

know how to preserve the qualitative military edge of the Israeli Defense Forces and of the Israeli Air Force through acquisition of this important plane.”

Military might is useful only if three things occur: One, the capability is present to counter and engage the threat; two, the capacity and numbers are present for all of the threats; and three, those in power have the resolve to use them to protect the sovereignty of our Nation and its citizens.

The current demand on our military requires every ounce of capability made available by advanced weapon systems and, just as important, the numbers needed to counter threats the globe over.

Consider how in the past we chose to reduce the number of F-22 advanced fighters made available to combatant commanders. Originally, the program of record for the F-22 was 750 aircraft, yet we procured only 195. Today, the demand for the F-22 and its capabilities dwarfs the available jets in the inventory. In hindsight, we should have bought 1,000.

Similar situations have also occurred with the B-2 bomber, the C-17 transport, and numerous other aircraft. The lesson is clear: The program of record for 1,763 F-35 A models for the Air Force and 680 B and C models for the Navy and Marine Corps have to materialize and be realized. The committees of jurisdiction should also insist to the Department that the F-35 Joint Program Office also acquire the spare parts needed to sustain the numbers and accelerate that purchase to ensure that F-35s are sustained at the level of readiness demanded by the current world dynamic. As the old adage goes, if we do not learn from history, then we are doomed to repeat it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2028, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2028) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Alexander/Feinstein amendment No. 3801, in the nature of a substitute.

Alexander amendment No. 3804 (to amendment No. 3801), to modify provisions relating to Nuclear Regulatory Commission fees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

GAO REPORT

Mr. COATS. Madam President, it is the beginning of the appropriations season here in Washington. I am glad we are doing that. We are a little bit ahead of schedule from past experiences, although we haven't been doing appropriations bills during my second term in the Senate. I am glad we are doing them because that is really what we are here for.

For those listening, this is for when Congress determines how we spend taxpayer money. There are a number of people in the gallery today—they are all taxpayers—wondering: Where does this money that is sent to Washington go?

When Hoosiers from Indiana send their hard-earned tax dollars to Washington to be spent by the Federal Government, they expect their elected leaders to be good stewards of their resources. After all, they worked hard to earn this money. Before they get their net paycheck, their taxes are deducted and sent to Washington. They have every right to expect us to be good stewards.

It is no wonder taxpayers are furious with Washington when the Federal Government wastes the money they work so hard to make. When they hear about or read about some of the ludicrous ways we spend their money or the wasteful ways we spend their money, they have every reason to be concerned and to be angry.

Clearly, there are essential functions the Federal Government has to undertake, but we can't continue to ignore the fact that our national debt has now passed \$19 trillion. Borrowing money in order to pay for expenditures and then having obligations to pay that money back, along with interest rates, puts us in a very deep hole that we have talked about a lot, but we have not done what is necessary to address this continued plunge into debt.

Seemingly every day, we see examples of mismanagement and wasteful spending in Washington, which is one of the reasons I give my weekly "Waste of the Week" addresses. I have come to the floor now more than 40 times in this Congress to talk about documented cases of waste, fraud, and abuse within the Federal Government. It is not something made up but documented abuses by, generally, the Government Accountability Office, whose job is to examine how we spend our money and to publicize how that money is spent.

Now we have racked up nearly \$160 billion of documented waste, fraud, and abuse. This has included the ridiculous, such as Federal grant spending on rabbit massages, as well as the serious, such as double-dipping in the Social Security Disability Insurance funds.

While many Americans struggle every day to pay their mortgage or to put food on the table, it is infuriating that the Federal Government is wasting money renting empty warehouses or funding a study to determine if being "hangry" is a real thing.

I talked about the word "hangry" in one of my speeches several weeks ago. "Hangry" is a modification of the words hungry and angry. A considerable amount of taxpayer money was spent on a study to determine if a person gets angrier with their spouse when he or she is hungry and so they coined the word "hangry." It refers to someone who is hungry, and because they are hungry, they get a little anxious or a little difficult to live with. This study determined and came to the conclusion that, yes, if you are hungry, you tend to be a little bit angry and you tend to take it out on the person nearest to you, who is usually your spouse.

I think any of us could have come up with that conclusion without spending \$400,000 or so in order to determine that that is the case. The word "hangry" has now been added to Webster's dictionary. You can look it up. How can we spend \$400,000 of the taxpayer's money to do this study when people are having trouble paying their bills, their mortgage, or saving money so they can send their kids to school? This is the kind of thing that infuriates the American people. This is the kind of thing that has put our approval ratings in single digits. This is the kind of thing that causes people to say that Washington needs to be shaken up. Why do we keep taking the American people's hard-earned tax dollars and spending them on things like this?

Many Americans struggle every day to put food on the table and pay their mortgage. It is infuriating to them that the Federal Government is wasting money doing these kind of things. Eliminating this wasteful spending can go a long way to restoring trust in Washington, and it needs to start now. That is why, as I said, the studies by the government's only watchdog agency, the Government Accountability Office, are so important to the work we do here.

The GAO, or the Government Accountability Office, just released its "2016 Annual Report" on additional opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication. The GAO report presents 92 new actions we can take—either the Congress or the administration—to improve government efficiency and effectiveness to achieve cost savings. This report and some of its findings include programs I already talked about, such as the failed advanced technology vehicles program I highlighted last week. Unfortunately, in an amendment I offered here on the floor, we came up short with a vote of 48 to 49, but we raised the awareness of a program that is sitting on nearly \$4 billion of unspent money. Of the five proposals that were released—money

was released on these five proposals—two of the companies have already gone bankrupt. Instead of sitting on \$4 billion worth of additional money that we had to award, we simply said: Look, we have wasted \$500 million in this program. Why don't we take that \$4 billion and use it for a better purpose, like returning it to the taxpayer. If not that, we could have returned that money to the taxpayer or used the money to offset something essential, such as work that prolongs life and brings better health at NIH or perhaps put the money towards something else that is needed, such as infrastructure, but, unfortunately, we came up one vote short of a majority.

I am looking forward to exploring ways in which we can use examples in our continued efforts through "Waste of the Week." We are looking at several things. We know the IRS is paying billions in fraudulent refunds to criminals who steal people's IDs over the Internet, or whatever method they use, and then file for IRS returns. We are looking at consolidating programs that are scattered across 22 different Federal agencies and have all kinds of duplications or selling unused Federal property, which could save billions of dollars a year. The list doesn't end. It just continues.

I will be coming down here week after week. I will have another "Waste of the Week" later this week. Exposing the waste, fraud, and abuse is only the first step that the administration and Congress must take. According to this report, the actions Congress has already taken—and Congress ought to be commended for this—by using GAO's recommendations over the past 5 years has saved \$56 billion. That is not small change.

I have documented another \$160 billion worth of savings in the last 40 speeches—not million, billion. There is still plenty left to do.

In 2010, I asked Hoosiers to send me to Washington to rein in the Federal Government's runaway spending. Whether it is through my continued "Waste of the Week" speeches, legislation, or highlighting reports like the GAO report, as I am doing today, I will continue to pour every ounce of effort I have into doing as much as I can to reduce wasteful government spending.

We will be back later this week with speech No. 41 of "Waste of the Week." Hopefully, we can continue to alert this Congress and this government to the hard-earned money that is being wasted and could be used for much better purposes.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I am here to join Senator MERKLEY in offering amendment No. 3812 regarding funding for wind energy research.

This is a straightforward amendment. It simply restores funding for wind energy research to the amount provided for just last year—\$95.4 million.

The underlying bill provides \$80 million, so the Merkley-Grassley amendment will increase funding by just \$15.4 million. These additional funds will come from within the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Program, so we can see there is no cost to this amendment from the bottom line of the bill. It does not raise overall spending levels. It simply redirects \$15 million from other renewable and efficiency programs to wind energy research.

This funding will allow the Department of Energy to continue the advancement of wind technologies and innovations. These advances have greatly increased the competitiveness of wind and facilitated rapid growth in wind energy across the country.

In Iowa, wind energy now accounts for more than 30 percent of the State's total electricity supply. Wind supported 88,000 jobs in 2015, an increase of 20 percent from the previous year. Wind was also the No. 1 source of new generating capacity in 2015—greater than natural gas and solar.

Some of my colleagues oppose wind energy and Federal policies that support this clean and renewable energy. They argue we shouldn't pick winners or that wind is a mature industry. Don't kid yourself. Wind, while nearly mature, is just an infant compared to the Federal dollars and incentives provided for fossil and nuclear energy.

It is quite amusing to me that some of the strongest opponents of wind energy in this body are the biggest proponents of other much more costly programs for mature, traditional energy sources. For example, the 100-year-old oil and gas industry continues to benefit from tax preferences that benefit only their industry that result in the loss of more than \$4 billion annually in tax revenue.

Nuclear energy is another great example. The first nuclear powerplant came online in the United States in 1958. That was 58 years ago. Nuclear received special tax treatment, including—would you believe it—a production tax credit. Nuclear also benefits from Price-Anderson Federal liability insurance that Congress provided as a temporary measure way back in 1958. This temporary measure—can you believe it—has been renewed through 2025. Nuclear energy has also received more than \$74 billion in Federal research and development dollars since 1950. This bill includes over \$1 billion for nuclear research. This is an increase of \$71 million, or 7.3 percent, over fiscal year 2016 for wind energy research. We are just asking for the same amount of money appropriated for next year as this year.

Fossil energy research and development is another one I can point out, which is allocated \$632 million in this bill, equal to the 2016 levels. Even prominent conservative advocacy groups have called for the nuclear and fossil fuel energy funds to be cut or eliminated altogether.

Again, this amendment will simply provide level funding for wind energy research by providing an additional \$15 million. This is not new money, so there is no score by the CBO. I urge my colleagues to support the Merkley-Grassley amendment.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes on another subject as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF OUR POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I recently gave a speech to the Midwest Political Science Undergraduate Research Conference, which was held at Wartburg College in Waverly, IA. It dealt with the current state of our political discourse and what we should all do as Americans to try and elevate that political discourse.

The election-year rhetoric is already heating up in the Senate, so I think it is appropriate to share with the Senate what I told these political science students and their professors.

This is an election year, so there is a lot of talk about how Americans have voted and will vote, as well as which Americans will vote and which ones will not vote. There is something that is evident in this election season, and it is also something I have seen increase steadily since I have served in elected office, and that happens to be cynicism. Americans are increasingly cynical about their system of government and those who serve in that government. Candidates of all political stripes are tapping into this cynicism by railing against so-called elites. Sometimes it is the notion of elites within a political party, elites in Washington generally, or elites even in the private sector. Regardless, there is a perception that elites of some kind or another have an undue influence over decisionmaking and ordinary citizens are being ignored.

I am not saying that such concerns are all illegitimate, but I think the cynicism is made worse by a lack of understanding when it comes to how our government works and, more importantly, why it works the way it does. It seems to me there has been a decline in interest in teaching American students about our constitutional system and especially the principles on which it was founded. You cannot understand how our government works and how it is supposed to work without understanding the Constitution. I would add that the best guide to the Constitution is the Federalist Papers.

You also cannot understand the Constitution without understanding the Declaration of Independence, but you

cannot understand the Declaration of Independence without understanding the natural rights philosophy. You also cannot separate the study of history from political science.

To understand our current political debate, it is important to understand how we got where we are today. For instance, the debate between anti-Federalists and Federalists sheds a great deal of light on what our founding generation agreed upon and what they disagreed upon. Subsequent events such as the Civil War, the progressive movement, and the civil rights movement all drew upon earlier American political ideas, either borrowing from or rejecting them. Our political discourse today is inevitably influenced by this heritage, but it also seems disconnected from it.

From cable news shows to the local diner, people with different views shout past each other without comprehending the opposing arguments. In recent years, there has been a realignment of political parties that follows more closely along philosophical lines. That has led to more party-line votes, but you would think that would make our debate more about principles instead of pure partisanship, but it hasn't.

There has been a lot written about how Americans are increasingly sorting themselves into groups—where they live and work with people who think like they do and only consume like-minded media. As a result, when people do encounter a view they don't agree with, there is a tendency to think there must be something wrong with the person who holds that view. Moreover, if a policy you disagree with gets enacted but almost no one you know supports it, naturally you feel there must be something amiss. That leads to anger, resentment, and cynicism, and that makes for fertile ground for demagogues.

There are real differences of philosophy reflected in the two major political parties, so I am not arguing there shouldn't be vigorous debate. In fact, the clash of ideas is an essential part of our representative system of government, but you cannot effectively challenge an opponent's philosophy if you don't understand that philosophy, and you cannot understand your opponent's philosophy unless you understand what you believe and why you believe it. That is why it is so important Americans study American history and civics.

Thomas Jefferson said:

If a Nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be. If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed.

In an election year, we talk a lot about voting being a civic duty, but that is incomplete. Our civic duty goes well beyond the simple act of voting. We have a responsibility to understand what we believe and why before we go into the voting booth.

Representative government doesn't work very well if citizens are only engaged in the month or two before an election. Our system of government relies on an informed and active citizenry. We need more Americans to write their Members of Congress and to ask their positions, attend town meetings, and seek to understand both sides of an issue. Still, we have to come to terms with the fact that we are a closely divided nation. Better understanding of each other's principles will elevate the debate, which is good for representative government, but it will not eliminate and shouldn't eliminate political differences.

The next step is to respect other people's right to live according to their principles. I believe that calls for a renewed commitment to federalism. The Father of our Constitution, James Madison, designed a system for what he called an extended republic. The classical understanding of a republic as small, unitary, and homogeneous did not apply to the new United States and it certainly doesn't now. In fact, Madison argued that our large, diverse country could better prevent a majority faction from forming and trampling on the rights of others. However, it also required decentralizing power and allowing different States and communities to do things their own way.

Whenever a government takes an action, there will almost certainly be some people unhappy with it. That is why the presumption should be to let individual Americans live their lives as they see fit. When government action is warranted, the decision should be made as close as possible to those it affects. In my view, the extent to which the Federal Government now makes a great many decisions that affect the lives of Americans beyond the limited role envisioned in the Constitution leads to a great deal of unnecessary conflict.

Since our government is so closely divided, a great many decisions will upset almost half of the American people. That is not a sustainable situation. So my preferred solution—which, of course, is based upon my political philosophy—is to let States and communities make more of their own decisions when it comes to issues such as health care and education. Of course, others may disagree and do disagree, and we should have that debate, but it should be an honest and respectful debate based upon very basic principles.

That was the end of my substantive remarks to those students at Wartburg College. I then commended the students for their interest in exploring political issues. I also said to the students that the fact that they are interested and that they are engaged and many of their peers are not gives these students a very special calling.

I ended my speech with a challenge. I said: I would challenge you to continue developing your understanding of your political beliefs and those of others with whom you may disagree and then

do your part to elevate the political dialogue. I would issue the same challenge to my colleagues here in the Senate.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I want to thank the distinguished Senator from Iowa for his remarks and also his chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee. I found his remarks very interesting.

I note that the distinguished chairman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee is now on the floor. I have been very fortunate to serve as his ranking member, and I think that we have put a very good bill together and that his leadership has been very strong.

Last week Senator ALEXANDER brought to the floor a chart, and on that chart there were red and blue lines, and they depicted a lot about the spending patterns of this Nation, which absolutely is relevant, considering we are talking about spending. Well, I wanted to put my rendition before us since no one on the floor is asking to speak at this time.

Since 2006 I have asked my staff to put together some charts on spending, which I share every week at my constituent breakfast with the constituency from California.

I want to tell you a little bit about this chart. The source of this chart is the Congressional Budget Office, and it is the budget and economic outlook part of that. Going back to 2006, we looked at budget numbers, but the actual way to look at it is really outlays. What does the Federal Government spend every year? That is the number which creates the debt and creates interest on the debt.

In 2006 the Federal Government spent \$2.654 trillion in total. Here is how it was spent: This big red part is what are called entitlements. These are mandatory payments to programs to which an individual is entitled. If you are entitled to it, you get it regardless of what impact it has on the budget. They were 53 percent of what the Federal Government spent in 2006, and interest on the debt was 8 percent. So if we add 53 percent and 8 percent, that was about 61 percent of everything that was spent during that year. Nondefense discretionary was 19 percent and defense was 20 percent. So the green and the blue were the discretionary programs, the yellow was interest on the debt, and the rest were entitlements.

This year the total outlay is \$3.919 trillion. Entitlements have gone up to 63 percent of what the Federal Government will pay out this year. Interest on the debt has dropped 2 percent to 6.5

percent, largely because interest rates are low. Defense discretionary is 15 percent, and nondefense discretionary is 15.5 percent. So if we put these two things together, which we are now passing appropriations bills on, they comprise only about 30.5 percent of what the Federal Government will spend this year. The rest is entitlements and interest on the debt.

If you are entitled to Social Security, you get it. If you are entitled to Medicare, you get it. If you are entitled to Medicaid; disabled; women, infants, and children; and a whole host of very good programs because they help people—but they are expensive and they cost. This isn't often talked about, and I think it is not talked about because individuals don't want to worry people. But it is a problem, and it is a problem that needs some solutions.

If you project these numbers 10 years forward to 2026, we go from total outlays, total government payments in 2016 of \$3.9 trillion, to \$6.401 trillion, and entitlements are then 65 percent of what the government will spend in the year 2026. Interest on the debt will double from what it is today to 13 percent because it is estimated that interest rates will go up. So, adding the two together, you see that we are well over 70 percent in spending. If we look at discretionary spending, defense discretionary and nondefense discretionary, we will see they are both 11 percent. That is the economic outlook.

So only 22 percent of the budget will be what the Appropriations Committee will be doing in 10 years from now because the rest of it will not be able to be controlled. So we have a constantly escalating picture.

In my own view, those things like the Army Corps of Engineers, which in a sense is the only infrastructure program this country really has outside of the highway program, will be compressed more, and everything we spend to make this a better country will be compressed more because of the growth in entitlements and interest on the debt.

Well, I believe the time has come for Members on both sides of the aisle to sit down and see what we can do to work out solutions to this ever-growing problem. Is it additional taxes? Are there ways we can change these programs so that they become more efficient to cover people and pay for them in a better way than putting them on the debt, which is effectively what we are doing?

So I want to state to our distinguished chairman, who is now here, last week we had his red and blue lines, so this week I brought my charts that I have been using since 2006, and I believe the numbers are correct, and I believe they are also astonishing and they need our concern.

I would like to work with the chairman in the future, and perhaps we could bring together Republicans and Democrats to sit down and consider some remedies that will not be pun-

ishing for people but will bring this huge red mark and thereby the interest mark into better control than today.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I congratulate the Senator from California. With her usual precision, she has identified the big problem, and she approached it as she usually does—in a very direct way. The picture she presents is not one we can tolerate in the United States of America. The good news is, we have done a good job on discretionary spending. That is what we are working on in these bills.

The chart I showed last week, which shows about the same things in a little different way than hers, points out that the spending in 12 appropriations bills has been flat and will be flat for the next 10 years. In other words, if the work the Appropriations Committee is doing on \$1 trillion were all that there was to the Federal budget, we would not have a Federal debt problem. That blue line is Federal spending under control. We set priorities. We have oversight. Senator FEINSTEIN and I have eliminated programs. We do that every year. We are getting control of this budget of big cost overruns that persistently happened on large construction projects. So I am proud of that blue line. I am not proud of the red one. That is the one Senator FEINSTEIN is talking about. This is \$1 trillion, but on top of that is \$3 trillion. That is the automatic spending.

There has been very little courage shown on the Republican side of the aisle or on the Democratic side of the aisle. We make big speeches sometimes about the blue line, which isn't a problem, but very few speeches about the red line that are as straightforward as Senator FEINSTEIN's remarks today.

We have a responsibility to taxpayers, to ourselves, and to the next generation to deal with this line because that is the line which is causing the Joint Chiefs of Staff to say that our Federal debt is our biggest national security problem, which is quite a thing to say in a world as unsafe as we have today.

I thank the Senator from California. Her prestige in the Chamber makes her remarks today even more important. I look forward to working with her to gradually bring this red line under control while we still can.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 3813 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3801

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator MURRAY, I call up

Murray amendment No. 3813 and ask unanimous consent that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report the amendment by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from California [Mrs. FEINSTEIN], for Mrs. MURRAY, proposes an amendment numbered 3813 to amendment No. 3801.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add a provision relating to certain requirements in the acquisition of welded shipboard anchor and mooring chain)

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1 ____ None of the funds made available by this title may be used for any acquisition that is not consistent with section 225.7007 of title 48, Code of Federal Regulations.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, is it appropriate for me to speak on the Murray amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I say to the body that I support this amendment. The Murray amendment would reinforce "Buy American" provisions that have been in place for decades. These provisions say that when American tax dollars are being spent, the preference should be to buy American products.

Despite current Federal regulations, there are concerns that the Corps of Engineers is circumventing these "Buy American" provisions and acquiring welded shipboard anchor and mooring chain manufactured by foreign sources. The Murray amendment simply reiterates current requirements to support American-made products, echoing language from our colleagues in the House and the 2016 appropriations bill.

The amendment is good for families and workers across the country, and I urge this body to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Murray amendment No. 3813 simply restates an existing regulation, so I have no objection to it. I am going to vote for it.

I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has been yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3813.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER),

the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 60 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Durbin	Murphy
Ayotte	Feinstein	Murray
Baldwin	Franken	Nelson
Bennet	Gardner	Peters
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Reid
Brown	Hirono	Schatz
Burr	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Kirk	Stabenow
Cardin	Klobuchar	Tester
Carper	Leahy	Udall
Casey	Manchin	Warner
Cassidy	Markey	Warren
Cochran	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Collins	Menendez	Wyden
Coons	Mikulski	
Donnelly	Murkowski	

NAYS—38

Barrasso	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Roberts
Coats	Hoeben	Rounds
Corker	Inhofe	Rubio
Cornyn	Isakson	Sasse
Cotton	Johnson	Scott
Crapo	Lankford	Sessions
Daines	Lee	Shelby
Enzi	McCain	Sullivan
Ernst	McConnell	Thune
Fischer	Moran	Tillis
Flake	Paul	Wicker
Grassley	Perdue	

NOT VOTING—7

Boxer	Merkley	Vitter
Cruz	Sanders	
Graham	Toomey	

The amendment (No. 3813) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 3841; 3842; 3851; 3843; 3844; 3808; 3869, AS MODIFIED; AND 3870 TO AMENDMENT NO. 3801

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, on behalf of the Senator from California and myself, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up en bloc and reported by number: Reed, No. 3841; Feinstein, No. 3842; Warner, No. 3851; McCain, No. 3843; Rounds, No. 3844; Murkowski, No. 3808; McCain, No. 3869, as modified; and Carper, No. 3870.

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

The clerk will report the amendments by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. ALEXANDER], for others, proposes amendments numbered 3841; 3842; 3851; 3843; 3844; 3808; 3869, as modified; and 3870 en bloc to amendment No. 3801.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3841

(Purpose: To transfer funding to the Weatherization Assistance Program account from the Building Technologies account)

On page 23, line 15, before the period at the end, insert the following: “: Provided further, That of such amount \$220,600,000 shall be available for the Weatherization Assistance

Program, of which \$6,000,000 shall be derived by transfer from the amount otherwise available for Building Technologies.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3842

(Purpose: To modify the deadline for the completion of a feasibility study relating to the Sites Reservoir in Colusa County, California)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2 ____ Section 205 of the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114-113; 129 Stat. 2242), is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking “feasibility studies described in clauses (i)(II) and (ii)(I)” and inserting “feasibility study described in clause (i)(II)”; and

(B) by striking “such studies” and inserting “such study”;

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

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

“(3) not later than November 30, 2017, complete and submit to the appropriate committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate the feasibility study described in section 103(d)(1)(A)(ii)(I) of the Califed Bay-Delta Authorization Act (Public Law 108-361; 118 Stat. 1684);”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3851

(Purpose: To ensure that certain amounts are used to implement the requirements of the DATA Act)

On page 56, line 13, strike the period at the end and insert the following: “: Provided further, That of the amounts appropriated under this heading, not less than \$543,000 shall be used to implement the requirements of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-101; 128 Stat. 1146).”

AMENDMENT NO. 3843

(Purpose: To require the Western Area Power Administration to prepare a report on the use of certain provisions in power contracts)

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 ____ (a) Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that—

(1) examines the use of a provision described in subsection (b) in any power contracts of the Western Area Power Administration that were executed before or on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) explains the circumstances for not including a provision described in subsection (b) in power contracts of the Western Area Power Administration executed before or on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) A provision referred to in subsection (a) is a termination clause described in section 11 of the general power contract provisions of the Western Power Administration, effective September 1, 2007.

AMENDMENT NO. 3844

(Purpose: To make certain funds available for Upper Missouri River Basin flood and drought monitoring)

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1 ____ Of the amounts made available under this title for operation and maintenance, \$2,000,000 shall be available for Upper Missouri River Basin flood and drought monitoring under section 4003(a) of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-121; 128 Stat. 1310).

AMENDMENT NO. 3808

(Purpose: To improve a program relating to remote and subsistence harbors)

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1 ____ Section 2006 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (33 U.S.C. 2242) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3), by inserting “in which the project is located or of a community that is located in the region that is served by the project and that will rely on the project” after “community”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “or of a community that is located in the region to be served by the project and that will rely on the project” after “community”;

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking “local population” and inserting “regional population to be served by the project”; and

(C) in paragraph (5), by striking “community” and inserting “local community or to a community that is located in the region to be served by the project and that will rely on the project”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3869, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study and develop a plan for the removal of invasive salt cedar)

At the end of title II, add the following:

SEC. 2 ____ (a) The Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of Agriculture, may enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences under which the National Academy of Sciences shall conduct a comprehensive study, to be completed not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, on the effectiveness and environmental impact of salt cedar control efforts (including biological control) in increasing water supplies, restoring riparian habitat, and improving flood management.

(b) Not later than 1 year after the date of completion of the study under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture, may prepare a plan for the removal of salt cedar from all Federal land in the Lower Colorado River basin based on the findings and recommendations of the study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences that includes—

(1) provisions for revegetating Federal land with native vegetation;

(2) provisions for adapting to the increasing presence of biological control in the Lower Colorado River basin;

(3) provisions for removing salt cedar from Federal land during post-wildfire recovery activities;

(4) strategies for developing partnerships with State, tribal, and local governmental entities in the eradication of salt cedar; and

(5) budget estimates and completion timelines for the implementation of plan elements.

AMENDMENT NO. 3870

(Purpose: To allow certain funds for shore protection to be prioritized for certain projects)

On page 3, line 21, before the period at the end, insert the following: “: Provided, That funds made available under this heading for shore protection may be prioritized for projects in areas that have suffered severe beach erosion requiring additional sand placement outside of the normal beach renourishment cycle or in which the normal beach renourishment cycle has been delayed”.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now vote on these amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on these amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendments en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 3841; 3842; 3851; 3843; 3844; 3808; 3869, as modified; and 3870) were agreed to.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, the Democratic leader, Senator REID, and my colleague, Senator FEINSTEIN.

What we have done is approved eight more amendments by Senators with a voice vote, and we have already agreed to have three more votes at 11 a.m. tomorrow. We are making good progress. We hope to continue to do that and wrap up the bill soon.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to support two crucial programs important to Utah and the West in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill pending before us.

The bill includes \$10 million for the Central Utah Project in the Department of the Interior. This funding makes great strides in supporting rural water infrastructure. Over the decades-long life of this project, I have always advocated for appropriate funding levels to ensure timely completion of this project.

This vital program was authorized in the 1956 Colorado River Storage Project Act and allows the State of Utah to develop its share of the Colorado River for irrigation and water supply. This program also reaches into five other States and provides for construction of water delivery infrastructure.

Over the past few years, the Obama administration has constantly tried to underfund the Central Utah Project, but Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN have been able to restore funding to levels that enable construction to move forward.

Continuing funding for this project is important to taxpayers. Once the project is built and begins to deliver water, the people of Utah will start to repay their share of the costs to the Treasury.

This funding also allows mitigation work to continue, which restores and protects lands that are important to fish and wildlife that have been impacted by Federal water development for this project.

While we all wish additional funding were available for the important projects in our State, I believe that Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN have done a good job in balancing priorities, and I appreciate them including funding to continue this vital program.

Another important program funded in this bill is the section 595 environmental infrastructure program in the Corps of Engineers.

Section 595 is a program that provides funding to rural areas in Idaho,

Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming for water construction projects.

The bill includes \$10 million for this program, which the Corps of Engineers will allocate competitively among the eligible States.

Section 595 funding is particularly important for projects in rural areas surrounded by Federal lands. Often, local sponsors can't meet the general 50/50 cost share required for construction projects, but section 595 reduces the non-Federal cost-share.

An example of where this program made a big difference in my State is in the small town of Escalante, where section 595 funds were used to rehabilitate and enlarge the Wide Hollow Reservoir.

Before the project began, irrigation water that was held in the reservoir only lasted until mid-July, leaving most farmers with wilted crops during the heat of the summer.

The Corps of Engineers provided \$5.5 million under the section 595 program, which was matched with nearly \$8 million in State grants and loans.

Today, because of Section 595, Escalante farmers can expect to receive water throughout the growing season, which allows them to harvest hay and other critical crops that, in the past, they would have had to purchase.

There are projects just like Wide Hollow Reservoir throughout the State of Utah—in fact, all throughout the West—and taxpayers can be assured that the \$10 million provided in the Energy and Water bill will be put to good use.

I appreciate Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN working with me to include these critical funds, especially given the tight budgets that we face this year and the competing priorities they had to consider.

To conclude, Mr. President, I believe that the Energy and Water bill that Senator ALEXANDER and Senator FEINSTEIN have before the Senate is a balanced, prioritized bill that includes important priorities not only for my State of Utah, but also for the Nation and I urge its passage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

HONORING NEBRASKA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST
THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tribute to Nebraska's heroes and the current generation of men and women who lost their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Each of these Nebraskans has a special story to tell. Throughout this year and beyond, I will continue to honor their memory here on the Senate floor.

MASTER SERGEANT LINDA TARANGO-GRIESS

Mr. President, today, I wish to highlight the life of MSG Linda Tarango-Griess of Sutton, NE.

Linda was known to everyone as one proud soldier. From an early age, she was disciplined and focused on the future. Her Aunt Marie remembers this

future soldier as "a great kid" who was always helping others. Marie would know because she raised Linda from the age of 11.

Linda attended Kearney High School, where she enjoyed playing softball and volleyball. She was also active in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Linda's willingness to serve as a role model and mentor for others came as no surprise to those who knew her. As one of her high school classmates recalled, Linda was "someone who always had a smile and a positive attitude."

After graduating from Kearney High School in 1989, Linda was determined to go to college, but she struggled to find a way to pay for it. She learned about tuition assistance opportunities offered by the National Guard and she decided to enlist.

Through the National Guard, Linda discovered her passion for being a soldier in the U.S. military. It also allowed her to complete her college education.

Linda graduated from the University of Nebraska in Kearney with a degree in criminal justice.

As part of her service, Linda was required to train one weekend a month in York, NE. It was there that Linda met her soulmate, Doug Griess. After dating for a few years, they were married in 1994.

For the next several years, the young couple formed a new bond and they began planning for the future while continuing their service in the National Guard.

Less than a decade after they were married, their roles in the military would bring them both to the frontlines of a new war a world away from home in Iraq. Linda and Doug wondered which of them would be called up first. Then the news came for Linda to deploy with the 267th Ordnance Company.

After deployment training, the 267th arrived at Camp Speicher near Tikrit, Iraq, in February of 2004. As one of the unit's senior sergeants, Linda's helpful nature and her insistence on doing every job well quickly stood out. Her professionalism and caring nature boosted the morale of her platoon.

An officer from a nearby unit said Linda "was always a true professional—not only a mentor but also a friend. She served her country honorably."

The summer of 2004 was shaping up to be a complicated period. Doug was at annual training back home, and rumors were flying about his unit deploying. At the same time, Linda was planning to return home on leave to be with Doug and her family for a short time.

On July 10, Doug's unit received deployment orders. The following day, on July 11, 2004, the unthinkable happened. Linda was driving in a convoy through a high-threat area in Samarra, Iraq. The convoy was attacked by Al Qaeda insurgents, and Linda's vehicle

took a direct hit from an improvised explosive device. Linda and another soldier were killed.

She was only 2 weeks from returning to Nebraska.

Doug was at home with his friends discussing their upcoming deployment. Suddenly, a car pulled up with three soldiers dressed in Class A uniforms, and Doug knew why they were there.

Linda was buried in Sutton, NE, and over 1,000 mourners traveled to this small town in Central Nebraska to honor this brave soldier. A month later, Doug deployed to Iraq with his unit. His grief over the loss of Linda was held at bay for a year as he focused on his mission and his fellow soldiers. Linda would have wanted it that way. Doug's commitment to fulfilling his oath and serving his Nation would have made her proud.

MSG Linda Tarango-Griess was the first woman to lose her life in combat while serving in the Nebraska National Guard. She earned the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and was promoted posthumously to Master Sergeant.

Doug would later remarry, and he is now the proud father of three wonderful children. Linda's Aunt Marie lives in Lincoln, where she is active in Yellow Ribbon activities for troops serving abroad. Linda's sister Vicki lives in North Platte with her three children, not far from her brother Augie and her father Augustin.

To this day, one of Linda's cousins keeps an email from Linda that was sent before she departed on her final mission. In the email, Linda proudly describes how her platoon competed in a 5-mile run which the 267th nicknamed the "Desert Dash." Linda said: "None of us won the race, but in our hearts we are winners, our reward is the self-satisfaction for just finishing the race."

I hope all Nebraskans remember her as an example of what it means to serve our Nation with bravery, compassion, and joy.

MSG Linda Tarango-Griess is a hero. She embodied the grit and determination of an American soldier, and I am honored to tell her story.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF JESSICA ROSENWORCEL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we have a great opportunity in the Senate to recognize and reconfirm an extraordinarily distinguished and dedicated public servant who happens to be from West Hartford, CT, Jessica Rosenworcel of the Federal Communications Commission.

I understand there was an agreement as part of the approval of Commis-

sioner O'Rielly and that Michael O'Rielly, in fact, was reconfirmed as part of a very unusual request that there be that agreement. The President renominated Ms. Rosenworcel for a new 5-year term in 2015, and she was easily and unanimously confirmed by the Commerce Committee. I think we ought to keep that agreement in the Senate, that anyone a party to that agreement when the Democratic leader, Senator REID, agreed to reconfirm Republican FCC Commissioner Michael O'Rielly—that we ought to move forward. But apart from the politics and the internal agreements that may have been reached—and they deserve to be honored—Commissioner Rosenworcel is supremely well qualified, and she is needed on the Commission, which is sorely in need of her expertise and experience in specific areas.

Let me give just a few examples. No. 1, as an example of her leadership, she led the effort to provide for writing rules that will enable enforcement of the 9/11 locating standards for all 9/11 services across the country. The GPS location services require those rules. She has written standards and will enable those standards to become the guiding light for all 9/11 services. That is important in cases of emergency. It is important in cases of physical and emotional trauma or crashes—an accident. It is important in cases of opioid or heroin overdoses, which are becoming increasingly prevalent across the country. In fact, in Connecticut and, my guess, Oklahoma and all across the country, there is an epidemic of opioid and heroin addiction tragically taking a toll in deaths and financial costs. When there are overdoses, the administration of Narcan or naloxone within a limited period of time may be the difference between life and death and, in fact, can bring people back from the brink of death.

Those types of location standards will help emergency responders go to the places they are needed. The standards applied to the 9/11 services that enable the first responders to go to those places are a result of the work that Commissioner Rosenworcel has done on the FCC. That is only one example of the kind of work she has done.

She has been outspoken on the cruel struggle faced by students left out of the broadband revolution, as countless are in areas that have no Internet access at home and face obstacles, literally, to complete homework they are given at school and to apply for scholarships they need financially. Today, roughly 7 in 10 teachers assign homework that requires access to broadband, but the data from the FCC suggests that almost 1 in 3 households lacks subscriptions to broadband services. They simply do not subscribe to those services at any speed with any server due to lack of affordability and, frankly, lack of interest.

Ms. Rosenworcel has made this "homework gap"—a term, by the way, that she coined—one of her top prior-

ities and has pushed all of us to think creatively to provide all students with the connectivity they need for a fair chance to succeed. That is really the American dream—a fair chance to succeed, closing the gap that results from this lack of access to the Internet, which in turn creates a homework gap and a scholarship gap and generally deprives those students of a fair chance.

As Commissioner, Ms. Rosenworcel has visited schools across the country in Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, and many more and witnessed how the Internet can support greater learning opportunities and also how limited broadband capacity prevents students from developing the skills essential for them to compete in the global, digital economy. Drawing from these experiences and her experience in the Senate working on this program, she called for an E-Rate 2.0 to ensure that the E-Rate Program is reinvigorated to meet the future connectivity needs for libraries and schools through stronger broadband capacity standards and robust funding. That robust funding is an investment this Nation needs to make.

She is continuing the legacy of Senator Rockefeller to fight for strong public safety, not only on the FCC 9/11 rules, which keep communities safe and provide emergency responders the ability they need to go to places where there are overdoses or other health emergencies, but she has also worked on a bipartisan policy, a spectrum policy leading the FCC to raise record-breaking amounts in the last year's wireless spectrum auction and ensuring that there is more than enough to fully fund FirstNet, the nationwide interoperability network for public safety officials to communicate during emergencies.

She has taken her own time—and she has a young family—on multiple occasions when she is back home in Connecticut to join me in helping to educate wireless customers and consumers on what they can do to avoid cramming—those are the charges on phone bills that consumers never consent to and never know about in many instances—and where they can go to seek refunds when they are victims of these kinds of cramming scams. She has been a champion of consumer interest on cramming refunds, on preventing cramming, and on helping to reach wise and prudent settlements with the carriers.

She has joined me to call on telephone companies to offer consumers new tools to block robocalls. What I find—and it is a relevant point during the campaign season in which we find ourselves—is that voters, consumers, residents, people from all walks of life in both parties, and a lot with no party at all, deeply resent the robocalling we see so often. Those robocalls come from commercial interests and sometimes from political interests. I approve banning robocalls. Whether or not we agree to ban them, consumers ought to have the ability to block them if they choose to. That is the cause she has championed with me.

I deeply respect her commitment to consumer interests. She is widely acknowledged for her keen judgment and insight on all these issues, advancing smart telecommunications policy for the public benefit.

She is a graduate of Wesleyan University and New York University Law School. Her career has been about telecommunications law, which included time as senior communications counsel for the Senate Commerce Committee under the leadership of both Senator Rockefeller and Senator Inouye.

In her time on the Commission, she has been a champion of consumers, students, emergency responders, of everyday working men and women who deserve the best system and protection of their interests when it comes to telecommunications.

There was an agreement that ought to be respected, but as important or even more important than an agreement, she deserves and the country needs for her to serve as a Commissioner.

I urge my colleagues to reconfirm her swiftly and overwhelmingly so that she can continue to do this vital and important work she has been doing.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 3801 to Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, an act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Jerry Moran, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt, Orrin G. Hatch, John Hoeven, John Thune, Thad Cochran, Roger F. Wicker, Mark Kirk, John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the underlying bill, H.R. 2028.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Calendar No. 96, H.R. 2028, an act making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Jerry Moran, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, Roy Blunt, Orrin G. Hatch, John Hoeven, John Thune, Thad Cochran, Roger F. Wicker, Mark Kirk, John McCain, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the cloture motions be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the filing deadline for all first-degree amendments to both the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801 and the underlying bill, H.R. 2028, be at 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 26.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

EARTH DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last Friday marked the 46th annual Earth Day, and we cannot ignore that we are at a crossroads in time. Human-caused climate change is accelerating with each passing year and is now taking a severe toll on our planet. We see it in our scorched farmlands and burnt forests in the West and in the flood ravaged river valleys and superstorm battered coastlines in the East. Climate change is not a hoax, and we must act now to protect our future and our future generations.

Earth Day is an opportunity to recognize that climate change is not only the greatest threat to our environment today, but it also poses a threat to public health and to our national and economic security. In coming years, the economy of Vermont, the United States, and every country on Earth will be altered. We must guide that economic transformation to protect future generations.

We are really just beginning to grapple with the serious economic consequences of climate change across the country. In Vermont, we saw the warmest winter on record this year, with mean temperatures 5 to 10 degrees above normal and snowfall several feet below normal. On Christmas Eve, the mercury hit 68 degrees in the State

capital of Montpelier, beating the previous record by 17 degrees. The abnormally high temperatures and lack of snow hurt our ski and tourism industries. Many ski areas saw business down 20 percent, and some saw a drop of as much as 40 percent. This does not just impact the ski areas and the mountains, but also our restaurants, local hotels, contractors, and other businesses that are driven by the ski industry.

Climate change could also impact Vermont's maple industry, which contributes more than \$300 million in sales to Vermont's economy every year. While 2016 has been a successful year for producing maple syrup, if temperatures continue to rise each year, in the short term we could face reduced sap quality and even a decrease in the amount of sap produced. I am also very concerned that, in the long term, our sugar maple stands could be decimated by invasive pests or threatened by drought and forest fires. The agriculture and fisheries sector is highly dependent on specific climate conditions, and maple production will not be the only agricultural industry affected. The Pacific Northwest's winemakers, Alaska's salmon fisheries, the Southeast's peanut producers, and corn growers in the Midwest could all face significant climate-related challenges.

The threats posed by climate change are numerous and can be downright frightening. However, Earth Day—and every day—we must remember that, if we can have such a profound negative impact on our environment, we can also have a profound positive affect on the drivers of climate change. If we make climate the top priority around which we organize and refocus economic decisions, we can find solutions to climate risk through creative thinking and innovation. While climate change does represent one of the greatest challenges of our time, we should see it as opportunity to nurture and attract entrepreneurship, rather than dragging our heels or denying that there is a problem.

I am proud that time after time Vermonters continue to come together to identify solutions to big problems. I am amazed and energized every day by Vermont innovators who are thinking creatively and already leading nationally and internationally. Vermont businesses, nonprofits, and educational institutions are already tackling big problems and finding solutions to climate change, solutions that are being readied to be deployed in Vermont and exported around the world. Just last week, I had joined leaders from the University of Vermont to announce a National Science Foundation competitive award of \$20 million to Vermont EPSCoR, which will support research of the Lake Champlain Basin and its watersheds to find out what has made some parts of the basin resilient in the face of extreme weather events, while