171. A bill to amend chapter 131 of title 5, United States Code, to prevent Members of Congress and their spouses and dependent children from trading stocks and owning stocks, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-309).

S. 2315. A bill to provide for the creation of the missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel Records Collection at the National Archives, to require the expeditious public transmission to the Archivist and public disclosure of missing Armed Forces and civilian personnel records, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-310).

S. 2871. A bill to advance Federal Government innovation through the implementation and use of multi-cloud computing software technology, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-311).

S. 3015. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to address telework for Federal employees, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-312).

S. 3654. A bill to amend the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 to require the timely appointment of agency transition officials, to ensure adequate performance and oversight of required transition-related preparation, to require new guidance for agencies and possible transition teams, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-313).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 3810. A bill to prohibit conflict of interests among consulting firms that simultaneously contract with the Government of the People's Republic of China and the United States Government, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-314).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4043. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to make executive agency telework policies transparent, to track executive agency use of telework, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-315).

S. 4373. A bill to provide for congressional approval of national emergency declarations (Rept. No. 118-316).

S. 4651. A bill to require agencies to use information and communications technology products obtained from original equipment manufacturers or authorized resellers, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-317).

S. 4681. A bill to ensure a timely, fair, meaningful, and transparent process for individuals to seek redress because they were wrongly identified as a threat under the screening and inspection regimes used by the Department of Homeland Security, to require a report on the effectiveness of enhanced screening programs of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-318).

S. 4711. A bill to limit the consideration of marijuana use when making an employment suitability or security clearance determination, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-319).

S. 5028. A bill to require Federal contractors to implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-320).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 5067. A bill to improve individual assistance provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-321).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 5102. A bill to require annual reports on counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-322).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

S. 5105. A bill to require a report by the Secretary of Homeland Security regarding the failed assassination attempt on the life of Donald J. Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, 2024 (Rept. No. 118-323).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 5109. A bill to amend section 3520A of title 44, United States Code, to extend the Chief Data Officer Council's sunset and add new authorities for improving Federal agency data governance, including to enable reliable and secure adoption of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-324).

S. 5133. A bill to establish a tracker for Senate-confirmed executive branch positions (Rept. No. 118-325).

S. 5302. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to address the responsibilities of the Administrator of General Services with respect to Federal advisory committees, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-326).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 5313. A bill to improve section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Rept. No. 118-327).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 5315. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to enhance border security by seeking to expand partnerships with appropriate law enforcement entities in Mexico and Central American and South American countries to combat human smuggling and trafficking operations in Mexico and such countries, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-328).

S. 5317. A bill to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a review of the Homeland Security Information Network, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-329).

S. 5319. A bill 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 (Rept. No. 118-330).

S. 5321. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a DHS Cybersecurity Internship Program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-331).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 5527. An act to amend section 1078 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 to increase the effectiveness of the Technology Modernization Fund, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-332).

H.R. 6231. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require a prioritized policy issuance review process for the De-

partment of Homeland Security, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-333).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title:

H.R. 7832. An act to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a plan to identify, integrate, and deploy new, innovative, disruptive, or other emerging or advanced technologies to enhance, or address capability gaps in, border security operations, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-334).

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 9596. An act to amend title 41, United States Code, and title 10, United States Code, to provide best value through the multiple award schedule program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-335).

By Mr. MANCHIN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 4753. A bill to reform leasing, permitting, and judicial review for certain energy and minerals projects, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 118-336).

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. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 5602. A bill to designate any clinic that is a certified community behavioral health clinic as a "Stabenow-Blunt Community Behavioral Health Clinic"; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 5603. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the threshold amounts for inclusion of Social Security benefits in income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. COONS):

S. 5604. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the advanced manufacturing investment credit to include materials integral to the manufacturing of semiconductors or semiconductor manufacturing equipment; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 5605. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require disclosures to contributors regarding recurring contributions or donations; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 5606. A bill to reform the Federal Election Commission's enforcement processes and related provisions under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 5607. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the rehabilitation credit for buildings in rural areas; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. LEE):

S. 5608. A bill to reduce the size of the Federal workforce through attrition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 5609. A bill to promote international exchanges on best election practices, to cultivate more secure democratic institutions

around the world, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 5610. A bill to provide grants to support continuing education in election administration or cybersecurity for election officials and employees; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 5611. 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 Finance.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 5612. A bill to amend part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for prior authorization reforms under the Medicare Advantage program; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 5613. A bill to improve the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of diagnosis in health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. 5614. A bill to require the head of each Executive agency to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to the headquarters of the Executive agency to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 5615. A bill to protect elections for public office by providing enhanced security for the infrastructure used to carry out such elections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. ROMNEY (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. MORAN, Mr. KING, and Mr. HASSAN):

S. 5616. A bill to establish the Artificial Intelligence Safety Review Office in the Department of Commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WELCH:

S. 5617. A bill to provide for debt reduction for developing countries for purposes of climate adaptation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WICKER:

S. 5618. A bill to promote defense innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 5619. 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 Indian Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 5620. A bill to require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study on the use of commercial-off-the-shelf products and artificial intelligence technologies by the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. SMITH:

S. 5621. A bill to provide grants to States, Indian Tribes, and Tribal organizations for activities to increase the availability of child care options and to support the child care workforce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 5622. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to establish an energy efficient appliance rebate program to provide rebates for the manufacturing, distribution, contracting, installation, and servicing of certain building electrification products and industrial heat pumps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHMITT:

S. 5623. A bill to establish a debt reduction fund to reduce the national debt of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 5624. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an integrated project team to improve the process for scheduling appointments for health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 5625. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize the Clean School Bus program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 5626. A bill to modify the Federal share of operating costs for certain projects that receive grants under the Formula Grants to Rural Areas Program of the Federal Transit Administration; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 5627. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to provide that the United States Postal Service may provide certain basic financial services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 5628. A bill to provide for an international disability rights strategy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCHATZ:

S. 5629. A bill to support marine carbon dioxide removal activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LANKFORD:

S. 5630. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to modify the Methane Emissions Reduction Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 5631. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for access to certain beneficial ownership information; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 5632. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and administer a pilot program to provide grants to support Food is Medicine programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 5633. A bill to establish Medicare flex fund accounts and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 5634. A bill to establish a grant program under the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. SCHATZ:

S. 5635. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 1992 with respect to the Department of

Energy Tribal loan guarantee program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. WARREN:

S. 5636. A bill to ensure progress toward the fulfillment by the Federal Government of its trust and treaty obligations to Native Americans and Tribal governments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 5637. A bill to establish the "Biomedical Innovation Fund", and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Ms. SMITH):

S. 5638. A bill to secure the supply of drugs in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. COTTON:

S. Res. 935. A resolution condemning the commutation of Michael Conahan granted by President Biden on December 12, 2024; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. Res. 936. A resolution congratulating the Los Angeles Galaxy for winning the 2024 Major League Soccer Cup; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 937. A resolution to authorize testimony and representation in United States v. Warnagiris; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1034

At the request of Ms. LUMMIS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1034, a bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to establish a competitive grant program for projects for commercial motor vehicle parking, and for other purposes.

S. 1631

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

S. 1772

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1772, a bill to establish a national mercury monitoring program, and for other purposes.

S. 1924

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1924, a bill to protect

human rights and enhance opportunities for LGBTQI people around the world, and for other purposes.

S. 2286

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2286, a bill to improve the effectiveness and performance of certain Federal financial assistance programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2300

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2300, a bill to require that information on spending associated with national emergencies be subject to the same reporting requirements as other Federal funds under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, and for other purposes.

S. 3050

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3050, a bill to require a report on artificial intelligence regulation in the financial services industry, to establish artificial intelligence bug bounty programs, to require a vulnerability analysis study for artificial intelligence-enabled military applications, and to require a report on data sharing and coordination, and for other purposes.

S. 3109

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3109, a bill to require the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Commissioner of Social Security to review and simplify the processes, procedures, forms, and communications for family caregivers to assist individuals in establishing eligibility for, enrolling in, and maintaining and utilizing coverage and benefits under the Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP, and Social Security programs respectively, and for other purposes.

S. 3456

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3456, a bill to provide a retroactive effective date for the promotions of senior officers of the Armed Forces whose military promotions were delayed as a result of the suspension of Senate confirmation of such promotions.

S. 3722

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3722, a bill to require a report on access to maternal health care within the military health system, and for other purposes.

S. 3834

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 3834, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure veterans may obtain a physical copy of a form

for reimbursement of certain travel expenses by mail or at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 4284

At the request of Mr. PETERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 4284, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amount of monthly housing stipend received by parents pursuing a program of education through distance learning using Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 5008

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5008, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 5226

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5226, a bill to establish a program to address sickle cell disease and other heritable hemoglobinopathies.

S. 5541

At the request of Mr. SCHMITT, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 5541, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training Program.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 5625. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize the Clean School Bus program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Clean Commute for Kids Act of 2024, which I introduced today.

Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, I still recall the diesel exhaust that my classmates and I inhaled each day on our way to school. Unfortunately, this is still a reality for nearly 25 million American children who ride more than 400,000 diesel-powered buses to school. These vehicles expose our children to harmful pollutants that impact not just their health but also their academic performance.

As we continue our efforts to combat climate change and build more sustainable infrastructure, we must simultaneously prioritize reducing children's exposure to these harmful emissions by accelerating the deployment of zero-emission buses.

That is why I am reintroducing the Clean Commute for Kids Act, which builds on the successful Clean School Bus Program that I was proud to champion as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law. This program is already

delivering impactful results, having awarded nearly \$3 billion to fund the replacement of approximately 8,700 diesel buses across the country, with many more on the way.

This legislation offers improvements to streamline the process for school districts to apply for the program, promotes good-paying schoolbus manufacturing jobs, and authorizes an additional \$22 billion to further support the replacement of aging diesel buses with zero-emission fleets. By doing so, we can continue to cut greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and safeguard the health of our children for generations to come.

As we know, investing in zero-emission schoolbuses is not just about reducing pollution—it is about investing in our children, their health, and their future. I am grateful to Senator WARNOCK for co-leading this effort with me in the Senate, and I thank my good friend Representative CÁRDENAS for championing this legislation in the House before his retirement.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 935—CONDEMNING THE COMMUTATION OF MICHAEL CONAHAN GRANTED BY PRESIDENT BIDEN ON DECEMBER 12, 2024

Mr. COTTON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 935

SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE COMMUTATION OF MICHAEL CONAHAN GRANTED BY PRESIDENT BIDEN ON DECEMBER 12, 2024.

It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) President Joseph R. Biden undermined the rule of law and robbed victims of justice, when he issued the commutation of Michael Conahan on December 12, 2024;

(2) Michael Conahan was a judge convicted of accepting kickbacks in exchange for his role in sentencing more than 2,300 children to private juvenile detention centers;

(3) this commutation is a reprehensible insult to the victims of Michael Conahan;

(4) the action of the President is made yet more outrageous by his failure to individually review Michael Conahan's case;

(5) President Biden acted contrary to the original intent of the Presidential pardon power to correct specific and limited failures in the criminal justice system; and

(6) the Senate condemns this commutation and condemns the process by which it was approved.

SENATE RESOLUTION 936—CONGRATULATING THE LOS ANGELES GALAXY FOR WINNING THE 2024 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. SCHIFF) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 936

Whereas, on December 7, 2024, the Los Angeles Galaxy (referred to in this preamble as the "LA Galaxy") defeated the New York

Red Bulls by a final score of 2 to 1 to win the 2024 Major League Soccer (referred to in this preamble as the “MLS”) Cup;

Whereas this victory marks the sixth MLS Cup for the LA Galaxy franchise and their tenth overall finals appearance;

Whereas the LA Galaxy was undefeated at home at Dignity Health Sports Park throughout the entire 2024 MLS season and playoff run;

Whereas, during the 2024 playoffs, the LA Galaxy defeated the Colorado Rapids, the Minnesota United FC, the Seattle Sounders FC, and the New York Red Bulls en route to winning the MLS Cup;

Whereas the LA Galaxy was the only team to reach the conference finals that finished the regular season in the top 3 in their conference;

Whereas the LA Galaxy scored a record 18 goals throughout the playoffs;

Whereas the LA Galaxy leads the league with 6 MLS Cup titles;

Whereas goals scored by Gabriel Pec, Joseph Paintsil, and Dejan Joveljić on November 24, 2024, marked the first time in MLS postseason history that 3 teammates have each scored 2 goals in the same match;

Whereas Dejan Joveljić led the league in the playoffs with 6 goals and also had 2 assists;

Whereas every member of the 2024 LA Galaxy roster played a key part in winning the MLS Cup during this historic season;

Whereas the LA Galaxy secured its first MLS Cup title in 10 years;

Whereas the LA Galaxy Foundation continues to advance the game of soccer and make a positive impact in the community through volunteerism, financial support, and programming; and

Whereas LA Galaxy fans never stopped supporting the team throughout the 2024 season, playing a key role in motivating their team to victory: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Los Angeles Galaxy for winning the 2024 Major League Soccer Cup;

(2) recognizes the achievements and contributions of the entire Los Angeles Galaxy organization, including the players, coaches, management, front office staff, and support staff in bringing the Major League Soccer Cup back to Los Angeles; and

(3) respectfully directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the controlling owner of the Los Angeles Galaxy, Philip Anschutz;

(B) the president and CEO of AEG, the ownership group of the Los Angeles Galaxy, Dan Beckerman; and

(C) the president of business operations and chief operating officer of the Los Angeles Galaxy, Thomas Braun.

SENATE RESOLUTION 937—TO AUTHORIZE TESTIMONY AND REPRESENTATION IN UNITED STATES V. WARNAGIRIS

Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 937

Whereas, in the case of *United States v. Warnagiris*, Cr. No. 21–382, pending in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, the prosecution has requested the production of testimony from Daniel Schwager, a former employee of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(a) and 704(a)(2) of the Ethics in Government Act of

1978, 2 U.S.C. §§288b(a) and 288c(a)(2), the Senate may direct its counsel to represent current and former officers and employees of the Senate with respect to any subpoena, order, or request for evidence relating to their official responsibilities;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may, by the judicial or administrative process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate; and

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may promote the administration of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistent with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Daniel Schwager, a former employee of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, is authorized to provide relevant testimony in the case of *United States v. Warnagiris*, except concerning matters for which a privilege should be asserted.

SEC. 2. The Senate Legal Counsel is authorized to represent Mr. Schwager, and any current or former officer or employee of the Secretary's office, in connection with the production of evidence authorized in section one of this resolution.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3345. Mr. LEE proposed an amendment to the bill S. 4511, to provide for the crediting of funds received by the National Guard Bureau as reimbursement from States.

SA 3346. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3347. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3348. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3349. Mr. BENNET (for Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. OSSOFF)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 5062, to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes.

SA 3350. Mr. BENNET (for Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 4640, to strengthen trafficking victim assistance grant funding.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3345. Mr. LEE proposed an amendment to the bill S. 4511, to provide for the crediting of funds received by the National Guard Bureau as reimbursement from States; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Guarding Readiness Resources Act”.

SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF FUNDS RECEIVED BY NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU AS REIMBURSEMENT FROM STATES.

Section 710 of title 32, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) TREATMENT OF REIMBURSED FUNDS.— Any funds received by the National Guard

Bureau from a State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, or the Virgin Islands as reimbursement under this section for the use of military property—

“(1) shall be credited to—

“(A) the appropriation, fund, or account used in incurring the obligation; or

“(B) an appropriate appropriation, fund, or account currently available for the purposes for which the expenditures were made; and

“(2) may only be used by the Department of Defense for the repair, maintenance, replacement, or other similar functions related directly to assets used by National Guard units while operating under State active duty status.”.

SA 3346. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . ADJUSTMENT TO NORMAL AND EARLY RETIREMENT AGE.

Section 216(l) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 416(l)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(F) with respect to an individual who—

“(i) attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2024, and before January 1, 2032, such individual's early retirement age (as determined under paragraph (2)(A)(ii)) plus 60 months; or

“(ii) receives a benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) and attains 60 years of age after December 31, 2024, and before January 1, 2032, 67 years plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (5)(A) for the calendar year in which such individual attains 60 years of age;

“(G) with respect to an individual who—

“(i) attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2031, and before January 1, 2033, 69 years of age; or

“(ii) receives a benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) and attains 60 years of age after December 31, 2031, and before January 1, 2033, 69 years of age;

“(H) with respect to an individual who—

“(i) attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2032, and before January 1, 2036, 67 years of age plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (5)(B)); or

“(ii) receives a benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) and attains 60 years of age after December 31, 2032, and before January 1, 2036, 67 years of age plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (5)(A));

“(I) with respect to an individual who—

“(i) attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2035, and before January 1, 2037, 70 years of age; or

“(ii) receives a benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) and attains 60 years of age after December 31, 2035, and before January 1, 2037, 70 years of age; and

“(J) with respect to an individual who—

“(i) attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2036, 70 years of age plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (6)); or

“(ii) receives a benefit described in paragraph (2)(B) and attains 60 years of age after

December 31, 2036, 70 years of age plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (6)).”;

(2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) The term ‘early retirement age’ means—

“(A) in the case of an old-age, wife’s, or husband’s insurance benefit—

“(i) 62 years of age with respect to an individual who attains such age before January 1, 2025;

“(ii) with respect to an individual who attains 62 years of age after December 31, 2024, and before January 1, 2032, 62 years of age plus the number of months in the age increase factor (as determined under paragraph (4)) for the calendar year in which such individual attains 62 years of age; and

“(iii) with respect to an individual who attains age 62 after December 31, 2031, 64 years of age; or

“(B) in the case of a widow’s or widower’s insurance benefit, 60 years of age.”; and

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

“(4) For purposes of paragraph (2)(A)(ii), the age increase factor shall be equal to three-twelfths of the number of months in the period beginning with January 2025 and ending with December of the year in which the individual attains 62 years of age.

“(5) The age increase factor shall be equal to three-twelfths of the number of months in the period beginning with January 2025 and ending with December of the year in which—

“(A) for purposes of paragraphs (1)(F)(ii) and (1)(H)(ii), the individual attains 60 years of age; or

“(B) for purposes of paragraph (1)(H)(i), the individual attains 62 years of age.

“(6) The Commissioner of Social Security shall determine (using reasonable actuarial assumptions) and publish on or before November 1 of each calendar year after 2035 the number of months (rounded, if not a multiple of one month, to the next lower multiple of one month) by which life expectancy as of October 1 of such calendar year of an individual attaining early retirement age on such October 1 exceeds the life expectancy as of October 1, 2036, of an individual attaining early retirement age on October 1, 2036. With respect to an individual who attains early retirement in the calendar year following any calendar year in which a determination is made under this paragraph, the age increase factor shall be the number of months determined under this paragraph as of October 1 of such calendar year in which such determination is made.”.

SEC. ____ . INCREASE IN MAXIMUM AGE FOR DELAYED RETIREMENT CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (w) of section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402) is amended—

(1) in paragraphs (2)(A) and (3), by striking “age 70” each place it appears and inserting “the maximum delayed retirement age (as determined pursuant to paragraph (7))”;

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

“(7) For purposes of paragraphs (2)(A) and (3), the ‘maximum delayed retirement age’ shall be equal to—

“(A) during the period before January 1, 2025, 70 years of age for an individual who has attained early retirement age (as determined under section 216(1)(2)) during such period; and

“(B) during the period after December 31, 2024, the sum of—

“(i) the retirement age for such calendar year, as determined under section 216(1)(1), for an individual who has attained age 62 (for purposes of section 216(1)(2)(A)) or who has attained age 60 (for purposes of section 216(1)(2)(B)) during such calendar year; and

“(ii) 3 years.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

SA 3347. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CHILD’S INSURANCE BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 202(d)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C)(iii), by adding “and” at the end; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

“(D) at the time such application was filed, had an income that did not exceed 100 percent of the poverty line (as defined in section 2110(c)(5)) applicable to a family of the size involved.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

SA 3348. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 82, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . LIMITATION ON SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 215 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“Limitation on Benefits for Certain Individuals

“(j)(1) In the case of an applicable individual, the primary insurance amount of such individual shall not exceed an amount equal to the quotient of—

“(A) the total amount of taxes paid under sections 1401(a), 3101(a), 3111(a), 3201(a), 3211(a), and 3221(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 with respect to any self-employment income, wages, or compensation paid to or received by such individual; divided by

“(B) the total number of months of remaining life expectancy of such individual, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security using reasonable actuarial assumptions.

“(2) For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘applicable individual’ means an individual whose primary insurance amount would be computed or recomputed pursuant to subsection (a)(7), (d)(3), or (f)(9) of this section (as in effect on the day prior to the date of enactment of the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023).”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to benefits payable for months after December 2024.

SA 3349. Mr. BENNET (for Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. OSSOFF)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 5062, to address sexual har-

assment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Prison Staff Safety Enhancement Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2023, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Justice released a report titled “Evaluation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Efforts to Address Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Committed by Inmates Toward Staff” (in this section referred to as the “Inspector General report”).

(2) The Inspector General report examined all sanctioned inmate sexual incidents in the Bureau of Prisons (in this section referred to as the “Bureau”) between fiscal years 2015 and 2021, and found that inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault is widespread.

(3) The Inspector General report further found that the Bureau does not collect adequate data on inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault and that, because of the Bureau’s inadequate data, the Bureau has not been able to identify the full scope of inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault.

(4) The Inspector General report further found that the Bureau does not have systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the Bureau’s strategies to mitigate inmate-on-staff sexual harassment and sexual assault.

(5) The Inspector General report made recommendations to the Bureau to address the failures in the Bureau’s data collection and mitigation efforts, but the Bureau has not implemented these recommendations.

SEC. 3. ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OF BUREAU OF PRISONS STAFF.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BUREAU.—The term “Bureau” means the Bureau of Prisons.

(2) CORRECTIONAL OFFICER.—The term “correctional officer” has the meaning given the term in section 4051 of title 18, United States Code.

(3) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The term “Inspector General” means the Inspector General of the Department of Justice.

(4) INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “incarcerated individual” has the meaning given the term “prisoner” in section 4051 of title 18, United States Code.

(5) SEXUAL ASSAULT.—The term “sexual assault” means an act described in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of section 920 of title 10, United States Code.

(6) SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—The term “sexual harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that explicitly or implicitly affect an individual’s employment, unreasonably interfere with an individual’s work performance, or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY BUREAU.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Bureau shall fully implement each recommendation in the report released by the Inspector General in 2023 titled “Evaluation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Efforts to Address Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Committed by Inmates Toward Staff”.

(2) REPORT.—If the Bureau has not fully implemented each recommendation referenced in paragraph (1) by the deadline under that paragraph, the Bureau shall submit a report to Congress by that deadline

that includes an explanation of the failure to fully implement each recommendation and a detailed timeline for full implementation.

(C) DATA ANALYSIS BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date as of which the Bureau has fully implemented each recommendation referenced in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) the Inspector General shall request from the Bureau, and the Bureau shall provide, updated data on the number and prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault incidents perpetrated by incarcerated individuals against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau during fiscal years 2022 through 2025;

(B) the Inspector General shall conduct an analysis of the data described in subparagraph (A); and

(C) the Inspector General shall provide Congress and the Attorney General with the analysis conducted under subparagraph (B) and any additional recommendations, including analysis of whether the Bureau has taken sufficient steps to identify the prevalence and scope of sexual harassment and sexual assault incidents perpetrated by incarcerated individuals against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau and to mitigate such incidents.

(2) ANALYSIS OF PUNISHMENTS.—The analysis required under paragraph (1)(C) shall include an analysis of punishments for sexual harassment and sexual assault as of the date of enactment of this Act in facilities controlled by the Bureau of Prisons, including data on the use of such punishments during the 5-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act.

(d) RULEMAKING BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after receiving the analysis under subsection (c), the Attorney General shall promulgate a rule adopting national standards for prevention, reduction, and punishment of sexual harassment and sexual assault perpetrated by an incarcerated individual against a correctional officer or other employee of the Bureau.

SA 3350. Mr. BENNET (for Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Mrs. BLACKBURN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 4640, to strengthen trafficking victim assistance grant funding; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Victims of Human Trafficking Act”.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO ASSIST VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Section 107(b)(2) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “shall” and insert “may”;

(B) in clause (i), by striking “three percent” and inserting “up to 7 percent”;

(C) in clause (ii)—

(i) by striking “5 percent” and inserting “up to 10 percent”; and

(ii) by inserting “and strengthening program administration and budgeting” after “activities”; and

(D) in clause (iii), by striking “one percent” and inserting “up to 1 percent”; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), strike “75 percent” and insert “95 percent”.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO NOT OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator Chuck Grassley, do not 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 19, 2024.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2024

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it recess until 10 a.m. on Friday, December 20, and resume consideration of the Cheeks nomination; further, that upon disposition of the Murillo nomination, the Senate resume legislative session; further, that if any nominations are confirmed during Friday’s session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

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

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BENNET. Mr. 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 8:12 p.m., recessed until Friday, December 20, 2024, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 19, 2024:

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. RALPH J. RIZZO, JR.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. GREGORY J. BRADY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. JOHNNY K. DAVIS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. WALTER H. ALLMAN III
CAPT. WESLEY P. BRINGHAM
CAPT. RICHARD G. BURGESS
CAPT. DARYLE D. CARDONE
CAPT. CAMERON R. CHEN
CAPT. MATTHEW J. DUFFY
CAPT. JOHN P. FRIEDMAN
CAPT. WILLIAM K. GANTT, JR.
CAPT. MICHAEL R. JARRETT
CAPT. DAVID LOO
CAPT. GARY G. MONTALVO, JR.
CAPT. DAVIDTAVIS M. POLLARD
CAPT. MATTHEW T. POTTENBURGH
CAPT. WILLIAM R. REED
CAPT. KARREY D. SANDERS
CAPT. CHARLES R. SARGEANT
CAPT. JOHN W. STAFFORD
CAPT. THOMAS J. ZERR

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. ANDREW M. BIEHN

CAPT. DANIEL L. LANNAMANN
CAPT. BRIAN A. METCALF

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. TIMOTHY S. BRADY, JR.
COL. DUSTIN J. BYRUM
COL. HENRY DOLBERRY, JR.
COL. LAUREN S. EDWARDS
COL. CHRISTOPHER M. HAAR
COL. SEAN P. HOEWING
COL. RYAN M. HOYLE
COL. DAVID C. HYMAN
COL. ROBERT T. MEADE
COL. JOEL F. SCHMIDT
COL. JEREMY S. WINTERS

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) JOHN E. DOUGHERTY IV
REAR ADM. (LH) JONATHAN E. RUCKER
REAR ADM. (LH) DOUGLAS L. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) THOMAS M. HENDERSCHIEDT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER D. ALEXANDER
REAR ADM. (LH) BRADLEY J. ANDROS
REAR ADM. (LH) SEAN R. BAILEY
REAR ADM. (LH) BRIAN H. BENNETT
REAR ADM. (LH) ADAN G. CRUZ
REAR ADM. (LH) CHRISTOPHER A. KIJEK
REAR ADM. (LH) MAX G. MCCOY, JR.
REAR ADM. (LH) THOMAS P. MONINGER
REAR ADM. (LH) MARTIN J. MUCKIAN
REAR ADM. (LH) GREGORY D. NEWKIRK
REAR ADM. (LH) MARK A. SCHAFER
REAR ADM. (LH) NICHOLAS R. TILBROOK
REAR ADM. (LH) ROBERT E. WIRTH
REAR ADM. (LH) MICHAEL S. WOSJE

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. LUKK C. G. CROPSY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. MARK B. PYE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. MATTHEW C. BROWN

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. TONRI C. BROWN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

LT. GEN. CURTIS A. BUZZARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601, AND FOR APPOINTMENT AS A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 711:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. BRETT G. SYLVIA

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JUSTIN S. ALBERICO AND ENDING WITH JONATHAN A. ZANNIS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH STEPHEN M. ADDINGTON AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA J. WOLFRAM, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LEE EDMOND AKERS AND ENDING WITH MICHAEL GRAY YTTTRI, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH PHILLIP N. ALVAREZ AND ENDING WITH STANLEY Y. WONG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ERIC STARR BUSS AND ENDING WITH JONATHAN M. WALKER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH STEPHEN V. S. ALEXANDER AND ENDING WITH YESUN YOON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LAKISHA N. ALBERTIE AND ENDING WITH KERI L. YOUNG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JOHN C. BATKA AND ENDING WITH RICHARD Y. K. YOO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF KEITH A. SCHULTZ, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF FRANCIS X. PARR III, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF JAY E. BUTTERFIELD, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH THOMAS A. HUTTON AND ENDING WITH ROBERT D. MCALLISTER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 18, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ROBERT L. BELL AND ENDING WITH DANIEL J. BROWN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 18, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF GABRIEL R. BULTZ, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CORA L. ALLEN AND ENDING WITH 0003434384, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 18, 2024.

ARMY NOMINATION OF RAFAEL J. KAPLAN, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHRISTOPHER D. CARAWAY AND ENDING WITH BRADFORD M. WINKELMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 18, 2024.

NAVY NOMINATION OF ERIK C. HEDVAL, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF KEITH C. BRADY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

IN THE SPACE FORCE

SPACE FORCE NOMINATION OF KENNETH N. WOOTEN, TO BE MAJOR.

SPACE FORCE NOMINATION OF BRENDA L. BEEGLE, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

IN THE COAST GUARD

COAST GUARD NOMINATION OF BENJAMIN J. SPECTOR, TO BE CAPTAIN.

COAST GUARD NOMINATION OF ALEXANDER B. CURRIE, TO BE COMMANDER.

COAST GUARD NOMINATION OF HOLLY A. BERGMAN, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

COAST GUARD NOMINATION OF JILLIAN H. BEECHER, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH THOMAS E. ADAMS AND ENDING WITH MARIE L. SEVIN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2024.

COAST GUARD NOMINATION OF JESSE COLLINS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JASON A. ACUNA AND ENDING WITH DAVID J. ZWIRBLIS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2024.

COAST GUARD NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RYAN G. ANGELO AND ENDING WITH JEFFREY S. ZAMARIN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2024.