



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 118th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 170

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

No. 81

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, May 10, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, Jr., a Senator from the State of Maine.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, ruler of our lives, help us today to trust You with all our hearts, minds, and strength. Lord, keep us striving to stay within the circle of Your will.

Today, empower the Members of this body to bring deliverance to captives, sight to the morally blind, and healing to those who are bruised by life's trials and setbacks.

Give our lawmakers the wisdom to follow Your providential leading, even when facing problems that seem too difficult to solve. Lord, help our Senators to be strengthened with Your peace, justice, and purpose as You fill this Chamber with Your presence.

We pray in Your marvelous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 9, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable ANGUS S. KING, JR., a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3935, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3935) to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize and improve the Federal Aviation Administration and other civil aviation programs, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Cantwell) modified amendment No. 1911, in the nature of a substitute. Schumer amendment No. 2026 (to amendment No. 1911), to add an effective date.

Schumer motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with instructions, Schumer amendment No. 2027, to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 2028 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2027), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 2029 (to amendment No. 2028), to add an effective date.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SOUTHERN BORDER

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on the border, when it comes to fixing our southern border, the American people demand that elected representatives prioritize action over rhetoric.

It is the easiest thing in the world to do what many Republicans have done this year and done year after year: come to the floor, complain that the border is a mess, and then do just about nothing to fix the problem.

It is the easiest thing in the world to do what Donald Trump and his followers have perfected over the years: demonize immigrants, pay lip service to our border agents, but ignore the work required to make change happen.

Democrats know that the situation at the border is unacceptable. We know

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S3629

that the status quo cannot continue. But Democrats also know that fixing the border requires bipartisan legislation from Congress.

Six months ago, Democrats sat down with our Republican colleagues to get to work on drafting the strongest border security bill Congress has seen in decades. It contained many of the biggest issues that our Republican colleagues have demanded: fixes to asylum, more money for border agents, and it increased the President's emergency powers to respond to high numbers of border crossings.

Our bipartisan bill was the closest Congress has been in decades to fixing our southern border—until Donald Trump blew it all up for political gain.

I have seen many cynical things around here over the years, but it is hard to think of something more cynical than Republicans blowing up their own border deal in order to help Donald Trump win an election because they think chaos will help him win. After all, how many times have we heard from Republicans that we need to fix asylum?

How many times did we hear Donald Trump say that our asylum system was “archaic” and that “what Democrats should be doing now is . . . changing the loopholes”? That is Trump. Trump said that.

How many times did we hear our Republican colleagues say on the floor things like “We’ve got to redo our asylum laws,” as my colleague from Florida has said?

If my Republican colleagues care about fixing asylum, why did they vote to kill the best chance we have seen in decades to fix it? If my Republican colleagues care about our border agents, why did they vote against a bill that would have hired 1,500 more agents and given them more tools to stop the flow of drugs and weapons? If my Republican colleagues truly believe the system is broken, why did they vote against a bill that would have provided more immigration judges, more asylum officers, and had the support of the very conservative Border Patrol union? Two words is why: Donald Trump. It was Donald Trump who didn’t like that Congress had finally reached a deal on the border that would have taken away a key issue for him on the campaign trail. It was Donald Trump who made clear that exploiting the border is great but actually fixing the problem is not.

I know this is a frustrating issue for millions of Americans. Many of us who want to solve the problem, on both sides of the aisle, are frustrated as well. Republicans are going to go on and on and on about the border, but facts are stubborn things. When Americans ask this year who is to blame for the continued mess at the border, they should listen to the words that came from Donald Trump himself. He said, “Please, blame it on me.” That is what Trump said.

TAXES

Mr. President, on taxes, yesterday, the CBO released a new report that should be a shot across the bow for all Republicans who supported the disastrous 2017 Trump tax cuts. The CBO reported that extending all of the Trump tax cuts, which Republicans support and Donald Trump has promised to do if elected, would add a whopping \$4.6 trillion to the deficit. That is \$4.6 trillion. Let me say that again. An extension of all of the Trump tax cuts would add a whopping \$4.6 trillion to the deficit.

To the self-proclaimed fiscal hawks on the right who always complain about deficits, this CBO report about the Trump tax cuts is like a pie in the face.

This report should come as no surprise. We all saw what happened when Donald Trump and Republicans first pushed their tax cuts a few years ago. They blew a nearly \$2 trillion hole in our deficit. They left American families out to dry, with no trickle-down stemming from the benefits for the very wealthy and the largest corporations. The Trump tax cuts were a dud for our economy and a political loser at the same time for the Republican Party.

So I ask my Republican colleagues: Are they really willing to double down on the disastrous Trump tax law and blow a \$4.6 trillion hole in our deficit? Are our Republican colleagues, who claim to be the party of fiscal responsibility, so desperate to help the very wealthiest few and large corporations that they would add another \$4.6 trillion to the deficit?

Do my Republican colleagues believe so deeply in giveaways to the ultrawealthy that they would let programs like Social Security and Medicare, which millions of Americans rely on every day—would they let them run dry? If nothing else, this shows how out of touch Republicans are with working- and middle-class America.

The American people don’t want tax cuts that overwhelming favor the wealthiest few and corporations. They want a fair and equal Tax Code that works for everybody.

While Republicans keep pushing terrible tax giveaways for the wealthy and cuts to Social Security and Medicare, Democrats continue to deliver meaningful results for the American people.

This week, for instance, we learned that the United States will triple its domestic chip manufacturing by 2032, thanks to our Chips and Science Act. This is great news for both American jobs and the American economy. It is exactly what we envisioned when we were working on the bipartisan Chips and Science Act: a new wave of tech jobs, a new wave of scientific research, and a revival of Federal investment in the technologies of the future.

Under President Biden and Democratic leadership, America is on the right track.

H.R. 3935

Mr. President, on the FAA, later today, the Senate will vote on cloture on FAA reauthorization. We hope to get this done today to keep the FAA funded and operational before tomorrow’s deadline.

The work we are doing on FAA is going to have practical consequences for millions of Americans who travel by air every single day. So Senators have every reason in the world to continue working together on a bipartisan basis to get this done.

If we let funding for the FAA lapse, it could be disastrous for the safety of our skies and the efficiency of our airports. Thousands of employees might be furloughed. Air traffic controllers will be forced to work longer and extra hours. Funding for infrastructure projects would be halted.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue working together so we can fund the FAA and avoid missing tomorrow’s deadline.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

ISRAEL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, war is hell. It tears apart societies. It alters the course of entire civilizations, and innocent noncombatants suffer. Try as we might, humanity has not eradicated war or stripped it of its horrors.

But in the modern world, civilized nations hold themselves to the highest standards and take deliberate care to minimize harm to civilians. The United States is first among these nations, but even we make mistakes. On this administration’s watch, precision military strikes have inadvertently killed civilians in multiple theaters of operations.

Our ally Israel goes to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties. Over decades of grinding conflict to preserve its security, a circumstance most Americans can hardly imagine, Israel routinely accepts great risk to its own soldiers to avoid endangering innocent civilians.

But the forces sworn to erase Israel from the Earth follow a different code. To Hamas, civilian casualties are not tragedies; they are tools of the trade. To these savages, kidnapping, torture, rape, and murder aren’t crimes; they are tactics. For terrorists around the world, human suffering is the weapon of choice, and Hamas seeks to magnify it.

These are the facts, and any serious conversation about the war in Gaza needs to start here.

If war could be avoided entirely, so could its terrible costs. Israel tried to avoid this war. It negotiated a ceasefire with the savage terrorists bent on destroying the Jewish State, all to try to avoid the war.

The terrorists used this cease-fire to plan and prepare for war, and, on October 7, Hamas launched it. It also chose how Israel would be forced to fight it, putting fighting positions in hospitals, schools, and United Nations facilities; directly attacking humanitarian aid crossings. This doesn't just contravene the laws of war. It exploits human suffering.

Why does Hamas behave this way? Because it works. Because they know the media will cover it—"if it bleeds, it leads." Because they know it creates an international rush—rush—to blame Israel. Because leftist columnists and useful idiots of university campuses will play at revolution and express solidarity with the terrorists. Because the President of the United States will be forced to choose between his supposedly "ironclad" commitment to an ally under attack and the will of his leftist political base. And because they bet that the President would choose the latter.

Well, it would seem that Hamas bet correctly. President Biden is withholding urgent military assistance to Israel.

But he cannot have it both ways. He cannot claim his support for Israel is ironclad while denying Israel precisely the weapons they need to defend themselves.

The President is old enough to remember 1968, but he seems to have learned the wrong lesson from that pivotal year. Caving to the college radicals will only whet their appetite to spend the summer demanding further anti-Israel concessions at his party's convention.

I fought for months to secure passage of the national security supplemental to support Israel, Ukraine, and vulnerable Asian partners, and to make important investments in our own military. I stood up to the opposition in my own party to do the right thing.

If the Commander in Chief can't muster the political courage to stand up to the radicals on his left flank and stand up for an ally at war, the consequences will be grave. Other allies who rely on "ironclad" guarantees from America will question our commitment. Nations on the fence in the middle of a major power competition for influence will look elsewhere for their own security, and our enemies will be emboldened.

NOMINATION OF ADEEL ABDULLAH MANGI

Mr. President, on a different matter, I have spoken many times about Adeel Mangi, President Biden's nominee to the Third Circuit. I have covered his shocking and deep association with virulent anti-Semites and how he misled the Senate about them.

I have also covered his association with anti-police radicals. Just last week, it was revealed that Mr. Mangi

introduced one of his anti-cop friends to the head of the Rutgers Center for Security, Race, and Rights so they could "collaborate" on a project.

Democrats can't rebut these disqualifying associations because they are facts. So, instead, they have mounted an all-out campaign to gin up leftwing support for Mr. Mangi and force our Democratic colleagues to walk the plank on this nomination. And in so doing, they have given the Senate reason to move from Mr. Mangi's judgment to questioning his ethics.

After the biggest police unions came out in opposition to his nomination, Mr. Mangi complained, in an extraordinary letter to one of my colleagues, that the groups opposing him "never spoke to" him about his "position" or "views."

Really? What would these outside parties have learned about his views had they asked?

Well, we don't actually have to guess. For the past few months, Democrats have paraded Mr. Mangi in front of liberal interest groups in order to secure their endorsements. For example, a group of leftwing law enforcement organizations met with Mr. Mangi and then praised his commitment to "help ensure equity" in law enforcement.

Equity in law enforcement, what on Earth does that even mean? Are those his views? These are questions our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee might have liked to ask Mangi; but, unfortunately, these meetings took place after—after—his hearing.

More recently, 125 congressional organizations sent a letter supporting Mangi. How many of these leftwing organizations had Mangi met with? Did he meet with the AFL-CIO? What views did he discuss with them? We will never know.

You see, nominees have to disclose in their questionnaires whether or not they have made any promises during their confirmation process. Committee Republicans also ask written questions about meetings and coordination with leftwing dark money. But what Mangi has found is that if he makes the sales pitch after—after—the committee process is over, as he did with certain law enforcement groups and maybe to others, nothing needs to be disclosed.

This is particularly troubling given that these small law enforcement groups seem to almost be almost always based in very Democratic New Jersey counties like Middlesex and Hudson. Hudson County, of course, is the home to one of the last old-style Democratic political machines. Are the ward bosses taking care of Mr. Mangi? What do they expect in return?

Compare this to the behavior of Judge Quraishi, the Nation's first Muslim district judge, whom I supported and have mentioned before. Judge Quraishi recently made headlines by striking down—down—New Jersey's unique—and uniquely corrupt—primary balloting system.

In other words, he drained the lifeblood of the same Hudson County

Democratic machine while it was calling in favors for Mr. Mangi. As I have said, there is a better way in New Jersey, if only the Biden administration would care to look.

It is the role of the Senate to provide advice and consent. We ask nominees questions and evaluate their answers. We judge nominees on that political record.

Mr. Mangi's closed-door meetings with interest groups short circuits that process and calls into question what fairness we might expect from him.

It is yet another reason the Senate should not, cannot confirm Mangi.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, one of our important responsibilities in Congress is to protect American consumers. But allies of Big Business and Wall Street, who always fear threats to their bottom lines, have been working overtime to convince consumers that a bill that I have introduced with Senator MARSHALL, the Credit Card Competition Act, will do more harm than good.

Their latest tactic, they are recruiting allies from the airline industry. United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby recently said that our bill would "kill rewards programs."

Let me be very clear. This is false. Moreover, this past July, Forbes published an article saying that compared to other nations, airline rewards programs in the United States have made it more challenging to earn and redeem miles.

Because while the airline industry is trying to argue that my bill would stifle competition and their loyalty programs, it is actually their own questionable practices that threaten American consumers' ability to redeem rewards.

Let me explain. The airline industry knows how much consumers value rewards programs that over 100 million Americans participate in. These programs originated as a way to reward true frequent flyers for their loyalty and patronage. And, today, millions of Americans participate.

But these programs have evolved to include cobranded credit cards that focus on dollars spent using those cards.

The Presiding Officer and I spend a big part of our lives on airplanes. I don't know about your experience, but I will tell you what mine is: As soon as they have us in our seats buckled in, they start advertising their credit cards.

I have seen times when the flight attendants walk up and down the aisles

passing out brochures for people to consider enlisting in their credit card program. And then as you are leaving the plane, they are once again passing them out.

They seem to focus as much on credit cards as they do on safety in these airplanes. You have to ask yourself why. It turns out there is one basic reason for it. Airlines make more money off the cobranded credit cards they issue than they do from aviation programs.

At the same time, they are showing troubling reports that airlines use their loyalty programs to engage in abusive, unfair, and sometimes deceptive practices.

Airlines incentivize Americans to purchase goods and services, obtain certain credit cards, and spend as much money as they can on the cards in exchange for promised rewards. And all the while, they retain the right to strip consumers of these rewards or alter the terms of these programs at will.

For example, there are troubling reports that airlines may be devaluing the miles that you accumulate making it harder for consumers to ever achieve promised rewards.

At certain times, the cost of purchasing points from airlines' websites may be up to three times the value of the points at redemption. This is a rip-off with wings. We must do more to protect American consumers.

In October, I wrote to the Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. I expressed my concern about these unfair practices, and in March, he replied. I was pleased to read that DOT's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection is using its authority to initiate a review of airlines' rewards programs.

DOT has been meeting with major U.S. airlines to get more information on exactly how these frequent flyer programs work. Secretary Buttigieg shared with me that DOT has the necessary authority to investigate these programs and take enforcement action where appropriate.

The Secretary also announced a joint hearing with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. That is good news for consumers. That meeting took place this morning to discuss airline credit cards and frequent flyer programs with industry representatives, labor leaders, and consumers. These are important steps forward in the conversation, and I thank Secretary Buttigieg for showing this initiative. Just last week, I had a chance to raise the issue directly with him at an open hearing during the Senate's Appropriations Subcommittee. Once again, I was glad to hear the Department of Transportation also is concerned with airline shady practices and seeks to protect Americans.

This week, the Senate has been considering the FAA reauthorization bill. I support a provision, which made the final bill, that would create a Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for the Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Consumer Protection. I

think it is important to put someone in this post to have better oversight of frequent flyer programs for the consumers of America.

We should pass the reauthorization bill as quickly as possible to ensure there is no lapse in resources for our Nation's airports, air traffic controllers, aviation industry, and all the passengers.

Employed by the credit card and airline industries, critics have accused me of jeopardizing Americans' airline rewards with my idea of competition among credit cards. This isn't true. Modern-day airlines have become credit card companies that also happen to own airplanes. It is their deceptive practices that threaten Americans' ability to redeem rewards that they have earned. I am committed to holding both industries accountable for exploiting hard-working consumers to further line their own pockets.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call for the cloture motion with respect to the substitute amendment numbered 1911, as modified, be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 Cantwell substitute amendment No. 1911, as modified, to Calendar No. 211, H.R. 3935, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize and improve the Federal Aviation Administration and other civil aviation programs, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Martin Heinrich, Gary C. Peters, Patty Murray, Brian Schatz, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Peter Welch, Richard Blumenthal, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Laphonza R. Butler, Angus S. King, Jr., Jeanne Shaheen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 1911, as modified, offered by the Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER], to H.R. 3935, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize and improve Federal Aviation Administra-

tion and other civil aviation programs, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 161 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Baldwin	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Peters
Bennet	Hagerty	Reed
Blackburn	Hassan	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Risch
Booker	Hickenlooper	Romney
Boozman	Hirono	Rosen
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Budd	Kelly	Sanders
Butler	Kennedy	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Capito	Klobuchar	Scott (SC)
Carper	Lankford	Shaheen
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Lummis	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Sullivan
Cornyn	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Marshall	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Tuberville
Crapo	Moran	Warnock
Cruz	Mullin	Warren
Duckworth	Murkowski	Welch
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Murray	Wicker
Fischer	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	Young

NAYS—13

Cardin	Johnson	Van Hollen
Cassidy	Kaine	Vance
Daines	Lee	Warner
Ernst	Merkley	
Hawley	Schmitt	

NOT VOTING—3

Braun	Scott (FL)	Sinema
-------	------------	--------

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 13.

Three-fourths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 2040

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 2040 to the text proposed to be stricken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York, [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 2040 to the text of the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1911.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the end add the following:

SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 7 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

AMENDMENT NO. 2041 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2040

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I call up second-degree amendment No. 2041.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Ms. CANTWELL], for Mr. SCHUMER, proposes an amendment numbered 2041 to amendment No. 2040.

Ms. CANTWELL. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike “7 days” and insert “8 days”.

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

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

AMERICAN HOSTAGES

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I come to the floor today to speak for a few moments about the urgent—matter of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad and about a specific positive recent development to make sure that when they are released and freed, they are welcomed home in a positive and meaningful way.

Today, there is somewhere between 30 and 40 Americans wrongfully detained abroad, and they range all over from their backgrounds to the countries in which they are held.

I have met repeatedly with Rachel and Jon, who are the parents of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, an American Israeli who was attending a music festival in Israel when he was attacked, badly injured, kidnapped by Hamas terrorists, and dragged to Gaza where he is still today hostage beneath Gaza in tunnels.

Ryan Corbett has been held in Afghanistan for years, an NGO worker who was abducted by the Taliban.

Mark Swidan has been held in China on narcotics trafficking charges, a sentence upheld recently but not yet imposed.

And, of course, Evan Gershkovich, a Wall Street Journal reporter currently imprisoned in Russia whose mother I met with recently and who I join with his family in continuing to pray and work for his release.

There has recently been a positive step forward in how we welcome home these hostages.

First, I have to tell you something disturbing about how we have long welcomed home hostages. Jason Rezaian is a Washington Post reporter who was

taken prisoner in Iran and, ultimately, served a year and a half—544 days—in prison in Tehran before he was released. And I want you to guess what was the first thing Jason got from the U.S. Government when he returned home? It was a tax bill with fines and penalties for his failure to file and pay his taxes on time.

Jason came to meet with me and recounted to me that when he pointed out to the IRS that it was front-page news in the Washington Post that he was unjustly imprisoned—of course, he couldn't pay his taxes on time—they said: We would like to help you, Mr. Rezaian, but Congress needs to act in order for us to stop imposing tax penalties on American hostages.

So today I am here to celebrate that my dear friend MIKE ROUNDS, Republican Senator, and I have introduced and the Senate has now passed a bill with a catchy title, Stop Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act. It cleared unanimously—thank you. We now await House action.

This is the latest in a number of actions several of us have taken together. There is now a National Hostage and Wrongful Detainee Day. It was recognized by a bill that was passed in the Defense authorization bill last year and signed into law by President Biden. That was March 9.

We are also working on legislation to repair the credit score of those who are wrongfully imprisoned, held hostage, or detained. As you can imagine, if you spend years in prison in Russia or in Iran or being held captive in Afghanistan or in Gaza and you aren't making payments on your bills, your credit score suffers. Senator TILLIS and I are next hoping to move the Fair Credit for American Hostages Act.

Let me conclude by saying this: We have to do more together to deter hostage-taking, to restore to the United States those who have been wrongfully detained, to cooperate across our government.

I am grateful that the Biden administration has increased its focus on this urgent moral issue and that 47 wrongfully detained Americans have been brought home so far under the present administration. But, frankly, all of us should be working together to hold in our prayers and thoughts those who are hostages, those who are wrongful detainees and their loved ones, and to work together, as Senator ROUNDS and I have in recent weeks and as the Congress as a whole will in coming days.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. COONS. The Senator will so yield.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I have a great deal of respect for the Senator from Delaware, and we work well together on the Judiciary Committee and always operated in good faith, even though we sometimes have differences of opinion. I know he spends a lot of time thinking about national security and foreign relations affairs,

and he has traveled the world and knows more leaders of the different countries around the world than I ever will.

But I do know that since he shares the concerns about the status, particularly the American citizens who are hostages in Gaza, I would just like to get some idea from him what his thoughts are about the administration's pause on weapons delivery to Israel.

Let me just predicate this by saying, I remember back when, of course, we were concerned about al-Qaida in Fallujah where the marines fought a terrible battle. And, unfortunately, any time there is a conflict, there are going to be civilian casualties. Obviously, the goal is to minimize those casualties; likewise, in places like Mosul where ISIS made its last stand in Iraq.

I would like to get an idea from the Senator, if he would be so kind, if he would share what his thoughts are about what Israel is supposed to do in Rafah, obviously, to satisfy the concerns about civilian collateral damage but also in a way that allows Israel to eliminate the terrorist threat.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to what is a pressing concern for so many of us.

I will simply reflect on my last in-person meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Gallant in Israel, now many weeks ago. It was part of a visit I made to a number of countries in the region. I spoke directly to this, and I believe what I am saying also reflects the views of the administration.

Of course, the United States stands strongly behind Israel and its defense and its security. Secretary of Defense Austin, when asked this same question about what it might mean if there were pauses or reviews of weapons deliveries—what that might mean. Just yesterday, he said that the administration, the United States, retains an ironclad commitment to Israel's security and defense, as just demonstrated a few weeks ago when we worked together with Israel, with the UK, with France, with Saudi Kingdom, and with Jordan to provide their defense against 300 missiles and drones launched at Israel by Iran.

So what is it that we are saying with regard to Rafah? What I said to the Prime Minister was: You don't just have the right to defend the Israeli people against Hamas; you have the obligation. After October 7, you have to restore a sense of security and deterrence against this terrorist organization that massacred more Jews, more civilians—1,200 people of a wide range of backgrounds, in fact. It is the worst day for Jews since the Holocaust. But many who are still held captive in Gaza by Hamas are from a dozen different nations, languages, and religions.

You have to go after them and finish the job. You have to go into Rafah, go

after these four remaining battalions, and you have to secure Gaza and make certain Hamas does not reemerge as a fighting force that can ever threaten Israel again.

And given that there are a million civilian refugees who have flown down to the very bottom of Gaza and are now up against the hard border with Egypt, and given that Egypt will not allow any of them into Egypt, you have to provide a pathway for civilians to leave Rafah before you go in at scale with a bombing campaign—a ground campaign—to minimize civilian injuries and deaths. If there are 10,000 or so Hamas fighters remaining in Rafah, and if the multiplier—to use a crass term—has been 2-to-1 civilian deaths for every Hamas fighter killed, to contemplate 20 or 30,000 more civilian deaths in Rafah is to contemplate a horrifying outcome.

But it is not acceptable to leave Hamas in control of a segment of Gaza and capable of returning.

So what is it I am hoping and expecting Israel will do? To relocate all of the civilians in Rafah, north in Gaza, screen them so that none of the leaders of Hamas or the fighters of Hamas escape; to provide for humanitarian aid and for shelter in another part of Gaza; and then to go in in scale, get into the tunnels, secure the release of the hostages, if possible, and finish the job. That is difficult but, in my view, doable.

For us to ignore the consequences of using American weapons at scale in a very heavily concentrated place where there are a million refugees there because they were told to move south, as the IDF carried out its justified campaign against Hamas over the last 6 months, would be to undertake a tragic loss of life that is needless.

Madam President, at this point, I am inclined to yield unless the Senator has a follow-up question for me.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I appreciate the comments from my friend and colleague from Delaware.

I am reassured by his commitment to make sure that Israel will have the capacity to actually eliminate the terrorist threat, which is, of course, an existential threat. Hamas, a proxy of Iran, wants to wipe Israel off the map. This is not a conflict of choice. It is an existential fight by the Israeli people. And, of course, no one wants any civilian casualties, collateral damage.

And from the news reports that I read and see, it looks to me like the Israelis are trying to provide a safe passage for many of the refugees who, as the Senator says, have moved south, but now they are up against the hard border of Egypt with nowhere else to go. My hope is, as he said, that they will be given safe passage, if they can, to someplace where they won't be in harm's way.

But, again, to me, the bottom line is we have to give Israel the flexibility they need to eliminate the threat. We would ask for nothing less if it were us

as it has been in places like Mosul and Fallujah in the past.

I appreciate the Senator for responding. Again, I am reassured by his comments. But I hope—I hope—we never are so arrogant or so full of hubris as we think we can dictate or micro-manage a conflict in a foreign country thousands of miles away when they are in a fight for their lives.

Thank you very much. I appreciate my colleague.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, if I might extend my remarks briefly, then conclude.

There is another path a bipartisan group of us worked hard to support, and I hope is still possible. This path forward, which I also discussed directly with Prime Minister Netanyahu, was given real life just 2 weeks ago—3 weeks ago—when Iran attacked Israel.

Israel's defense against these Iranian missiles and drones was, yes, primarily provided by missile systems and by Israeli jets but also by the cooperation and assistance of the Saudis, the Jordanians, the Americans, and the British.

There is another path forward where ending Hamas in Gaza and the region is the joint project of the Saudis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, and that there is an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was exactly that prospect that helped precipitate the Hamas attack of October 7.

Yes, Hamas is a hateful terrorist organization dedicated to eradicating Israel and killing Jews. But the timing, the timing of the October 7 attack was very closely aligned to when a final next step in the Saudi-Israel reconciliation was about to move forward. They have been determined to prevent peace.

There is a way forward whereby Hamas may be eliminated from having any role in Gaza and the West Bank and, in the future, of the region by a regional cooperation which could be facilitated by achieving peace. That is also much to be hoped for and worked for.

I yield the floor and thank my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the information of the Senate, cloture having been invoked, the motion to commit and the amendments thereto fall.

H.R. 3935

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the Senate has spent much of the past couple of years rushing to complete high-stakes bills before long-awaited deadlines arrive. Matter of fact, we have been very bad about meeting those deadlines. We keep kicking the can down the road in a number of cases. That was the situation last month, when one of our Nation's most vital intelligence tools was in danger of expiring on the 19th of April. It was the case last spring, when the United States hit the debt limit and nearly defaulted on its debts while Congress debated solutions. It was the case for fiscal year 2024 appropriations, when Congress had to pass multiple eleventh-hour funding bills to avert a government shutdown.

It seems like we have lurched from one deadline to another up against the wall, where we have postponed making important decisions on a timely basis, so there is no more time, no more flexibility, and we have lurched, as I said, from potential shutdown to potential shutdown.

But the big item on the Senate's agenda this week is the reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration, and to my point, it is set to expire tomorrow night.

The Federal Aviation Administration is vital to the safety and the efficiency of our Nation's air travel system that millions of us depend on, on a daily basis. From certifying aircraft and pilots to overseeing air traffic controls, this Agency touches on virtually every aspect of the aviation industry, and its operations have a major impact on all the American people. On an average day, the Agency serves more than 45,000 flights involving 2.9 million passengers. That is a staggering number—45,000 flights, 2.9 million airline passengers a day.

A highly functioning FAA is vital to the country, but it is clear that the Agency has fallen short in a number of respects in recent years. Travelers have dealt with widespread flight cancellations and paralyzing staffing shortages. They have experienced jarring safety issues, such as near collisions on airport tarmacs, including one at the Austin airport, where I live. All of these incidents have underscored the need to pass a strong FAA reauthorization bill that prioritizes safety, efficiency, and consumer confidence.

My friend Senator CRUZ, the junior Senator from Texas, is leading the reauthorization effort on this side of the aisle, and he has worked with the chairwoman, Senator CANTWELL, to help craft a bipartisan, bicameral bill that will make flying safer and more convenient for all airline passengers.

This reauthorization bill importantly includes a range of reforms and will modernize and improve the FAA. It strengthens safety standards, enhances consumer protections, invests in technologies to improve efficiency, and expands training programs to meet the workforce demands of the rapidly growing air travel industry.

I am glad this legislation also delivers a major win for Texas and in particular, San Antonio, where I was raised. San Antonio is the seventh largest city in the United States, and it is known as Military City USA because of the large presence of our Armed Forces. As a matter of fact, that is the reason my family moved to San Antonio when I was a freshman in high school—because my dad was a career Air Force officer stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

Despite the fact that we are talking about the seventh largest city in the country, you can fly directly from Washington, DC, from Reagan National Airport, to Houston, to Dallas, to Austin, but you can't fly directly to San

Antonio. You have to go through a major hub, like Dallas-Fort Worth. This is because of this archaic and really quite inappropriate perimeter rule which limits the number of gates available for aircraft to fly in and out of Washington, DC, at Reagan National Airport.

This makes it difficult for military personnel serving in places like San Antonio or businesspeople who want to come back and forth or simply families who want to come visit the Nation's Capital. This makes it unnecessarily difficult for each of them, but I am optimistic this will change soon as a result of the underlying Federal Aviation Authorization Act. This legislation will allow five additional long-haul flights into Reagan National Airport, giving airlines the ability to establish a direct route between, in this case, San Antonio and the District of Columbia.

Again, I want to commend Senator CRUZ for his leadership on this legislation. He knows how important this is to San Antonio and the entire State of Texas. It is also important for consumers to have a competitive choice when it comes to the airlines they choose to fly on because the more competition, it means that the prices will have to be better, more affordable for consumers, and it will force everybody to be better. He and Senator CANTWELL and our colleagues on the Senate Commerce Committee have crafted a strong bill to modernize the FAA and promote safety for the American people, so I just want to say a few words about how much I appreciate their hard work.

I hope the Senate will pass this bill soon, perhaps as early as this evening.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Madam President, on another matter, while all these big, deadline-driven bills often get the most attention, they aren't the only pieces of legislation moving through the Senate and across the Capitol to the House and then to the President's desk. This Chamber, the Senate, has been very productive in producing countless bipartisan bills that address some of the biggest challenges our country is facing.

One example is the need to protect our kids online. The social media platforms that were designed to connect people have become breeding grounds for exploitation and abuse of children.

Out of every great technology that has made our lives easier and made us more prosperous, unfortunately, there always seems to be a dark side that is exploited by bad actors and evil people.

Last year, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received over 36 million reports of suspected child exploitation.

Let me say that again. Last year alone—NCMEC, it is called—the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received 36 million reports of suspected child exploitation online.

Predators are increasingly using these social media platforms to groom and exploit vulnerable children. Repub-

licans and Democrats—again, this is not a partisan issue—Republicans and Democrats on the Judiciary Committee have taken these threats seriously. We have held multiple hearings on this topic, and my colleagues and I have introduced a range of bills to build a safer world online for all of our children.

One of those bills is the Project Safe Childhood Act, which gives Federal prosecutors and law enforcement more tools to go after online child predators. This legislation that I introduced and passed the Judiciary Committee passed the Senate unanimously last October, but it is still awaiting action in the House of Representatives after all these many months.

Sadly, it is not the only such bill. The House is also sitting on another important bill to protect children called the Jenna Quinn Act. This legislation carries the name of an inspiring young Texas woman who is a survivor of child sexual abuse. Jenna was the driving force behind a 2009 law in Texas that required training for teachers, caregivers, and other adults who work with children in schools on how to identify, prevent, and report child sexual abuse. Given the amount of time our children spend in class, it is important that our teachers and our counselors and people who work with them in their schools are trained to identify the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse.

Since the Jenna Quinn Law passed in Texas in 2009, a number of States have passed similar laws, but this training lacks funding typically, and that is where the Jenna Quinn Law comes in. The bill I introduced with Senator HASSAN to finally back the Federal training will come with Federal grant funding attached.

Again, this bill, like the previous bill I mentioned, passed the Senate unanimously, but it is still awaiting action in the House of Representatives.

But I am not done yet. The House is also holding up another bill that would reauthorize Project Safe Neighborhoods through the Department of Justice. This is another bill that I introduced. This program fosters partnerships between Federal, State, and local law enforcement to help reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer.

It was inspired by a successful program that started just down the road in Richmond, VA, called Project Safe Neighborhoods. Actually, I think it was called Project Exile at that time. But it also is something that, when I was attorney general a few years ago, we scaled up for a statewide effort, and it helped reduce crime rates across our State.

The Federal program is called Project Safe Neighborhoods, and it has, during its tenure, helped reduce violent crime in large cities and small towns across America.

Given the growing concerns about crime in our country, including right

here in the Nation's Capital, in the District of Columbia, there could not be a more important time to make this program better, stronger, and more effective.

So these are three bills that were bipartisan and basically voted unanimously out of the Senate and are sitting, waiting for action in the House. Each one passed the Senate, as I said, with unanimous support, and each one would go a long way to help reduce crime, support survivors, and make our country safer. But there are a total of 10 bills which I have authored that have passed the Senate but are awaiting action in the House, including these 3. So when you add the other bills that have been introduced by many of my colleagues, we have a serious legislative logjam on our hands. The House is sitting on bills to protect children, improve public safety, promote efficient trade, and so much more.

I am here to plead with the House to take up and pass these bills. Many of them are, as they were in the Senate, not controversial. There shouldn't be any reason for any more unnecessary delay.

We know here we are 6 months before the next election, and legislating only gets harder each day, the closer and closer we get to the November election. Including this week, the Senate is scheduled to be in session for only 12 weeks between now and election day, and the same is true for the House of Representatives. In that time, we will need to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization, pass the Defense authorization bill, pass the farm bill, and fund the government, among many other things. Of course, those are just the must-pass bills. There are countless other items, like the ones I mentioned, that we should be working on together.

So we have a lot to accomplish in the next 12 weeks, and I would encourage our friends in the House to take up these commonsense, bipartisan bills that are noncontroversial and send them to the President's desk as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Ms. BUTLER. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in recognizing the indispensable contributions public service workers across the Nation make every single day.

I would like to start by thanking Senators SINEMA and LANKFORD—thank you so much—for championing the 2024 reintroduction of their Public Service

Recognition Week resolution of which I am a proud cosponsor.

For more than four decades, the first week of May has been set aside to show appreciation to the Federal, State, county, and local government employees who form the backbone of our country. As we mark the 40th anniversary of this tradition, we have a renewed opportunity to salute those working behind the scenes in small towns and big cities, many of whom have dedicated their entire professional careers to giving back to their community and to this country.

California is home to more public servants than any other State in our Nation. As one of the two Senators representing more than 40 million Californians, I could not be prouder of that fact. Whether it is here in the Halls of Congress or in the pockets of our Nation, I stand shoulder to shoulder with millions of public servants who get out of bed every morning, committed to shaping our world for the better. From our teachers to our librarians, our elected officials and our election workers, our people in uniform who fight crimes and fight fires, they and so many others exemplify some of our Nation's highest ideals.

I am inspired by the stories of hard-working Californians who have dedicated their lives to public service. They are the reason our communities are kept safe. They are the reason our students are kept on the right track. They are the reason democracy endures against attempts to erode it. And they don't get nearly enough credit or thanks for the sacrifices that they make to keep our country moving forward.

My office performed direct outreach to communities up and down our State, inviting people to nominate those working in local, State, and Federal offices they believe best define what it means to be a public servant. We received hundreds of nominations—extraordinary people from all across California who embody the spirit of public service—and though each and every one of them deserves their own recognition, I would like to share a few of those stories today.

The first is Roxana Samame.

Roxana is a multilingual cultural academic language coach for the L.A. Unified School District. She is nominated by Geraldine Hernandez-Abisror. Geraldine met Roxana this year from Geraldine's work in community engagement and as a parent liaison for the Reseda Community Schools.

A member of United Teachers Los Angeles, Roxana is a single mom, nominated for having the biggest heart and the best gift for working with students from underserved communities. She was a former dean of students at West Adams Prep School, has worked with students involved in gangs, and has provided meaningful support to keep our kids on the right path. She currently serves as a coach for title III multilingual and cultural language

students in Los Angeles, which is the second largest school district in our Nation. In addition, she works in supportive services for the English Language Development Program at William Mulholland Middle School.

Congratulations, and thank you, Roxana.

Veronica Marbella from Los Angeles, CA.

Veronica is a nurse practitioner at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Outpatient Center in Los Angeles, CA. She was nominated by Guadalupe Alvarado.

Veronica is a proud union member of SEIU Local 721, and she was Guadalupe's first supervisor in 2001 at Charles Drew Medical Center. She has served for 30 years as a nurse practitioner, including the supervision of the Trauma Intensive Care Unit at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital in LA. She built a track record of training nurses on how to best advocate for their patients and for each other. She also worked closely with Dr. Meade, who was the ICU director and a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, to orient and train both interns and residents in the surgery program.

Veronica has dedicated her life to serving others in the most complex environments. In the words of Guadalupe, "She reminds us of the compassion, dedication, and skill involved in providing excellent patient care."

Thank you, Veronica and Guadalupe.

Joy Murphy from Santa Clara, CA.

Joy works at NASA's Ames Research Center and was nominated by her cousin, Geraldine Hernandez-Abisror.

Joy has been a public servant for more than 26 years and was the first Filipina-African American to serve as the Deputy Director of the Office of Human Capital at NASA's Ames Research Center. She now serves as the Director for California Human Resources and Chief Human Capital Officer at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in Edwards, CA.

Joy is a mother who has dedicated her life to serving her community and, according to Geraldine, has a heart of gold and talent that words cannot describe.

Thank you, Joy, for all that you do to make California and our Nation great.

Josh Hoines from Shasta, CA.

Josh works for the National Park Service and was nominated by Erin Ryan, who works with Josh in serving California constituents. A public servant for more than 18 years, Josh currently serves as the Whiskeytown Park Superintendent.

Erin told us that Josh came into his role during a very difficult time. Over 90 percent of the park had burned in a wildfire, and he was dealing with COVID shutdowns and a lack of funding. Despite these obstacles, Josh has returned to the park, and he has returned the park to an effective recreation area. According to Erin, Josh has done great work with staff and the community and our office. She adds

that the community is fortunate to have him in the district. I know I am fortunate to have Josh in our national parks as a representative of this government.

I am grateful, Josh. Thank you and congratulations.

Finally, Diego Rivera.

Also from Los Angeles, Diego is a firefighter. He is a firefighter at the U.S. Forest Service, Angeles National Forest in Los Angeles, CA. He was nominated by Robert Garcia, who served as his boss, the fire chief.

On August 16, 2023, Diego was fighting fires in the Six Rivers National Forest in Northern California when he was struck by a fallen tree and was severely injured, rendering him paralyzed. Since his injury, Diego continues to defy a lot of his medical prognoses, exceeding any expectation that medical professionals have made. Despite his paralysis, he remains engaged with his firefighting team and the U.S. Forest Service's fire agency to continue to motivate and inspire firefighters to believe in themselves and in each other.

In closing, service is the rent we pay for living or, as Shirley Chisholm reminded us, it is the great price that we pay for living. I am grateful to the thousands of public servants across the State of California for their continued service to the people of this Nation. Choosing a life of dedicated service to others is a decision that demands the highest respect and the greatest gratitude. Far too often, people in this line of work go unsung and underpaid.

So, as we use this moment to recognize the critical role they play in holding our Nation together, let's recommit ourselves to understanding that they are needed, ensuring that they are protected, and making the path to public service smoother for those who choose to walk it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, regulations have been coming thick and fast from the Biden administration lately as the administration races to squeeze in regulations before the deadline, after which they could be overturned by a new Congress.

In fact, a recent spate of regulations brought the total regulatory costs imposed by the Biden administration in 2024 to over \$1 trillion—\$1 trillion—in just one year.

All told, the Biden administration has imposed a staggering \$1.47 trillion in regulatory costs since the President took office—\$1.47 trillion.

Compare that to President Trump, who had actually reduced regulatory costs by this point in his administration. But, perhaps, I am not being fair. Perhaps, it is not surprising that a Republican President didn't impose a staggering regulatory burden.

Let's compare President Biden to his Democratic predecessor, President Obama. By this point in his first term,

President Obama had imposed regulations costing \$303.5 billion—certainly, of course, more than President Trump, but, I am afraid to say, still a long way away from President Biden. The total cost of President Obama's regulations at this point in his first term doesn't come anywhere close to President Biden's total.

In fact, the total cost of President Obama's regulations to this point was roughly 20 percent of the cost of President Biden's—20 percent.

The Biden administration has imposed regulations costing almost five times as much as President Obama's. President Biden is bringing new meaning to the phrase "the heavy hand of government."

What do we mean when we refer to regulatory costs? What do those look like in practice? They can look like forcing electric generation facilities to spend millions of dollars to install costly carbon capture systems, as the Biden administration is doing with its new powerplant rule.

They can look like an additional \$7,000 in construction costs for new homes. See President Biden's energy efficiency requirements for affordable housing.

They can look like imposing new vehicle emission standards, effectively forcing car companies to spend enormous amounts of money to rejigger their supply chains and factories to produce a lot of new electric cars, even though Americans are not exactly clamoring for electric vehicles.

They can look like forcing farmers and ranchers and other private landowners to spend tens of thousands of dollars for permits or penalties concerning water features on their private land. And for that, I would have you see the Biden administration's waters of the United States, or what we call the WOTUS, rule.

I could go on.

All of these regulatory costs have consequences. It just stands to reason, if your family is facing a major, unexpected medical bill, for example, there is a good chance you are going to have to account for it somehow—either by cutting back spending, dipping into savings, or picking up extra hours at work, or perhaps a second job to increase your income.

Similarly, if you are a South Dakota nursing home facing a Federal requirement to hire additional staff—and for that, I would have you see the Biden administration's new nursing home staffing regulation—you are likely going to have to do something like reduce the number of patients that you care for or close your doors altogether, which is becoming already way too common in my State of South Dakota.

Or if you are a small business facing the new overtime rule the Biden administration recently put in place—which imposes a massive 65-percent increase in the overtime exemption threshold—you may be faced with the unappealing prospect of either increas-

ing prices on the goods or services that you provide, reducing the number of positions you have available, or lowering the base pay you offer to create room to be able to pay overtime wages.

Or take President Biden's powerplant regulations. His so-called good neighbor rule and his new carbon capture and emissions regulations will not only drive up energy prices for American families and businesses, they are also likely to result in a less reliable energy supply.

Our current assumption that we will automatically have the energy we need to power our businesses, operate our heating and air conditioning systems, run our appliances, and light our homes may not survive the long-term imposition of President Biden's powerplant rules.

Then there are still other costs. American taxpayers are now being forced to pay for abortion services at the VA—in defiance of Federal law—thanks to a Biden administration regulation.

This is far from the only attempt by the Biden administration to impose its far-left social agenda through Federal regulation and endanger conscience rights in the process.

We are facing serious consequences from the Biden regulatory regime, from threats to conscience rights to questions about the future stability of our energy supply to immense financial costs for families and businesses—\$1.47 trillion in regulatory costs in less than 4 years. I shudder to think what that number will look like should we see another 4.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

Mr. VANCE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a program of critical importance to my State and to a number of people all across the country, and that is the Affordable Connectivity Program—something that doesn't generate a lot of headlines; something that doesn't generate a lot of partisan debate; and something for which, gratefully, there is a bipartisan group of Senators who would, I think, extend the Affordable Connectivity Program for this country, but, unfortunately, it looks like the leadership does not want to give us a vote on it.

So I want to talk about why this program is important and talk about why it is important that we hopefully, sometime in the future, authorize this important program, which just expired a matter of a few days ago.

Now, this is a town where, often, the things that generate headlines are sometimes the most partisan fights,

the things that are most pressing and most relevant. And, of course—the Presiding Officer knows me—I participate in those debates just as well or just as much as anybody.

But sometimes—hopefully, most of the time—this body should be geared toward actually accomplishing things for the constituents that we represent. In the State of Ohio, the Affordable Connectivity Program benefits over a million households. That is not a million people. A million households in the State of Ohio benefit from this program. And my cosponsors from Vermont, from New Mexico, Democratic colleagues, and from a number of Republican States as well, I think, testify to how important this program actually is.

Let me just sort of try to identify a couple of the reasons why it is important. So the first reason it is important is because we know that connectivity is actually one of the important and necessary parts of living life in the 21st century. We may not like this. We may think that this is a negative trend. But, look, kids can't do their schoolwork without access to high-quality broadband. A lot of parents can't do their work from home if they don't have access to high-quality broadband. Teachers can't prepare lessons for the next day.

And, increasingly, especially in a country that is as constrained by budget and fiscal matters as ours, one of the great ways to lower healthcare costs in our country is telemedicine. Yet you can't do telemedicine, of course, if you don't have an internet connection at home.

The Affordable Connectivity Program solves this problem by ensuring that our low-income residents all across the country can afford their internet bills.

Now, it is not just about the consumers; it is not just about our citizens who need a high-quality connection because the guarantee that consumers will be able to pay their internet bills, regardless of their income level, is one of the things that makes it possible for a lot of companies to invest in rural broadband infrastructure.

Now, I talked to a number of companies, a number of businesses that do rural broadband infrastructure just in the State of Ohio, and it costs a lot of money. Right? You lay a mile of fiber in a place like Cleveland, Columbus, or Cincinnati, and you instantly have thousands upon thousands of people who are ready to tap into that connection; but you lay a mile of fiber in rural southeastern Ohio, and maybe, if you are lucky, you have a few people who are willing to tap into that connection. So it is more expensive in the parts of our country that are more sparsely populated.

I think it is one of the reasons my Democratic colleague from New Mexico is as passionate about this as I am—Senator LUJÁN because you have, of course, large numbers of reservations

all over New Mexico and a large number of rural areas that are in reservations. And, look, you need to be able to access the stuff. You need to be able to access internet connection in the 21st century. It is important for economic development. It is important for people to be able to live their lives.

But in order to ensure that people are willing to actually invest in that broadband infrastructure, to pay for that mile of fiberoptic cable, we have to make sure that, on the other end, there are customers who are willing to actually access and pay for those services.

So this is an important thing, and it is already expired. And it hasn't expired because of partisan bickering. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation that wants to reauthorize this program. It hasn't expired because we don't have the resources. This is a very, very small amount of money in the grand scheme of the Federal budget. The reason it is expired is because sometimes in Washington, people are too busy arguing about public policy and not actually busy enough doing public policy.

We have the votes. We have the need. We have the necessity. But the reason why this program has fallen, the reason why this program has lapsed, the reason why it has gone offline—if you will forgive a pun—is because we can't actually vote on it. And that, unfortunately, I think, is a reflection on Senate leadership; it is a reflection on the brokenness of this town; and it is a reflection on the fact that, too often, so many good public policies for the people of our country fall through the cracks because other things take priority.

Well, this should take priority. This is important. And I think, unfortunately, a lot of people in Ohio are about to find out how important it is when they start to see the effects of it expiring.

So one of the things, Mr. President—I am mindful a little bit of the time here. I received a number of letters about this. One of the really fascinating dynamics of becoming a U.S. Senator—I have been here for all of 18 months—is that your constituent letters very often tell you the issues that the people you represent, the people you serve, actually care the most about. I expect a lot of constituent mail—positive and negative—and sometimes I am surprised by it.

I am always surprised that anytime an issue of animal rights comes up, that is when I get maybe the most mail. People in Ohio really love animals, and rightfully so. And this issue I have gotten a lot of letters on. Again, it doesn't gather a lot of headlines, but it matters to a lot of people.

This is one letter I received from a constituent:

Senator VANCE: I am writing to you today to stress the importance of Congress providing continued funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) as soon as pos-

sible. My household, along with a special needs person that relies on GPS for tracking his whereabouts could be life-threatening if I cannot find him.

Think about that, right?

I am his legal guardian and look over his well-being so as when he wanders off, I would not be able to find him through his cell phone device. More than 21 million other vulnerable households in the United States—

Mr. President, 21 million, 8 percent or so of our population, rely on this program to pay for broadband services.

Without the support provided by this program, my home and many others would struggle to afford a broadband subscription.

The support provided by the ACP program has kept my family and families like mine online through these difficult economic times.

I am going to read a second letter here, but I just want to highlight what an extraordinary testament that is: the legal guardian of a special needs person who needs broadband access to be able to keep tabs on this person when they need to. And the program that they desperately need has already expired, and they are about to start feeling it. It only expired a week ago, so they haven't maybe noticed it yet, but they certainly will. And this person needs access to this program to keep track of a special needs person. And you wonder, Will they have it without this continued program?

I am going to read another letter here. This is from Poland, OH:

Dear Senator VANCE, I represent the Ohio Connectivity Champions, a group of technology experts who were hired by the Management Council of the Ohio Education Computer Network during the pandemic to help Ohio families find affordable internet.

We originally focused on parents of students who needed internet so that their children could complete schoolwork. Since then, we have focused on all Ohioans and helping them with enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program as well as other technology related assistance.

We have heard from thousands of Ohioans on how much the ACP has helped them with affordable internet.

I know that budgetary issues are very difficult right now and that government expenditures are at the top of everyone's list of priorities, but the ACP is one of the most successful social programs in a long time.

The pandemic opened everyone's eyes to the digital divide in this country and the ACP has allowed for millions of Americans to participate in the 21st century economy. I know that the ACP will most likely be adjusted through negotiations in Congress, and that is fine, but to not fund the program completely would affect many Ohioans. We would appreciate your support of the ACP as we continue to help Ohioans with finding affordable internet.

Another letter comes from Columbus, OH. And though one of the things I really admire and like about the ACP program is it induces investment in rural broadband infrastructure, we also know that there are a lot of people in our urban areas who could not afford their internet bills without the ACP program.

So this is from Natalie in Columbus, OH:

We receive a \$30 credit each month on our internet connection. This is scheduled to end in early 2024 unless the Affordable Connectivity Program is fully funded. This makes a significant difference in our monthly budget as we are on food stamps. Both my husband and I are disabled. This credit makes a significant difference in our lives. Without it that \$30 will have to come out of our food budget as we don't have anywhere else to squeeze the budget. Food costs have gone up. Every month, we end up spending more on food than we get in food stamps. When we got that extra \$95 at the end of the month it really helped. However, that program was discontinued. Now, another program is scheduled to end that directly impacts those Americans on the bottom end of the economic scale.

So two people—a husband and wife—disabled, who are actually going to forgo food because this program has expired in my home State of Ohio. What a shame that we have failed Natalie and her husband by failing to reauthorize this program, and what an opportunity to actually get off our rear ends and make sure that we do it when we get the opportunity.

This is another letter I am going to read from Mansfield, OH:

I am 73 years old.

Mansfield, OH. Speaking of pets, this is actually where my wife and I got the very first dog that we ever owned together.

Without the ACP, I would not have internet.

So, I am writing to you today to stress the importance of Congress providing continued funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) as soon as possible.

The support provided by the ACP program has kept my family and families like mine online through these difficult economic times. We use it to stay connected to work, school, and healthcare providers, in addition to family and friends. Without ACP, the reality is we may no longer be able to afford to be connected and that would be an added hardship.

Think about this. I know that, like a lot of Americans with young kids at home, probably the most important thing that I use my broadband connection for is so that my three little kids can call their grandparents and call their aunts and uncles.

So this 73-year-old from Mansfield, OH, I wonder whether she will be able to contact her grandkids, whether she will be able to keep connected with her family who are not easy to get to if this program disappears.

One final letter I want to read. I am sorry. Mr. President, given the time, I will not read the last letter that I have. But the point that I think these letters drive home is that real people are going to suffer when this program goes away. You have people who have to pick between food service and internet connectivity. You have an elderly woman who may not be able to connect to her friends and family. You have people worried about their telemedicine and healthcare visits.

And on the point about Federal spending, it sort of breaks my heart when a constituent who can't afford internet service is writing to us apologizing for a program's budgetary hit

when it is a tiny, tiny slice of the American Federal budget. And I know this is a controversial comment with some of my colleagues, but if we can afford to fund military conflicts the world over, can't we afford to provide basic connectivity and services for our own people? Disabled people choosing between food and internet connection—that is the choice that we have foisted upon them by not authorizing this program. I am disappointed by that, Mr. President, and again I will say that it presents an opportunity for us to do the right thing—to make reforms to the ACP program where it needs to be reformed but to do the right thing: Reauthorize this program, and ensure that Ohioans and people all over our country don't have to choose between internet service and food. We can do that. We just have to do our jobs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

H.R. 3935

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, this is a little like *deja vu* all over again. Here we are dealing with another piece of legislation. It is an important piece of legislation. It is important legislation that deals with a lot of things important to a lot of Americans, affecting something that is uniquely, distinctively within our legislative jurisdiction as Federal lawmakers; that is, the work of the Federal Aviation Administration.

It has been part of the interstate network from the dawn of the Republic. Article I, section 8, clause 3, the commerce clause, has been interpreted, among other things, to give Congress regulatory—legislative jurisdiction over channels and instrumentalities of interstate commerce, and air travel happens to be one of those things.

This important FAA reauthorization bill that has a lot of provisions in it—some of which I like, some of which I am not wild about—was processed by the Senate Commerce Committee. The Commerce Committee—the chair and especially the ranking member—did yeoman's work in incorporating into the base text amendments from a wide array of Members, and I have appreciated the hard work they have put into it.

It is important to remember that no matter how hard a committee chair and ranking member work—certainly the ranking member, my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from Texas—have done in this case on this bill, it still doesn't obviate or supplant the need for robust consideration of amendments to be offered on the Senate floor because, remember, any one Senate committee, including the Commerce Committee, contains at most, you know, a few dozen Members of this body—a couple of dozen is about all—and there are, of course, 100 of us. Every one of us holds an election certificate.

One of the most fundamental rules in the Constitution—a rule that, by direc-

tive of the Constitution itself, can't be changed—is the principle of equal representation among the States in the Senate. So to give life and vitality to that, it is absolutely imperative that individual Senators be given the opportunity to have meaningful input into legislation whether they sit on the committee of jurisdiction or not.

To that end, throughout the nearly 2½ centuries of the existence of this body, the U.S. Senate, our rules have given pretty broad deference to individual Members and given certain prerogatives to each and every Senator, no matter how junior or how senior, whether a Member is with the minority party or with the majority party.

The whole basis of traditions in the Senate built into our rules—things like the filibuster, like the cloture standard—they are all designed to allow Members to engage in robust debate. You can't really have meaningful debate and meaningful input from every Member of this body who wants to participate unless you have something of an open amendment process on the floor.

Now, this was always the norm in the history of the Senate. It was even when I arrived here. I was sworn into office at the beginning of 2011. The Presiding Officer, of course, joined us not too long after that, and thus commenced the golden era of the U.S. Senate with the arrival of the current Presiding Officer.

When we arrived here in the Senate, there were still real, live, significant vestiges of the way the place always operated; namely, when we had a significant bill—especially a significant, must-pass legislative vehicle like the FAA reauthorization bill we are considering now—it was still normal, still to be expected that an individual Senator could come down to the Senate floor, call up his or her amendment, and make that amendment pending.

Once an amendment is made pending, then the Senate has an obligation eventually to dispose of that amendment either by passing it or voting on it and declining to pass it or tabling it or something like that. There are not many options, but it had to be disposed of once it was made pending.

We have gotten into a bad pattern since then. Unfortunately, both political parties have played a role in this. We have had increased prevalence of a situation in which the majority leader will come to the Senate floor, file cloture on the bill to bring debate to a close, set that process for bringing debate to a close in motion, and fill the tree.

Fill the tree. Filling the amendment tree is what that refers to. That is fancy Senate terminology that just means the majority leader has some tricks at his disposal to make it nearly impossible to get amendments made pending by individual rank-and-file Members.

It was fairly common that we could make our amendments pending as re-

cently as 2011 and 2012, when I arrived and then when the Presiding Officer arrived in the Senate. It is almost unheard of now because filing cloture and filling the tree have become almost automatic, almost reflexive. They are almost self-perpetuating. And it is relentless to the point that many Members who have joined us since then haven't ever even really experienced the Senate the way it is more properly expected to function. Individual Members have to beg and plead, go on bended knee to political leaders of both parties in the Senate, asking: Please, please, may I have a chance to do this? Without the acquiescence of the majority leader, the only way you can get your amendment pending in many circumstances involves coming to the floor and asking unanimous consent to make it pending. That consent is too routinely denied now, very often by the majority party—typically by the majority party; sometimes not.

What that results in is really a truncation, an abbreviation, a short-circuiting of the legislative process as it has always functioned here, as it was designed to function in the Senate rules, as I imagine it to have been envisioned by the Founding Fathers.

There are 100 Members of this body, and they should all have the opportunity to fight publicly for their constituents, to make improvements to the bill, to take away things they consider harmful, and to add things that have not been included that they think should be included.

This bill has not been amended on the Senate floor. That is why I opposed cloture moments ago. Like I say, there are some things in this bill that I really like, and there are other things that I don't like, but the biggest single reason to oppose cloture on the bill is that I don't know how you can in good conscience vote to bring debate to a close when debate has effectively not happened—at least not on the Senate floor.

I don't believe debate can happen meaningfully, effectively on an amendable vehicle like this one where there has been no opportunity to amend. The bill hasn't been amended on the Senate floor.

The Senate shouldn't simply agree to rubberstamp this so-called four corners agreement.

"Four corners agreement" is a term that can refer to several different things. Very often it means that it has been blessed—depending on the nature of the bill, very often it has been blessed by the law firm of SCHUMER, MCCONNELL, JOHNSON, and JEFFRIES or perhaps the law firm of SCHUMER, MCCONNELL, JOHNSON, and JEFFRIES accompanied by the chair and ranking member of the appropriate legislative committee or committees.

But we are not a rubberstamp for one or more committees or for the firm; we are each elected by the voters in our respective States and should stand accountable to them. In order to do our jobs, we have to stand here and be willing to debate. If you don't want to

fight fires, for heaven's sake, don't become a firefighter. If you don't want to cast votes, including lots of votes on amendments to legislation, even where you don't feel like taking the vote, even where you would rather be kicking back, drinking a root beer or something—you would be really doing your constituents a disservice if you subjugated your own desires—your own desire for bliss and for inaction and you preferred those over your duty to your constituents who elected you.

We are not here to celebrate somebody's birthday. We are not here to rubberstamp what the committees do or what the law firm suggests. We are here to legislate.

We are not really legislators; we are a gigantic rubberstamp to the extent that we ourselves don't have the opportunity to vote for amendments. That is why I call upon all Senators within the sound of my voice, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican or something else, a liberal or a conservative, whether you have been here for a few years or a really long time—it doesn't matter; you should want your job that you worked really hard to get elected to—you should want to be able to do your job.

I want to be clear. There are a lot of amendments that have been prominently featured and touted in connection with this bill, amendments—the sponsors of which have really aggressively argued for. A lot of those amendments are not amendments I support. In fact, a number of them are things that I strongly oppose and would really hope would not pass. Some of them, I would support; others, I wouldn't.

But notwithstanding the fact that some of them really are awful, call me old fashioned, Mr. President, but I think that is our job, is to take votes, to try to make legislation better, and to offer improvements to it, and that means amendments.

Look, I understand that in the House of Representatives, things operate a little bit differently. You have 435 people over there. It is a lot harder to have—this is why we have always bragged about our status as the world's greatest deliberative legislative body.

On paper, we are. Historically, we certainly have been. Today, we are not. We are kidding ourselves. We are delusional if we want and expect the American people to believe otherwise, because we are not that.

But here is the good news: We still are that entity on paper. We still are that entity as it is envisioned, as it is created, as it is established and outlined by the Constitution. We still are that entity with our own rules, our own precedents, and our own customs.

But, alas, the best rules, the best constitutional provisions will amount to dead letter if we ourselves refuse to exercise our own rights and our prerogatives. The muscle of legislative procedure begins to atrophy with nonuse—especially, deliberate, willful, chronic nonuse—always ultimately to the ben-

efit of the firm, to the benefit of a small handful of Senators and to the exclusion, to the effective disenfranchisement of everyone else—most importantly, those who elected us to do a job that we are neglecting, that we are outsourcing to third parties. Sometimes, it is third parties in the executive branch of government. Sometimes, it is individual Senators within our own ranks, within our own body, our own party leaders within our respective legislative Chambers.

Here is my closing plea. I hope and I humbly ask Senators—and I have great affection for the Presiding Officer and consider him a dear friend, even though he and I don't agree on every political issue. We have different positions on everything from the consumption of meat to whether I waited too long to shave my head. But the Presiding Officer and I are good friends, and even though we have different ideas for a lot of things, I think we both agree on the fact that the Senate could do a better job and would be doing a better job if we were voting more on his amendments, more on my amendments, more on the amendments that anyone else wants to file.

Sure, it takes a little bit more time, perhaps. Sure, it requires a little bit of effort. But that way we are doing our job. And not everything we want will always pass. And, yes, that way the law firm of SCHUMER, MCCONNELL, JOHNSON, and JEFFRIES wouldn't be able to control as much as it does. But it was never intended to be that way.

We are intended to make laws, not other lawmakers—certainly not legislative oligarchs who stand in for everybody else while the muscle of legislative and constitutional procedure continues to atrophy.

So, in short, the next Senate Republican and Democratic leader, regardless of who holds the majority, I hope, including and especially the next majority leader of either political party—I certainly hope he or she, whoever holds that position, will plot out a course that is different than the one that we have been on for the last few years and plot out a course that allows and encourages and enables each and every Senator to do his or her job.

We are all going to work better if everyone is allowed to do his or her job, and that means the leader needs to stop filling the tree reflexively, consistently, instinctively every time and boxing out rank-and-file Members.

Now, look, I get it. There are times when the majority party may see fit to do that, and those decisions have to be made in realtime. But I don't think it should be done often. I don't think it should be done for lighter, transient reasons. It should be the rare exception, rather than the norm.

But regardless of who the next majority leader is and to which party that leader may belong, it is not as though we are hopeless, passive observers, subjects to be acted upon here. No, we can be a part of this process.

Wherever, whenever there is an effort to lock out amendments, to fill the tree and exclude individual rank-and-file Members from the amendment process, any 41 Senators—Republicans, Democrats, or a combination of the two—can respond to that by proposing cloture and prohibiting the process from resulting and bringing debate to a close, unless or until each Senator is allowed the opportunity to offer, call up, and make pending their amendments.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Missouri.

RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I am, again, on this floor, this afternoon, because it is, again, apparent that Congress will fail to pass the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. Congress will, again, fail to compensate those Americans who have been exposed by their own government to nuclear radiation, to nuclear testing, to nuclear waste.

Why is Congress failing to act again? Well, because the House doesn't want to vote on it. The House doesn't want to vote on the radiation bill as part of the FAA. The House doesn't want to vote on the radiation bill as part of anything. The House just doesn't want to vote at all.

The only problem with that is that there is only 1 month remaining before this vital program—this commitment that this Nation has made to the working people of this Nation, to the veterans of this Nation who have served this country—before this commitment runs out, before it goes dark, before people exposed to nuclear waste by their own government get nothing. We have 1 month to go, and the House is not acting.

And so I am here, again, to remind this Congress, again, why it is vital, why it is a moral imperative that Congress—the House, in particular—act without delay.

So let me once more remind the House and all of those listening of just a few of the stories of the good Americans who have given their health—and, in many cases, I am sad to say, their lives—in an effort to help this country's nuclear program and as a result of what this country, what this government, what the military did in pushing forward with the nuclear program, including uranium processing and mining, without telling and informing the American people of what they were doing.

Let me just start in the State of Missouri. I could start in any number of

States because this was a nationwide effort that stretches all the way back to the Manhattan Project. And now most of America has seen that movie about Dr. Oppenheimer that won all those awards, and that is fine, and I am sure Dr. Oppenheimer deserves all the credit.

But let's just be clear that the real people who won not just the Second World War, the people who won the Cold War, the people who have fought and won every conflict that this Nation has been involved in, the people who are truly responsible and get the credit for the success of the Nation's nuclear program and military writ large are the working people of this country, who were not featured in that movie, who have not won awards, who are not getting plaudits from Hollywood or Wall Street or anybody else but are instead dying because of the radiation their government exposed them to.

In St. Louis, the government opened the uranium processing site in the 1940s, at the height of the Manhattan Project. St. Louis was a so-called secret city because it wasn't known that it was a site for uranium processing, and that went on for years.

When the government finally decided to close down the site, they didn't dispose of the nuclear waste. Instead, they allowed that waste to leak out of trucks that were supposed to transport it. They set it out in barrels in a parking lot, where it was exposed to the elements for years on end. Eventually they ended up dumping it—or some of it—in a public landfill.

You heard that right. Our government dumped nuclear waste in St. Louis into a public landfill, where, by the way, it still is. All these years later, it hasn't been cleaned up.

And as for the rest of it, the nuclear waste that sat out in barrels exposed to the elements, that was negligently transported in trucks, what happened to that? Well, it ran off into local creeks. It ran off into the soil. It helped pollute the air. And because of that, for 50 years and running, the people of St. Louis and St. Charles, which is right next door, and the entire region have been subjected to nuclear radiation in their homes, in their creeks—yes, in their schools—and it is still happening today.

What has the Federal Government done? Nothing. Nothing but mislead the people of my State. In fact, mislead is really too nice. They have out-and-out lied to them.

The government said for years that there was no nuclear contamination in Coldwater Creek in the St. Louis area. They said to the people of North County St. Louis: Your homes are fine. Your schools are fine. You are paranoid. Don't worry about it.

It turned out that was all a lie. The soil was contaminated. The water is contaminated as I stand here tonight. And now we have got the Army Corps of Engineers testing underneath people's basements because that is how

deep the nuclear radiation, waste, and contamination, have sunk. That is how deeply embedded it is, really in the entire region.

And that story has been repeated over and over in places like Tennessee to Kentucky, to Alaska, to New Mexico and Utah and Nevada and Wyoming and many another State, in the West, in Ohio, in Pennsylvania.

Now, it is a pattern because this government's refusal to take responsibility for what it did is a pattern that continues to this day, and it is time to break it.

Because of what the government did, people like Zoey from St. Louis, she was born, this little girl, with a mass on her ovary—born with it. Why? Well, because her parents lived right near the creek that has been contaminated with nuclear radiation for decades and decades.

She had to have surgery to remove that mass from her body when she was 3 weeks old—3 weeks. She is 5 years old now, and she continues to experience regular complications from this disease that she was born with because of what the Federal Government did.

She is not the only one, not by a stretch—a long stretch. There is Zach Visintine. Zach was born with a rare brain tumor, one known to be caused by radiation. He had his first surgery when he was 1 week old. He started chemotherapy when he was 3 weeks old.

Zach died when he was 6. Why? Well, because his parents lived in that same region of St. Louis, right along that creek that the government poisoned, right along that waterway that the government contaminated, right along that area where the government said, for decades: totally fine, totally safe.

People played in the water. They built their homes right along the creek. Schools were built there. It was contaminated the entire time, and now Zach's family is left to mourn.

Or there is Claire. Claire's parents also grew up in the St. Louis area. Claire's parents grew up near another nuclear site called Weldon Spring, which is out in St. Charles, MO. For those who don't know the State, it is just to the west there of St. Louis. Claire was diagnosed as a baby with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma when she was only 2 years old.

This is happening not just in Missouri. We could talk about the victims of the Trinity Test, the original Oppenheimer test, like Bernice Gutierrez. Bernice was 8 days old when Trinity was detonated, 8 days. What we now know was—despite the government telling people at the time that there was no danger to their lives or property or persons, despite their saying it was fine—the nuclear fallout, the radiation, generated a cloud so large nearly the entire State of New Mexico was covered, and Bernice lived just miles from the test site.

Forty-four members of Bernice's family—44—have been diagnosed with

cancer or radiation-linked diseases. Her mother had cancer three times—three times. Three of her brothers have had cancer. Her sister has had cancer, and she has a thyroid disease that is radiation induced. Her oldest son passed away from radiation illness; her daughter died of thyroid cancer; and 36 additional relatives—additional—have died of cancer and radiation-linked thyroid disease.

What has Bernice received from the U.S. Government? An apology? Nope. Recognition? Nope. Compensation? Not a dime. Not a dime.

Then there is Leslie Begay, who is a Navajo marine. Leslie is so typical of so many of the Navajo Nation. Did you know the Navajo Nation volunteers to serve this country in our Armed Forces in a proportion greater than any other community in the United States of America? It is extraordinary.

And when the time came during the Cold War to open mines to mine for uranium, guess who did more mining than any other community in the United States of America. It was members of the Navajo Nation. You want to talk about patriots? These are patriots. They have served this Nation at every hour of need, and Leslie is a prime example.

What did Leslie get when he went to the uranium mines? This is after he served the country in the Marines now. He goes to the uranium mines to continue serving this country. Did the government support him? No. Did they warn him? No. Have they compensated him for the diseases and cancers he has suffered? No. No.

Let me give you just one more example. These are young men and women—very young—elementary students at Jana Elementary School back in the St. Louis area. This picture was taken just a year or so ago. Their school was closed in 2022, closed, because independent, verified, third-party testing discovered dangerous levels of radiation in the dust on the windowsills at the school, in the dust covering the desks at the school. Why is that? Because Jana Elementary sits right next to that contaminated creek that the government poisoned all those years ago. And now these kids are told not only can they not go to school any longer in the neighborhood where they grew up—for months they were without a school entirely. Now they are told: Who knows what they have been exposed to. Who knows.

What has the government done about it? Have they rebuilt the school? No. Have they cleaned it up? Nope. Have they helped any of these children? No.

It is the same story. And I could give you 6 more examples or 60,000 or 600,000 because that is the minimum number of the good Americans who have been poisoned by their government, exposed by their government and the government's negligence to nuclear radiation.

Now, I will say this: The Senate did the right thing just a couple of months ago when we finally passed legislation

to right this decades-long injustice. This body finally passed—by an overwhelming, bipartisan margin, I might add—legislation to compensate these families, to compensate these good Americans, these brave Americans, to acknowledge them and their service, to elevate them to the stature that they deserve. These are American heroes. They deserve to be honored. They deserve to be elevated. They deserve to be compensated. This legislation, our legislation, would do it, and this body has passed it.

And now, now it waits for action in the House. Now, Speaker JOHNSON said, upon passage of the Senate's legislation 2 months ago—I have his statement in front of me. He said that he would work to move forward and act on the reauthorization measure, move forward and act on a reauthorization measure.

That was March of 2024; this is May. What has the House done? Nothing. How has the House voted? Not at all. What action has the House taken? None. And in 1 month—1 month—if the House does not act, this program goes dark. These children are not helped. These good Americans are not compensated. One month to go.

So I say again today: It is time for Speaker JOHNSON to keep his commitment not to some politician somewhere; it is his job to keep his commitment to the American people. It is his job to keep his commitment to the good people of this Nation who are waiting for him to act. And I will just say that weakness in the face of injustice is not commendable. Vacillation in the face of injustice is not to be praised. Indecision in the face of injustice is nothing to be proud of. This is the time to act and to move. This is the time for the House to keep its commitments and for the Speaker to keep his commitments.

We need politicians who are less concerned about how long they will hold their office and how many votes they have to support them in some election for office and more concerned about delivering justice for the American people.

Now, I will say this: I know there are some in the Speaker's party, my party, who would urge him to turn back and to reject what this body did in honoring and compensating the American people who so deserve it. I see these remarks from today published, remarks made by the junior Senator from Utah, Senator ROMNEY. Here is what Senator ROMNEY said. He does not like the bill passed by the Senate compensating these Americans. He said it costs too much, and he goes on and says that any compensation should be reserved for people "who have been determined to actually be suffering"—to actually be suffering—"as a result of radiation exposure."

I have to tell you, I don't understand this statement at all. I do not understand it. I do not understand why it is not good enough for these children and

their suffering to matter. I don't understand why the thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of Americans poisoned in my State and other States, why that isn't good enough for this body to act. We have evidence. We have studies. This has been years of research done on the scope of the government's tests, on the scope of the downwind exposure to radiation, on the uranium processing done in Missouri and in Tennessee and in Kentucky and so many other States, Ohio. We know what the facts are. That is why this body finally acted.

And I would just say to the Speaker: It is incumbent now on you to act. Do not turn back and do not listen to those who would tell you to put people last and money first. Make no mistake. The bill for this program has been paid. The bill for this radiation has been paid. It has been paid by the American people. They are the ones who are paying the costs. They are the ones who are dying. They are the ones who are having to forgo cancer treatments, treatments for their children, because they can't afford it because their government has exposed them to this radiation negligently and now won't do anything about it. They are paying the cost. It is time the government bore its share.

Now, this is a moment of truth for Congress and also for the party of which I am a Member. It is a moment of decision. If you want to be the party of working people, you have to stand up for working people. If you want to be the party of those who have fought and died and bled and given their health for this country, you have to stand up for them. This is the time. This is the time. This is a test, and it is time for my party to rise to it, along with the rest of this Congress to honor the people who have built this Nation.

So, yes, I am in earnest about it. And, yes, I do feel a heaviness of heart about this today because, yes, the clock is ticking. I know that the lives we have lost we can never get back. I realize that. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't act now to help those who are suffering now. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't act now to right the wrong.

It was wrong for the government to poison the American people, lie to them about it, and do nothing about it. That was wrong. But we can right that wrong. This is America. We can make it right. The bill the Senate passed makes it right. This is a moral matter. It is a moral commitment.

I call on the House to act without delay. I call on them to do the right thing without hesitation. I urge the Speaker: Do what is right for the American people. Do what is right for the working people of this Nation. If you do, the Nation will commend you and stand with you.

Courage in the service of justice is what we need now, and I urge them to ward it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ISRAEL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, some of my Republican colleagues held a press conference today, criticizing President Biden for his decision to stop sending additional bombs to Israel due to the Netanyahu government's apparent decision to launch a major military assault on Rafah.

One of my Republican colleagues even said:

Joe Biden objectively favors a Hamas victory over Israel. It's just that simple.

Which sounds rather amusing given the fact that, for the last 40 years, there has probably been nobody here in Washington, DC, more strongly supportive of Israel than Joe Biden, as a Senator and a President.

We all know that President Biden has been very clear about his opposition to an attack on Rafah for many, many months and for good reason: An offensive—a major military offensive—in Rafah would worsen an already horrendous humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

I am not quite sure—I know a little bit about politics, but I am not quite sure whom my Republican colleagues think they are speaking for when they attack the President.

The truth of the matter is that the American people—Republicans, Democrats, Independents, progressives, conservatives, moderates—are increasingly sick and tired of the massive destruction that is now taking place in Gaza. That is not BERNIE SANDERS' opinion; that is what poll after poll after poll shows. What those polls show is that the American people want an immediate cease-fire, and they do not want more U.S. military aid going to the war machine of the rightwing extremists' Netanyahu Government.

Let me just take a second to mention a few of the polls that are out there showing where the American people are on this issue.

Just this week—a few days ago—a Data for Progress poll found that 70 percent of voters, including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, support the U.S. calling for deescalation and a cease-fire in Gaza. Deescalation is not a massive assault on Rafah, and a majority of voters, including 68 percent of Democrats and 55 percent of Independents, support suspending all U.S. arms sales to Israel until it stops blocking U.S. humanitarian aid from entering Gaza.

An April 14 POLITICO/Morning Consult poll: 67 percent of Americans support the U.S. calling for a cease-fire.

An April 12 CBS poll: 60 percent think the U.S. should not send weapons and supplies to Israel. Those are all, for my Democratic colleagues, disproportionately higher among Democratic supporters.

An April 10 Economist/YouGov poll: 37 percent support decreasing military aid to Israel; just 18 percent support an increase. Overall, 63 percent support a ceasefire, and 15 percent oppose.

So I am not quite sure where my Republican colleagues are coming from and who they think they are representing.

Let me just take a moment to tell you why the American people are opposed to more military aid going to the Netanyahu Government.

Almost 35,000 Palestinians have already been killed in the 7-month war, and more than 78,000 have been wounded, over two-thirds of whom are women and children—two-thirds of whom are women and children. As we speak right now, according to humanitarian organizations, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children face the possibility of malnutrition and starvation.

No. The American people do not want to see an increase in destruction in Gaza. They want to see an end to this horrific war.

Mr. President, as I am sure you know, the Netanyahu government has already destroyed the civilian infrastructure of Gaza. There is virtually no electricity, virtually no clean water, and raw sewage is running through the streets, spreading disease.

The housing infrastructure of Gaza has been demolished. Over 60 percent of the housing units have been damaged or destroyed, including 221,000 housing units that have been completely decimated, leaving more than 1 million people homeless—almost half the population of Gaza.

The healthcare system has been systematically annihilated—healthcare—at a time when you have tens and tens of thousands of people who have been injured, 26 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza have been made inoperable, and more than 400 healthcare workers have been killed.

The educational system in Gaza has been virtually destroyed. Every one of Gaza's 12 universities has been bombed, 56 schools have been destroyed, 219 have been damaged, and 625,000 children have no access to education.

Some of my Republican friends think that this is not enough violence, that this is not enough destruction? They want Netanyahu to go into Rafah and kill more people, making it impossible for humanitarian aid to get out to starving people. Maybe some of my Republican colleagues think that is a good idea. I do not believe the American people agree with them.

Last year at this time, the population of Rafah was about 300,000. Today, it is about 1.3 million. In other words, the population has quadrupled—quadrupled—in a 7-month period, with people who have been driven out of their homes throughout Gaza now landing in Rafah. That is why an attack on Rafah would make an unspeakable humanitarian disaster even worse. There are 1.3 million people, including 600,000 children, sheltering in that area. That means there are some 50,000 people per square mile. It is enormously densely populated.

This is also Rafah, where the vast majority of humanitarian aid is re-

ceived and distributed and where most of the few remaining medical facilities are located.

In other words, at a time of massive humanitarian disaster throughout Gaza, an attack on Rafah would not only greatly add to the death toll, it would severely hinder the ability of humanitarian aid to get through to desperate and starving people.

Let me conclude by saying this: The United States does and should stand by its allies, but our allies must also stand by the values and the laws of the United States of America. That is what an ally is.

We must now use all of our leverage to prevent the catastrophe in Gaza from becoming even worse, and that means holding back all offensive military aid, including billions in recent funding, until the Netanyahu government withdraws from Gaza, restores humanitarian aid to people who are now facing starvation, ends the disastrous war, and stops killing Palestinians in the West Bank.

The United States of America must not be complicit in this atrocity.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, in a few moments, I will make a unanimous consent request on a bill on airline slots, sponsored by Senators WARNER and KAINE.

I am here for the sake of fairness—fairness. There are very strong feelings on both sides of this issue. It is not partisan but, rather, different people have different opinions. The proper and fair and only right thing to do is have a vote and let the body decide.

I yield to the senior Senator from Virginia to explain his amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for making this UC request.

I have been in this body since early 2009. This issue which we are debating about—slots at DCA—is a perennial one. People feel very strongly on both sides. There has never been a time since I have been in the Senate that there was not either a bipartisan agreement to resolve this issue before it came to the floor or a debate on the floor which resulted in a vote. Sometimes it is part of the States—Virginia and Maryland—that don't want additional slots. We have been successful. Sometimes we have not. But each and every time, there has been a vote.

As a matter of fact, if we look over at the proceedings on this bill, in the House, managers of those bills thought they had some sense of what should be included in or not included in, in a slot debate. But the House of Representatives actually had a vote, and to the surprise of the managers of the bill, slots were completely eliminated from that piece of legislation.

I am not going to sit here and rehash all of the statistics. What is clear,

though, is that the single busiest runway in the United States of America is not at DFW; it is not in New York; it is not in Seattle; it is not in Atlanta; it is at National Airport—an airport that was originally constructed for 15 million passengers, with 3 runways to allow some distribution of those flights. Now, because of the lack of turbo planes and prop planes, we have an airport that handled 25 million passengers last year—90 percent of all that traffic on a single runway.

My friends who don't agree with this—and as the majority leader said, it is not a partisan issue; it comes from both sides—have said: No, no, Senator KAINE, Senator WARNER, you are wrong. This won't add to the delay. It won't add more cancellations. It was a one-off a few weeks ago when two airplanes came within a few hundred feet of a collision. It won't add any additional safety concerns.

So in an effort to try to meet folks halfway, we have amended the original Kaine amendment, which said, no, let's just have an up-or-down vote on slots, and said, no, let's allow the five slots if and only if the Secretary of Transportation certifies that no additional safety concerns will be raised, the traveling public won't be impaired, there won't be any additional cancellations, and there won't be any additional delays—all things the opposition has said: Add these slots. There is no problem.

Well, let's not have Congress weigh in on something that, frankly, we don't have the expertise to weigh in on in the first place. Let's give it to the Secretary of Transportation to make that determination on passenger safety, on cancellations, on delays. Let's let the professionals make that decision. That is what our amendment does.

Again, I am going to yield now to my friend, my fellow Senator from Virginia, Senator KAINE.

Again, I thank the majority leader for making this request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Senator WARNER.

I also want to thank the Senate majority leader.

Mr. President, I have spoken on the floor a number of times about this, and I don't need to rehash the deep concern I have about the excessive delay that already exists at Reagan National, the excessive cancellations that already exist at Reagan National, and the excessive need to put planes into holding patterns circling over a city with very restricted airspace at Reagan National.

I deeply oppose the jamming of more flights onto this runway, and I oppose that it was done with no involvement from Virginians whatsoever, no opportunity for us to weigh in. We are not on the Commerce Committee. So the only way we have to have an impact on this is to have an amendment on the floor. We may win it or we may lose it, but this is our hometown airport. It is all

being done without us. The only impact we have is to be able to do something on the floor.

So the proposed amendment that I introduced was simply to strip the slots, to follow the advice of the FAA, to follow the advice of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, to follow the advice of people who know what they are doing so as to avoid a potential catastrophe.

I am not going to get that amendment. I am not going to get that amendment. So, instead, what Senator WARNER has done, together with our Maryland colleagues, is propose a compromise. We will accept the 5 slots—5 slots are equal to 10 flights—if, as Senator WARNER indicates, the Secretary of Transportation says with respect to each slot: It will not increase delay, it will not raise the risk of cancellation, and it will not risk passenger safety.

We should all want that, not only for the airport that the Capital region uses but for all airports—not increasing delay, not increasing the safety risk, not increasing the cancellation risk. That is what this amendment is.

We want a vote on our amendment about our hometown airport, and we have offered a compromise to protect safety and the convenience of passengers.

And I would hope that my colleagues would see fit to allow the home State Senators in whose territory this airport is to at least have an amendment vote.

And, with that, I yield back to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me just reiterate: For the sake of fairness, it is only the right thing to do to allow a vote. We don't know what the outcome will be, but it is very fair to have a vote.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the only amendment in order to the Cantwell-Cruz substitute amendment No. 1911, as modified, be Warner amendment No. 2057 and that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate vote on the amendment; further, upon disposition of the Warner amendment, all postcloture time on substitute amendment No. 1911, as modified and as amended, if amended, be considered expired and all remaining amendments be withdrawn; that upon disposition of the substitute amendment No. 1911, as modified and as amended, the cloture motion with respect to the underlying bill be withdrawn; that the bill, as amended, if amended, be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, as amended, with a 60-vote-affirmative threshold required for passage and with 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, all without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any objections?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me say I appreciate the passion of my colleagues from Virginia. I have served with both of them for 12 years. Senator KAINE and I both were elected together in 2012. He and I have worked together on many issues, and I anticipate we will work together on many issues going forward.

On this issue, he and I see the issue very differently. This bill that is before the Senate is a bill that moved forward the right way. It moved forward, frankly, a way I wish a lot more legislation proceeded in the Senate. This bill proceeded through regular order.

It began in committee. The Commerce Committee took it up. We had a series of markups scheduled over several months. In the process of drafting this bill, we solicited the input, initially, of every Senator on the Commerce Committee. And every single Senator—Democrat and Republican—has priorities that are reflected in the underlying bill that were adopted.

After the bill came out of the Commerce Committee, we solicited the input of every other Senator, those not on the Commerce Committee, for their ideas, their priorities for their respective States.

This bill contains over 200 Member priorities, from Democrats and Republicans, reflecting the different needs and the different priorities of our 50 States.

In addition to all of those, this week, we added nine more amendments in a managers' package when the majority leader laid down the substitute earlier this week. This is an amendment that reflects the consensus view of this body, which is why I anticipate shortly we will see an overwhelming bipartisan vote passing the FAA bill.

Now, on the question of slots, in the committee initially, an amendment was offered by Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK, a Democrat from Georgia, to expand the number of slots at DCA Reagan airport by 28 slots. That was an amendment that had a lot in its favor, but it also prompted furious lobbying on the other side. Ultimately, what the committee did is work to seek common ground, work to seek a compromise.

Senator WARNOCK's amendment of 28 slots was not adopted. Instead, what was adopted was an amendment that I drafted, working hand in hand with the chairman of the committee, Senator CANTWELL, that went down from 28 slots to merely 5 slots.

Now, several arguments have been raised against creating any additional slots at Reagan. One argument is pointing to the recent near miss at DCA Reagan as evidence that no additional flights can go into or out of Reagan. However, it is worth noting that the FAA experts have recently clarified that this near miss had absolutely nothing to do with traffic on the runway; that it was unrelated issues that produced the near miss. And I might note those unrelated issues include what this underlying bill address-

es, which is ensuring we have sufficient air traffic controllers to monitor the traffic and protect safety.

Another argument used by opponents of adding new flights to Reagan is the argument that DCA was originally designed to accommodate 15 million passengers annually and that in 2023 it served 25.5 million passengers. What that argument fails to acknowledge is that DCA has made significant investments to increase capacity, including adding more gates and expanding terminals.

Opponents of additional flights have also claimed that DCA is overburdened by its current flights and that DCA flights are already delayed. What that argument omits is the fact that DCA has a better on-time arrival rate than either Dulles or BWI. It has the best on-time arrival rate of the three airports in this immediate vicinity.

I would note, the most voracious opposition to this amendment comes from lobbying on behalf of United Airlines, and the reason is not complicated to ascertain. United has a near-monopoly position at Dulles airport, and United understandably wants to preserve its monopoly profits. Five new flights into and out of Reagan airport would provide additional competition—competition that would, predictably, lower the price of tickets. It is not surprising that United Airlines doesn't want tickets to go down; they want to continue charging monopoly prices.

I will point out, for the people of Virginia and the people of Maryland and the people of DC, limiting supply, allowing United to reap monopoly profits, and raising prices is not a good outcome. And for that reason, this bill, as drafted, with the new flights, will benefit the people of Virginia, the people of Maryland, and the people of DC. Indeed, in a recent poll, 67 percent of Northern Virginians support adding flights to DCA.

This bill improves competition. And in terms of the overall traffic, there are right now 800 slots at DCA Reagan. When this bill is adopted, it will go from 800 to 805. So it is a small, reasonable increase.

I would also point out, DCA Reagan is the only airport in the country that has Federal slot control and a restriction on long-haul flights. This restriction is in no other airport in the country, and there is a long, protectionist history as to why this one airport is subject to these restrictions.

I want to make one final point. In addition to being a benefit for everyone going to our Nation's Capital or from our Nation's Capital, a benefit that impacts the entire country—Americans from all 50 States travel to Washington, DC, to our Nation's Capital, whether it is schoolkids coming to tour the Capital, whether it is families coming to the Smithsonian, whether it is people coming to the Holocaust museum or the Lincoln Memorial, whether it is people coming to see the cherry blossoms.

Everyone coming to and from DC will benefit from this provision, but there is also a very particular benefit to my home State of Texas, and that, understandably, is near and dear to my heart. This issue first came to my attention about 3 years ago, and it came to my attention because a delegation from the city of San Antonio came to my office. That delegation included business leaders; it included committee leaders; it included elected leaders in San Antonio, most of whom are Democrats. And to a person, they were deeply, deeply dismayed that the city of San Antonio does not have even one direct flight to DCA Reagan.

Now, San Antonio is, today, the seventh largest city in America. San Antonio is the second largest city in Texas. San Antonio actually has a higher population than Dallas, TX. San Antonio also has an enormous military population. Indeed, the city's nickname is "Military City USA." And there is an enormous population of Active-Duty military and veterans who live in San Antonio. DCA Reagan is right next to the Pentagon, and it is right next to Arlington National Cemetery.

I can tell you, the community of San Antonio is united on a bipartisan basis that San Antonio deserves a direct flight to and from Reagan, that it will save money for residents of San Antonio, that it will generate jobs for residents of San Antonio, and that it is only fair for residents of San Antonio that they be able to come directly to DCA Reagan. And as a result of this bill that the Senate is preparing to vote on, San Antonio is going to win a major bipartisan vote to get that flight.

And my final observation: Senator WARNER said in the past a bipartisan compromise had been reached on this issue. I would note that happened here too. This bill that was voted out of committee was a bipartisan compromise. It was a compromise that was negotiated between me, the ranking member on the committee, and Senator CANTWELL, the chairman of the committee—a Republican and a Democrat—and this provision was added to the bill and voted out of the committee unanimously. Every Democrat voted for it; every Republican voted for it because it is a reasonable provision that benefits consumers and is fair.

Therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The majority leader.

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

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

The majority leader.

H.R. 3935

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, after months of painstaking work, the FAA reauthorization is passing the Senate today.

Aviation safety has been front of mind for millions of Americans recently, and this FAA bill is the best thing Congress can do to give Americans the peace of mind they deserve.

Passing this FAA bill preserves critical funding for airport security, training for more air traffic controllers and safety inspectors at manufacturing plants.

Passing FAA means avoiding costly delays to airport infrastructure projects, and passing FAA means avoiding the furlough of over 3,000 Federal employees. I am especially proud that this FAA bill keeps in place the 1,500 hour rule for airline pilots, which I promised would not be weakened.

Thank you to Chair CANTWELL—she worked so hard on this bill—and to Ranking Member CRUZ for their work to finish this bill.

Thank you to all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who contributed to making this bill stronger.

Without everyone working together and being willing to reach consensus, this very difficult bill would not have gotten done.

So I know of no further debate on the substitute amendment No. 1911, as modified.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on amendment 2041.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I withdraw my amendment No. 2040.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. The amendment is withdrawn.

AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I withdraw my amendment No. 2026.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right. The amendment is withdrawn.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the substitute, the cloture motion with respect to the bill—H.R. 3935—be withdrawn, and that the bill as amended, if amended, be read a third time, and that the Senate vote on the passage of the bill as amended, if amended, with a 60-vote affirmative threshold required for passage, and with 2 minutes for debate prior to the vote, all without further intervening action or debate.

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

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1911, AS MODIFIED

The question is on agreeing to the substitute Amendment No. 1911, as modified.

The amendment (No. 1911), in the nature of a substitute, as modified, was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the cloture motion is withdrawn, and the clerk will read the title of the bill for the third time.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I yield back that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), and the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 162 Leg.]

YEAS—88

Baldwin	Grassley	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Boozman	Hirono	Rubio
Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Butler	Johnson	Schmitt
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Carper	King	Scott (SC)
Casey	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Lee	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lummis	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Thune
Cotton	Marshall	Tillis
Cramer	McConnell	Tuberville
Crapo	Merkley	Vance
Cruz	Moran	Warnock
Daines	Mullin	Warren
Duckworth	Murkowski	Welch
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murray	Wicker
Fetterman	Ossoff	Wyden
Fischer	Padilla	Young
Gillibrand	Paul	
Graham	Peters	

NAYS—4

Cardin	Van Hollen
Kaine	Warner

NOT VOTING—8

Barrasso	Hagerty	Romney
Braun	Manchin	Sinema
Britt	Menendez	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). On this vote, the yeas are 88, the nays are 4.

The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill is passed.

The bill (H.R. 3935), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 579.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Courtney Diesel O'Donnell, of California, to be United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, with the rank of Ambassador.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 579, Courtney Diesel O'Donnell, of California, to be United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, with the rank of Ambassador.

Charles E. Schumer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, Alex Padilla, Richard J. Durbin, Amy Klobuchar, Jack Reed, Tina Smith, Tammy Duckworth, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch, Sheldon Whitehouse, Raphael G. Warnock, Debbie Stabenow.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 570.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sanket Jayshukh Bulsara, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 570, Sanket Jayshukh Bulsara, of New York, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Laphonza R. Butler, Alex Padilla, Tim Kaine, Margaret Wood Hassan, Christopher Murphy, Peter Welch, Tammy Duckworth, Tammy Baldwin, Christopher A. Coons, Tina Smith, John W. Hickenlooper, Chris Van Hollen, Mark Kelly.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 460.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Seth Robert Aframe, of New Hampshire, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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 the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 460, Seth Robert Aframe, of New Hampshire, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Brian Schatz, Mazie Hirono, Tina Smith, Gary C. Peters, Amy Klobuchar, Raphael G. Warnock, Catherine Cortez Masto, Alex Padilla, Mark R. Warner, Tim Kaine, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Margaret Wood Hassan, Peter Welch.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, May 9, be waived.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

H.R. 3935

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate has tonight

passed this vital legislation. The House of Representatives should next week take it up and quickly pass it and send it to the President's desk for signature.

This legislation is a strong, bipartisan, bicameral bill that includes hundreds of priorities for Senators and Representatives, both Republican and Democrat. This bill gives the FAA the safety tools it needs at a critical time to help bring new aerospace technologies to market.

I want to take a moment to recognize the staff who has spent countless hours hammering out this legislation. This was no easy task. As I stated earlier, this bipartisan product was the result of many, many months of hard work, late nights. There were many times it appeared this bill was not going to make it over the finish line, and the hard work of the staff is a big part of the reason we are where we are tonight.

I want to thank my staff for their tireless efforts to get this bill passed into law. Many thanks to Simone Perez, who is next to me and who has not slept in about 6 months. I will note that she broke her foot stepping on a dump truck of her young son, but I personally said she got the foot boot from kicking hindquarters.

Since the Presiding Officer is also a pastor, I will make sure to speak in a way that would be appropriate in front of a pastor.

I want to thank Duncan Rankin, Andrew Miller, Matt Swint, Hannah Hagen, Ryan Cannon, Melissa Braid, Christian McMullen, Amanda Thompson, Liam McKenna, Nicole Christus, Brad Grantz, Omri Ceren, and Aaron Reitz.

I am also thankful to Chairwoman CANTWELL and her staff. The chair has worked tirelessly as well. Her staff has worked tirelessly. We have worked hand in hand navigating issues—some contentious, some passionate, some that seemed would take the entire bill down—and then we went back and worked out a compromise. They have been terrific partners with us, and I look forward to our committee continuing to produce strong, bipartisan products in the near future, in the weeks and months ahead.

I would be remiss if I also didn't thank Senators MORAN and DUCKWORTH, who serve as the leaders on the Aviation Safety, Operations, and Innovation Subcommittee. I appreciate both Senator MORAN and Senator DUCKWORTH and their staff for working collaboratively with us on this bill.

Finally, I would like to thank Senate legislative counsel—specifically, John Goetcheus, Ruth Ernst, and C.J. Murphy, who worked long hours and late nights to make this bill happen.

And now, Mr. President, I look forward to going to Ronald Reagan National Airport, getting on an airplane, and flying home to Texas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.