

America can. No other Nation can be trusted to defend peace and advance liberty.

America cannot avoid its role as a global leader. But we also know America cannot be tasked with protecting the world on its own. It will take an international order of free nations with free economies to do so. We must work with like-minded allies whenever possible and encourage them to do their part, but no other nation has the ability to organize or lead such a coalition if we fail to do so.

That is why I will continue to make the case for an engaged America, no matter who becomes our next President, no matter how the political winds may blow. Our safety and our prosperity depend on it. The ideal of America depends on it. That was true last century, and it is even more so today.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I am pleased that today the Senate passed two annual spending bills—Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs—and approved funding to combat the Zika virus.

Senators COLLINS, REED, KIRK, and TESTER worked hard to craft good, bipartisan bills with no ideological, partisan policy riders.

They have reminded us of the way we should do business here in the Senate.

I was proud to support both bills when they were considered by the Appropriations Committee in recent weeks and proud to support them again today.

I am pleased that the bill includes long-overdue funding to fight Zika. The bill does not provide the full amount of funding that our health and infectious disease experts say they need, but it does provide a good down payment of \$1.1 billion.

We must do more, and we must do it now, in order to protect pregnant women nationwide.

This bill builds on the surface transportation bill, the FAST Act, that Congress passed last year that provides funding over 5 years for rail and highway infrastructure.

Illinois rail lines are at the center of our national transportation network.

In 2014, 5 million people boarded or exited trains in Illinois, giving resi-

dents a safe, affordable option when traveling.

The bill supports rail options by providing strong funding for Amtrak, including \$1.42 billion for the national network.

It increases funding for TIGER and Core Capacity Capital Investment Grants, which supports transportation improvement projects across Illinois like the CTA's Red Purple Modernization project to provide more commuter passenger rail options to people in Chicago.

The bill also funds important rail safety programs across the country.

First-time funding for passenger rail grant programs authorized in the FAST Act will address gaps in supporting and growing our nation's passenger rail infrastructure.

Rail line relocation and grade crossing enhancements will reduce accidents and improve passenger safety in Illinois and around the country.

Nearly 1.1 million barrels of crude oil are hauled on our nation's railroads every day. Last year's derailment in Galena, IL, highlights the need to invest in rail safety.

The bill continues funding for Positive Train Control programs and supports the Safe Transport of Energy Products Program.

There is always more work to be done. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, America scores a D in investment in roads, transit, and aviation and a C-plus in rail.

This bill is a good start. This bill not only invests in our transportation infrastructure, but it also invests in our housing infrastructure.

I want to thank Senators COLLINS and REED again for their efforts to address lead-based paint hazards in our Nation's low-income housing.

Since Flint, we have learned that exposure to lead, be it through our drinking water or paint in our homes, is still a major problem in communities across Illinois and the country.

We have also learned that, when government shortchanges our infrastructure because of opposition to common-sense protections and draconian spending cuts, families suffer the consequences.

In the case of Flint, local and State government was the problem, and now, it, along with Federal Government, have to be part of the solution.

And the provisions in this bill can help us do that. This bill requires HUD to update its standards to the CDC's blood level standard, which is currently four times the CDC level. It improves tenant awareness and education of the lead-based paint hazards. And it provides a modest increase in funding for the identification and remediation of lead-based hazards found in federally assisted housing.

These are all good things, and they will go a long way in addressing the government's abysmal and embarrassing record in dealing with this problem, which has led to far too many

children living in federally subsidized housing suffering from lead poisoning, including one family in Chicago. Lanice Walker's 4-year-old daughter was diagnosed with lead poisoning less than 5 months after her and her family moved into a home subsidized by a Housing Choice Voucher.

But Lanice Walker was not able to move without the risk of losing her voucher because her daughter's blood lead level, which was two times the CDC level, didn't meet the standards under HUD regulations. It wasn't until all nine of her children had elevated blood levels and legal advocates intervened on her behalf before she was granted permission to move.

This is unacceptable, and we must do more to protect children in affordable housing before they become poisoned by lead. We must ensure that lead-based paint hazards are properly identified before a family moves into a unit. We must update all outdated lead regulations using the most recent science and enforce them. And we must adequately fund programs designed to identify and eliminate lead paint hazards.

I hope that our efforts today are just the beginning of our recommitment to addressing our lead epidemic.

The Senate also approved the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, which provides a \$3.1 billion increase above fiscal year 2016 enacted levels.

This funding will support a wide variety of projects to ensure the military readiness and quality of life on military bases within the United States and around the world.

It provides \$70 million for Arlington National Cemetery to ensure that the final resting place for our servicemembers is well maintained.

The bill ensures that we provide for our Nation's veterans and their families, those who have sacrificed so much over the years and deserve our gratitude.

The Veterans Benefits Administration will receive \$2.8 billion more than last year to help the VA modernize its claims processing as well as help reduce and eliminate backlogs.

Forcing veterans to wait months and sometimes years to get the benefits they deserve is unacceptable.

The bill increases funding for critical programs and emerging needs, including hepatitis C treatment, whistleblower protection, as well as family caregiver support.

For years, I have championed the caregivers program in Congress, so I am pleased that this program is a priority in this bill.

Hundreds of veterans and their caregivers in Illinois and more than 23,000 nationwide participate in this program, with much success.

The bill increases medical and prosthetic research funding by \$44 million compared to fiscal year 2016, at \$675 million. These funds are critical to continuing our national commitment

to medical research and will help our veterans that return home with both the physical and mental wounds of war.

The number of veterans using VA services is dramatically increasing as the population ages. The VA provides more care for veterans now than ever before, and more of these veterans and their families have increasingly critical needs.

I would also like to take a moment to address an amendment I offered that was included as part of a managers package.

My amendment directs the Secretary of the VA to spend at least \$21 million to fill critical staffing shortages in VA leadership at networks, medical centers, and health care systems across the country.

At least three dozen key VA leadership positions are currently filled by acting or interim directors, sometimes for years at a time. In my home State of Illinois, for example, Hines VA Hospital has not had a permanent director since 2014.

Permanently assigned leadership that is capable of overseeing and managing networks and medical centers is critical to delivering high quality care to our Nation's veterans in a timely fashion, especially at a time when the VA faces a number of challenges.

This funding will help the VA prioritize filling these key positions, as well as address staffing shortages in other management and clinical positions, including in rural and underserved areas.

It is my hope that this funding will allow the VA to quickly fill these important positions within the Department.

I am glad to say that overall, moving this bill is good for our Nation's military and their families.

I hope today's action by the Senate is another step in the direction of passing all 12 appropriations bills, all without ideological riders.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to continue to work with us in a bipartisan manner to pass additional appropriations bills without ideological riders.

I would also like to urge my colleagues to quickly send these funding measures to the President. Zika funding is needed now.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I wish to join Americans across the country in recognizing the immeasurable sacrifices made every day by the men and women of law enforcement. Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers put their lives on the line to help uphold the rule of law in America. Their professionalism and commitment to justice underpin so much of what has allowed this country to thrive for generations.

In May 1962, President John F. Kennedy designated May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week con-

taining May 15 as National Police Week. In that proclamation, President Kennedy stated, “. . . from the beginning of this Nation, law enforcement officers have played an important role in safeguarding the rights and freedoms which are guaranteed by the Constitution and in protecting the lives and property of our citizens. . . .”

It is that twofold role of protecting both the constitutional and physical well-being of all Americans that earns law enforcement officers such a revered place in American society. In the 53 years since President Kennedy established this national celebration of law enforcement, much has changed in regards to the tactics and procedure for protecting essential rights and freedoms, as well as the nature of threats against personal property and the citizenry. What has not changed in the unwavering commitment to addressing these challenges by law enforcement agencies nationwide.

My home State of Maryland is home to a close-knit, well-trained, and dedicated network of law enforcement agencies. Maryland is often called America in Miniature, and as such, Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers across Maryland are expected to be able to respond to an incredibly diverse set of situations.

Being on the front lines of upholding the rule of law and protecting Americans from harm is not easy work. There is hardly a law enforcement officer in the United States who will not face the threat of bodily harm during their career. Unfortunately, due to the dangerous nature of police work, law enforcement officers across the country are killed on the job every year.

Thus far in 2016, 35 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty. Every one of those men and women left a family and grieving law enforcement agency. California, Colorado, and Maryland share the painful distinction of leading the Nation in law enforcement deaths in the line of duty. Three officers from each one of the aforementioned States were killed in the line of duty; in Maryland, all three were killed by gunfire.

Senior Deputies Patrick Dailey and Mark Logsdon of the Harford County Sheriff's office and Officer Jacai Colson of the Prince George's County Police Department were all model officers who were tragically killed while protecting colleagues and civilians. All three of these men served communities in Maryland with distinction and contributed greatly to not only public safety but also to helping build strong and lasting relationships among law enforcement and the people they protect.

Senior Deputies Dailey and Logsdon were both fathers and military veterans. Both served honorably with the Harford County Sheriff's Office.

On Christmas Eve 2002, Deputy Dailey saved the life of a teenager traveling in an SUV that collided head-on with a cement mixing truck. Deputy

Dailey, a number of fellow sheriffs, and two civilians emptied six fire extinguishers in an attempt to quell a fire that threatened to engulf the vehicle and the unresponsive driver. Using only their bare hands and batons, the group managed to free the driver seconds before the fire consumed the passenger compartment. The teen was able to thank his rescuers 3 months later at the Harford County Sheriff's Office Awards Banquet.

Exactly 11 years before his death, Deputy Logsdon confronted a suicidal man who was armed with a loaded shotgun. In a display of great bravery and at great risk to himself, Deputy Logsdon managed to talk the man into surrendering his weapon. After the man was disarmed, Deputy Logsdon continued to help the man by transporting him to the hospital, where he received medical care.

Officer Colson was an undercover narcotics agent. He had a dangerous job with zero margin for error. Officer Colson did not make errors. He was a 4-year veteran of the Prince George's Police Department. The commander of the Prince George's County Police Department's Narcotic Enforcement Division said of Colson, “Not only is he good at his job, he's that guy that you wanted on your team.”

The President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 89 described Officer Colson as “. . . always the first person here in the morning, ready to work and put in a full day's work.”

All three of these men could have done anything with their lives, and they chose to uphold the law. I am thankful that, for the many people they interacted with on a daily basis, these men embodied justice. I join Marylanders in mourning their loss.

It is my hope that this National Police Week serves as a catalyst to communities and governments across the country to evaluate ways to better serve those who are sworn to protect and serve.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Madam President, this evening, I want to honor our Nation's peace officers and to remember those who we have lost in the line of duty over the last year.

Sunday was Peace Officers Memorial Day, a day set aside by President Kennedy in 1962 to honor those law enforcement officers who we have lost in the line of duty, a day that unfortunately has touched me personally, both in the past while serving as attorney general for North Dakota and tragically again earlier this year when the city of Fargo, ND, lost one of its finest in the line of duty.

On the evening of Wednesday, February 10, 2016, Fargo Police Officer Jason Moszer answered the call to serve and protect for what would turn out to be the last time. He knew when he answered that call that he would confront an active-shooter situation, and he never hesitated in taking up a position to put himself between the shooter and the community he so very much loved.