

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(2) TOPICS.—Each briefing required under paragraph (1) shall cover the latest staffing and resource assessment at Joint Task Force-East, including—

(A)(i) a determination of whether the current staffing levels of Joint Task Force-East are sufficient to successfully advance the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of such Joint Task Force; and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient staffing levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for increasing such staffing levels; and

(B)(i) a determination of whether sufficient resources are being provided for Joint Task Force-East in accordance with section 708(b)(7)(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)(7)(a)); and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient resource levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for providing any remaining resource requirements.

(c) REPORT ON JOINT TASK FORCE-EAST HEADQUARTERS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, the Commissioner for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Administrator of General Services, shall submit a report to the congressional committees listed in subsection (b)(1) that analyzes the cost and effectiveness of hosting the Joint Task Force-East headquarters in Portsmouth, Virginia compared to alternative headquarters locations.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be withdrawn; that the Peters substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered and made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 3292), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “DHS Joint Task Forces Reauthorization Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 708 OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 708(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (9)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii)(II), by adding “and” at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) a staffing plan for each Joint Task Force;”;

(B) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) not later than December 23, 2024, and annually thereafter, submit to the committees specified in subparagraph (B) a report containing information regarding—

“(i) the progress in implementing the outcome-based and other appropriate performance metrics established pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iii);

“(ii) the staffing plan developed for each Joint Task Force pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iv); and

“(iii) any modification to the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of each Joint Task Force, and a description of, and rationale for, any such modifications.”; and

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking “2024” and inserting “[2029] 2026”.

(b) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall brief—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(2) TOPICS.—Each briefing required under paragraph (1) shall cover the latest staffing and resource assessment at Joint Task Force-East, including—

(A)(i) a determination of whether the current staffing levels of Joint Task Force-East are sufficient to successfully advance the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of such Joint Task Force; and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient staffing levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for increasing such staffing levels; and

(B)(i) a determination of whether sufficient resources are being provided for Joint Task Force-East in accordance with section 708(b)(7)(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)(7)(a)); and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient resource levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for providing any remaining resource requirements.

The bill (S. 4698), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 9614

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the Senate receives H.R. 9614 from the House of Representatives, the text of which is identical to S. 4539, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—H.R. 4693

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental

Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4693, an act to provide the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995 does not apply to certain reports required to be submitted by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and other purposes, and the bill be referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, September 23; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Jenkins nomination, postcloture; further, that all postcloture time be considered expired at 5:30 p.m.; and, finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Monday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators LANKFORD and MCCONNELL.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Oklahoma.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, it is the middle of September. The end of the funding year is actually just over 10 days away. The Senate has brought up exactly zero appropriations bills, although the Committee on Appropriations has worked in a bipartisan way to be able to get those through the Committee on Appropriations. But zero of them have come to the floor for a vote, which means we are facing a continuing resolution in the next week and another one of those hanging deadlines out there.

We could have worked on it last week, except last week, there were just judges, and this week, it was some tax judges and other folks on the docket and some political votes that came up. So we didn't work on it last week, and we didn't work on it this week. We

didn't work on it 2 months ago or 3 months ago when they had already been out of committee. They just haven't come up at all.

So once again, the Nation is whispering about, will we have another government shutdown based on the fact that Congress has not finished its work. Quite frankly, even during this September, we have not even brought up appropriations bills for a vote on the floor at all.

I have come to this floor multiple times to say that this is not the way it should run. Quite frankly, a hundred of us would all nod our heads and say it is not the way it should run.

I continue to be able to bring to this body a very simple idea that MAGGIE HASSAN and I—my colleague from New Hampshire—have had together for years now that, if it ever came to the floor, would pass. We have plenty of support on both the Republican and Democrat side of the aisle to be able to deal with ending government shutdowns. It is a simple idea that she and I have; that is, if we get to a moment like this that we have not finished our work, the government doesn't have a shutdown; we have, actually, a shut-in where all of us have to stay here and continue our work. Federal employees and the Nation are held harmless, but we have to actually finish the work.

We have multitrillion dollars in debt and little to no conversation here about it, and we won't have any in September. Now, it looks like we will punt this for several months. My question is, Will we have it then? Probably not because it may punt to November or December or it may punt into next year. We haven't decided yet.

When that is decided, there will be another deadline sitting there, and there will be more things to do during that time period, whether it is the end of this year, because there are so many unaddressed things that have not happened this year that have to be addressed, so they will be crammed into the end of the year, so there will be no serious conversation then; or it will be punted into next year, and there are so many things under a new Presidential term that have to be done, there won't be any serious conversation then.

So my simple question is, When do we ever have this conversation on something we all acknowledge is a problem? But instead of working on what we all know is the big issue, we are instead voting on judges and chitchatting and pretending it is not a problem when it is.

We are not voting on the national defense authorization either. That has come out of committee already on wide bipartisan support months ago, but it has yet to come to the floor of the Senate. My understanding now of the latest rumor is that there is no plan to actually bring it to the floor of the Senate, that there seems to be an intent to say: We will just not ever bring it to the Senate and just kind of pretend we did and then move to a conference report at the end of year.

One of the single most important bills that we do during the course of the year is our funding for Americans' tax dollars in our National Defense Act. So far, we have not done any of the 12 bills dealing with our funding, and apparently, we are not going to do the National Defense Act this month, next month; maybe November, December if they can form an agreement with Members of the House behind the scenes. So the first time we may ever see the bill may be after some deal has already been struck, and we will have no amendments, no conversation; just the single biggest thing that we work on during the course of the year—national defense—landing on the floor of the Senate, saying: Vote up or down. Does anyone think that is the way it should operate? Anyone at all?

In this bill, I fought for things like Tinker Air Force Base. It is the largest sustainment base in all of the Air Force, and it happens to be in Oklahoma. There are serious things that are there.

We are in the transition between two different airplanes, the E-3 to the E-7. The E-7 has not come on fast enough, and the E-3 was already fading away, not being sustained. So in this bill, it actually says: Hold on, Air Force. The other platform is delayed. We can't give up this one until that one is on board.

So it is a literal national defense issue to say: We have to be able to resolve this. It is Congress speaking into what we should speak into in a very practical area to say these are things that need to be solved.

We have personnel issues, like pay raises for our military. We have issues for spouses and their work. We have all kinds of things that are built into this bill dealing with our different installations around the world and the fight that is happening in Europe and the Middle East and our preparation all around the world to be able to secure the United States. But we are not talking about that. We are having votes on judges instead. And apparently, from what I am hearing rumor of, we may not have any talk about it at all on the floor of the Senate.

There is a bill that has been moving through committee dealing with energy permitting—it seems to have bipartisan support—saying we have to fix the process of how we are doing energy transmission for transmission lines and also for pipelines and basic energy needs.

It is interesting. Ten years ago, I would have people catch me and say: We really want to be able to get renewable energy. We want renewable energy. We need that for our manufacturing. That is what we want to do.

Do you know what I hear now from manufacturers? We just need energy, period, because our electric grid is being strained across the entire country because we have more data centers, because we have AI coming on board, which uses a tremendous amount of

electricity. We have electric vehicles that are coming on board, which use a tremendous amount of electricity. In the process, we have more and more regulations slowing down the production of more and more energy. We are not keeping up, and we all know it. Yet a bill to deal with energy permitting languishes. I have no idea, after it comes out of committee, if we will ever even discuss it on the floor of the Senate, although it has been worked on.

We have healthcare issues. We all talk about the importance of healthcare and trying to be able to bring down the cost for consumers. Well, guess what, the Finance Committee did protracted, multiyear work on a bipartisan basis to be able to move a bill dealing with pharmacy benefit managers to bring down the cost not of 10 drugs but of all drugs and to be able to make it more available—and not just available by mail, available at pharmacies, especially rural pharmacies that are struggling under the oppression of the pharmacy benefit managers.

Just this year, this calendar year—middle of September to January—just this year, 2,275 pharmacies in America have closed. Do you know why? That pharmacy benefit manager bill that we have that has been out of committee on a wide bipartisan vote is still sitting there not even debated on this floor while 2,275 pharmacies closed because, apparently, we needed to do other things.

So we have ignored more than 2,000 pharmacies closing, many of them in rural areas, because we wouldn't even debate the policy here. If we brought it to this floor, it would pass tomorrow with overwhelming support on both sides of the aisle, but it has not been brought up.

There is a farm bill that is out there that was due last year, so there was an extension into this year. Well, guess what, that farm bill expires now within the month, and there is no debate still about the farm bill that was extended from last year into this year on where it is going to go.

Farmers that are dealing with reference prices right now and inflation and what they are facing for the cost of fuel, the cost of fertilizer, the cost of equipment—as that continues to accelerate, Congress continues to ignore bringing up the farm bill, as if our food is just going to appear at the grocery store.

These are big issues. The reason we all were elected was to work on these big issues, but so far this year, these issues won't even come to the floor of the Senate for debate. It is not that they have been brought up and voted down; they are not even brought up.

My simple challenge is: It is the middle of September. Why aren't we working on the budget? Why aren't we working on the national defense authorization? Why aren't we working on energy and the cost of permitting for energy? Why aren't we working on

lower-priced prescription drugs? Why aren't we working on the farm bill? All of those had wide bipartisan support coming out of committee—all of them—but none of them have been brought up here on this floor.

Maybe it is so everything can just get crammed into the end of the year and get past "the election." But maybe we need to reset our priorities. Let's get the things done that the American people expect us to work on, the hard things, the things that are important, whether it is healthcare, energy, agriculture, policy, the budget, the national defense. Let's address the things that should be addressed, and let's get started. I would be OK with starting today, but let's at least address them next week. But from my understanding of next week's schedule, they are not coming up then either.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

TRIBUTE TO JULIE ADAMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, one of my predecessors in the Senate from Kentucky was a guy named Happy Chandler. He had a legendary career that continued back in the Commonwealth as a two-time Governor, and he was actually the baseball commissioner for a while. He was known for what I found to be a wise observation: You can start too late but never too soon.

That sums up how I feel about the task I began this time last week: publicly thanking the talented people who serve with me in the Republican leader's office. It is not because I am going anywhere anytime soon. It is not because there is any shortage of important work still to be done. I have just had the great, good fortune of leaning on an outstanding staff, and it is never too soon to thank them for their devoted service over many years.

The group I would like to single out for particular praise this afternoon includes some of the longest serving members of my team and some of its newest arrivals, some of the most familiar faces around the Capitol and some of the behind-the-scenes heroes who actually keep us going. Every one of them is essential to the work that we do for Kentucky and for the Nation.

I will begin with someone whose first stint on my team predates my time as Republican leader.

Today, the former Secretary of the Senate, Julie Adams, is a senior leader with administrative responsibilities that touch every corner of this institution, but I will claim credit for first bringing this proud Iowan to the Senate as my deputy communications director.

When Julie left my team the first time, she wisely picked an opportunity I would have a rough time objecting to, and that was working for First Lady Laura Bush at the White House. Well, ever since she got back, I have done ev-

everything I could to keep Julie's numerous talents right here in the Senate. From complex personnel policy to ancient institutional protocol, Julie hasn't met a Senate challenge she couldn't handle with tact and grace. Appointing Julie as Secretary under the last Republican majority was literally a no-brainer. From this desk, I had a front row seat to Julie's professional excellence, but I wasn't the only one.

As I understand it, Julie's daily appearances on the Senate floor were appointment viewing for her parents Harold and Leah. They tuned in from back home, and they have good reason to be proud of their truly exceptional public servant.

So, Julie, thank you so much.

TRIBUTE TO GRACE HARRISON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, while Julie has been out amongst the tapestry of the broader Senate, the next pair I would like to thank have been holding down the fort just inside the doors of my Capitol office.

The first person anybody sees when they stop by my office is Grace Harrison, and that is by design. Grace has both the warmth and the poise of a royal and the authoritative confidence of a bouncer. She knows how to make guests feel welcome whether they are Kentuckians stopping by on a family vacation or dignitaries arriving for important meetings. At the same time, she knows how to keep a firm hold on what comes in and out of the office. It is a rare combination of skills and easily takes years to hone, but Grace had it mastered on day one.

As I understand it, it wasn't long after she arrived that Grace also had the names and faces of each of our colleagues committed to memory, and she has wasted no time in taking on extra projects above and beyond the duties of the front office. This isn't at all surprising for someone who, I am told, found time back in high school, amid the demands of academics and extracurriculars, to start up her own business on the side. Well, I am grateful that Grace continues to make it her business to support my entire team so well.

So, Grace, thank you.

TRIBUTE TO GADEN JAMES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, if you make it past Grace, you may find yourself striking up a conversation with the other half of my all-star front office, Gaden James.

It usually begins with a detailed account of the incredible history of the room—the very first home of the Library of Congress—but where the conversation goes next is anybody's guess. Gaden is as comfortable discussing the finer points of sport fishing as he is the nuances of Richard Nixon's foreign policy. No matter the topic, you are sure to come away with some new walking-

around knowledge. Perhaps that is par for the course with an alumnus of one of our most erudite former colleagues, Rob Portman.

Gaden has struck a sort of balance few young Capitol Hill staffers manage to achieve. He is both 100 percent present for the tasks at hand and 100 percent committed to honing the skills he hopes to use in his future. In other words, he is not above keeping track of my favorite coffee mug, but he never misses an opportunity to attend a briefing on an interesting topic either. And when the Senate works odd hours, so does my front office team. I am grateful that Gaden has been so willing to burn the midnight oil.

So, Gaden, thanks a lot.

TRIBUTE TO KATIE KARAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, if the front office sounds like an energetic place to work, just ask our special assistant, Katie Karam, what it is like helping my senior staff in the back office.

Katie came aboard last year at a particularly busy time for my team. Depending on who you ask, she was either stolen or rescued from the wild world of House campaigns. Regardless, Katie dove headfirst into a tough job: keeping tabs on a chief of staff who is known to come and go from the office via a secret side door, tracking down a national security advisor who is frequently unreachable via phone or email, and taking on extensive other duties as assigned—all with a calm but eager willingness beyond her years.

Katie is a sponge for new knowledge and skills, and my entire staff has come to count on her as a utility player in all kinds of clutch situations.

Katie's contributions in my office follow in a distinguished family tradition of public service, and her loyal commitment to this team is second only to her devotion to her family, whom I know she makes very proud.

So, Katie, thank you.

TRIBUTE TO SARAH STEINBERG

Mr. MCCONNELL. Of course, Mr. President, I can't talk about how my office runs with calm efficiency and professionalism without mentioning the great work of my scheduling director, Sarah Steinberg.

Around the Senate, it is considered poor form to recruit all-star staffers away from our colleagues, but when my dear friend Lamar Alexander announced his retirement, I concluded it was fair play for the Kentucky delegation to borrow Sarah's talents from her native Tennessee.

At any given moment over the past 5 years, there isn't anyone who has had a better idea of where I am—or, more importantly, where I am supposed to be—than Sarah. Discretion and attention to detail are her calling cards. Sarah closely guards my confidence and vigilantly protects my time. She spots sensitive situations from a mile away and