



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2019

No. 58

Senate

The Senate met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our hope for years to come, guide our lawmakers on each step of their pilgrimage. Make them supreme in compassion, mercy, and love, in fellowship with one another and their constituents.

Lord, bring them more and more into oneness with You and obedience to Your commands. Fill them with the spirit of Your peace. In their weakness, give strength. In intemperance, give serenity. In discouragement, grant hope. And in weariness, bring rest. Work through them to fulfill Your will for our Nation and world.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The majority leader of the Senate is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 7

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 7) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the Calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar on the next legislative day.

NATO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, first I want to take a moment to thank NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg for his remarks at this morning's joint session of Congress. I am proud that the Secretary General could be here with us in Washington as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization celebrates its 70th anniversary this week.

It is no exaggeration to say that over these seven decades, with steady American leadership, NATO shaped world history for the better. The proud history of alliance and solidarity has paid huge dividends to NATO's member states and to the world.

NATO, with American leadership, kept the peace and created the conditions for an unprecedented period of prosperity for the United States, as well as its allies. It has deterred major Soviet and Russian aggression and prevented a third world war.

When communism's Iron Curtain fell over much of the world, we stood together for democracy. When the post-Cold War transformation could have roiled Eastern and Central Europe, we stood together for stability. When brutal killers trampled human rights in the Balkans, we stood together for innocent lives. And when terrorist fanatics killed thousands of Americans on

September 11, we stood together for freedom. NATO allies remain with our troops in Afghanistan to this very day.

It is essential that we keep the alliance healthy and strong. The threats we face are numerous, and not least among them, in a kind of throwback to the alliance's founding, is an assertive Russia that has barely even pretended to honor international commitments, brazenly violated arms control agreements, invaded and occupied Ukraine and Georgia, and conducted cyber operations and so-called active measures against NATO allies. As President Trump has made it clear, keeping NATO strong means that all allies must commit to NATO's collective security.

For our own part, after years of President Obama's defense cuts, the United States has turned the corner on defense spending, investing more in readiness and modernization. We need to sustain that progress, but, of course, NATO allies must live up to their promises to invest in their own defense. This isn't about meeting an arbitrary budget number but about building real capabilities that are needed to meet real requirements identified by the alliance's military commanders. As the Secretary General has pointed out, our allies are starting to follow our lead. They are on track to contribute an additional \$100 billion in defense spending.

There are also other ways NATO must adapt to meet the threats of the 21st century. It is essential that the alliance follow through on the reforms championed by former Secretary Mattis. NATO must modernize its capabilities to address interoperability challenges, enhance military mobility across the continent, and improve the speed at which it makes decisions.

For today, I just want to thank the Secretary General for his address this morning. Every American should be

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



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proud of what his presence in this Capitol Building represents about our Nation's vital role in NATO and NATO's vital role in the world.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on an entirely different matter, the comprehensive campaign by Senate Democrats to delay Senate consideration of Presidential nominations is now more than 2 years old. As I have explained in recent days, it is time for this sorry chapter to end. It is time to return this body to a more normal and reasonable process for fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities, no matter which party controls the White House.

The Senate had to hold 128 cloture votes on nominations during President Trump's first 2 years. That is 128, more than 5 times as many as the equivalent period for the previous 6 Presidents combined.

Now, 42 of those 128 were for positions that had never, in the past, required cloture votes, like the Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, the General Counsel at the Department of Agriculture, or the Ambassador to Luxembourg. It is not a thoughtful investigation of a few highly controversial nominees and not a principled opposition in some rare circumstances. These are part and parcel of Senate tradition.

But grinding, across-the-board systematic obstruction, under threat of filibuster, sparing not even individuals whom literally zero Senators opposed in the end—this is new. This is new, and it needs to stop.

Well-qualified civil servants, academic and business experts, and exemplary jurists with broad bipartisan support are all subjected to weeks, if not months and months, of pointless delays, and then pointless cloture votes tying up floor time, not because a real debate was happening, not because there is real due diligence requiring months of delay but just because our colleagues across the aisle have chosen to endlessly relitigate the 2016 election rather than actually participate in governing, just because they wish our President were not our President.

The Department of the Interior has waited 631 days since President Trump first nominated an Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget. That is 631 days. Her nomination was voice-voted out of committee. After months of inaction, it had to be sent back at the end of Congress last year.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation has waited 450 days since its CEO was nominated, and it has been more than a year since the President nominated a chair for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. None of these are front-page news, just normal positions the President has been trying to fill. In each case and in hundreds of others, Democrats have made sure those chairs stayed emptied for far too long.

This systematic obstruction is unfair to our duly elected President, and, more importantly, it is disrespectful—disrespectful to the American people who deserve the government they elected. The American people deserve the government they elected.

This problem goes deeper than today. We are talking about the future of this very institution and the future functioning of our constitutional government. This practice is laying the foundation for a dangerous new norm. We cannot set this new precedent that the Senate minorities will systematically keep an administration understaffed, down to the least controversial nominees, anytime they wish somebody else had won the election.

We need to act. We need to act. We need to act so that in its third year, the current administration can finally get more of its team in place. We need to act to repair the institutional legacy we are leaving and restore a functional nominations process for future administrations of both parties.

For most of the storied history of this institution, the traditions that govern the Senate have combined two distinct things—on legislation, an iron-clad commitment to robust minority rights, including extensive debate and the filibuster, and on nominations, a reasonable process for considering the individuals the President sends us.

So let me be absolutely clear. The legislative filibuster is central to the nature of the Senate. It always has been and must always be the distinctive quality of this institution. In the U.S. Senate, dissenting voices retain considerable power to shape the debate on legislation. Pivotal moments have hinged on the strong convictions of a minority that has urged caution or insisted on an amendment.

I know many of our colleagues on both sides share my view that this part of the Senate's DNA must never be put in jeopardy or sacrificed to serve either side's momentary partisan whims. In fact, during the last Congress, 61 of our colleagues from both sides of the aisle signed an open letter making their commitment to the legislative filibuster abundantly clear.

I know many of us were disturbed to read this week in the Washington Post that far-left activists are pushing “an abolish-the-filibuster litmus test on the presidential campaign trail, and quite a few of the 2020 aspirants have at least signaled a willingness to consider it.” I am glad that many of my Democratic colleagues are on the record opposing such a shortsighted disaster championed by the far left. The commitment of both sides to preserving the legislative filibuster is not just a historical matter. It is also very practical. Neither party is particularly keen to see the other side enact its entire, full-bore legislative wish list the next time they obtain 51 votes.

Republicans don't want Democrats to enact an entire leftwing agenda with 51 votes, and Democrats certainly don't

want Republicans to enact every last part of our conservative agenda with a mere 51 votes. What they are not thinking about is when the shoe is on the other foot. When the shoe is on the other foot, and Republicans have a simple majority of 51, and there is no legislative filibuster, what would happen? They are only thinking about how it might enable them, but not thinking ahead to the next time the shoe is on the other foot. In fact, I remember that in 2013 I said, when our colleagues on the other side insisted on going to a simple 51 votes on the executive calendar: You might not like what happens when the shoe is on the other fellow's foot.

I would keep in mind—I would say to my friends on the far left: Think about what might happen the next time the people who are not for it have 51 votes. We all know that both parties will possess future 51-vote majorities somewhere down the line. It will happen.

The Senate's long traditions on legislation therefore need to remain in place. But what we are discussing this week is restoring the different traditions concerning nominations. The tradition here is entirely different. There is no long tradition—none—of what amount to mass filibusters of personnel for administrations. There is no tradition of systematic, grinding delays under threats of filibuster that extend even to nominees whom nobody opposes. All of this is new. Until my Democratic colleagues started us down this road in 2003—this began in the first administration of George W. Bush—routine systematic filibusters of nominations were a foreign thing. It just wasn't done.

So we need to recover Senate tradition. The effort we will make later today is about getting us back to what the tradition in the Senate was for a couple of hundred years, down to the Bush 43 first term.

Yesterday, we had a chance to do just that, working across the aisle and through the same process that we overwhelmingly agreed to with President Obama. But—stop me if you have heard this one before—Senate Democrats chose obstruction instead.

Never mind that in 2013, a bipartisan majority, including many Republicans, passed a similar measure that immediately benefited the Obama administration. In other words, to help President Obama, a significant number of Republicans joined with all of the Democrats in 2013 to do something almost exactly like what we will be proposing later today. He had just gotten reelected. Do you think we were happy about that? We weren't. But we thought the Executive Calendar should be expedited for these kinds of nominations that we are discussing today.

Never mind that the same Democrats who opposed this measure yesterday have whispered in the ear to many of us, including the occupant of the Chair, that they would be more than happy to support this, provided it didn't take effect until 2021. They are more than

happy to support it, provided it doesn't take effect until 2021. Well, that certainly concedes the reasonableness of what we are going to achieve later today.

Because bringing the Senate nomination process permanently back to Earth right now would help the Republican administration, they weren't interested in doing the right thing—what they did in 2013, what they are whispering in our ears now: Oh, no, we cannot do it now because we don't like who is in the White House.

Republicans remain committed to reform. Look at the nomination currently before us—a textbook case study on the shameful state of the current process. Jeffrey Kessler of Virginia was first nominated as Assistant Secretary of Commerce in November of 2017. It took 7 months before Democrats on the Finance Committee allowed his nomination to be considered. When it was, he was reported out on a unanimous vote. Nobody opposed him in the Finance Committee.

The familiar story continues—another 6 months of inaction. The nomination was sent back to the White House at the end of the last Congress. So the process started all over again. This time he got a voice vote out of the Finance Committee. Everybody just said aye. Yet here on the floor, inexplicably, it still required a cloture motion to break through the obstruction and give this nominee, whom no one voted against, a vote.

Later today, it appears that at long last we will be able to take action to finally advance Mr. Kessler's nomination, to do the responsible thing, to begin to unwind this partisan paralysis for the good of the Senate and for the future of the constitutional order each of us has pledged to protect.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2

p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S. RES. 50

Mr. THUNE. Yesterday afternoon, Senate Democrats voted against a rules change that would have reduced needless delay in the Senate and ensure that future Presidents of both parties could staff their administrations in a timely fashion.

Democrats chose partisanship over principle and political advantage over the well-being of the Senate. How do I know that this was a partisan decision on Democrats' part and not a principled one? Because 34 currently serving Members of the Democratic caucus supported a very similar rules change measure when President Obama was in office. Yet not one Member—not one Member of the Democratic caucus—voted in favor of the rules change yesterday.

Worse, privately, many Democrats had indicated a willingness to support the rules change but only if the effective date were pushed to 2021, when Democrats hope they will have a Democrat in the White House. Apparently, it is reasonable for Democratic administrations to be staffed up in a timely fashion, but Republican administrations should have to suffer endless partisan delays. That is a pretty offensive position.

It is disrespectful to the American people, who deserve a fully staffed administration, even when their choice of President isn't the Democrats' choice. It is disrespectful of our system of government.

Democrats apparently think the system should be rigged in favor of their party, no matter what election results say. Don't like the fact that a Republican President got to choose Supreme Court Justices? Pack the courts. Don't like the fact that your candidate didn't win the election? Change our electoral system.

In a democracy, you win some elections and you lose some elections. Sometimes you like the individual in the White House, and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you succeed in passing your legislation, and sometimes you just don't have the votes. That is the nature of life in a democracy.

No one likes being in the minority. It is not fun to lose votes or elections, but that is the price of freedom. That is the price of democracy.

The other option is for one party to try to rig the system in its favor so that everything goes its way no matter what election results say. There is a name for that. It is called tyranny.

Back in 2013, a majority of Republicans, including the Republican leader and me, supported a rules change to streamline the process of approving lower level administration nominees, such as district court judges and assistant secretaries. We voted for this rules change even though we knew it would benefit only President Obama since it would expire at the end of the 113th Congress, but we signed on because we supported the principle behind the change. We believed that Presidents should be able to staff their administrations in a timely fashion, yes, even if they weren't Presidents from our party. We believed that whether the President was a Republican or Democrat, the American people deserved a fully functioning executive branch. So we worked with Democrats to streamline consideration of lower level administration nominees.

I am deeply disappointed that Democrats chose to betray their principles yesterday for short-term partisan gain, and I hope the Democrats here in the Senate will think better of their vote and work with Republicans to speed up consideration of lower level nominees before Democrats' historic level of obstruction becomes a permanent standard here in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am going to use my time on the Senate floor to address two related subjects.

The Republican leader is reportedly on the verge of going nuclear to speed through the confirmation of more far-right nominees. He says Democrats are guilty of extreme, unprecedented obstruction, and he claims that his hand has been forced and that is why he is required to change the Senate rules. In the real world, I want to make clear that I believe the facts tell a different story, and I am going to lay out briefly why I think this is the wrong way to go.

When you look at the numbers, you see that the Republican leader's argument is a fantasy. Let's look at judges, and let's compare the Trump administration to the Obama administration. The Obama administration started with 53 judicial vacancies; the Trump administration started with 112. That increase didn't occur because a whole lot of judges somehow magically qualified for Social Security and quit sometime in 2016; it was because Republicans blocked nominees for years at a time, and they kept those seats open. Senate Republicans even blocked their own judicial selections during the previous administration. Put your arms

around that. Senate Republicans even blocked their own. Only 22 judicial nominees were confirmed in the final 2 years of the Obama administration—the fewest in a Congress since Harry Truman was President.

In 2015 and 2016, the Judiciary Committee considered only five circuit court nominees. It considered that many in December of 2017 alone. There were nearly twice as many circuit judges confirmed in the first 2 years of the Trump administration as there were in President Obama's entire first term. Nominees are moving nearly twice as quickly under this President.

Republicans even blew up a century-old bipartisan practice of seeking input from Senators on judicial nominees from their home States. It is based on what has come to be known as the blue slip to consent to a hearing and a markup of a nomination. It is a tradition, by the way, Republicans fought to protect when a Democrat was President and they were in the minority. Under this President, they threw the blue-slip tradition out the window.

Republicans are also moving nominees in huge batches and at paces that prevent serious debate on their qualifications. A few months ago, the Judiciary Committee held a markup and voted out 46 nominees, including 44 judicial nominees. That had never been done before. It is a head-scratcher how that can meet any reasonable definition of "advice and consent."

The way my colleagues on the other side talk about the issue, you would think Democrats delayed every nomination for as long as possible. That just doesn't remotely resemble the truth.

Setting judges aside, what about the executive branch? The President and his advisers will tell you right out in the open that they don't want to nominate anybody. They have chosen to leave those positions vacant. That certainly doesn't meet a textbook definition of "Democratic obstructionism." I am the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee. Our committee has zero nominees ready for a committee vote. It is not because anybody is blocking them; it is because the Trump administration seems uninterested in putting nominees forward. Our committee, on a bipartisan basis, has done its job.

So, colleagues, you can't look at the record of nominees over the last 2 years, particularly on judges, and conclude that the Democrats have broken the Senate. It is just not true. I believe a number of my colleagues on the other side know it. When they want to go nuclear and change the rules, we get a parade of horror stories about how Democrats are obstructionists. It is a totally different story when they prefer to tout their record on nominations.

Let's hear from Republicans, from the President on down.

Here is the President tweeting in late 2017: "Judges at a record clip. Our courts are rapidly changing."

The President at a rally last year: "We have the best judges. We put on a

tremendous amount of great Federal district court judges. We'll be setting records. We are setting records. Appeals court judges. A Supreme Court judge—fantastic."

The Vice President, March 2018: "The President . . . set a record for the most court of appeal judges confirmed in the first year of an administration in American history."

Leader MCCONNELL said it all, speaking about the confirmed judges. He said "including a record number of circuit court judges for a President's first year."

More recently, Leader MCCONNELL said: "We confirmed every circuit judge. We've now done 29 circuit judges. That's a record for this quick in any administration in history."

After November's elections, when Democrats won control of the House, Leader MCCONNELL said: "I think we'll have probably more time for nominations in the next Congress than we've had in this one, because the areas of legislative agreement will be more limited between a Democratic House and a Republican Senate. . . . I don't think we'll have any trouble finding time to do nominations." That is Leader MCCONNELL. "I don't think we'll have any trouble finding time to do nominations."

Leader MCCONNELL said: "We intend to keep confirming as many as we possibly can for as long as we're in a position to do so."

My colleagues on the other side can't have it both ways, constantly talking about Democratic obstructionism and then, in effect, making all these statements about how they are setting records for getting people through. You can't have it both ways.

I am going to close on this. I am not going to apologize for opposing nominees who are unqualified, corrupt, or simply outside of the mainstream.

I opposed the nomination of Ryan Bounds to the Ninth Circuit because he concealed hateful writings to a bipartisan committee—since I became the State's senior Democrat, and now as the senior Senator, I have continued this committee. We have had a bipartisan selection committee that vets candidates. We had it when my former colleague, Senator Smith, who I know is a friend of the Presiding Officer's, was here. We always worked in a bipartisan way to address these issues. This was a nominee who concealed hateful writings from the bipartisan selection committee that vetted his candidacy, and he was forced to withdraw.

I opposed Neomi Rao because she also had put extreme views in writing, and those views closely mirrored the work she had done as a Trump appointee attacking protections for women's health, for sexual assault victims on campus, and for vulnerable communities across the country.

I opposed the nomination of Thomas Farr because he ruthlessly attacked the voting rights of people of color.

I opposed the nomination of Tom Price to lead the Department of Health

and Human Services because I thought he was just about as corrupt as they came and seemed to be laser-focused on taking away people's healthcare.

I opposed the nomination of Steven Mnuchin to be Treasury Secretary because I believed a history of profiting off of the suffering of millions of Americans ought to be disqualifying for that job.

Now, what has been the record? Multiple members of the Trump Cabinet have resigned under an ethical cloud. The rule change for which the Republican leader is pushing will cause the rushing through of even more unqualified and corrupt nominees at the sub-Cabinet level.

The bottom line is that all of the doomsday talk about the Democratic obstruction that is forcing the Republican leader's hand is simply out of touch with the facts. The Trump administration will find more support among the Democrats when it picks better nominees. It is a quaint idea—pick better nominees, and then you will get support. Instead, the nuclear option Leader MCCONNELL is set to trigger this week is a strategy that will take us in the opposite direction. It is going to make it easier to rush unqualified and extreme nominees through the Senate before anybody notices.

I oppose this change. I urge more of my colleagues on the other side to do the same.

NOMINATION OF DAVID BERNHARDT

Mr. President, I conclude my remarks by turning briefly to a related subject that deals with, I believe, compromised, corrupt Trump nominees.

The Energy and Natural Resources Committee is scheduled to vote tomorrow on the nomination of David Bernhardt to be the Interior Secretary, but there is developing news—news revealed just last night—that ought to be enough to put this flawed nomination on hold.

According to the Washington Post, "[t]he Interior Department's Office of Inspector General is reviewing allegations that acting secretary David Bernhardt may have violated his ethics pledge by weighing in on issues affecting a former client, the office confirmed Tuesday."

I made it clear in Mr. Bernhardt's hearing last week that I believed he had ethics problems owed to the appearance that he had been working on behalf of former clients while he had served as a public official. I am also very concerned about the real possibility that Mr. Bernhardt made false statements under oath in his nomination hearing last week. I asked the Interior Department's inspector general to look into these matters, but she has not had time to respond to my request. The fact is that the inspector general is just at the very outset of this process.

Here is the prospect this body faces. The Senate could be on its way to installing an Interior Secretary who

could almost immediately face an investigation for corruption and lying under oath. These are serious allegations that face Mr. Bernhardt, so I feel strongly that the vote in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee needs to be delayed until they can be investigated fully.

With all of the Trump nominees who have resigned in scandal—by the way, one being the predecessor of whoever will be the head of the Interior Department, Ryan Zinke, who, when he came for his confirmation hearing, promised nine times he would be like Teddy Roosevelt and left under an enormous set of ethical clouds—it is clear this Republican-controlled Senate has decided that it is going to confirm first, ask questions later, and maybe duck all of the hard questions altogether.

I believe that needs to change right now. It is time to restore public trust in this process. I do not believe the Senate should allow the Interior Department to turn into a revolving door of corruption and scandal. The vote on the Bernhardt nomination, in my view, should not proceed tomorrow in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

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. WYDEN. 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 Texas.

S. RES. 50

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the last 2 years, since the beginning of the Trump administration, our Senate Democratic colleagues have brought our work to a crawl over judicial and executive branch nominees. It is as if they have frustration and surprise over the election of President Trump in the first place and still haven't gotten over it. This is another way in which they have sought to undermine the administration—to deny the President the staff necessary to populate the various executive branch Agencies as well as the judiciary.

The way you do that in the Senate is by stringing out the amount of time it takes to confirm nominees who ordinarily would have been confirmed by consent or by voice vote—certainly, not by taking 3 days or so at a time to generate a confirmation. It is not because these nominees are unqualified or even controversial; it is simply because this is how the resistance operates at a time when President Trump is President of the United States. These nominees are being used as a weapon to slow the work of the Senate and, really, to deny us the floor time in which to do other things that we might be doing that would be beneficial to the American people, and they have been running this play repeatedly over the last 2 years.

In February of 2018, President Trump nominated John Ryder to serve on the board of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The work of the TVA is undeniably important, but this isn't the sort of high-profile job that typically leads to a contentious nomination. In fact, these board positions are normally confirmed by voice vote.

Mr. Ryder was, by any account, well qualified for the job. He received unanimous support from the committee of jurisdiction, the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Under normal circumstances, he would have been quickly confirmed by the entire Senate. Our Democratic friends, instead, decided to delay and delay and delay some more and forced the Senate to hold a cloture vote on the nominee, which caused him to sit in limbo for 400 days.

I wonder how many Americans who want to serve their country in some positions that require Senate confirmation can afford to put their lives on hold and wait for 400 days or more just for the Senate to get around to doing something that should be somewhat of a routine job.

With Mr. Ryder, in the end, the irony would almost be funny if it were not so pathetic. Ultimately, he was confirmed by voice vote. For 400 days, we waited to achieve the result we all knew we were to have all along if Mr. Ryder were to hang in there long enough. For 400 days, the TVA waited for the vacancy to be filled without there being an end in sight, and for 400 days, Mr. Ryder and his family waited and waited and waited with uncertainty. Sadly, he is not alone. He is part of a long list of nominees who have received similar mistreatment.

There is one Texan, a friend of mine, who had to wait even longer. Susan Combs is a fourth-generation rancher from Big Bend who has led an impressive career in both the public and private sectors and has gained the respect of virtually every person who has crossed her path.

She served as a member of the Texas House of Representatives, then as the first female agriculture commissioner of Texas, and later served as the Texas comptroller of public accounts.

When she was nominated to be the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, I was thrilled, and I was happy to introduce her before her committee hearing. Less than a month after she was nominated, Susan was unanimously approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Again, I was hopeful that her nomination would sail through since it, clearly, was not a controversial nomination. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

Here we are, 631 days later, and Susan Combs has still not been confirmed. Again, it is not because she is not qualified for the job or that she is a controversial nominee. Just the opposite is true. This is simply the way our Democratic colleagues have sought

to deal with nominees from this President.

If Senate Democrats were delaying well-qualified nominees like Susan to make sure they had adequate opportunity to debate their nominations, we wouldn't have any disagreement with that, but we know, by their actions, that they will stop at nothing to bring the work of this body to a screeching halt, particularly during the time of the Trump administration.

Over the last 2 years, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have forced votes on nominees who in previous years would have sailed through the Senate. During President Trump's first 2 years, we held more than five times the number of cloture votes on nominees as we did during the same time for the last six Presidents combined. So to call this unprecedented is not an exaggeration, and the long list of vacancies is growing.

Our government is suffering, and the services that we provide to the American people are being obstructed as well. The Senate's duty of advice and consent is important, but it is not our only job. We have a lot of other things we are supposed to do here, and they are falling by the wayside while we try to work through these, largely, non-controversial judicial and executive branch nominees.

Unfortunately, our Democratic colleagues' delay tactics have brought us to the point at which we really don't have many other options. We have tried negotiations. We have been told they will be happy to limit postcloture debate time but that, oh, by the way, they will not agree to that unless it starts in the year 2021. This is hardly a principled position. This is simply about resisting President Trump, his administration, and this administration's ability to do the job the President was elected to do.

What we have proposed is something that will not make nominations easier to be confirmed. The process will be largely the same, and the vote threshold will remain the same. It will simply keep us from wasting valuable time that we should be spending on debating and voting on other important policies, not widely supported nominees.

This certainly isn't as radical a change as many of our Democratic colleagues are presenting it to be. In January of 2013, current Majority Leader SCHUMER and then Majority Leader Harry Reid led the charge to make similar changes in order to process President Obama's nominees.

At that time, Republicans were in the minority. What did we do then? Well, we weren't exactly fans of President Obama's, but he had just been elected to his second term, and suffice it to say that while we were hoping for a different outcome, we weren't about to obstruct his ability to populate and staff the various Departments in the Federal Government. We didn't obstruct nominees. We didn't sulk. We didn't try to prevent the President

from filling these nominations throughout the entire government. This is our government. In fact, we took the opposite approach. Along with several of my Republican colleagues, I joined Democrats in voting for a resolution that would speed up the consideration process for lower level nominees.

I have to give Senator ALEXANDER, the Senator from Tennessee, a lot of credit for negotiating that in the first place. But it has now expired, and we are back to the status quo before that temporary change went into effect. Like the changes we are talking about today, it didn't change the threshold for nominees; it just made the process a little more efficient. It received votes from 78 Senators on a bipartisan basis. So that is why it is a real head-scratcher that we find ourselves where we are today. Unfortunately, I think we know what the answer is. This is part of the anti-Trump resistance. Unfortunately, it is not playing out just in social media or on TV; it is playing out right here in the Senate—what used to be known as the world's greatest deliberative body.

When our colleagues Senator BLUNT, chairman of the Rules Committee, and Senator LANKFORD of Oklahoma introduced this resolution, I was surprised that our colleagues across the aisle wouldn't do what we did back in 2013. Back then, all but one Member of the Democratic caucus voted for the resolution—again, something very similar to what we are proposing today—but yesterday, they refused to even proceed to debate a similar change. They could have offered amendments. They could have made changes to the resolution where they thought it fell short. But no—their commitment to obstruction remains. It is clear they don't really oppose the resolution; they oppose supporting a resolution under the President of another party. Indeed, they oppose supporting this resolution under President Trump.

When 78 Republicans voted for a similar change in 2013—as I said, we didn't vote for President Obama, but we understood the importance of protecting the Senate as an institution and allowing our valuable work to continue on behalf of the American people. I wish our colleagues across the aisle had that same commitment today.

Just as I supported this modest change in 2013, I will support it again today. This will allow us to make meaningful progress in confirming the long list of pending nominees without impeding our ability to do our other work, like legislation.

In particular, there are four district court nominees from Texas I am eager to get off the Senate calendar and on the Federal bench.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, later today, the majority leader will

use the so-called nuclear option to once again break the Senate rules. This is going to be the latest episode in a series of decisions that have been made around here—mostly by the majority leader but not only by the majority leader—to degrade the Senate's responsibility to advise and consent.

What has happened here is a travesty. We have destroyed—this generation of American politicians has decided that somehow we have prerogatives that the people who came before us didn't exercise.

I think part of the problem we have is that people are so sick and tired of the dysfunction around this place, they are not even paying attention to what is happening here even though, in theory, it is happening in their name.

Two days ago—on the first of April, fittingly—the majority leader wrote an op-ed laying out his case. He wrote:

Since January 2017, for the first time in memory, a minority has exploited procedure to systematically obstruct a President from staffing up his administration.

Let's read that again.

Since January 2017, for the first time in memory, a minority has exploited procedure to systematically obstruct a President from staffing up his administration.

Senator MCCONNELL went on to write:

Crucial jobs are still being held empty out of political spite.

He seems to have completely forgotten the Obama administration when he was the leader of the minority, when he was systematically denying President Obama the right not only to put people in his Cabinet and in his administration but to put judges on the bench as well.

Before President Obama arrived in Washington, the filibuster had been used 68 times on this floor—68 times since that rule was created sometime right before 1920. In the first 5 years of the Obama administration, the Republicans filibustered his nominees or used the filibuster in some other way 79 times. It had been used 68 times from when the rule was created to when President Obama became President, and then over the first 5 years of his administration, they used it 79 times. And they can't remember a time when a minority systematically denied a President the ability to put judges on the court or to staff their administration.

When President Obama was President, they filibustered the Secretary of Defense nominee for the first time in the history of America, and he was a former Senator and a Republican. His name was Chuck Hagel. They filibustered him. Secretary of Defense seems like a pretty crucial appointment.

In President Obama's last 2 years, the Republican Senate confirmed only 22 judges. That is a smaller number than at any time since the Truman administration. Twenty-two judges was all he got.

President Obama left 100 vacancies to President Trump to fill—a record num-

ber. There were more vacancies at the end of his term than there were at the beginning.

It has been a concerted strategy of Senator MCCONNELL's for a decade—for more than that—and he has succeeded.

He led the most famous blockade that has ever happened in the Senate, and that was the blockade he led of Merrick Garland.

When Justice Scalia died 342 days before the end of President Obama's term, Senator MCCONNELL responded to that by saying: "This vacancy should not be filled until we have a new President." He called President Obama a lameduck President. There were 342 days left in his term. He had an entire year left in his term.

Until that point, the Senate had never refused to consider an elected President's nominee because the vacancy arose in an election year, which they claimed over and over again wasn't the case. Since the Nation's founding, the Senate has confirmed 17 Supreme Court nominees in election years; it has rejected 2.

The majority leader would later say:

One of my proudest moments was when I looked Barack Obama in the eye and said, "Mr. President, you will not fill this Supreme Court vacancy."

He did it because he knew he could get away with it, and he thought he would roll the dice. It was shameful. And it wasn't true that it was consistent with our history; it was completely inconsistent with our history.

Whether you support Donald Trump or you don't support Donald Trump, I think you can thank the majority leader for electing Donald Trump because by keeping that vacancy on the Court, he made that the issue in the election, and he galvanized the Republicans around a candidate who otherwise wouldn't have been very appealing to many of them. People say that he stole a Supreme Court seat. It is bigger than that—he won the Presidency for Donald Trump. And we know what has happened since that time.

But it amazes me that in the name of things not moving quickly enough, he can come out here and claim that the most significant thing he has ever done is what he did to Merrick Garland and then the record he has set putting judges on the circuit courts and the district courts since Donald Trump was elected President. Nobody has ever had this many judges put on the court as fast as the majority leader has put them on the court. Now, for district court judges, he wants to do it in 2 hours of time. He is just going to crank the machine until it is not available to him anymore, and it has been clear that has been his objective from the beginning.

But it is not just that the judges are conservative judges; it is that they are not as good as they used to be.

You know, until the group of people in this room—including me, by the way—in 2013, out of desperation, I came to this floor and voted to change the

rules so that President Obama could actually get some nominees confirmed, some judges confirmed, and some administrative appointments confirmed. I have said on this floor before that that is the worst vote I have taken as a Senator, and I apologize for that vote. I share some of the responsibility for where we find ourselves today.

The majority leader said at that time: "You're going to come to regret this decision." And I will say this about him: He was right. I do. Not for me and not for the Senate but for the American people who are having their judiciary infected by the mindless partisanship of this place, which is hopefully temporary partisanship. But those are lifetime appointments that we are confirming that we can't take 30 hours to confirm anymore, and now we are going to do them in 2 hours just to make sure we populate the court with conservative judges whose views are consistent with the majority leader's and the President of the United States.

But, as I said, it is not just about their point of view, their judiciary philosophy, it is also their quality, because if you have to earn 60 votes for a lifetime appointment or—when I was in law school and you were a qualified judge who was nominated by a President for the Supreme Court, you would then command 90 votes or 95 votes, and that gave the American people confidence that the judiciary was insulated from politics, that it was insulated from partisanship. Now, because of what the majority leader has done to the Supreme Court, we are going to put people on that Court with lifetime appointments by the barest partisan majorities. It is impossible for me to see how that is going to build confidence in the judiciary.

So when he says he has just put it back to the way it was before anybody around here started to filibuster circuit court judges, that is not true because before that, you would get 90 votes for somebody who was qualified for the Supreme Court, and today, you get whatever you get from the partisan majority that happens to be in power.

By the way, I have absolutely no idea what is going to happen when we have a President of one party and a majority of another party and there is a vacancy on the Supreme Court, or two or three. If we don't change our behavior around here, those vacancies are just going to remain until we have a President and a Senate of the same party, however long that takes. But if you only need to get 51 votes, I guess you don't have to be that qualified.

The Senate confirmed a nominee recently to the Sixth Circuit who wrote blog posts peddling conspiracy theories about Barack Obama and compared abortion to slavery. He was confirmed 51 to 47. He would never have survived the vet before.

The Senate confirmed a nominee to the Fifth Circuit who dismissed concerns about glass ceilings for women, sexual harassment, and the gender pay

gap as a Trojan horse for government intervention. He was confirmed 50 to 47. This man would never have gotten to this floor before we changed the rules, and he now has a lifetime appointment.

The Senate confirmed a nominee for the Eighth Circuit, even though the American Bar Association rated him unanimously as "not qualified," a unanimous rating of "not qualified," and he is now a circuit court judge with a lifetime appointment. It has never happened in our history. The ABA questioned whether he "would be able to detach himself from his deeply held social agenda and political loyalty." He was confirmed 50 to 48. They said he was unqualified unanimously because they thought his ideology would blind him, and now he has a lifetime appointment.

The Senate confirmed a second judge the ABA deemed unqualified for a district court in Oklahoma. According to the ABA, this nominee frequently missed work, and when he did show up, it was often in the middle of the day. He was confirmed by 52 votes.

Last December, the Senate confirmed a third judge the ABA found unqualified with 50 votes. He barely made it, but Vice President PENCE made a trip from the White House to break the tie.

The partisan temper that is destroying this place needs to come to an end, and we need to make sure, between now and whenever that happens, that we don't take down the rest of government with us.

The Founders didn't design the court to be an extension of our partisan foolishness. The independent judiciary is responsible for enforcing the rule of law, which is at the heart of our democratic Republic. It is what separates us from so many other countries around the world that have failing economies because no one subscribes to the rule of law or that are filled with corrupt institutions, where rules are bent, broken, or ignored, with no thought about what is going to be left for tomorrow but just the looting of the economy for the benefit of people today.

The Constitution makes it clear that the Senate has a responsibility—we have a constitutional responsibility—to advise and consent on judicial nominations. There is no one else assigned that responsibility. The House of Representatives has nothing to do with it.

Through this decade-long—it is more than that—20-year-long series of preemptive retributions, where one party says: If we don't do it to them, they are going to do it to us, we are now at the point where we are destroying the judiciary, and I think we should pull back from the brink. I don't think the majority leader should invoke the nuclear option today, should break another rule around here. No one else in America runs their operation by breaking the rules.

Just in this session alone, we have seen not only this, not only this violation of our norms and our customs, of

the rule of law, of our responsibility to advise and consent, we have seen the same people support the President's extraconstitutional destruction of the rule of law when he claimed an emergency to fund his wall or to fund \$5 billion for his wall, which, by the way, he said had already been largely built.

Just like the majority leader today is saying, we have a record number of judges who have been confirmed since President Trump has been put in office, but we are not moving quickly enough so I have to change the rules by using the nuclear option.

I need to declare an emergency to build the wall, even though it is almost complete because of my excellent administration.

It is all gibberish, and it is all meant just to get a result for partisan reasons.

I think when the history is written about this period of our political system, this is all going to look like a tragic farce—all of it. People are going to know, when they write an op-ed piece on April Fools' and say one thing, and they have spent the last 20 years doing something else, that is not going to be lost to the pages of history. People are going to know how the system worked when we arrived here, when the people who were in this Chamber arrived, including myself, and maybe in some tiny, little footnote there will be something that says: Well, at least BENNET was out here admitting the mistake he made to contribute to this disaster.

For the life of me, I don't know why we aren't correcting course. We are free people. Everybody in this Chamber, I think, should have an incentive to try to be remembered well and to be remembered as a good steward of this place and of the work we did here. I doubt very much, when our careers are at an end, what people are going to say is, the good news is, they broke the rules.

I know what the result is going to be today. I know my friend from Oklahoma has actually worked hard to see if he could get a bipartisan result here, and today that has been impossible, but what I really hope is that we can change what we are doing in the Senate so we can protect and preserve the independence of our judiciary and that maybe we will even move beyond the bipartisanship that is bringing the Senate to its knees today.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, Republicans believe, regardless of who the President is, they should be able to hire their staff. I can say we not only believe that, we practice that.

In 2013, there was an ongoing debate over nominations with President Obama. Democrats and Republicans came together to resolve the time issue for nominations under President Obama. Democrats asked Republicans to join them to say: Let's fix the problem we have with the length of time on

nominations because it is taking too long, and so they made a proposal. It was 2 hours, equally divided—so it would actually be 1 hour—for district court judges, 8 hours for other nominees, which again equally divided would actually be 4 hours total for other lower nominees, 30 hours for circuit court, Supreme Court, Cabinet officers.

Republicans joined with Democrats in 2013 and with 78 votes at the beginning of President Obama's second term—and may I remind this body, Republicans were not excited about President Obama's second term—Republicans joined with Democrats on this one principle: Every President should be able to hire their own staff and their staff not be blocked. When the American people vote for a President, this body should respect the vote of the American people and allow that President to hire their staff. Now, when President Trump was elected, Democrats have 128 times blocked President Trump from getting his nominees—128 times.

I have, for now 2 years, met with my Democratic colleagues, and I have asked, let's put back into place exactly what Republicans voted with Democrats to do. I am asking Democrats to now vote with Republicans to do that. They have said no for 2 years.

So I simplified the proposal and said: Let's just make it straightforward and simple, taken from the same principles Harry Reid put forward under President Obama. Let's make that permanent, no matter who the President is now or in the future. Let's make it consistent and straightforward.

I was told no by every single Democrat, with this one exception. I will vote for that proposal as long as it starts in January of 2021. I am glad you Republicans joined with Democrats, they would say, to help President Obama get nominees, but we will not help President Trump and will block him all the way through. Now, if you want to open this up for 2021, we will be glad to be able to help.

I want to reiterate that Republicans believe whoever the President is, when the American people select a President, they should be able to hire their staff. I wish my Democratic colleagues believed the same thing. Because of that, we are making a change today. I have worked for months, meeting with Democratic colleagues, trying to find some way we could come to an agreement as was done in 2013, where Republicans and Democrats came together to resolve this. I have been rebuffed for 2 years. Not a single Democrat has been willing to join us in this, not a single one. That is unfortunate.

At the end of the day, we will try to restore this body back to how it used to function for two centuries, when every President was allowed to get a hearing for their nominees and get a vote in the Senate. For two centuries, we functioned that way. I think it is not unreasonable to function that way again in this body.

I look forward to this dialogue, and I look forward to the day we can get this issue resolved so we can get back to the work of legislation because we can't even get to legislation right now because we are blocked on nominations. So let's get the nomination issue resolved, as we have for two centuries, and then let's get on to legislation and finish the task.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, we raise this point today, not just because of what has happened to Donald Trump's nominees over the last 2 years, but we reached this point because 16 years ago the Senator from New York started this Senate down a path that was unprecedented in 200 years. For 200 years, any President's nominees got an up-or-down vote. That was the custom, the unwritten rule, if you will.

Starting in 2003, specifically geared toward a brilliant young lawyer named Miguel Estrada, the Senator from New York warped those unwritten rules and customs. That has brought us to where we are today. So today Senator SCHUMER will reap what he sowed. I will call it Miguel Estrada's revenge.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Mitch McConnell, Steve Daines, John Thune, John Cornyn, James M. Inhofe, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Jerry Moran, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jeffrey Kessler, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 95, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Ex.]

YEAS—95

Alexander	Fischer	Peters
Baldwin	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hassan	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hawley	Romney
Blunt	Heinrich	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Brown	Isakson	Schatz
Burr	Johnson	Schumer
Cantwell	Jones	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Shelby
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tester
Cotton	McConnell	Thune
Cramer	McSally	Tillis
Crapo	Menendez	Toomey
Cruz	Merkley	Udall
Daines	Moran	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murray	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Wyden
Feinstein	Perdue	Young

NAYS—3

Gillibrand	Sanders	Warren
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NOT VOTING—2

Harris	Hyde-Smith
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 95, the nays are 3.

The motion is agreed to.

The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this is a very sad day for the Senate. At a time when Leader MCCONNELL brags about confirming more judges than anyone has done in a very long time, he feels the need to invoke the terribly destructive and disproportionate procedure of the nuclear option in order to fast-track even more of President Trump's ultraconservative nominees to the Federal bench.

Before I discuss that in greater detail, I want to note for the record that Democrats were prepared to confirm the nomination of Mr. Kessler by unanimous consent, so the cloture vote we had was unnecessary.

If you have been listening to Senators debate this issue in recent days, you have heard a lot of claims and

counterclaims about cloture votes, about rates of confirmation for circuit and district courts in different Congresses, about judicial vacancies and other arcane things that may not sound very illuminating. So I want to start by making clear what this debate is really all about. I want to issue a warning about what is at stake in this fight. Underneath all of the statistics, what Leader MCCONNELL, President Trump, and Republicans in the Senate are trying to do is use the courts to adopt the far-right agenda that Republicans know they cannot enact through the legislative process.

Why can't they? Because it is an agenda the American people reject, an agenda set by the far right, which Republicans in the Senate follow.

Senator MCCONNELL and Republicans in Washington understand that they will never persuade enough Americans to support backward goals like ending women's reproductive freedom, taking away healthcare, rolling back civil rights, making it more difficult to vote, or abolishing safeguards for clean air and clean water.

Instead, they decided there was another route to achieving their policy goals, one that requires neither public support nor legislation: the courts. So Republicans, pressured by the hard right and by wealthy, special interest donors, launched a sustained effort to pack the courts with very conservative judges, preferably young ones, who would sit on the bench for decades. These prospective judges were identified as early as law school, having signaled their hard-right leanings through their writings or membership in conservative groups like the Federalist Society.

Nominees like these started to appear during the George W. Bush administration. Take Miguel Estrada, a Bush nominee with no judicial experience, who held membership in the Federalist Society but had no writings and claimed he had never even thought about *Roe v. Wade*.

Or take William Pryor, another Bush nominee, who called *Roe* "the worst abomination in the history of constitutional law" and who argued that States should have the right to criminalize homosexuality.

Or take Charles Pickering, who advocated a reduced sentence for a man convicted of burning a cross in the front yard of an interracial couple.

Before the Republicans launched their campaign to remake the courts, neither party would have dared put forward such radical nominees.

Starting with his campaign and into his Presidency, President Donald Trump has been captive—totally captive—to the conservative campaign to take over the courts. Before he was a Presidential candidate, Mr. Trump had been a Democrat and a person with no fixed judicial philosophy, so conservatives didn't trust him. He and his advisers came up with a solution: Ask the Federalist Society to produce a list of

far-right Supreme Court nominees, and then have candidate Trump pledge to only nominate people on that list. And not just the Supreme Court—the Federalist Society is and continues to be a huge influence on nominees to the circuit courts.

No other Presidential candidate had so willingly and openly outsourced judicial nominations this way, but it mollified the hard right, and the President has dutifully nominated people from the list to the Supreme Court. He has made similarly ideological choices for the circuit and district courts.

This is an alarming strategy because, over the last 2 years, President Trump has nominated and Senate Republicans have advanced the most unqualified and radical nominees in modern times.

Consider the nomination of Ryan Bounds, who misled the Oregon Senators' bipartisan judicial selection committee about his controversial writings in the past, writings in which he dismissed efforts to increase diversity as mere "race-think," criticized Stanford University's suggested punishment for students who defaced an LGBT pride statue, criticized a student group for protesting against a hotel company that had fired workers trying to unionize, and disregarded the value of university disciplinary actions against students accused of sexual violence. Five of the seven members of Oregon's in-State screening committee, including the committee's chair, said they would not have recommended Bounds had they known of his college writings when they first interviewed him. Fortunately, it became clear that a few Republicans would not support Mr. Bounds on the floor, and the nomination was withdrawn.

Consider the nomination of Thomas Farr, who has an extensive record defending discriminatory voting laws and racial gerrymandering in North Carolina. He is also credibly alleged to have played a role in the voter suppression efforts of the Jesse Helms campaign, including sending over 100,000 postcards to heavily African-American precincts that "falsely told voters they could be found ineligible to vote based on several conditions involving place and length of residence." Amazingly, after something as despicable as that, President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL pushed hard for his nomination, but it could not withstand scrutiny by the Senate and was ultimately withdrawn due to the united Democratic opposition and a few conscientious Republican Senators.

I would note that in the cases of both Mr. Farr and Mr. Bounds, the Republican concerns emerged only at the end of postcloture debate time, which Republicans now propose to limit. Had we had only 2 hours, horrible nominees—way beyond the bounds of normal nomination and discourse, even from conservatives—like Farr, like Bounds would be sitting on the courts today.

I agree with what my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR has said:

Two hours for a lifetime appointment . . . is unacceptable.

She said:

Two hours for a lifetime appointment, with huge influence on people's lives, is unacceptable. It's ridiculous. It's a mockery of how this institution should work.

It is not just the courts. There are many examples in the executive branch as well. Ann Marie Buerkle, nominated to chair the CPSC—just today the Post reported that this nominee blocked action at the Commission to recall hundreds of thousands of potentially defective baby strollers, even in the face of reports that they caused "potentially life-threatening injuries." She even kept Democratic Commissioners in the dark about the investigation.

Of course, there is Chad Readler, who led the charge to end preexisting condition protections. President Trump and Senate Republicans, the self-declared "party of healthcare," rewarded him by overwhelmingly confirming him to a lifetime position as a circuit court judge. Despite Mr. Readler's conspicuous role in trying to curtail Americans' healthcare, no Republicans were willing to stand up to President Trump and vote against his confirmation.

At this point, people listening to these proceedings might be asking themselves: What happened when a Democratic President occupied the White House?

The answer is that Republicans, led by Senator MCCONNELL, remained undeterred. In such times, they chose to employ the extraordinary tactic of denying confirmation to a Democratic President's nominees in order to hold vacancies open until a Republican could regain the Presidency. It was an audacious and insidious gambit, a way to nullify a Democratic President's power to fill judicial vacancies.

We saw this tactic during the Clinton administration, when Republicans on the Judiciary Committee killed a number of President Clinton's quite moderate judicial nominees, even without the basic courtesy of a hearing.

We saw it again during the Obama administration, when Republicans used the filibuster and other forms of delay to more than double the number of circuit and district court vacancies. During Obama's last 2 years in office, the Republican Senate confirmed fewer circuit court nominees than any Congress in 70 years.

Then, in March of 2016, Senator MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans took this maneuver to a new Machiavellian low. They refused to even consider President Obama's nomination to the Supreme Court of the United States, Circuit Judge Merrick Garland, one of the most respected jurists in the Nation, a man known not only for his judicial excellence and perfect judicial temperament but his moderation. In fact, Senator Orrin Hatch, a conservative's conservative and the former chairman of Judiciary Committee, had previously endorsed Judge Garland for the Supreme Court.

But the merits didn't concern Senator MCCONNELL. His cynical strategy required Republicans to block the Garland nomination for almost a year until after President Obama's second term ended, and that is exactly what they did. It was widely condemned as a naked power grab that nullified the President's constitutional authority. It was a terrible, deeply lamentable moment for our democracy and our Constitution. Yet, as the New York Times reported, Senator MCCONNELL said it was one of his "proudest achievements."

After President Trump took office, Republicans sensed an opportunity to grease the conveyor belt even more. Senator MCCONNELL ordered the Judiciary Committee chairman to do away with the longstanding practice that Senators be consulted about district court nominees in their home States. The blue-slip tradition ensured that judicial nominees reflected the ideology and values of the State to which they were nominated. It provided some healthy counterbalance against nominees who were outside the mainstream from either party or were lacking in proper qualifications. Thanks to Senate Republicans, led by Senator MCCONNELL, that protection is now history.

So when Republicans complain about Democratic handling of nominees, there is no other word for it but hypocrisy. You don't have to take my word for it. According to the Congressional Research Service, more circuit judges have been confirmed in the first 2 years of the Trump administration than in the first 2 years of any Presidency since at least the Truman administration.

The majority leader himself has celebrated the pace of confirmations. He bragged about it to the Heritage Foundation. He said this to them a few months ago:

We confirmed every circuit judge. We've now done 29 circuit judges. That is a record for this quick in any administration in history.

Those are Leader MCCONNELL's words, not mine.

Now we have to change the rules, even though you have confirmed more circuit court judges than anyone in history. That is a shame. That is a disgrace. That is not the Senate we want. For Leader MCCONNELL to brag about confirming more judges than ever before and then to complain about Democratic obstruction and say that the process is broken so you have to change the rules is the height of hypocrisy.

Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans also complain about the pace of confirmation for President Trump's executive branch and independent Agency choices. They conveniently omit Republicans' sorry record of obstruction of nominees to Democratic seats at important agencies like the NLRB, the FDIC, and the SEC, which have suffered as Republicans caused

dedicated public servants like former NLRB Chair Mark Pearce to languish for months or even years.

It is actually a little surprising that Leader MCCONNELL and his Republican colleagues would draw attention to the subject of executive nominees now, given the appalling history of incompetence, corruption, and venality among President Trump's so-called "best people," not to mention the fact that there are hundreds of vacancies the President can't even be bothered to fill.

Staffing the government is serious business and so is the system of justice assigned to the courts by our Constitution. They both deserve better than the Senate Republicans' cynical, partisan efforts to turn the Senate into a conveyor belt for ideological conservatives.

The notion that President Trump's judicial nominees have been treated unfairly is simply false. There is no truth to it, as all of these statistics that I have talked about have shown. What Republicans really want to see is the elimination of yet another norm of the Senate so they can automate and expedite the nomination process without a modicum of debate. They are all for "consent" with no "advice." With all undue haste, they want to pack the courts with partisan warriors, not impartial jurists. It is outrageous.

Democrats have a different view of who should sit on the Federal bench. We have a different view of the role of this Chamber. Our judicial system works best when we hold nominees to three simple standards: excellence, moderation, and diversity. These are not ideological litmus tests. They are the pillars of a healthy system of justice. They are the benchmarks by which we can rest assured that the men and women who are appointed to the Federal bench will respect the rule of law and execute their duties impartially.

It cuts both ways. When Republicans are prepared to act in good faith and advance nominees of high caliber, we are ready to give them the consideration they deserve. For generations, the Senate has done the work of the American people through consensus, through compromise, and through cooperation. It has been a place where seemingly impossible disagreements have found sensible solutions. Indeed, the legacy of the Senate is the story of debate—ample debate—followed by compromise. It is in large part thanks to the rules that govern how this Chamber works. It is crucial that those rules not be twisted or abused for partisan advantage.

The majority, by taking yet another step to erode that legacy, risks turning this body into a colosseum of zero-sum infighting—a place where the brute power of the majority rules, with little or no regard for the concerns of the minority party, and where longstanding rules have little or no meaning.

I am so sorry my Republican colleagues have gone along with Senator

MCCONNELL's debasement of the Senate. To do this for such blatantly political ends is simply unworthy of this institution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. One of the advantages of having been around the "advice and consent" process for as long as I have is that I know a little history. I was actually here as a young staffer on the Judiciary Committee when Richard Nixon appointed two Supreme Court Justices who were defeated. During most of those years, our Democratic friends were in the majority here in the Senate. They could have done whatever they wanted to on the executive calendar to slow down, obstruct, and prevent Republican Presidents from having nominations confirmed.

I can remember during the Clinton years the urging of both Senator Daschle and Senator Lott—when my party was in the majority—to invoke cloture on circuit court nominees whom I opposed in order to keep the Senate from developing a process of filibustering the executive calendar, which had never been done before.

The clearest example of why it was never done before is the Clarence Thomas nomination—the most controversial nomination for the Supreme Court in history, with the possible exception of Brett Kavanaugh. He came out of committee with a dead-even vote. They could have killed him in committee. He went to the floor and was confirmed 52 to 48. We all know it only takes one Senator, just one, to make us get 60 votes on something.

Joe Biden and Ted Kennedy were hard over against Clarence Thomas, but nobody—not one of the 100 Senators—said you have to get 60 votes. Clarence Thomas was confirmed 52 to 48 and has been on the Supreme Court for 30 years. He would never have been there if a single Senator—just one—had said you had to get 60 votes. My friends, I call that a pretty firm tradition that you don't filibuster the executive calendar. Was it possible? Yes, it was possible. It just wasn't done.

When did all of this start? Well, the junior Senator from New York got elected in 1998. George W. Bush got elected in 2000. The alarms go off. They are going to appoint a bunch of crazy rightwingers to the circuit courts.

So my good friend the Democratic leader, at a seminar or a meeting, invited a couple of people named Laurence Tribe and Cass Sunstein—two rather famous liberal law professors—and they had a discussion about what to do about these awful rightwing judges who are going to be sent up.

The conclusion was to open the toolbox, take out whatever tool would work, and save America from these kinds of people. And so they did. The poster child for that was Miguel Estrada, who they said openly they were afraid was going to give President Bush the opportunity to make the first

Hispanic appointment to the Supreme Court. We had all-night filibusters. We actually stayed up all night trying to make a point.

It didn't make a difference. Ultimately, we thought maybe we should employ the so-called nuclear option. We ended up not doing it after there was a gang of 14 that developed and worked out an agreement, and some of the nominees were confirmed and some weren't. Yet what had been clearly established was that now the norm in the Senate was that you filibuster anybody that you want to on the executive calendar. That had then been established as a matter of practice, and that continued through the Bush years. There was actually an effort to keep Justice Alito from being on the Supreme Court by requiring a filibuster for the purpose of defeating Justice Alito, but it was not successful. A number of circuit judges were stopped.

When we fast-forward to the Obama years, our side used the filibuster twice to defeat two circuit judges over a period of 5½ years. Majority Leader Harry Reid decided, in his zeal, to pack the DC Circuit—that this had gone on long enough. So, in November 2013, I believe it was, the nuclear option was employed. The threshold was lowered to 51 for everybody on the Executive Calendar except for the Supreme Court. The DC Circuit court judges were confirmed. At the time, I said I didn't like the way it was done. I thought maybe those on the other side would rue the day they did it.

Amazingly enough, about a year and a half later, I was the majority leader. Funny how these things change, isn't it?

A number of my Members came up and said: Why don't we change it back.

I said: Look, I don't think we like the way they did it, but this is the way the Executive Calendar was handled for 200 years until Senator SCHUMER and his allies Laurence Tribe and a cast unseen said: Well, why don't we use any tool in the toolbox to stop judicial appointments?

I discouraged our going back to 60 because I had actually seen that both sides had respected their using a simple majority on the Executive Calendar down to 2003, so we didn't.

Now, look, with regard to these continued complaints about Merrick Garland, that is not what this proposal is about. This proposal is about sub-Cabinet appointments and district judges. For those of you who were not here in 2013, it is almost identical to what almost every one of you voted for in 2013—a standing order that lasted 2 years and a good number of us giving President Obama the opportunity to advance these sub-Cabinet appointments and district judges more quickly.

Let's talk about district judges for a minute. Chairman GRASSLEY and Chairman GRAHAM honored the blue slip for district judges. There are 47 of you guys. There is not a single district

judge who comes out here on the calendar who doesn't have two blue slips returned from whomever the Senators are from the home State. What that means is that you guys are not irrelevant on district judge appointments. You are not irrelevant. For example, I tried to get my good friend the Democratic leader to approve a list of 30 district judges last fall, and 14 of them were from blue States. Oh, no. He was not going to do any district judges on a voice vote even if he were for them.

So, look, all this proposal does that we are talking about today is reduce the postcloture time for sub-Cabinet appointments—just like we helped you all do in 2013—and for district judges, none of whom will even be on the calendar until both blue slips are returned positively. It is not exactly a radical change.

Back to Merrick Garland for a minute. Look, I made the decision—and my colleagues on the Republican side joined me in making that decision—because I knew for sure, for absolute certainty, that if the roles were reversed and there were a Republican President and a Democratic Senate, you wouldn't have filled the vacancy. How did I know that? You have to go back to the 1880s to find the last time a vacancy on the Supreme Court occurred in the middle of a Presidential election year and was confirmed by a Senate of a different party from the President's—1880.

Oh, but that was not enough. In 1992, our friend Joe Biden, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, with a Republican in the White House, a Democratic Senate, and no vacancy on the Supreme Court, helpfully opined that if a vacancy occurred, he wouldn't fill it.

Oh, but guess what. Eighteen months before the end of the Bush 43 term, the majority leader of the Senate, Harry Reid, and a fellow named CHUCK SCHUMER said that if a vacancy occurred, they wouldn't fill it. That was 18 months before the end of the Bush term.

On the business of filibustering the Executive Calendar, there is one thing I left out, and I want to catch up here. Back in 2003, when my good friend the Democratic leader started all of this that we have been wrestling with since then, he said: I am the leader of the filibuster movement, and I am proud of it. The Buffalo News, May 27, 2003. I am the leader of the filibuster movement, and I am proud of it. The Buffalo News. CHARLES E. SCHUMER recommended using an extreme tactic—a filibuster—to block some of the Bush administration's nominees for Federal judgeships. Talk about being proud of something. He started this whole thing that we have been wrestling with since 2003. He cooked it up and convinced his colleagues to do it, and once it started, it continued until 2013 when it was turned off.

So, look, where are we? The Executive Calendar is very close to being returned to the way it was treated by

both parties down to 2000—not the legislative calendar but the Executive Calendar. There is nothing radical about this. He is acting like it is a sad day for the Senate. If you want to pick a sad day for the Senate, go back to 2003 when we started filibustering the Executive Calendar. He started it. That was a sad day. This is a glad day. We are trying to end the dysfunction on the Executive Calendar.

Let's talk about dysfunction. There were 128 cloture votes in the last Congress, many of them on nominees for whom there were no objections at all—128. Goodness gracious. In the first 2 years of each of the last six Presidents, cumulatively, the majority leader of whichever party had to do that 24 times in order to try to advance a nomination.

So don't hand me any of this “sad day in the Senate” stuff. What has been going on here is completely and totally unacceptable. Do you know why I know that? It is because many of your Members, Mr. Leader, have told me privately that they would be happy to do this provided it would take effect in January 2021. Oh, what might happen in January 2021? I can't imagine. Well, it might be a Democratic President and a Democratic Senate. I can understand—but, oh, not now.

Look, we know you don't like Donald Trump, but there was an election. He is at least entitled to set up the administration and make it function. With regard to the judiciary and circuit judges, every President of both parties feels it is his prerogative.

Senator ALEXANDER has pointed out the history of the blue slip. There has been a little confusion about that. He has noted that blue slips were not used as an absolute veto over judicial nominees until—listen to this—the 1950s, when former Judiciary Committee Chairman James Eastland of Mississippi afforded them the status because he did not want Federal judges who had been appointed by President Eisenhower to interfere with segregationist policies in the Jim Crow South. When he became the Judiciary Committee chairman, our former colleague Ted Kennedy restored blue slips to their historical purpose of ensuring consultation as opposed to serving as a one-Member veto of a qualified judicial nominee.

All we have done is restore blue slips for circuit court nominees to the consultative function they have played for most of their history.

I have been under Presidents of both parties. They do not defer to us on circuit court judges. We don't get to pick them. We almost do get to pick them when they are district court judges and when we are of the same party as the White House. We have a lot of clout because the chairmen honor the blue slips for district court judges. They are entirely contained within our States, and none of them get out here on the floor unless the Senators approve

them. There are 47 of these guys over here who are not toothless when it comes to district judges.

So this is not a bad day for the Senate; this is a day we end this completely outrageous level of interference and obstruction with this administration. I don't think anybody ought to be seized with guilt over any institutional damage being done to the Senate.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. President, I raise a point of order that postcloture time under rule XXII for all executive branch nominations other than a position at level 1 of the Executive Schedule under section 5312 of title 5 of the United States Code is 2 hours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the point of order is not sustained.

APPEAL RULING OF THE CHAIR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I appeal the ruling of the Chair and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the Senate?

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Lee	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Harris

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate overrules the decision of the Chair.

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, in the last vote today we established a new precedent. The rules of the Senate are a combination of the rules of the Senate, the standing orders of the Senate, and the precedents of the Senate. Senator LANKFORD and I had hoped to do this with a permanent standing order that basically would have put the Senate exactly where the bipartisan vote was in 2013, which included my vote, to have the same kind of rules that we are encouraging now. This process is designed to speed up not only nominees for Republican Presidents but also nominees for Presidents who are Democrats.

In the last 2 years, we have seen an extraordinary use of every tool available to the minority. The Senate is designed to be a place where the minority is heard. In fact, at one time, any Senator could stop everything forever, and when Senators started doing that to excess, that rule was changed. The protections of the minority often have to be looked at again when the minority abuses those protections. That is what has happened in this case.

Now we have 2 hours of debate on the nominee we are debating right now. If we hadn't just taken the vote we took that overruled the Chair, we would have 30 hours of debate. I guarantee that there will not be 2 hours of debate about this nominee. There may not be 2 minutes of debate about this nominee if we see what we have seen happened in the last 2 years.

The rules of the Senate currently say that if any Senator wants to hold up consideration of a nominee, then, the Senator can insist that we go through the process of invoking cloture. In the first 2 years of the Obama administration, that process was used 12 times, and that was more than had been the case in the past. In fact, the previous 3 Presidents had cloture invoked on their nominees a total of 12 times. That is 24 times in 4 Presidencies. In the first 2 years of President Trump's time in office, the majority leader had to come to the floor 128 times and say we are going to have to invoke cloture to have a chance to vote on this nominee.

It is the first week of April. Eleven times this year already the Senate has had to invoke cloture on a nominee for a government job—for a judgeship or some other government job. While that debate time was seldom used, occasionally, at the end of the week, we would say: Well, OK, we will just go ahead and do the last one. Each time, we had to assume that 30 hours would be used up for those people to be processed and to have a chance to do the jobs that they were going to do.

The history of the Senate is exactly as the majority leader described here earlier. In the first 200-plus years of the Senate, while the Senate often used a delaying tactic to delay legislation and require the Senate to think about it more, the Senate virtually never used

the rules of the Senate to slow down the process of putting people in the Cabinet.

In fact, several Presidents—and Presidents in this century—had their full Cabinet put in place within the first day or two of their administration. That didn't happen with this President, and it is obviously what brought us to where we are today.

Usually, in the first couple of years of a new administration, the President not only gets his Cabinet approved right away, but the President is also able to put people around those Cabinet officers who want to move the government in the same direction that the voters just said they wanted the country to go.

The term of an administration is only 4 years. At the end of 2 years, if you are sending back 124 nominees who just simply didn't get voted on—they got investigated, they got the background checks done, they went through the committee, and the committee voted to send them to the floor—that was always supposed to be part of the work of the committee, and that happened for 124 people who never had a chance to get voted on in the first 2 years of this administration, many of whom had been waiting in line for a year.

Now, if you are appointed and have a short-term job in the Federal Government and are willing to serve, the one thing that does for sure is to put your life in some chaos—coming up with the material that the Congress insists on, going through the background check, and getting your financial records out. For most people, it also means putting the way they make a living on hold.

I had somebody whom I nominated as one of three people for the President to choose from to be the district judge in the Eastern District of Missouri. I made that nomination roughly 24 months ago. Twenty-two months ago, the President told the person he chose that he was going to nominate that person. Last November, after a year and a half of that person telling all his law clients, "You know, I am about to become a Federal judge; you may need to find another lawyer," and after he closed his legal process, he hasn't been voted on yet. That man was one of the people sent back from the White House. He had to be sent back up this year and had to go through the Judiciary Committee again. He had to get back in a line, where every single person took 30 hours of debate, after the 1 day that had to be debatable between the time the leader brings you up and you come to the floor.

This sounds pretty complicated. That is because it is, and it is made more complicated by the fact that people have used it as a delaying tactic.

Now, as for the 128 people whom I mentioned—the 128 people whom the majority leader had to file cloture on—compared to 12, let's be sure we are comparing this the way this used to be,

even in recent years to now—128 compared to 12. When those 128 people finally got votes, the support was substantial. When they finally got votes, one-third of them got 70 votes or more. Thirteen percent got 90 votes or more. So you have 90 people voting for people that someone insisted we needed 30 hours of debate for, and there wasn't a debate at all.

Twenty district judges had cloture filed on them. Twelve of those district judges had nobody vote against them after 30 hours on the floor, where, in all likelihood, nobody had anything to say during those 30 hours.

The average amount of time that we spent talking about nominees during the 30 hours that has been insisted on is less than 1 hour. The person who generated the most discussion, at least this year, was the new Attorney General. That is a pretty important job. There should have been quite a bit of discussion. In fact, it was our intention—the intention of the standing order that Senator LANKFORD and I filed—and it will continue to be the intention, that that person will still have 30 hours of debate if anybody thought that was necessary.

Supreme Court justices, Cabinet members, and circuit judges would all have 30 hours of debate. But even with the Attorney General, less than 4 hours was used to talk about what everybody listening would believe is one of the most important jobs possible.

For the 10 other nominees who have had cloture filed on them prior to this week, almost no debate time was used. In fact, again, even in the case of Attorney General William Barr, four-thirtieths of the time was used. That means that twenty-six-thirtieths of the time wasn't used, but we couldn't use it for anything else. We couldn't use it for another nominee. We couldn't use it for a piece of legislation. We couldn't use it to talk about how the government spends its money basically to debate an appropriations bill that would be on the floor. It just couldn't happen.

Last week, we confirmed Bridget Bade to be a judge of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. We used less than 1 minute of the 30 hours that the minority insisted on—less than 1 minute of the 30 hours—but nothing else could be done during those 30 hours.

Every Member of the Senate knows that the abuse of this process is done to delay and to keep us from confirming not only other people who need to be confirmed but to keep us from getting to the work we need to get to. It prevents us from taking up other legislation. It prevents us from doing our job.

It has to be discouraging when you talk to people in the future about this: Would you be willing to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for something? Would you be willing to serve as the Assistant Deputy Secretary of Treasury for IRS? And, by the way, you really can't start anything new, and you may never get voted on.

When you do get voted on, you may not actually be able to serve in that job for more than a few months if you serve the rest of the term of this Presidency.

People will begin to say no, and we all know that.

Today we have 140 people who are waiting to be voted on for jobs they have been nominated for. They are now out of committee. They have done all the paperwork. They have cleared all of the days. They have done everything they needed to do.

When President Reagan was President, the average number of days between the time you were voted out of committee and the time you were voted on on the floor was 5 days. By the time you had gotten out of committee, you had already been weeks, if not months, into this process. Five days later, you would get to know whether or not you were going to get the job.

With President Trump, the average number of days between the time you got out of committee and the time you got voted on was 55. That is 55 days when you are waiting to do the job that you have been willing to do, have answered every question you have been asked, have gone through all of the background checks you needed, and you are still waiting.

This system cannot work that way. We would never get everybody confirmed that a President is required to nominate, which means we also would never have time to get the other things done that the Senate needs to do.

I think the step we took today was an important one. We will talk about another category of people to be confirmed later today—district judges. I believe we will be able to make that change as well. Again, the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, and the circuit judges would all still have 30 hours available to them.

Our friends on the other side may continue to insist on that, but if they do, I guarantee that if you run a clock on this, in all likelihood nobody will ever use the 30 hours to talk about the nominee. If we didn't do it to talk about William Barr, we are not hardly going to do it to talk about anybody else.

Debate is an important thing. Having the right people in the right job is an important thing. It is also important to have them in the right job at the right time. Today, I believe the Senate is taking important steps to return back to the traditional role of the Senate in confirming nominees and giving Presidents an opportunity to do the job they were elected to do.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I thank my colleague. He has more institutional knowledge, has been here longer, and understands this process. I haven't been here as long, but I am trying to put a little common sense to it, and I am having a hard time.

I am not naive enough to stand up thinking that if I could have given my speech before we took that vote, it might have made any difference. I wish it would have. I wish I could have. But it didn't happen that way.

Words cannot express how disappointed I am—I truly am—to stand here as the only Member of the Senate who voted against the nuclear option in 2013 when it was a Democratic proposal and in 2017, the Republican proposal, and now what we did today. I have consistently voted against this because it is not who we are, and it is not about what we are about either.

For those who don't know, the nuclear option is strictly a gimmick that allows the majority party to truly steal the power of debate and the power of the filibuster from individual Senators. Why does it matter? Because so much of our influence as Senators comes from our power to filibuster. It is also the most powerful tool we have to force compromise and to stand up for the people we represent.

In spite of the importance of this power, everyone else in the body who has had the chance has voted to use the nuclear option to lower the votes required to end debate from 60 votes to a simple majority of 50 plus 1 on different types of nominees. That is a tragedy for our constituents. For this country, it is even more of a tragedy. For the institution of the Senate, it is a disaster.

This debate is not new, and I would not be honoring the legacy of the late Senator Robert C. Byrd, whose seat I sit in, if I did not take the opportunity to at least recite a little history here on the floor of the Senate.

The Founding Fathers always intended the Senate to be deliberate, and we are known as the most deliberate body in the world.

George Washington himself was said to have told Thomas Jefferson that the Senate should serve as a "cooling saucer" for legislation from the House. As you know, the House works on a simple majority; 218 Democrats or 218 Republicans can do anything they wish. The Senate is supposed to temper that down.

This body was created to protect the rights of individual States—small States in particular. In the Federalist Papers, John Jay notes that "in this spirit it may be remarked, that the equal vote allowed to each State, is at once a constitutional recognition of the portion of sovereignty remaining in the individual States, and an instrument for preserving that residuary sovereignty."

The filibuster is essential to preserving that residual sovereignty, and diminishing that power should matter to anyone who comes from a small or rural State like my State of West Virginia. This power was also meant to empower individual Members, like me, who often find themselves in the minority of their own party.

That doesn't mean we can't make changes for efficiency. But today's rule

change and the two that came before it in 2013 and 2017 were not meant to make this place more efficient; they were meant to take power from each and every Senator. That means you and I have given up our power and our ability to represent our States.

Before 1917, there was no way to end a debate in the Senate whatsoever, from our beginning, so one Member could grind this place to a halt for however long they felt necessary. Then, at the urging of President Woodrow Wilson, the Senate adopted rule XXII that year, 1917, and first used it 2 years later to end a filibuster against the Treaty of Versailles.

For the next 80-plus years, some tweaks were made to the rule and its reach was expanded, but there was no real threat to the existence of the rule. In 2005, that all changed when then-Majority Leader Bill Frist made the first serious effort to change the rules of the Senate and reduce the power of every Member of this body by deploying the nuclear option. None other than John McCain and Robert C. Byrd, our dear departed friends, teamed up to form the Gang of 14 that cut a deal on a package of nominations that took the nuclear option off the table—but only for a little while.

In 2013, when Harry Reid and Democrats—my side of the aisle—voted to end the filibuster for Presidential nominees, I was one of only three Democrats to fight and vote against it. The other two, Mark Pryor and Carl Levin, are no longer serving in the Senate today, but we represented all wings of the Democratic Party—from the liberal end, to the conservative end, to the moderate centrist end. We stood together despite our differences because we knew that it would forever lessen the institution of the Senate and that it would come back to bite us when we weren't in the majority. That was the point we made at that time. That was the argument we made and pleaded with our colleagues.

For the past 5 years, we have seen the consequences of those actions. Today, our Republican friends are using the same excuse our Democrats used—historic obstruction. Democrats are using the same argument today that our Republican friends have used—unprecedented overreach. This is the hypocrisy that makes us understand why people think Washington sucks. It is on both sides. No one is innocent on this.

In 2013, the current majority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, was furious about what the Democrats were threatening to do. He called it breaking the rules to change the rules. And I agreed with him. He was right. I voted with him.

In 2013, I heard and listened to Leader MCCONNELL when he said:

The American people decided not to give the Democrats the House, or to restore the filibuster proof majority they had in the Senate back in 2009, and our Democratic colleagues don't like that one bit. They just don't like it. The American people are get-

ting in the way of what they'd like to do. So they are trying to change the rules of the game to get their way anyway.

This is precisely what the American people decided about Republicans in the 2018 election, and the Republicans have now gone down the same path Leader MCCONNELL warned us against. You would think that at least we would understand the definition of “insanity”—doing the same thing over and over, thinking we are going to get a different outcome. It doesn't work that way.

Leader MCCONNELL went on to say: “So look, I realize this sort of wishful thinking might appeal to the uninitiated newcomers in the Democratic conference who served exactly zero days in the minority, but the rest of you guys should know better.” And he is absolutely correct. Everyone should know better. Those of you who have been in the minority before should know better because what goes around comes around.

His final warning, which I am disappointed my Republican friends didn't listen to, was this:

If you think this is in the best interest of the United States Senate and the American people, to make advice and consent mean effectively nothing, obviously you can break the rules to change the rules to achieve that.

That is what we have done.

But some of us have been around here long enough to know that the shoe is sometimes on the other foot.

While the majority leader and minority leader have flipped their positions and their perspective today, the lesson is clear: Breaking the Senate for political expedience will, over time, hurt all of us and, most importantly, our constituents and the American people.

I firmly believe the filibuster is a vital protection of minority views and exactly why the Framers of our Constitution made the Senate the cooling saucer. Lately, both parties have lit the saucer on fire and thrown it out the window. The Senate was set up by our Founding Fathers to force us to work together. Think about that. They knew that whatever we receive from the House would be hot as a firecracker. Someone had to put out the flame. Someone had to know to say: That is not who we are as a country, and it is not basically who we want to be as a country.

We are not the House of Representatives, and by golly, we are going there at a rapid pace—a rapid pace. It seems that when people come from the House, they bring that House mentality—scorched and burned earth. That is not what we were set up to be. This is a very different body. It is the most unique body in the world.

As the late great Robert C. Byrd himself said in the months before his death, “While I welcome needed reform, we must always be mindful of our responsibilities to preserve this institution's special purpose.” And we are better than this, he said.

I always tell people back home that I can't vote for something unless I can

go home and explain it. I don't care if it is an idea that my friends on the Republican side have. It makes sense to me. My constituents understand it. I go home and vote and tell them why I voted with my Republican friends. If I vote with my Democratic friends and it makes sense, I tell them the same. If I vote against something of my Republican friends or Democrats, I explain to them. It has nothing to do with politics; it is policy. Does it make sense? Will it help the constituents of the State of West Virginia? Will it make my country stronger and better? That is really what I care about. That is the purpose of my being here.

For the life of me, I can't figure out how anyone who voted for this can explain it when they go back home, because we have given our power away. Every time you do this, you continue to erode the powers you have as a Senate by the Constitution of the United States of America and by the Founding Fathers who created this body. Now, how we can do it in such a willing way makes no sense. How do you look people in the eye and say: I gave up my individual power to represent you. How do I do that? I am not going to do it. I am not going to do it, and I haven't done it, nor will I ever do it.

You can say it was because of obstruction. Well, if there is an obstruction, there is a way around obstructions. You drive around obstructions. You have obstructions in your life every day. You learn to work around obstructions. It is basically by communicating. It is basically by sitting down and looking at the other side, the other point of view.

I have always said that I am not always right. I need help. But I am not always wrong either. I have, hopefully, some input, and I try to make that as a balance as I approach these things. And Republicans are—what they have done today is basically the same. We don't have obstructions we can't overcome if we respect each other. You can't blame everybody for everything. You can't blame somebody else for something you are unwilling to do. You can't blame somebody else if you don't have the patience to sit down and talk through your problems and try to understand better. You can't blame somebody else if you are not willing to give and take. That is what the whole process is about if you are going to be successful in life—anyone who has been successful. It is not “my way or the highway”; it is “our way going down the highway together.”

This move is a betrayal of the people we represent, and everyone in this body is complicit. It is a shame that we are going to go back and try to explain our positions with the votes that were made today. It is just a shame. It should never have come to this. For hundreds of years, we have managed to overcome obstructions and preserve our Founders' vision for the Senate, but for the last 6 years, Members on both sides of this aisle have decided that is no longer possible.

This abdication of our power and responsibility is nothing more than weakness in the face of partisanship. This is truly tribal. What tribe do you belong to? Do you belong to the Democratic tribe, or do you belong to the Republican tribe? I am sorry, I belong to the American tribe, and I am going to stay right in the tribe I belong to, and I am going to be loyal to the American tribe.

This abdication of our power and responsibility is truly, truly a weakness in the face of partisanship, and my colleagues need to stand up to the leaders. We have given too much power to the leadership here.

I remember the day when people used to talk about, oh, the committee chairman had so much power. They could run a bill and make sure it got on the floor and got voted on. Those days are gone. There is always a reason why something doesn't go to the floor, even if it goes through the committee process. Something comes out of the committee unanimously, and it still doesn't come to the floor. Try to explain that one.

To protect the powers of the Senators as representatives for their States and to protect the institution of the Senate, that is not that hard, and I know because I have done it. I have voted against my colleagues on my side of the aisle. I was up front, and I was honest. I said: I am sorry; I can't go home and explain that. It doesn't make sense at all, and I am not voting for it.

If they want to get my vote, they are going to have to sit down and say: What would it take to get your vote?

And I would explain to them: You have to adjust this or adjust this and make sense.

It is fair to the minority, and if we were in the majority, or vice versa, the majority should be fair to us. If you can work through that, you can make it. You can make it on this side. If not, it is going to be a miserable 6 years for every Senator who just got elected, if we don't come back to reality.

I know I keep calling it an individual right, but it really isn't. It is a trust passed down from the Senators who preceded us. They had the will and they had the determination to make this place work, and we have given up on that. This belongs to our constituents, the power we have here, and we have no power to protect them now.

The solution to obstruction isn't ruining the Senate. It is outreach. It is compromise. It is finding solutions that make a bunch of people on the far left and the far right very uncomfortable and mad sometimes. Until we are willing to do that, the hard work of this institution is going to get worse. So it is not that we are fractured, we are almost broken, and it was never intended. I have never seen anything broken that we couldn't fix. I hope we come to our senses. I hope we act as Americans. I hope we understand basically the whole thought process from our Founding Fathers, who had the

great insight of having two bodies in a bicameral, not a unicameral, branch that was supposed to work to help each other and protect us from ourselves. Right now, we have become the worst enemy of ourselves. I hope we change.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam 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 Michigan.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I have come to the floor many times, and I come to the floor today to say something straightforward. Healthcare is personal, not political. Despite all the debates, everything that has gone on around healthcare, for every family in Michigan and across the country and for every one of us, healthcare is personal, not political.

If your child gets sick in the middle of the night and needs to be taken to the emergency room, you don't care who the doctor voted for in the last Presidential election.

If you are diagnosed with cancer or a chronic condition, you are more interested in receiving the care you need than the ins and outs of the insurance plan that provides that care.

If your mom or dad needs to move into a nursing home, you want to make sure they are happy and that they are treated well, regardless of the specific Medicaid reimbursement rate.

Healthcare is personal to each and every one of us, not political, and it affects each and every one of us, whether we watch MSNBC, CNN, FOX News, or don't turn on the television.

That is why, when this administration and Republicans in Congress try to take away people's healthcare over and over and over again, I take it personally. You know who else takes it personally? The American people. Certainly, I know the people of Michigan do.

Back in November, they sent a message at the ballot box. Unfortunately, the administration and Republicans in Congress missed the message. They could be working across the aisle right now to expand access to care and improve quality and reduce costs. This is something I work to do all the time. Instead, they are, once again, trying to take away your healthcare.

If you don't believe me, just take a look at President Trump's budget. This administration wants to pay for a huge tax giveaway for the wealthiest among us by taking away people's healthcare.

Let me say that again.

They are asking us to pay for a budget-busting tax giveaway for the wealthy by taking healthcare away from people who depend on Medicare and Medicaid. Many of us, when this

tax bill passed, said that when they were creating almost \$2 trillion in deficit, watch out because the next thing will be a discussion to say: Oh. Oh my gosh. We have a big deficit. We have to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, and the other things that directly affect people, with healthcare at the top of the list.

So what happens? Well, the Trump budget would cut \$800 billion from Medicare over the next 10 years. That is taking away healthcare from our seniors, people with disabilities. The Trump budget would cut \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid over the next 10 years. That is taking healthcare away from half of all the babies born in America who are covered by Medicaid—their and their moms. That is taking healthcare away from two in three seniors who get their nursing home care from Medicaid healthcare. That is taking away healthcare from everyone who has benefited from expanding Medicaid, including low-income, minimum-wage working people, working families, including more than 650,000 people in my State of Michigan covered by a very successful program called Healthy Michigan.

Ninety-seven percent of Michigan children can see a doctor when they get sick or hurt now because of what has happened with Michigan, with Healthy Michigan and other coverage, and the number of people treated without insurance has dropped 50 percent, which means instead of folks dropping into the emergency room who can't pay and everybody else's insurance rates go up to pay for it, people now have their own insurance, and those costs have dropped by 50 percent—the number of people walking in without insurance.

What has that meant for the State of Michigan? Taxpayers had more than \$400 million back into the budget in the State of Michigan last year because of the savings because of Healthy Michigan.

We should be building on this progress. Instead, Republicans are, once again, trying to take your healthcare away.

Between 2010 and 2018, the Republican majority in Congress voted to repeal or weaken the Affordable Care Act more than 70 times—70—with no replacement. Now the Trump administration has stepped in to help because they weren't successful in Congress. We were able to stop that because people rose up and said: My healthcare is personal not political. People from across the country engaged and we were able to stop it in Congress. So now the Trump administration has stepped in to do a number of things to sabotage the Affordable Care Act.

Look at what has happened in the last year. Last February, the Trump administration announced it would provide funding to States that want to let insurance plans cover fewer services, encouraging fewer services to be covered.

Last April, they issued a rule that, among other things, allowed insurers

to hike premiums 15 percent without justification.

In June and August, they expanded access to Association Health Plans and what are called short-term plans, which we also call junk health plans because they are a lot cheaper, but they don't cover much, and people don't realize that until they get sick. These plans don't have to cover prescription drugs or mental health or maternity care.

By the way, as the person who led that fight in the Senate Finance Committee, I can tell you that the vast majority of insurance plans prior to the Affordable Care Act did not cover maternity care and prenatal care, which is pretty basic as part of healthcare for women. Remember when being a woman was considered a preexisting condition? That is what we meant. These plans are bringing that back, which means if you are a woman, you have to pay more to be able to get basic healthcare, and that is wrong. We did away with that 10 years ago.

In July, the Trump administration slashed funding for programs that help people enroll in health insurance coverage and began steering people toward the junk plans. So instead of giving people information through healthcare.gov and encouraging people to find out what would be the cheapest plan that would be effective and cover what they need, they made it harder to sign up for comprehensive coverage and pushed people toward these junk plans.

In October, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that healthcare.gov would be shut down for 60 hours during open enrollment season for "maintenance," so you couldn't even get online to be able to sign up for more affordable, comprehensive insurance that actually would cover things you and your family need.

In November, the Trump administration released information for States on how they could use waivers to undermine consumer protections. Consumer protections are things like not getting dropped if you get sick. Prior to the Affordable Care Act, so many times people said to me: I have paid for insurance all my life and never needed it. I finally need it, and I got dropped after I got sick. What do you mean it only covers 1 day in the hospital or doesn't cover maternity care? What do you mean the insurance company can cap the number of cancer treatments I need? Isn't that up to my doctor?

Well, it is now, and it has been under the Affordable Care Act. Instead, we are in a situation where they are trying to get States to waive consumer protections and put decisions back in the hands of insurance companies.

Thanks to all of this sabotage, it is estimated that comprehensive health insurance costs 16.6 percent more this year than it otherwise would.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my statement, which will be about 2 minutes.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you very much.

It is estimated that comprehensive health insurance costs 16.6 percent more this year than it otherwise would because of all of this sabotage, upheaval, and chaos in the healthcare markets.

In case those sabotage attempts were too subtle, last week the Department of Justice announced that it agrees—the Trump administration now agrees with the Federal judge in Texas who said that the entire Affordable Care Act must be struck down. There would be no more coverage for preexisting conditions, no more consumer protections, no more capacity to have your child on your insurance until age 26, no more capacity to be able to expand what we are doing for minimum wage workers, et cetera.

In other words, if they can't take away your health insurance through the legislative process, they are trying to do it now through the courts, which also goes to what is happening now in terms of changing the rules so they can more quickly put judges through and pack the courts with folks who will agree with taking away people's healthcare.

What is the Republican alternative to the ACA? Unfortunately, these folks still don't have one. Don't worry. President Trump now says that he is going to have a "really great" healthcare plan after he is reelected in 2020. Just wait.

By the way, to emphasize the fact that Senate Republicans support what President Trump is doing, they passed a budget resolution out of committee last week through a partisan vote—only Republican votes—that includes repeal of the Affordable Care Act with no replacement in place.

In the meantime, the Affordable Care Act could be struck down by the courts, and more than 20 million people who gained health coverage through the Affordable Care Act could be out of luck.

Let me say, in conclusion, that just this week I heard from one of those 20 million people. Lisa from Norton Shores graduated with a marketing degree in the middle of a recession and worked a low-wage job at the local hospital for 8 years. When a part-time, temporary job opened up at a local marketing agency, the Affordable Care Act allowed Lisa to take the job and get the experience she needed for a career in her field. She was able to get healthcare separately from her job. That job led to another marketing job with a local company—this one with benefits.

A few years later, the original marketing agency offered Lisa a full-time job. Once again, the ACA allowed her to take it. Lisa wrote this:

It was only through the Affordable Care Act that I have been able to pull myself up to be a contributing member of society. It has allowed me to rise to my capabilities.

She added that if the ACA is overturned, "I will have to leave this job

for a position that includes health insurance. It would kill this awesome small business I work for. . . . This will be a top priority for me when I vote in 2020."

Lisa and millions of other people are sending a message. The only question is, Are folks listening?

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

KESSLER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kessler nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

CLOTURE MOTION

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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 the nomination of Roy Kalman Altman, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mitch McConnell, Johnny Isakson, Roger F. Wicker, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Deb Fischer, David Perdue, Todd Young, John Thune, Rick Scott, Mike Rounds, Marco Rubio.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Roy Kalman Altman, of Florida, to be the United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 60 Ex.]

YEAS—66

Alexander	Burr	Cortez Masto
Barrasso	Capito	Cotton
Blackburn	Cardin	Cramer
Blunt	Cassidy	Crapo
Boozman	Collins	Cruz
Braun	Cornyn	Daines

Duckworth	Jones	Rounds
Durbin	Kaine	Rubio
Enzi	Kennedy	Sasse
Ernst	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Feinstein	Lee	Scott (SC)
Fischer	Manchin	Shaheen
Gardner	McConnell	Shelby
Graham	McSally	Sinema
Grassley	Moran	Sullivan
Hassan	Murkowski	Tester
Hawley	Perdue	Thune
Hoeven	Portman	Tillis
Hyde-Smith	Risch	Toomey
Inhofe	Roberts	Warner
Isakson	Romney	Wicker
Johnson	Rosen	Young

NAYS—33

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	King	Sanders
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Schatz
Booker	Leahy	Schumer
Brown	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Menendez	Stabenow
Carper	Merkley	Udall
Casey	Murphy	Van Hollen
Coons	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Paul	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Harris

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 66, the nays are 33. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Roy Kalman Altman, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I understand the majority is considering another change to how judicial nominees are considered.

My understanding is the majority leader may move to break the rules of the Senate and cut the time that Senators can debate nominees after cloture is invoked from 30 hours to 2 hours.

Just yesterday, the Senate rejected this change. The Lankford resolution was voted on and did not receive 60 votes, let alone the 67 votes required to change the rules.

The resolution would also have changed postcloture debate time on circuit court and Supreme Court nominees from 30 hours total to 30 hours divided between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. This means debate on a Supreme Court nomination could be limited to only 15 total hours of debate.

Despite bipartisan opposition to the Lankford resolution, the majority is now considering limiting debate time by breaking longstanding rules of the Senate.

Changing the rules is not only unnecessary, but also is dangerous, especially when we are talking about lifetime appointments. Further, given this administration's failure to properly vet its own nominees, the Senate should not restrict critical vetting and due diligence.

There is simply no need to limit debate on President Trump's judicial nominees. In fact, President Trump's

judicial nominees have been confirmed at a record pace.

Through his first 2 years in office, President Trump had more circuit court nominees confirmed than any other President had at the same point in their tenure—30 total. That is on top of two Supreme Court Justices and 53 district court judges.

Further, the current administration's circuit court nominees have been confirmed nearly twice as fast as President Obama's, 256 days for President Obama's nominees versus 139 days for President Trump's nominees.

The rules change is also unnecessary because Senate Democrats are in no way obstructing confirmations. Senate Democrats have not required cloture votes on more than half of President Trump's district court nominees.

On average, the Senate has used only 3 hours of floor time for debate on President Trump's district court nominees.

In addition, a higher percentage of President Trump's district court nominees have been confirmed by voice vote as compared to President Obama's district court nominees, 49 percent versus 35 percent. In other words, Senate Democrats have not required the majority to hold rollcall votes on nearly half of President Trump's nominees to the Federal district courts.

Finally, Democrats have worked with the Trump administration to identify qualified judicial nominees.

For example, Delaware's two Democratic Senators, Senators CARPER and COONS, worked with the White House to identify two qualified nominees to be judges on the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware.

Senators DURBIN and DUCKWORTH of Illinois worked with this administration to identify two highly qualified nominees to be judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Both of those nominees were confirmed unanimously.

In addition, we are right now in postcloture time on the nomination of Roy Altman to the Southern District of Florida. Several Democrats voted for Mr. Altman in committee, and Democrats have not demanded a full 30 hours of debate time on Mr. Altman's nomination.

Despite all of this, Republicans are nevertheless breaking the rules and pushing the Senate closer to a body that is governed simply by the whim of the majority.

All of this leads to an unmistakable conclusion—shortening debate time is unnecessary. It is a response to a non-existent problem, and it is simply a power grab meant to stack the courts at an even faster rate.

It is also important to stress why it is so dangerous to allow the Trump administration to stack the courts in this way, without adequate debate time.

We have seen this administration fill lifetime positions with young, inexperienced nominees who are often outside the legal mainstream. We have seen

them try to do this without properly vetting those same nominees, as in the case of Brett Talley, who failed to disclose to the Judiciary Committee nearly 15,000 online comments, including one in which he defended the founder of the KKK.

The Senate needs sufficient time to scrutinize the records of these nominees—nominees like Matthew Kacsmaryk and Patrick Wyrick, who have led efforts to undermine the Affordable Care Act; nominees like Brian Buescher, who has argued that States should go after women's reproductive rights "bit by bit"; and nominees like Wendy Vitter, who refused to acknowledge that *Brown v. Board of Education* was correctly decided and who falsely claimed there is a connection between the use of contraceptive pills and the incidence of cancer.

Two hours is simply not enough time to scrutinize these nominees' records, especially when so many of this administration's judicial nominees fail to disclose materials to the Judiciary Committee.

In conclusion, all Senators, and not just those on the Judiciary Committee, need adequate time to review the records of these judicial nominees, who, if confirmed, will serve for life.

All Senators need adequate time to make an informed decision about whether these nominees are qualified to decide the fate of thousands of people's lives. After all, the American people deserve to know that, if they find themselves in a Federal court, they will have an impartial, qualified, mainstream jurist who has earned the right to sit on the bench.

This decision to break the rules and reduce debate time on judicial nominees not only harms the institution of the Senate, but also harms the Federal judiciary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I raise a point of order that the postcloture time under rule XXII for all judicial nominations, other than circuit courts or Supreme Court of the United States, is 2 hours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the point of order is not sustained.

APPEALING RULING OF THE CHAIR

Mr. MCCONNELL. I appeal the ruling of the Chair and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the judgment of the Senate?

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll. Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 61 Ex.]

YEAS—48

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sinema
Carper	Leahy	Smith
Casey	Lee	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—51

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	McConnell	Thune
Cruz	McSally	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Harris

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate overrides the decision of the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

S. 972

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, earlier this week I introduced the bipartisan Retirement Enhancement and Savings Act of 2019, and the acronym for that is RESA, or R-E-S-A.

I am pleased to be joined by my colleague, Ranking Member WYDEN of the Finance Committee, in introducing this very important piece of legislation. The workplace retirement system provides an effective way for employees to save for retirement. Not all workers have access to retirement plans, and some workers who have access to a plan don't always participate.

The committee felt that we needed to do more to encourage and facilitate retirement savings. That is why we are providing new incentives for employers to adopt retirement plans. The bill also helps to reduce costs of operating these plans and creates new provisions to encourage workers to plan and to save for retirement.

This bill has been a long time in the making. Work on it actually began shortly after the passage of the Pension Protection Act of 2006. So when I say a long time, if it actually started back there at that time, that is 13 years ago.

Over several Congresses, the Finance Committee has held hearings on the retirement system and reviewed a number of proposals to improve the system.

Many ideas were put forward. We examined each of them carefully, including through the work of the Finance Committee's Tax Reform Working Group on Savings and Investment, which did most of its work during the year 2015.

The resulting proposals were brought together to form this bill that we call RESA. It was unanimously approved by the Finance Committee in 2016. In the last Congress, many of us worked closely with former Senator Hatch, and chairman at that time, to advance this package. We came very close to an agreement last December, but, as a lot of times happens at the end of the year, it fell short due to politics and the process at that time. Passage of this important bill remains a top priority for me. I have continued working closely with Senator WYDEN, the ranking Democrat, other committee members, and even colleagues in the House to maintain the momentum from the end of last year so that improvements in this bill can be signed into law without further delay.

The RESA bill would reform our retirement savings laws in several important areas. For example, it would improve on an existing type of plan called a multiple employer plan, or as we say in finance, MEP. The bill would expand these plans so that employers can join together to sponsor a single retirement plan for their workers. These open MEPs would make it far more feasible for businesses of all sizes, and especially small businesses, to offer retirement plans by harnessing economies of scale and reducing unnecessary administrative burdens on employers.

More importantly, these open MEPs would open the door for millions of Americans to save for retirement. Speaking of small businesses, the bill includes provisions designed to make it easier and more cost-effective for smaller employers to sponsor a retirement plan. Small businesses, farms, and ranches, are, of course, vital to our economy. We need to encourage a level playing field so that workers and small businesses throughout our country have equal access to retirement plans as workers at Fortune 500 companies have.

RESA also would create a new fiduciary safe harbor for employers that allow employees to invest in lifetime-income arrangements like annuities. In addition, the bill would expand the portability of retirement plan assets, including those annuities. That would allow workers, then, to keep their retirement savings when they change jobs throughout their career.

This bill encourages employers to provide the kinds of tools and flexibility that employees need to plan for a financially secure retirement. RESA also would help employees to add to their retirement savings each year through automatic increases in contributions to 401(k) plans. Also, to help workers plan better for retirement, the legislation would require employers to

provide an estimate of how much the employee's account would provide during retirement if the employee invested the balance in an annuity.

All of this is intended to help individuals get on the path of saving for a secure retirement during their working years, but it is also with an eye toward making sure that their savings will last once they retire. I should also note that this bill is paid for.

This is the pay-for. The main offsetting provision involves an option under current law for a person to pass along his or her IRA or 401(k) account to a family member or other beneficiary. Under current law, the recipient of that account can keep the inherited funds in the tax-deferred account and save for their own retirement if they take out a required minimum amount each year. That is often referred to as a "stretch IRA."

The bill maintains this savings option for people who inherit an IRA or retirement account, but it places a limit on how large an account can be inherited on a tax-protected basis. This is a commonsense approach to encourage the next generation to save for retirement while ensuring that the changes in this bill are fiscally responsible.

Retirement security is a very important topic that is already getting a great deal of attention this year. The House Ways and Means Committee considered a retirement savings bill yesterday that is built on the provisions included in RESA, and I look forward to working with Chairman NEAL of the House Ways and Means Committee to reconcile our bills and to get a final package to the President's desk.

So, in closing, I want to sum by stressing that increasing long-term savings in America is critically important. We know that there are ways that we can improve our private retirement system to make it easier for Americans to save. The reforms in this bill represent a very important step forward in improving Americans' retirement security.

I know that there are other Members with additional ideas for improving retirement security. I want those Members to know that regardless of this bill's passing, we are ready to consider those proposals and advancing those that will build on RESA and will help to attain the goal of ensuring that all Americans achieve a security retirement.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the confirmation vote on the Altman nomination occur at 11:45 a.m. on Thursday, April 4.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The senior Senator from North Dakota.

S. RES. 50

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss why we needed to reform the confirmation process. It was absolutely necessary to ensure that the Senate is able to approve the President's nominees in a timely manner.

Delays and obstruction have prevented qualified nominees from being confirmed. In fact, at the pace the Senate has been going, it would take more than 5 years to process the remaining nominees. Clearly, the process isn't working.

In the Senate, we take our advice and consent role very seriously. We all want to ensure that we have capable and qualified individuals serving in important positions. Delays in the confirmation process often have nothing to do with the qualifications of the candidate.

These nominees have been vetted and approved by the appropriate committee, only to spend weeks or months waiting to be considered by the full Senate. Currently, there are more than 100 nominees awaiting confirmation on the Senate calendar. That is because our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been using the filibuster to delay all of the nominees—even routine, highly qualified nominees.

In past administrations, a cloture vote was only required for high-level or controversial nominations that required additional deliberation or debate. Under President Trump, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have required cloture on hundreds of nominees, which means instead of approving these nominations in a timely manner, it often takes 3 days on the Senate floor before a final vote is taken. That is because, following a vote to invoke cloture, there is an additional 30 hours of floor debate after an intervening day.

During the first 2 years of the previous 3 Presidencies, there were a total of 24 cloture votes. During the first 2 years of President Trump's Presidency, the Senate forced a cloture vote on 128 nominations. Think about that—24 for the prior 3 Presidents and 128 cloture votes on President Trump's nominations. For President Obama, during his first 2 years—to compare President Trump to President Obama's first 2 years—12 for Obama. There were 12 for President Obama and 128 for President Trump.

So let me provide another example. During the 8 years of the Obama administration, the Senate confirmed 272 district court judges. Since President Trump has been elected, the Senate has confirmed 53 district judges—272 to 53 district court judges. At that pace, only 195 district court judges would be approved over a full 8-year period, far less than the 272 during the Obama administration.

These delays impact qualified individuals across the Nation. For example, Peter Welte, the nominee to be the U.S. district court judge for the District of North Dakota, was nominated

by President Trump more than 77 days ago. It has been about 230 days since Drew Wrigley, nominee to be U.S. attorney for the District of North Dakota was originally reported by President Trump—230 days. These are qualified nominees from my home State of North Dakota and the Presiding Officer's home State of North Dakota who have been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support. Yet both are still waiting for confirmation by the U.S. Senate. They need to be out there doing their job. They need to get confirmed.

That is why we voted today to reduce debate from 30 hours to 2 hours for nominees like district court judges as well as many executive branch nominees, while retaining the 30 hours of debate for high-level nominees—for circuit court judges, Supreme Court judges, and for Cabinet positions. We did not change the confirmation for nominees to the highest levels of government, including the Supreme Court, circuit court, and for Cabinet-level officials.

This reform does streamline the process for other important nominees who have languished on the Senate calendar for far too long. This is a commonsense reform to ensure that there is still debate on nominees, while making the process more efficient and effective so we can get qualified nominees confirmed and working for the American people, as is our job.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

NOMINATION OF MARK ANTHONY CALABRIA

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, as you know and as we know, our Nation is facing an affordable housing crisis.

Right now, we are considering the nomination of someone who will have the power to do something about it—Mark Calabria, the President's nominee to spend the next half decade heading the Federal Housing Finance Agency. He would be responsible for overseeing a \$6.5 trillion housing market that provides homes for millions of American families, and \$6.5 trillion is \$6.5 thousand billion; that is how big a trillion is. He would oversee a \$6.5 trillion housing market that provides homes for millions of families.

Far too many Americans are left behind in our housing policy. Think about this. One-third of all households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. A number that is even more frightening is that one-quarter of American renters spend at least half their income on housing.

One-quarter of American renters spend half of their income on housing. What does that mean?

That is not something people around here, frankly, think about very much. If you are a Senator, if you are a Congressman, if you are some of the highly paid staff people, and many aren't, but if you are the chief of staff or legislative director or if you are a staff director, you don't think about those things.

If you do what Lincoln used to do and say "I need to go out and get my public-opinion baths" and if you see how people live and you see that somebody is paying half their income in rent, and their car breaks down and they don't have \$600 to fix their car, what happens is they can't pay their rent. Then, if something else happens and they get evicted, their whole life turns upside down. They have to give away their pet, no matter what their kids think. They have to move out of that apartment. They have to send their children to a different school. They often have to live in the basement of a neighbor's or a cousin's home. They end up putting their things in storage and losing them.

I don't think we understand what the housing crisis means to, literally, tens of millions of Americans. It is not just in the city, as the Presiding Officer knows. It is in rural areas. His State is pretty rural. Big parts of my State are pretty rural. It is not just East Cleveland or Over-the-Rhine in Cincinnati. It is Appalachia, small towns, and small cities like Zanesville, OH, and Mansfield, OH—places where you can't pay the rent or you get your home foreclosed and you lose your home; you get thrown out of your home, and your whole life turns upside down. That is why this is so important.

We are not only talking about renting but also about homeownership too. The homeownership rate among African Americans is at the same dismal level it was before we had laws in place to protect against discrimination. Those laws are barely being enforced. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development seems to have little interest in enforcing housing discrimination laws. The Senate Banking Committee majority seems to have little interest in enforcing anti-discrimination laws. Hispanic households are hardly better off than African-American households. These are serious issues we have to solve.

As we face this crisis, Mark Calabria, the President's nominee for FHFA will be on the frontlines. He will set policies that determine how many families can afford to buy a home and how much they pay. He will have the power to promote or discourage building affordable apartments to serve the lowest income renters. It is not just that people's wages are stagnant in the Trump economy. Wages are flat. It is not just that. As prices go up, there simply isn't enough housing, so rental units are getting more and more expensive.

If your wages are flat, no matter how hard you work—you might have two jobs, a job making \$9 and a job making \$14, but it is not enough if your rent keeps going up, as it does in far too many cases.

The record shows that Dr. Calabria is exactly the wrong person for this job. He actually questioned the need for the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage. Think about that. That is the primary tool

families use to afford homes and build wealth. I am guessing that almost every one of my colleagues, except those born extraordinarily rich—I am guessing that for most of us in this body, most people watching this, most of our staffs, and most Americans who own homes, especially the first home they bought had a 25- or 30-year fixed mortgage. Before people owned homes much in this country, a century ago, they had to pay off their home in 3 or 4 or 5 years, typically. Almost nobody can do that. That is why we have the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage.

Dr. Calabria wonders whether we need the 30-year mortgage at all. President Trump clearly doesn't know. President Trump knows how to build big apartment buildings and borrow money from Deutsche Bank because no reputable bank in the United States will lend to him. But he doesn't know what it is like to pay off a mortgage and for people who think in terms of, "How am I going to pay off my mortgage?" He doesn't understand what the importance of a 30-year mortgage is. Presumably, that is why President Trump picked somebody like Dr. Calabria to be in charge of housing.

Dr. Calabria has called for repealing the affordable housing goals. One-third of households are spending more than one-third of their income on housing, and it is worse for renters. You would think making housing affordable would be one of Dr. Calabria's top priorities, but he doesn't think we need the current affordable housing goals. He told Congress that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which he would be in charge of, should be eliminated. He would be the one overseeing a housing finance system that has helped more than 28 million American families become homeowners. He has questioned the need for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages. He has called for the end of the entities he would oversee that contribute to this housing market.

It is pretty clear—over his years of writing—whose side he is on. During the financial crisis, when Wall Street wrecked the economy and American communities were left to clean up the mess, Dr. Calabria blamed homeowners for this. He called homeowners who were underwater on their mortgage "deadbeats." Think about that. The guy who is going to oversee the whole housing agency market for the U.S. Government said that the people who were underwater—what does underwater mean? Underwater means that you have been paying your mortgage, but because of a drop in the economy or in your community, what you owe is more than what the house is worth. The house becomes devalued because of the neighborhood, because of other foreclosures, because of other people being evicted, and your home is worth less than what you owe the bank for your mortgage. That is called underwater. Dr. Calabria called those people deadbeats. Those people probably work every bit as hard as Dr. Calabria does—

not to make it personal—or as hard as most of us in the Senate work. These are people working hard to try to get ahead. Because of circumstances in this global economy where wages are flat, where the rich are getting richer, where most of America is treading water, Dr. Calabria calls these people deadbeats for something they didn't even do. Anybody who doesn't think families will do everything they possibly can to stay in their homes has clearly never met those who have actually had their homes foreclosed on. I have met those families.

My wife, Connie, and I live in ZIP Code 44105 in Cleveland, OH. That means nothing to anybody who is listening, but the ZIP Code in which we lived in the first half of 2007 had more foreclosures than had any ZIP Code in the United States. We live in a development of about 200 homes that are priced at \$100,000 to \$200,000 to \$250,000, but not far away, in the rest of this ZIP Code, there is home, after home, after home, after home that has been foreclosed on. These homes are generally old. They are generally not in good shape. They generally have very toxic levels of lead that poison children in their central nervous systems.

He is saying that these people are deadbeats—those who are working hard. They lost their jobs. That is the main reason most of them couldn't keep up with their mortgages. These families aren't deadbeats. They work hard. They work a lot harder than the Wall Street traders—that is t-r-a-d-e-r-s, perhaps—who are taking big risks with other people's money.

Some of Ohio's families were laid off, and they tried to find new jobs. They were making \$22 an hour, and they found new jobs at \$14 an hour. They work just as hard, maybe harder, but the new jobs don't pay as much. Some couldn't find new jobs because the economy was in a free fall. In 2010, one in five homeowners in Ohio was underwater in his mortgage. Yet he calls them deadbeats? One out of five people is a deadbeat because the worth of his home dropped, and he couldn't keep up with his mortgage?

At that time, Ohio had lost 375,000 jobs. In that year, Dr. Calabria criticized one of the most important tools that States like Ohio had in trying to help homeowners—the Hardest Hit Fund. The Hardest Hit Fund helps States like Ohio and Indiana and Arizona and Florida. It helps us weather a crisis. The housing markets and the workers in those States were devastated. The Hardest Hit Fund helped more than 25,000 struggling homeowners. It was not enough because the effort from the Senate was not enough, but it helped in the tearing down of thousands of plighted homes; it helped to make neighborhoods safer; and it helped them to recover.

Dr. Calabria said the Hardest Hit Fund was just subsidizing States because their housing markets were getting more affordable. What kind of per-

son thinks this way? What kind of person says these things? What kind of person is so hardhearted that he or she would possibly take these positions if he or she knows any of these people? Maybe he needs to go out and get to know some of these people.

We asked about his solution. He said we should just let prices fall. He would sit back and let homeowners suffer and communities suffer because of Wall Street's greed. This is the man the President of the United States and, apparently, the majority leader in the Senate—down the hall—want to lead in the overseeing of the housing finance in this country.

In more than 100 blog posts, articles, and papers, Dr. Calabria made his views clear. He said the goal of housing reform should actually be to shrink our mortgage market, that we should eliminate the GSEs and the Federal Housing Administration. My colleagues who plan to support his nomination today or tomorrow or whenever the vote comes should not act surprised if he raises costs for borrowers, if he makes it more difficult to develop affordable housing, or if he cuts off access to homeownership for American families. That is exactly what he has advocated for in his entire career.

This is a critical job. It is why nominees like him should be debated. Americans should have the chance to make their voices heard on a nominee like him, who can make it harder for them to buy homes.

My colleague down the hall is Senator MCCONNELL. He has the office 100 feet or so down the hall in which you see high-powered, expensive, suited, well-compensated lobbyists going in and out all day, streaming in and out. They are writing tax bills, fighting for the oil companies, enriching the pharmaceutical companies, and all of the kinds of things that lobbyists down the hall do who, I was going to say, work for Senator MCCONNELL. They don't actually work for Senator MCCONNELL, but they help Senator MCCONNELL with part of what his political organization is. As a result, Senator MCCONNELL, in order to help these special interests, is changing the Senate rules.

It is not enough that Senator MCCONNELL blocked a Supreme Court Justice for over a year. It is not enough that Senator MCCONNELL supports all of the dark money in politics or that billionaires can put money into political campaigns and nobody knows exactly where the money comes from. It is not enough that the Supreme Court is now controlled by the corporate elite in this country. It is not enough that the Senate is controlled by the corporate elite. It is not enough that the White House looks like a retreat for Wall Street executives except on the day it looks like a retreat for oil company executives, except on the day it looks like a retreat for big drug companies. That is not enough for Senator MCCONNELL. So what is he going to do? He is going to change the rules. He is going

to give less time to debate nominees who will have immense power over people's lives.

We talk about judges who serve lifetime appointments. We talk about the heads of Agencies, like of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, who have the power to hold corporations accountable if they use that power. Of course, we are talking about Dr. Calabria, who is supposed to make the housing market work for all Americans, yet who isn't sure we need the 30-year mortgage. Think about that.

We shouldn't be rushing these people through. We need time for the people we serve to make their voices heard. I would hope my colleagues would agree that these nominees deserve thoughtful consideration; they deserve debates; they deserve somebody who will defend them to come to the Senate floor. Let my fellow Republicans from the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee—people with whom I get along well and personally like—make the case for Dr. Calabria. Let them answer why he is not for the 30-year fixed mortgage, why he calls people who are underwater in their mortgages deadbeats. Why is that?

I would hope my colleagues would come to this floor and debate. I would hope that Senator McCONNELL would allow enough time for us to debate. I would hope my colleagues would reject Dr. Calabria's nomination and tell the President to send us a new nominee who will take the job at the FHFA seriously and make it easier, not harder, for Americans to afford housing.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SEDAT ACTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today it is my privilege to pay tribute to a Louisville, KY, legend, who is simply known as the Handstand Man. Like so many other University of Louisville Cardinals fans, I have vivid memories of cheering on our men's basketball team at Freedom Hall. During high-profile games, when the tension reached its peak, the eyes of every Car-

dinal would look upward gazing upon the gymnastic feats of Sedat Acton.

When the team and the crowd most needed his particular form of inspiration, Sedat would leave his seat and head toward a railing on the second level. As the officials blew their whistles for a timeout, Sedat would lift his body off the ground into an impressive handstand, dozens of feet above the arena's floor. Then, as the fans cheered, he would stretch out his legs under his torso into an L.

For so many Cardinals fans, Sedat's iconic handstand became an essential part of the basketball game experience, but for this fan in particular, his story holds even greater significance.

Like me, Sedat contracted polio at an early age. As a child in Turkey, he endured bullying because of the disease's lasting effects. Sedat would walk the beaches and watch groups of acrobats. He was inspired by their skills and became determined to use gymnastics to gain his own strength, fend off bullies, and prove he had defeated the terrible disease.

Under the caring and watchful eye of my mother, I was able to eventually get back on my feet. By practicing the gymnastics exercises he saw on the beach, Sedat overcame the disease as well. Then, as a teenager, he joined a professional acrobatics club in Switzerland. Sedat performed around Europe for years and showcased his tremendous strength.

In his early 20s, Sedat came to Louisville to live with his sister. Joining a local gymnastics squad at the YMCA on 3rd and Broadway, they performed with the cheerleaders at halftime during UofL men's basketball games. Over the years, Sedat could be found performing during several Cardinals' basketball and football games and even for the Kentucky Colonels.

Around 1980, he began a new type of act. This time, he was in the stands, where he earned the title of Handstand Man. His daring stunt provoked shocks and cheers from those below as he renewed the crowd's enthusiasm and inspired the players.

Over the next 30 years, Sedat's handstands became a regular part of Cardinals' basketball. I remember attending many of those games, and right when we needed it most, we would look to the rafters to see Sedat. He provided a much-needed thrill, helping cheer on the Cards during important games, and eventually to win conference tournaments and even the NCAA national championship.

Sedat's last performance at a UofL game was in 2009, but his legendary status among the people of Louisville remains. A local celebrity, Sedat is frequently recognized for his years of passion for the Cardinals. Now at the age of 74, he remains as dedicated a fan as ever.

Last year, Sedat and his family celebrated the 50th anniversary of his arrival in the United States. He speaks with such pride for the blessings of this

great country and for the opportunities he has received here. One of Sedat's prized possessions is a decades-old American flag. Throughout the years, he turned down many opportunities to leave Kentucky because he loves the city of Louisville, its people, and is so proud to call it home.

It wasn't that long ago that polio represented a real crisis. Through the concentrated efforts of many, the number of polio cases worldwide has plummeted dramatically. Thankfully, we are close to eliminating this disease for good.

I am grateful for the chance to honor Sedat's remarkable life today. With his wife of 40 years, Teresa, their three children, and their growing family, Sedat is fulfilling the American dream. As the Louisville Cardinals look forward to the beginning of the next basketball season, I know my Senate colleagues will join me in congratulating Sedat Acton on his lifetime of accomplishments.

COLORADO RIVER DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my colleagues from the Colorado River Basin and with Senator MANCHIN, the ranking member on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, regarding the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act.

I am pleased that we are considering this bill so quickly on the Senate floor. We need to act now as the historic drought conditions in the basin are a real threat to the water supply of 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of farmland.

As the chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I think it is important that we spend some time clarifying the intent behind this bill. We started last month with an oversight hearing in the Water and Power Subcommittee to examine the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan, which was chaired by my colleague, the Senator from Arizona, Ms. MCSALLY.

We also need to understand what the legislation that we are passing today does and does not do. As I read it, the measure directs the Secretary of the Interior to implement the Drought Contingency Plan agreements upon their execution by the seven basin States. The 2007 final environmental impact statement on Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead enables the Secretary to do so immediately as this document covers all of the Federal actions contemplated in the agreements.

I ask Senator MCSALLY, is that the correct reading of the bill?

Ms. MCSALLY. I thank Chairman MURKOWSKI. Yes, the Senator is exactly

right. The Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan, or DCP, consists of the Agreement Concerning Colorado River Drought Contingency Management and Operations and additional agreements that appear as attachments A1, A2, and B to that agreement. It is an emergency response to 19 years of severe drought and is designed to get us to 2026 without a serious crisis. In the lower basin, this will be done by increasing the contributions and providing incentives to leave water banked in Lake Mead as intentionally created surplus, among other things. My bill reflects the urgency of the situation through its directive that the Secretary of the Interior act without delay to sign the agreements upon execution by the seven Colorado River Basin States.

As Chairman MURKOWSKI mentioned, it is expected that the Secretary will sign these agreements without delay since the actions to be undertaken are within the analyses and range of effects reviewed in the environmental documents prepared pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, ESA, and in the 2007 final environmental impact statement, EIS, on Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead; and the EISs and ESA documents prepared for operation of the Colorado River Storage Project Act initial storage unit reservoirs. Additional environmental compliance is only applicable should Federal actions be undertaken that are outside the range of effects analyzed in those documents or the applicable records of decision.

I ask Senator CORTEZ MASTO, does she agree with this characterization of our bill?

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I thank my colleague from Arizona. I agree with her assessment. I would also add that this legislation was developed to ensure water conservation activities in the Colorado River Basin are able to begin in 2019 and be built into the planning of operations for 2020. For this to happen, there can be no delay between execution of the DCP by the States and the signing and implementation by the Secretary of the Interior.

I ask Senator GARDNER, is this also his understanding from the upper basin perspective?

Mr. GARDNER. Yes, the statements Senator CORTEZ MASTO and Senator MCSALLY have made regarding the existing environmental compliance documents and actions contemplated in the DCP agreements and the Secretary's expected immediate implementation of those agreements once acted upon by the basin states are consistent with my understanding.

This legislation is an important steppingstone to helping assure the long-term sustainability of the Colorado River. It enables the seven Colorado River Basin States to take advantage of flexible water management tools they have created under the Upper and

Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plans to address variable water supply conditions in the face of an almost two-decades-long drought that has no end in sight.

The Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan involves planning for how to move water from the Initial Units of the Colorado River Storage Project Act, otherwise known as the CRSP Initial Units, to protect critical elevations at Lake Powell and subsequently recover storage at the Units. It also provides a mechanism for the upper basin to conserve water to help assure continued compliance with the Colorado River Compact which will improve the resiliency of the entire Colorado River System. In the Upper Basin DCP, the "applicable Colorado River System reservoirs" include and are limited to the Initial Units of the Colorado River Storage Project Act, which include the Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge, Aspinall, and Navajo facilities.

This legislation enables the goals of the DCP to be met by authorizing the storage and release of water in CRSP initial units, without charge, for a demand management plan approved by the Upper Division states and the Upper Colorado River Commission. This water will be delivered into such storage pursuant to the law of, and at the direction and control of, the State from which the water is delivered, subject to approval of the Upper Colorado River Commission. Development of the Demand Management Plan, which will include water accounting mechanisms and other operational factors, will require hard work by all four upper basin States, but once completed will be a critical tool for these states to improve their water security.

I ask Senator BENNET, who has been involved throughout the development of this bill, does he agree with my characterization?

Mr. BENNET. I thank Senator GARDNER. I agree with his assessment and those of Chairman MURKOWSKI, Senator MCSALLY, and Senator CORTEZ MASTO, about the urgency and path forward for DCP implementation. I would like to reiterate that this bill does not exempt or waive any environmental laws. In drafting the DCPs, both the upper and lower basin carefully considered the environment and the existing environmental analyses and compliance documents. Additional NEPA compliance would be needed if Federal actions are outside the scope of effects analyzed in the existing compliance and decision documents.

I ask Senator SINEMA, if this is also her understanding?

Ms. SINEMA. I agree with my colleagues' statements and am proud to continue the legacy of water policy leadership in Arizona. Water plays a pivotal role for the environment, economic development, and cultural heritage of Arizona, and I am proud to have worked closely with the State of Arizona and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to keep this process moving

forward. Arizona takes a huge step towards securing its water future under the Drought Contingency Plan. The plan provides all Arizona communities, from Native American tribes to rural and agricultural regions to metropolitan cities, with greater certainty for reliable and secure water supplies. It shows what can be accomplished when stakeholders work together. I thank my colleagues for the discussion here today and urge passage of this legislation to ensure all Colorado River Basin States are able to implement the DCP as soon as possible.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank all of the Senators for providing their views on the language and for sponsoring this important legislation.

I ask Senator MANCHIN, has he heard the discussion among the sponsors of this bill? Is what he has heard from them about the intent of the legislation in line with his understanding?

Mr. MANCHIN. It is. I thank my colleagues for their support of this critical legislation and for participating in the discussion here today.

Ms. MCSALLY. I would like to thank Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member MANCHIN for their time, attention, and support of this critical legislation. I also associate myself with the comments added by the bill cosponsors and thank them all for their work on this issue and their comments about this bill's effect.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank my colleagues for this clarification and explanation of the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan Authorization Act. As we have just explained, the bill sponsors, along with the chair and ranking member of committee of jurisdiction are unified in the expectation that enactment of this bill will lead to immediate action by the Secretary of the Interior, and the DCP will be signed and implemented upon execution by the States.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING JEROME COUNTY

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, my colleagues Senator MIKE CRAPO and Representative MIKE SIMPSON join me today in recognizing the 100th anniversary of Jerome County, ID.

Established February 8, 1919, by the Idaho Legislature, the county was named for either Jerome Kuhn, son of William S. Kuhn, or Jerome Hill, who was commissioned by Kuhn to find a suitable town site north of the Snake River Canyon. With the city of Jerome as the county seat, the small farming communities of Eden and Hazelton also make up the eastern portion of Jerome County.

One of the early pioneers of Jerome County, I.B. Perrine, was looking for a place to winter his cattle, and Charles Walgamott showed him a spot with beautiful clear blue lakes bubbling up from an underground aquifer. Mr.

Perrine settled this area and called it the Blue Lakes Ranch. These blue lakes continue to provide water for irrigation, raising rainbow trout, and pristine drinking water to the residents of this area. It also features the beautiful Blues Lakes Country Club with one of the most scenic 18-hole golf courses in the State.

Although not officially recognized, local historians have documented the Hudson Bay Trail as an alternate route of the Oregon Trail, which goes through Jerome County. The traders of the Hudson Bay Company seemed to have preferred the trail going north of the Snake River Canyon to make their way to Fort Boise in the West and Fort Hall in the East.

With water, Mr. Perrine saw the magic this area produced and, with the help of Eastern United States Financiers, created the Milner Dam along the Snake River. The Milner Dam and subsequent irrigation system opened the Southern Snake River Plain to farmers, ranchers, and new communities. As a result, the communities of Jerome, Eden, Hazelton, and Greenwood were established between 1905 and 1911.

In 1919, the Idaho Legislature took the south portion of Lincoln County and the western portion of Minidoka County to carve out Jerome County. As one of the youngest counties in Idaho, it is the 43rd county, out of 44, in the 43rd State.

A notorious part of Jerome County is the Minidoka Relocation Center north of Eden; it is one of the 10 Japanese internment camps created by the U.S. Government during World War II. Currently, it stands as the Minidoka National Historic Site as a memorial of the sacrifice and suffering of the Japanese-Americans during this period of our history.

Today, Jerome County boasts a thriving economy lead by the dairy industry, producing more than 100 million pounds of cheese, whey protein, and other dairy products. They also produce the agricultural commodities of alfalfa hay, silage corn, barley, winter wheat, sugar beets, potatoes, beans, and spring wheat.

Senator CRAPO, Representative SIMPSON, and I are proud to recognize this landmark anniversary. We congratulate Jerome County residents on this centennial, and we wish its communities many more years of success.●

REMEMBERING LEON E. BRAXTON

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the memory of Leon E. "Bill" Braxton, a World War II veteran and teacher who dedicated his life in service to our Nation and educated countless students throughout his career.

Bill Braxton was born near Hope Hills, NC, on May 1, 1917. After graduating high school in 1934, he enlisted with the U.S. Army in April 1935, serving in Panama, Austria, Germany,

Japan, and Korea. He was an honor graduate of the Coast Artillery School, European Air Transport Service's Flight Captain's School, and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Bill flew combat missions in Indo China in 1954 and aided the French at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu.

In 1959, he retired from the U.S. Air Force and enrolled at the University of Miami, graduating magna cum laude with a degree in German. He then received a fellowship under the National Defense Education Act to attend Kent State University, earning a master's degree in German in 1964.

Bill's first teaching position was at Hialeah High School, teaching German and English. He taught at Stetson University before moving to Satellite Beach in 1971, where he joined Satellite High School. While there, he developed the school's German Student Program and was named teacher of the year for southern Brevard County. His proudest achievement was establishing the school's Fulbright Student Exchange program for German students before retiring from the school in 1979.

In retirement, he continued to teach French, German, and Spanish at Brevard Community College and co-authored four nonfiction books based on his life experiences, people he met at home and abroad, and events he witnessed while serving in the military.

Bill Braxton lived a full life and made a difference for his community and his country. I express my sincerest condolences to his four children—Thomas Braxton, Douglas Braxton, Patty Braxton, and Susan Braxton—his seven grandchildren, and his three great-grandchildren. May God bless his family during this time of sorrow, and may they be strengthened by the memory of his life's service.●

TRIBUTE TO JEFF BECKER

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jeff Becker, the Lee County Teacher of the Year from Island Coast High School in Cape Coral, FL.

Jeff believes building trust with his students is important for their future success. Every morning, Jeff greets students as they walk into the building and spends his lunch break in the cafeteria getting to know everyone.

Jeff is the digital media technology teacher, where he strives for his students to learn video skills. He is credited with transforming the school's news program, winning Best High School News Show at the Lee County Film Festival Awards in his first year of teaching.

He was previously in sales for 4 years and noted that, while he was having a fun time, he felt as though he should be doing something else with his life. He became a guidance counselor at Cape Coral High School in 2011 after earning his master's degree in elementary and secondary school counseling at Wilmington University.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Jeff for his dedication to the

students at his school and look forward to hearing of his continued good work in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO CAROLINE BUECHNER

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Caroline Buechner, the Santa Rosa County Teacher of the Year from Navarre High School in Navarre, FL.

Caroline was named teacher of the year after being selected among 33 teachers nominated from each school in her district. Santa Rosa superintendent, Tim Wyrosdick, visited her classroom during one of her chorus lessons to present the award. Caroline was humbled to receive this honor and wished to convey a message to all educators: "Join together to better the educational experience for students."

Caroline considers her students the best she could ever ask for, many of them are training for an upcoming singing competition. While she was shocked at the honor, her students knew she deserved the award and gave her a round of applause. She is credited for marrying academia and the performing arts and growing the school's choir program.

Caroline has been a choral music educator at Navarre High School for the past 9 years and is the coordinator of the 2019 All State High School Concern Choir. Her chorus program is considered one of the more prestigious programs in Florida.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Caroline for her dedication to teaching her choir students and look forward to hearing of her continued good work in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO EVAN GOULD

● Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Evan Gould, the Clay County Teacher of the Year from Lake Asbury Junior High School in Green Cove Springs, FL.

Evan regards it a tremendous honor to represent all school employees as teacher of the year. He believes support staff play a critical role in the success of students and teachers. His colleagues note he leads, inspires, and coaches his students to perform at the highest level. Evan believes every student can succeed academically, artistically, and socially.

Evan currently teaches chorus and drama classes at Lake Asbury Junior High School. He has been a teacher for 30 years, with 22 years in Clay County. His chorus and drama programs are highly regarded in Florida, winning awards and superior ratings at district and State competitions. He also serves as chair of District 1 Junior Thespians, hosting more than 500 drama students from across the region for their annual festival.

I express my sincere thanks and best wishes to Evan for his work to educate his students in chorus and drama. I look forward to learning of his continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO DEBRA HARTLINE

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Debra Hartline, the Manatee County Teacher of the Year from Braden River High School in Bradenton, FL.

Debra works closely with her students who need to improve their reading comprehension scores in order to meet the requirement for graduation. Each year, more than 96 percent of her students reach that goal. Her students note she spends many hours of work regularly re-instilling their confidence in themselves and preparing them before they take the reading test.

Debra's proudest moments are when she watches her students walk across the stage at their graduation. Many of them thought they would never graduate and credit Debra's reading methods with helping them improve their reading comprehension.

Debra has taught for 13 years, with the last 8 years at Braden River High School as a reading and English teacher. She previously managed a law in Cleveland, OH, when she noticed her daughter was struggling with reading comprehension. After she moved to Florida in 2000, she began to tutor at her home and later became a volunteer teacher at Braden River Elementary School.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Debra for her dedication in helping students achieve the important steps of graduating from high school. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the coming years.●

TRIBUTE TO ANGELA HRITZ

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Angela Hritz, the Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year from Davidson Middle School in Crestview, FL.

Angela received this award at her school district's annual banquet at the Emerald Coast Conference Center. She views teaching as a balancing act between challenging students and empowering them, and believes the most rewarding part of her job are the connections she makes with her students.

In her classes, she incorporates English language arts standards and keeps her students engaged by using Socratic seminars to deepen their understanding and develop communication skills. She ensures that her classroom is a respectful environment for her students.

Angela is a world history teacher and has taught at Davidson Middle School for more than 20 years. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership in 2008.

I congratulate Angela for receiving this important recognition after decades of teaching and extend my best wishes to her. I look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO TONYA MILES

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am honored to recognize Tonya Miles, the Putnam County Teacher of the Year from William D. Moseley Elementary School in Palatka, FL.

Tonya was honored to receive this award, noting that she was overwhelmed with joy. Her colleagues commended her on the difference she has made within the school district.

Tonya's students describe the culture in her classroom and their school as one of a big family. It is an atmosphere where everyone works to help others succeed. Her students feel like she is their biggest supporter, both in the classroom and in their extracurricular activities.

Tonya has taught for 15 years and has been a fifth grade math teacher at William D. Moseley Elementary School for the past year and a half.

I extend my best wishes to Tonya for her dedication to her students and community and congratulate her on this award.●

TRIBUTE TO MEREDITH NESS

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I honor Meredith Ness, the Walton County Teacher of the Year from Mossy Head Elementary School in DeFuniak Springs, FL.

Meredith's colleagues describe her as possessing the skills and dedication of a true leader and note that she is highly respected by all at her school. She views herself as a lifelong learner with a love for teaching students.

In Meredith's classes, she uses her knowledge for research in education and technology in designing lesson plans to teach her students. She currently serves as a professional learning facilitator, sponsor of Lego league and robotics club, a teacher mentor, and a member of the MHS school improvement team.

Meredith has been a teacher for 16 years, with the past 8 years at Mossy Head Elementary School. She is currently a fourth grade teacher.

I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Meredith for all of the great work she has done for her students and congratulate her for winning this award.●

TRIBUTE TO BRYAN POEPPERLING

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Bryan Poepperling, the Hendry County Teacher of the Year from Clewiston High School in Clewiston, FL.

In Bryan's classroom, his teaching of philosophy is based off a quote from Thomas Edison, "There is no substitute for hard work." He works to instill this mentality to both his students in the classroom, and the student-athletes he coaches.

Bryan is the social studies department lead and teaches advanced placement U.S. history and U.S. history

classes to sophomore and juniors at Clewiston High School. He also coaches cross country and junior varsity basketball. He earned his bachelor's degree in secondary education and social studies at the Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Bryan for his dedication to helping his students succeed in school. I look forward to learning of his continued good work in the coming years.●

TRIBUTE TO TAMI PORTER PARISH

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Tami Porter Parish, the Washington County Teacher of the Year from Vernon Middle School in Vernon, FL.

Tami's students find her more than their academic influencer, she is also a kind and admirable friend. Her students view her as someone who is always there for them and inspires them to achieve academic success. Tami considers herself blessed to teach her students, with many seeking her advice after class.

Tami is an eighth grade teacher at Vernon Middle School. She believes she is fortunate to work in the Washington County School District and would not trade a day of her teaching for anything.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Tami and extend my best wishes on her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ALANNA ROHLING

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I honor Alanna Rohling, the Escambia County Teacher of the Year from Lincoln Park Elementary School in Pensacola, FL.

Alanna's colleagues describe her as a teacher who embraces students with emotional challenges and helps them to succeed through her creative teaching style. She has been credited as a significant factor of the school's turnaround model to improve students' academic success in recent years. She dedicates her time not only to her students, but also to their parents, keeping them informed of their students' progress throughout the school year.

Her students' parents are grateful for this dedication, noting she is always willing to communicate, no matter the time of day. They believe her efforts have resulted in their young students being better prepared for future schooling.

Alanna is a kindergarten teacher and has been at Lincoln Park Elementary School since 2015. She also serves as the STEM committee cochair, a member of her school's leadership team, and works as a mentor to students outside of school.

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to Alanna for her work and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO LINDSAY SUMMERLIN
 • Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Lindsay Summerlin, the Gulf County Teacher of the Year from Port St. Joe Junior—Senior High School in Port St. Joe, FL.

Lindsay was shocked and overwhelmed with emotion to receive this award in front of her students when her daughter presented her with a bouquet of golden roses. She credits her students with making her a better teacher and was honored to receive Gulf County's support.

Lindsay works to build relationships with her students and seeks to help others in need. Following Hurricane Michael, she opened her home as a haven for neighbors and school district personnel whose homes sustained damage.

Lindsay is an exceptional student education teacher at Port St. Joe Junior—Senior High School. Her family moved from Georgia last year after her husband accepted the head baseball coaching position for the high school's team, the Tiger Sharks.

I express my best wishes and gratitude to Lindsay for her work and look forward to hearing of her continued success in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO LAURA ADAMS

• Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, in 2002, as Rhode Island's attorney general, I launched an organization aimed at helping Rhode Island's healthcare system reduce waste and improve care for our patients. The first hire at the new Rhode Island Quality Institute was Laura Adams. Convincing her to join us as president and CEO was our extremely good fortune. As Laura steps aside from those duties, I come to the floor today to recognize her many contributions to our healthcare system, in Rhode Island and nationwide, and to wish her well in her next adventure.

Lowering costs and improving quality in our healthcare system is, to say the least, a vital purpose. The Rhode Island Quality Institute was established to tackle some of the main drivers of America's healthcare problems, to improve health and advance the quality and value of care in Rhode Island. Under the leadership of Laura Adams, that mission achieved national recognition. As Laura prepares to leave, the institute's innovation and expertise is helping improve care around the country.

Laura got off to a very strong start. In 2002, the RIQI collaborated with Surescripts to pioneer a first in the Nation, end-to-end electronic prescribing system. Today, Surescripts has scaled up to every state in the country, with virtually every prescriber using it. In 2007, Child Magazine pointed to the State's uptake in e-prescribing as a key reason for ranking Rhode Island first overall on its list of the "Safest Places in the Nation to Raise a Child."

Laura then turned to another big challenge for our healthcare system:

hospital-acquired infections. In 2005, with Laura as Principal Investigator, RIQI launched the Rhode Island Intensive Care Unit Collaborative to identify ways to reduce the incidence of infections among ICU patients. By 2012, Rhode Island ICUs had shown significant improvement on several key types of infections.

In 2004, Laura and RIQI joined the Rhode Department of Health to apply for Federal funding to build an ambitious, innovative statewide health information exchange. RIQI took the lead building and maintaining the resulting system, CurrentCare. It took tremendous technical expertise to confront the complex governance, business, privacy, and security challenges involved. Laura, with the assistance of a talented lawyer, Linn Freedman, proved more than equal to the task. A 2017 analysis shows that CurrentCare returns millions of dollars in savings to our healthcare system.

Over the course of the development of CurrentCare, RIQI became the only organization in the country to win all three major health information technology grants under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, bringing in a total of \$27 million to Rhode Island. Federal agencies like the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology awarded RIQI substantial Federal grants to tackle difficult specialized challenges. RIQI has been recognized by government and healthcare leaders, chambers of commerce, and leading business publications for its numerous innovations. It has also been consistently recognized as one of the best places to work in Rhode Island.

In the process, Laura has won national acclaim. This year, a leading national hospital publication placed her on their list of "Female Health IT Leaders to Know" for her "significant contributions to health IT advancements, leading large teams, initiatives and companies focused on improving patient care." She has delivered hundreds of keynotes and presentations in 48 States and a dozen foreign countries. She has been named a cochair of the National Academy of Medicine Health Data Trust Initiative Steering Committee, and she has been appointed to numerous professional and corporate boards.

Laura Adams has poured her considerable talent, experience, and dedication into making the Rhode Island Quality Institute a national leader in health innovation and transformation. I thank her for years of service to Rhode Island and to our healthcare system nationwide.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 725. An act to change the address of the postal facility designated in honor of Captain Humayun Khan.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 540. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 770 Ayrault Road in Fairport, New York, as the "Louise and Bob Slaughter Post Office".

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 540. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 770 Ayrault Road in Fairport, New York, as the "Louise and Bob Slaughter Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 7. An act to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-840. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Defense, transmitting a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-841. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of two (2) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-842. A communication from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Department of Defense Annual Report on Audit for Fiscal Year 2018"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-843. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Consumer Response Annual Report"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-844. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection's Office of Minority and Women Inclusion Annual Report to Congress"; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-845. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cost Sharing: Energy Policy Act of 2005" ((RIN1991-AC13) (2

CFR Part 910)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2019; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-846. A joint communication from the Acting Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, transmitting proposed legislation; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-847. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of Education's fiscal year 2018 Annual Performance Report and fiscal year 2020 Annual Performance Plan; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-848. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Financial Report of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2018"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-849. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Fiscal Year 2018 Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and Agency Privacy Management Report; to the Committees on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Appropriations.

EC-850. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bureau's fiscal year 2018 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-851. A communication from the Secretary to the Board, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2018 annual report relative to the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-852. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 23-47, "Sense of the Council Urging the Federal Government to Prevent Nuclear War Resolution of 2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-853. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) Quarterly Report to Congress; First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2019"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-854. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 57th Annual Report of the activities of the Federal Maritime Commission for fiscal year 2018; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-27. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of West Virginia urging the United States Congress to pass legislation

permitting vehicles traveling on interstate highways in West Virginia to have the same maximum gross vehicle weight and axle configuration as currently permissible for vehicles traveling on United States routes in West Virginia; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE RESOLUTION 78

Whereas, Federal law currently imposes a maximum gross vehicle weight of 80,000 pounds on interstate highways, without any tolerance, and with axle weight restrictions and the bridge formula often reducing such maximum weight; and

Whereas, West Virginia also has an 80,000-pound maximum gross vehicle weight limit, but permits a 10-percent tolerance, raising the permissible maximum weight to 88,000 pounds; and

Whereas, Vehicles transporting commodities through West Virginia often reach our state on interstate highways, but leave the interstate highways system and switch to West Virginia's local roads, taking advantage of the higher weight limit on such routes; and

Whereas, Such practice increases traffic on West Virginia's mountainous country roads, raises safety concerns, and limits economic avenues; and

Whereas, Interstates could safely support the same weight restrictions as those on U.S. routes in West Virginia given that the design standards used for both systems are identical and the weight increase would be minimal; and

Whereas, The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Highways, is poised to address any questions Congress or the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, may have to demonstrate the feasibility of this request; and

Whereas, Providing an exception to the existing weight limits and restrictions in Title 23 of the United States Code, including the bridge formula, for vehicles operating on interstate highways in West Virginia will allow more vehicles to travel the safer interstate highways and expand economic access throughout West Virginia; and

Whereas, Congress has previously provided exceptions to the maximum gross vehicle weight on interstate highways for several states of the United States; therefore, be it

Resolved by the Legislature of West Virginia: That Congress is urged to allow vehicles traveling on interstate highways in West Virginia to have the same maximum gross vehicle weight and axle configuration as currently permissible for vehicles traveling on U.S. routes in West Virginia; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the Senate is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to the members of West Virginia's congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. RISCH, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment:

S. Res. 123. A resolution supporting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and recognizing its 70 years of accomplishments.

By Mr. RUBIO, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, without amendment:

S. 862. A bill to repeal the sunset for collateral requirements for Small Business Administration disaster loans.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. RISCH for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

John P. Abizaid, of Nevada, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Nominee: John P. Abizaid.

Post: Saudi Arabia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: \$0.00.
2. Spouse: \$1000.00, May 30, 2017, Dean Heller.
3. Children and Spouses: Sharon Shaw: none. Robert Shaw: none. Christine Abizaid: see attachment. Jill Murphy: see attachment. David Abizaid: none. Joanna Abizaid: none.
4. Parents: Ernest Abizaid—deceased; Fae Williams Abizaid—deceased.
5. Grandparents: Arthur Jepsen—deceased; Elva Jepsen—deceased; Amin Abizaid—deceased; Martha Abizaid—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Arthur Q. Jepsen: none; Gail Jepsen—deceased.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Sandra Burk—deceased; Richard Burk—deceased.

ATTACHMENT

Contributor name, recipient, state, employer, receipt, date, amount:

- Murphy, Jill, Beto for Texas, VA, Federal Government, 11/05/2018, \$50.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Federal Government, 11/05/2018, \$50.00.
- Murphy, Jill, Beto for Texas, VA, Federal Government, 11/03/2018, \$25.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Federal Government, 11/03/2018, \$25.00.
- Murphy, Jill, Beto for Texas, VA, Federal Government, 10/27/2018, \$25.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Federal Government, 10/27/2018, \$25.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Federal Government, 10/27/2018, \$2.50.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Fed Gov, 09/25/2018, \$5.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Fed Gov, 09/25/2018, \$50.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Fed Gov, 09/19/2018, \$50.00.
- Murphy, Jill, ActBlue, VA, Fed Gov, 09/10/2018, \$5.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 11/01/2018, \$50.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/17/2018, \$100.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/17/2018, \$50.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 09/24/2018, \$150.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 09/10/2018, \$100.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, Gina Ortiz Jones for Congress, TX, Dell, 09/01/2018, \$350.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, Gina Ortiz Jones for Congress, TX, Dell, 07/30/2018, \$500.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 04/20/2018, \$5.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 04/20/2018, \$50.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, se, 03/20/2018, \$50.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 03/20/2018, \$5.00.
- Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 03/20/2018, \$50.00.

Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, se, 02/20/2018, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 02/20/2018, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 02/20/2018, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, se, 01/20/2018, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 01/20/2018, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 01/20/2018, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, self-employed, 12/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 11/27/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 11/27/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 11/20/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 11/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, self-employed, 11/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/27/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/27/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 10/20/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, Elissa Slotkin for Congress, TX, self-employed, 10/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 09/27/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 09/20/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 08/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 08/20/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 07/20/2017, \$50.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 07/20/2017, \$5.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 06/19/2017, \$25.00.
 Abizaid, Christy, ActBlue, TX, self, 06/19/2017, \$2.00.

Stephen Akard, of Indiana, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, with the rank of Ambassador.

Nominee: Stephen J. Akard.
 Post: Office of Foreign Missions.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

- Contributions, amount, date, donee:
1. Self: \$250.00, 10-01-2016, Trump Make America Great Again Committee; \$200.00, 09-30-2016, Donald J. Trump for President; \$250.00, 01-18-2016, Friends of Kip Tom.
 2. Spouse: Kay Akard: None.
 3. Children and Spouses: Julianne Akard: None; Claire Akard: None; Hope Akard: None.
 4. Parents: L. Philip Akard—Deceased; Julianne Akard—Deceased.
 5. Grandparents: William Akard—Deceased; Flava Akard—Deceased; Johannes Herzog—Deceased; Dorothea Herzog—Deceased.
 6. Brothers and Spouses: John Akard: None; Mark Akard: None; Matthew Akard: None; Maconna Akard (sp): None; Luke Akard: None; Carol Akard (sp): None.
 7. Sisters and Spouses: Dorothy Swartzell: None; David Swartzell (sp): None; Sarah Wilson: \$100.00, 10-07-2018, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$100.00, 09-20-2018, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 12-17-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$100.00, 12-03-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$100.00, 12-03-2017, Roy

Moore for U.S. Senate; \$100.00, 11-20-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 11-04-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 09-23-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 09-17-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 08-11-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 08-11-2017, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 11-18-2015, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 10-08-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 10-08-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 10-08-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 10-08-2016, Committee to Elect Darryl Glenn; \$50.00, 10-08-2016, Committee to Elect Darryl Glenn; \$50.00, 08-17-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 08-17-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$50.00, 08-17-2016, Committee to Elect Darryl Glenn; \$50.00, 08-17-2016, Committee to Elect Darryl Glenn; \$50.00, 07-10-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 04-19-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 04-19-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 04-19-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 04-19-2016, Senate Conservatives Fund; \$25.00, 04-19-2016, Stutzman for Senate; John Wilson (sp): None.

Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Nominee: Lynda C. Blanchard.
 Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

- Contributions, amount, date, and donee:
1. Self: \$2,700.00, 11/5/2016, Martha Roby for Congress; \$2,500.00, 10/31/2016, Reaching for a Brighter America PAC; \$5,000.00, 9/30/2016, Common Sense Common Solutions PAC; \$1,500.00, 5/18/2016, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; \$500.00, 5/13/2016, Gary Palmer for Congress; \$1,000.00, 2/11/2016, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; \$40,725.00, 11/30/2017, Republican National Committee; \$9,275.00, 11/30/2017, Republican National Committee; \$5,000.00, 10/26/2017, HALPAC; \$1,500.00, 10/19/2017, Reaching for a Brighter America PAC; \$24,625.00, 8/29/2017, Republican National Committee; \$1,200.00, 8/29/2017, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; \$2,700.00, 8/29/2017, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; \$50,000.00, 8/1/2017, Strengthen Majority Committee (\$25,000 went to NRSC and \$24,625 went to RNC, \$1,200 to Kay Granger Campaign Fund, and \$2,700 to Kay Granger Campaign Fund); \$25,000.00, 8/1/2017, NRSC; \$1,000.00, 5/16/2017, Mike Rogers for Congress; \$1,500.00, 5/12/2017, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; \$125,000.00, 1/16/2018, Trump Victory; \$2,700.00, 5/9/2018, Martha Roby for Congress.
 2. Children and Spouses: Christopher John Blanchard: deceased. Benjamin Nicholas Blanchard: \$1,000.00, 8/11/2017, Kay Granger Campaign Fund. Haleyann Denise Blanchard: None. Keren Cesia Blanchard: None. Jennifer Ruth Blanchard: None. Gracie Mae Blanchard: None. Lizbeth Lucero Blanchard: None.
 3. Parents: Peggy Cleveland Powell—None; Dwight Merrill Cleveland—deceased. John Miller Powell (step)—None.
 4. Grandparents: Oscar Hale—deceased; Stella Hale—deceased; Richard Scales (step)—deceased; Ann Scales—deceased; Mr. Cleveland—deceased when father was a child, did not know him.
 5. Brothers and Spouses: Mitchell Tyson Powell (step)—\$6,000.00, 7/19/2017, Kay Granger Campaign Fund; Michelle Brenny Powell—None.

6. Sisters and Spouses: Yvonne Annette Schneckengerger—None; Donald Michael Schneckengerger—None; Cynthia Cleveland Burnside—None; Sheldon John Burnside—None.

MARCH 4, 2019.

Hon. JIM RISCH,
 Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
 U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENEDEZ,
 Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Relations,
 U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER MENEDEZ: Please update my Committee Questionnaire and my Federal Campaign Contribution Report based on the information outlined below.

Committee Questionnaire: Part B. Question 6, entitled "Political Contributions" should be amended to include the following contributions:

1. Self: An Additional \$2,700.00, 5/9/2018, Martha Roby for Congress.

Federal Campaign Contribution Report: The "self" section of my Federal Campaign Contribution Report should be amended to include the following contributions:

An Additional \$2,700.00, 5/9/2018, Martha Roby for Congress.

Please note the FEC reflects six campaign contributions for 2018. I made two campaign contributions—one to Martha Roby's campaign, and one to Trump Victory. Martha Roby's campaign divided the contribution into two smaller amounts (one for the primary election and one for general election).

I have confirmed with Elise Dickens, of the Republican National Committee, that there is one contribution filed under my name in 2018 to Trump Victory, the joint fundraising committee between the RNC and Donald J. Trump campaign, in the amount of \$125,000 on January 16, 2018. This came as a result of a \$250,000 joint check from myself and John Blanchard, and \$125K was allocated to each person.

She further advised, once a check is received by Trump Victory, the RNC and Donald J. Trump campaign can then transfer their legally designated amounts.

The Breakdown of the \$125,000 Trump Victory contribution—

- \$2,700 to Donald J. Trump (primary) on 1/16/18
 - \$2,700 to Donald J. Trump (general) on 1/16/18
 - \$85,700 to RNC (building fund) on 1/16/18
 - \$33,900 to RNC (general account) on 1/16/18
 - **this has not been reported yet on FEC since the RNC has not transferred it over from the Trump Victory account.
 - \$125,000 total to Trump Victory in 2018
- Thank you and the Committee for consideration of my nomination.

Sincerely,
 LYNDIA BLANCHARD.

Joseph Cella, of Michigan, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Fiji, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

Nominee: Joseph James Cella.
 Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: \$375, 5–12–06, Fidelis America PAC; \$250, 9–7–08, McCain-Palin Victory 2008; \$250, 9–29–08 Republican National Committee; \$150, 3–31–12 Rick Santorum for President, Inc.; \$100, 3–31–12, Rick Santorum for President, Inc.
2. Spouse: Kristen Renee Cella: \$500, 9–30–11, The American Way—Durant 2012.
3. Children: Francesca Teresa Cella: \$0; John Paul Cornelius Cella: \$0; Dominic Paschal Cella: \$0; Rita Rose Benedicta Cella: \$0; Mariana Lucia Cella: \$0; Anthony Gilbert Cella: \$0.
4. Parents: Janice Jean Cella: \$0; Robert Francis Cella: \$0 (deceased).
5. Grandparents: Irene Rose: (deceased) \$0; Emmett Rose: (deceased) \$0; Angela Cella: (deceased) \$0; Joseph Cella: (deceased) \$0.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Robert Francis Cella: \$35, 11–1–16, Make America Great Again PAC; Kelli Anne Cella: \$0.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Christina Marie Cella: \$27, 2–13–16, ActBlue; \$2.70, 2–13–16, ActBlue; \$50.00, 3–16–16, ActBlue; \$15.00, 3–31–16, ActBlue; \$50.00, 4–18–16, ActBlue; John Paul Nelson: \$3.86, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$2.70, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$3.86, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$3.85, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$3.86, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$3.86, 11–5–16, ActBlue; \$15.00, 12–16–06, ActBlue; \$5.00, 1–2–17, ActBlue; \$5.00, 1–24–17, ActBlue; \$11.00, 1–30–17, ActBlue; \$11.00, 2–27–17, ActBlue; \$2.50, 4–17–17, ActBlue; \$11.00, 5–25–17, ActBlue; \$2.50, 6–18–17, ActBlue; \$2.50, 6–18–17, ActBlue.

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador.

Nominee: Fitzpatrick, Michael Joseph.

Post: Quito, Ecuador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate. I have also compared this data to that which is publicly available via FEC.gov website, and am aware of no inconsistencies.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none, N/A, N/A.
2. Spouse: Silvana V. Fitzpatrick: none, N/A, N/A.
3. Children and Spouses: Michelle N. Fitzpatrick: none, N/A, N/A.
4. Parents: John R. Fitzpatrick, Jr.—deceased; Ruth M. Fitzpatrick: none, N/A, N/A.
5. Grandparents: John R. and Elizabeth K. Fitzpatrick—deceased. Joseph A. and Katherine D. McDonough—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: John F. and Ellen C.B. Fitzpatrick: none, N/A, N/A.
7. Sisters and Spouses: P. Kelly Fitzpatrick: none, N/A, N/A.

Kenneth S. George, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay.

Nominee: Kenneth Suggett George.

Post, Ambassador, Uruguay.

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

- Kenneth Suggett George, Self: \$1,000.00, 04.02.2012, Elizabeth Ames Jones for Texas Senate; \$500.00, 04.02.2012, Christi L. Craddock (Texas Railroad Commission); \$2,500.00, 02.08.2013, Friends of Jeb Hensarling; \$2,500.00, 05.29.2013, Republican National Committee; \$2,000.00, 08.16.2016, Republican National Committee; \$1,000.00, 09.06.2013, Dallas Entrepreneur PAC; \$1,200.00, 09.09.2013, Committee to Protect Prosperity and Free Enterprise; \$200.00, 09.09.2013, Keith Rothfus

for Congress; \$200.00, 09.30.2013, Gary G. Miller for Congress; \$2,600.00, 11.25.2013, French Hill for Arkansas; \$1,000.00, 02.27.2014, Edward W. Gillespie for Senate; \$2,600.00, 03.17.2014, Friends of Jeb Hensarling; \$500.00, 03.26.2014, Texans for Dan Patrick; \$500.00, 04.21.2014, Sean Duffy for Wisconsin; \$500.00, 05.23.2014, Chart H. Westcott; \$2,600.00, 06.05.2014, French Hill for Arkansas; \$40.00, 07.12.2014, Libertarian Party of Texas; \$5,000.00, 10.17.2014, Texans for Dan Patrick; \$1,250.00, 12.13.2014, Texans for Dan Patrick; \$2,500.00, 12.15.2014, Morgan D. Meyer; \$107.50, 03.23.2015, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers; \$2,200.00, 06.16.2015, Rick Perry; \$2,700.00, 11.13.2015, Ted Cruz for President; \$2,700.00, 11.20.2015, Marco Rubio for President; \$100.00, 06.14.2016, Texans for Greg Abbott; \$2,000.00, 08.17.2016, Trump Victory; \$2,700.00, 08.24.2016, Trump Victory; \$1,000.00, 08.29.2016, Donald B. Huffines; \$250.00, 08.31.2016, Dallas County Council of Republican Women; \$2,500.00, 10.26.2016, Texans for Dan Patrick; \$1,000.00, 11.03.2016, Sid Miller; \$5,000.00, 01.11.2017, Trump for America, Inc.; \$2,700.00, 02.28.2017, Friends of Jeb Hensarling; \$1,000.00, 03.21.2017, Faith Johnson for Dallas County District Attorney; \$2,700.00, 03.29.2017, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$1,000.00, 06.19.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$1,000.00, 10.18.2017, Faith Johnson for Dallas County District Attorney; \$1,000.00, 10.19.2017, Van Taylor for Congress; \$2,700.00, 10.20.2017, Trump Victory; \$2,700.00, 10.26.2017, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$1,000.00, 10.30.2017, Republican Challengers Fund; \$2,500.00, 12.28.2017, Estes for Texas; \$2,500.00, 12.28.2017, Miller for Texas; \$500.00, 12.31.2017, Bunni Pounds for Congress; \$2,500.00, 01.18.2018, Dallas County Republican Party-Primary; \$1,500.00, 03.27.2018, Jake Ellzey for Congress; \$2,200.00, 05.23.2018, Bunni Pounds for Congress; \$1,500.00, 05.23.2018, Jake Ellzey for Congress; \$5,000.00, 10.19.2018, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$2,700.00, 10.22.2018, French Hill for Arkansas; \$1,000.00, 10.22.2018, Lisa Luby Ryan, Texas State Representative Campaign; \$2,700.00, 11.05.2018, Van Taylor for Congress.

Patricia Mast George, Spouse: \$2,600.00, 09.30.2013, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$2,600.00, 12.09.2013, French Hill for Arkansas; \$1,000.00, 02.20.2014, Texans for John Cornyn, Inc.; \$2,500.00, 06.30.2014, Friends of Jeb Hensarling; \$2,700.00, 03.31.2015, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$1,200.00, 09.02.2015, Committee to Protect Prosperity and Free Enterprise; \$300.00, 09.02.2015, Bruce Poliquin for Congress; \$300.00, 09.02.2015, Thomas Earl Emmer, Jr. for Congress; \$300.00, 09.30.2015, French Hill for Arkansas; \$2,700.00, 11.07.2016, Friends of Jeb Hensarling; \$2,700.00, 11.07.2016, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$2,700.00, 06.30.2017, Pete Sessions for Congress; \$2,700.00, 10.23.2017, Trump Victory; \$500.00, 02.01.2018, Van Taylor Campaign; \$500.00, 02.19.2018, Vic Cunningham Campaign; \$1,000.00, 05.08.2018, War Veterans Fund benefitting Mike Waltz, Dan Crenshaw, Clayton Hinchman, Jake Ellzey and Lynne Blankenship; \$500.00, 05.15.2018, Bunni Pounds for Congress; \$2,700.00, 07.04.2018, French Hill for Arkansas; \$1,000.00, 09.17.2018, Dallas Entrepreneurs—Sessions 2018; \$500.00, 09.24.2018, Morgan Meyer Campaign; \$500.00, 10.14.2018, Crenshaw for Congress.

Kenneth Suggett George II, Son: None.

Carolyn Dudley George, Son.

Patrick Sarsfield George, Son: \$2,700.00, 06.30.2015, Rick Perry for President; \$1,000.00, 12.14.2015, Marco Rubio for President; \$1,000.00, 05.31.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$25.00, 06.05.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$25.00, 07.05.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$100.00, 07.14.2017, Ted Cruz for Senate; \$25.00, 08.05.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$25.00, 09.05.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$25.00, 11.05.2017, Republican Party of Texas; \$25.00, 12.09.2017, Republican Party of Texas;

\$200.00, 05.12.2018, Texas for Jake Ellzey; \$1,000.00, 05.12.2018, War Veterans Fund benefitting Mike Waltz, Dan Crenshaw, Clayton Hinchman, Jake Ellzey and Lynne Blankenship; \$200.00, 05.12.2018, Lynne Blankenship for Congress; \$200.00, 05.29.2018, Michael Waltz for Congress; \$50.00, 07.14.2018, Trump Make America Great Again Campaign; \$50.00, 07.19.2018, Trump Make America Great Again Campaign; \$25.00, 09.05.2018, Republican Party of Texas.

Elizabeth Secrest George, Spouse: \$2,700.00, 06.30.2015, Rick Perry for President.

Clement Roberdeau George, Son: \$1,000.00, 12.02.2015, Marco Rubio for President.

Molly Cooper George, Spouse: None.

Elizabeth George Gosselin, Daughter: None.

Chase Karl Gosselin, Spouse: None.

Clement Enos George, Father: Deceased.

Betty Suggett George, Mother: Deceased.

Gransparents, Long Deceased.

Meredith George Tinsley, Sister: None.

Edward R. Tinsley, Brother-in-Law:

\$1,000.00, 05.22.2014, National Restaurant Association PAC; \$500.00, 06.29.2015, Friends of John Boehner; \$1,000.00, 12.28.2015, National Restaurant Association PAC.

Jeffrey Ross Gunter, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iceland.

Nominee: Jeffrey Ross Gunter.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

- Self: \$177,563.00, 2013–present.
 Spouse (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A.
 Children and Spouses: Sophie Gunter: None, N/A, N/A. Simon Gunter, None, N/A, N/A.
 Parents: Milton Gunter (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A. Sally Gunter (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A.
 Grandparents: Seymour Mintz (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A. Jenny Mintz (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A. Jacob Gunter (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A. Sadie Gunter (deceased): N/A, N/A, N/A.
 Brothers and Spouses: N/A, N/A, N/A.
 Sisters and Spouses: Elyse Gunter: None, N/A, N/A.

Category, contributor, location, occupation, date, amount, recipient.

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 3/13/2014, \$2,600.00, Collins, Susan M (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 3/13/2014, \$2,600.00, Collins, Susan M (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 4/30/2014, \$2,600.00, McConnell, Mitch (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeffrey Ross Gunter MD Inc., 7/18/2014, \$2,600.00, Land, Terri Lynn (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeffrey Ross Gunter MD Inc., 7/18/2014, \$2,600.00, Land, Terri Lynn (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeffrey Ross Gunter MD Inc., 7/18/2014, \$2,600.00, Land, Terri Lynn (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeffrey Ross Gunter MD Inc., 7/18/2014, \$2,600.00, Land, Terri Lynn (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 10/8/2014, \$2,600.00, Strickland, Tory (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Ross, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 3/3/2015, \$2,700.00, Graham, Lindsey (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 5/29/2015, \$2,700.00, Kirk, Mark (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 5/29/2015, \$2,700.00, Kirk, Mark (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 6/24/2015, \$900.00, Johnson, Ron (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 7/7/2015, \$2,700.00, Nunes, Devin (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/10/2015, \$1,500.00, Ayotte, Kelly (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/13/2015, \$900.00, Ayotte, Kelly (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Av Dermatology, 3/30/2016, \$1,000.00, Heck, Joe (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 5/31/2016, \$2,700.00, Trump, Donald (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 5/31/2016, \$2,700.00, Trump, Donald (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey Ross Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 5/31/2016, \$19,600.00, Republican National Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Illinois (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Kansas (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of West Virginia (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of North Dakota (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Wisconsin (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Louisiana (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Missouri Republican State Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, New York Republican Federal Campaign Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Virginia (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Wyoming (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Mississippi (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Federal Cmte of Pennsylvania (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey Ross Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 7/25/2016, \$13,800.00, Republican National Cmte (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 7/27/2016, \$5,400.00, Cheney, Liz (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 7/27/2016, \$2,700.00, Cheney, Liz (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 7/27/2016, \$2,700.00, Cheney, Liz (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey Mr. Ross Mr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 8/30/2016, \$2,700.00, McCain, John (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 9/6/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Alabama (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 8/14/2016, \$2,700.00, Burr, Richard (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Mississippi (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Virginia (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of California (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Federal Cmte of Pennsylvania (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Illinois (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Kansas (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of North Dakota (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Alabama (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Missouri Republican State Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of West Virginia (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Wyoming (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Louisiana (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, New York Republican Federal Campaign Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Arkansas (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/11/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Wisconsin (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/17/2016, \$1,190.00, Connecticut Republican Campaign Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/17/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of South Carolina (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/17/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of Minnesota (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/17/2016, \$1,190.00, Republican Party of North Carolina (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/17/2016, \$1,190.00, New Jersey Republican State Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Argyle TX 76226, Retired, 10/17/2016, \$2,380.00, Republican Party of Tennessee (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of North Carolina (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Minnesota (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, Connecticut Republican Campaign Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of Tennessee (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, New Jersey Republican State Cmte (R).

Money to Parties, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 10/27/2016, \$1,723.00, Republican Party of South Carolina (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 12/20/2016, \$2,700.00, Royce, Ed (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 12/20/2016, \$2,700.00, Royce, Ed (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 12/21/2016, \$2,700.00, Nunes, Devin (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 12/21/2016, \$2,700.00, Nunes, Devin (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Physician, 4/24/2017, \$2,700.00, Granger, Kay (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeff Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeff Gunter MD, 6/2/2017, \$2,700.00, McHenry, Patrick (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 9/12/2017, \$2,700.00, Royce, Ed (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Dermatologist, 9/12/2017, \$2,700.00, Royce, Ed (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Doctor, 9/30/2017, \$2,700.00, Hawley, Josh (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeffrey R, Los Angeles, CA 90049, Doctor, 9/30/2017, \$2,700.00, Hawley, Josh (R).

Money to Candidates, Gunter, Jeff Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90049, Jeff Gunter MD, 11/13/2017, \$2,700.00, McHenry, Patrick (R).

Total: \$177,563.00.

Ronald Douglas Johnson, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador.

Nominee: Ronald Douglas Johnson.
Post: Ambassador, Republic of El Salvador.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.
2. Spouse: None.
3. Children and Spouses: Robert Todd Johnson, None; Lori Ann Johnson, None; Michael Todd Johnson, None; Joshua Lee Johnson, None.
4. Parents: Irvin T. Johnson—Deceased; Beatrice Johnson, None.
5. Grandparents: Herbert Johnson—Deceased; Ida Mae Johnson—deceased.
6. Brothers and Sisters: James H. Johnson—Deceased; Priscilla Jones, None; Chris Jones.

W. Patrick Murphy, of Vermont, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Nominee: (Warren) Patrick Murphy, Jr.

Post: Cambodia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.
2. Spouse: Kathleen M. Norman: none.
3. Children and Spouses: Seamus B. Murphy, none; Meghan V. Murphy, none; Gillian L. Murphy, none.
4. Parents: Warren P. Murphy, Sr., none; Margaret R. Murphy, none.
5. Grandparents: Robert Murphy—deceased; Theresa Murphy—deceased; George Albert—deceased; Alice Albert—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Christopher A. Murphy, none; Andrew F. Murphy, none.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Jennifer Murphy—deceased.

Daniel N. Rosenblum, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Nominee: Daniel N. Rosenblum.

Post: Republic of Uzbekistan.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contribution, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None, N/A, N/A.
2. Spouse, \$2,700, 2/21 & 3/14 2016, Hillary for America (Primary); \$1,750, 7/5 & 9/18 2016, Hillary Victory Fund (Primary); \$1,675, 7/5, 8/17 & 9/30/2016, Hillary for America (General); \$1,000, 9/18/2016, Hillary Victory Fund (General); \$250, 12/23/2017, Tammy Baldwin for Senate; \$250, 2/8/2018, Soderberg for Congress.
3. Children: Jonah Rosenblum: None, N/A, N/A; Liana Rosenblum: None N/A, N/A.
4. Parents: Louis Rosenblum: None, N/A, N/A.
5. Grandparents: Deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: None.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Janet Metz: None, N/A, N/A; Miriam Rosenblum: None, N/A, N/A; Sheldon Benjamin: None, N/A, N/A; Diane Rosenblum: \$500 (total), 7 periodic contris. between 12/20/15 and 5/7/16, Bernie 2016; \$86 (total), 16 contris. between 12/29/15 and 10/11/18, Act Blue; \$50 (total), 9/28 & 9/30/16, Americans for Responsible Solutions PAC; \$165 (total), 5 periodic contris. between 10/16/16 and 11/5/16, Deborah Ross for United States Senate; \$150 (total), 5 periodic contris. between 10/17/16 and 11/5/16, Russ for Wisconsin; \$150 (total), 4 periodic contris. between 11/15/16 and 12/3/16, Foster Campbell for United States Senate; \$15, 2/8/17, Elizabeth for MA, Inc.; \$40 (total), 4/13 & 4/17, Jon Osoff for Congress; \$50, 7/6/17, Friends of Bernie Sanders; \$75 (total), 8/3/17, 5/3/18 & 6/28/18, Amy McGrath for Congress; \$110 (total), 4 periodic contris. between 12/7/17 & 8/5/18, Doug Jones for Senate; \$80 (total), 1/29/18, 4/22/18 & 5/14/18, Kamala Harris for Senate; \$35 (total), 2/17/18 & 6/27/18, Friends of Maria; \$65 (total), 5/26/18, 7/25/18 & 9/2/18, Courage Campaign PAC; \$1250, 6/30/18, Sinema for Arizona; \$190, 8/3/18, Andrew Janz for Congress; \$12.50, 8/5/18, O'Connor for Congress; \$50, 8/9/18, Harder for Congress; \$100 (total), 8/9/18, 9/23/18 & 10/17/18, Jessica Morse for Congress; \$50, 8/16/18, Audrey Denny for Congress; \$75 (total), 10/5/18 & 10/24/18, Heidi for Senate; \$205 (total), 6 periodic contris. between 10/6/ & 11/4/18, Rosen for Nevada; \$20, 10/11/18, Linda Coleman for Congress; \$20, 10/11/18, Friends of Lucy Mcbath; \$20, 10/11/18, Lauren Underwood for Congress.

Henry Gordon: \$258 (total), 20 periodic contris. between 4/30/15 & 10/5/18, Act Blue; \$2.50, 5/25/16, Progressive Change; \$1,007 (ttl.), 28 periodic contris. between 4/30/15 & 5/25/16, Bernie 2016; \$55.19 (ttl.), 4 periodic contris between 1/21/16 & 10/21/16, Russ for Wisconsin; \$27.69 (ttl.), 1/21/16 & 10/21/16, Catherine Cortez Masto for Senate; \$47.50 (ttl.), 4 periodic contris between 4/13/16 & 10/21/16, Flores for Congress; \$35.19 (ttl.), 3 periodic contris between 4/13/16 & 10/21/16, Pramila for Congress; \$35.20, 3 periodic contris between 4/13/16 & 10/21/16, Zephyr Teachout for Congress; \$27.70 (ttl.), 10/21 & 23/16, Deborah Ross Senate; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Clements for Congress; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Committee to Elect Chase Iron Eyes; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Nolan for Congress Volunteer Committee; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Berragan for Congress; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Maggie for NH; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Carroll for Colorado; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Nelson for Wisconsin; \$7.69, 10/21/16, Katie McGinty Senate; \$10, 10/5/18, Heidi for Senate.

Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

Nominee: Donald Ray Tapia.

Post: Ambassador to Jamaica.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

- Capito For West Virginia, \$5,200, 3/25/2013; Flake PAC, \$5,000, 4/02/2013; Andrew Walter For Congress, \$2,600, 8/26/2013; Andrew Tobin For Congress, \$2,600, 10/28/2013; National Rep Senatorial Com, \$15,000, 10/31/13; National Rep Senatorial Com, \$6,413, 11/07/13; NRSC, \$15,000, 11/02/2013; Jeff Flake For Senate, \$5,200, 11/19/2013; RNC, \$70,000, 2014; Tom Cotton For Senate, \$5,200, 3/19/2014; Flake PAC, \$5,000, 3/31/2014; Corey Gardner For Senate, \$5,200, 6/06/2014; Andy Tobin For Congress, \$2,700, 4/20/2015; Marco Rubio for President, \$2,700, 4/21/2015; Portman For Senate, \$2,700, 4/24/2015; Salmon For Congress, \$2,700, 6/10/2015; Carly For President, \$2,700, 8/26/2015; Joe Heck For Senate, \$2,700, 9/18/2015; Marco Rubio For President, \$2,700, 11/03/2015; Chris Christie For President, \$2,700, 11/25/2015; Marco Rubio For President, \$2,700, 12/10/2015; Conservative Solutions PAC, \$50,000, 2/22/2016; Biggs For Congress, \$2,500, 3/31/2016; Friends of John McCain, \$5,400, 5/03/2016; Trump Victory, \$25,000, 6/14/2016; Trump Victory, \$25,000, 6/28/2016; Volunteers For Nehlen, \$1,000, 7/10/2016; Trump Victory, \$25,000, 8/03/2016; Ken Bennett For Congress, \$2,500, 8/12/2016; Kiehne For Congress, \$2,500, 8/18/2016; Marco Rubio For Senate, \$2,700, 9/24/2016; Marco Rubio For Senate, \$2,700, 9/24/2016; Paul Babeu For Congress, \$5,000, 9/24/2016; Winning Women's Committee, \$10,000, 9/29/2016; Trump Victory, \$25,000, 10/12/2016; Trump Victory, \$5,000, 11/01/2016; Trump Make America Great, \$752, 11/26/2016; Comstock For Congress, \$966, 12/08/2016; Josh Mandel For Senate, \$5,400, 2/08/2017; Regan, \$5,100, 3/7/17; Marsha Blackburn Victory Fund, \$5,400, 3/30/2017; Roger Wicker For Senate, \$5,400, 4/05/2017; Paul Ryan, \$5,400, 4/25/17; Team Ryan, \$12,500, 4/25/17; NRCC, \$7,100, 4/25/17; RGA, \$25,000, 5/5/17; AZ Republican Party, \$25,000, 5/12/17; George P. Bush, \$5,000, 6/29/17, Steve Smith For Congress, \$5,400, 6/26/2017; RGA, \$25,000, 9/25/17; Trump Victory, \$94,600, 10/3/2017; Donald Trump For President, \$5,400, 10/06/2017; RNC, \$94,600, 10/06/2017; Jeff Flake, \$2,600, 11/7/17; Steve Ferrara, \$5,000, 11/8/17; RGA, \$25,000, 12/6/17; Martha McCally, \$5,400, 1/19/18; Moses Sanchez, \$3,175, 2/7/18; Matt Rosendale, \$2,700, 2/14/18; Andy Biggs, \$2,700, 2/22/18; Schweikert, \$5,000, 3/29/18; Schweikert Victory, \$5,000, 3/29/

18; Rick Scott, \$5,400, 4/5/18; RAGA, \$1,569.77, 4/11/18; Debbie Lesko, \$2,700, 4/13/18; NRSC, \$24,700, 5/13/18; Justin Olson, \$2,000, 5/25/18.

1. Spouse: N/A.
2. Children and Spouses: Tim & Sheri Tapia, None; Londa & Will Perkins, None.
3. Parents: Jessie Joseph Tapia—Deceased; Constance Geraldine Snapp—Deceased.
4. Grandparents: Thorthon Snapp—Deceased; Myrtle Snapp—Deceased; Maria Medina Tapia—Deceased.
5. Brothers and Spouses: N/A.
6. Sisters and Spouses: Jessie Jane Cordell, None.

Kip Tom, of Indiana, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as U.S. Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture.

Nominee: Kip Tom.

Post: U.S. Ambassador to the UN.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date and donee:

1. Self: \$150,000, Apr-2016, Kip Tom for Congress; \$1,000, Dec-2017, Steve Braun for Congress; \$1,000, Jun-2016, Roger Marshall for Congress; \$2,300, Jun-2016, Growth Energy PAC; \$5,400, Mar-2015, Todd Young for Senate; \$5,400, Jun-2016, Todd Young for Senate; \$1,000, Apr-2014, Todd Rokita for Congress; \$1,876.07, Aug-2014, Jackie Walorski for Congress; \$1,500, Sep-2016, Todd Young Victory Fund; \$1,500, Oct-2015, Ind. Republican Fund; \$1,000 Oct-2017, Kyle Dukes for Sheriff.
2. Spouse: None.
3. Children and Spouses: Kyle and Angie Tom: \$5,400, Sep-2015, Kip Tom For Congress; Mark and Kandi Dunwiddie: \$5,400, Sep-2015, Kip Tom For Congress; Greg and Kassi Rowland; \$5,400, Sep-2015, Kip Tom For Congress; Kris Tom: \$2,700, Sep-2015, Kip Tom For Congress; Jon and Katie Fussel: \$5,400, Sep-2015, Kip Tom for Congress.
4. Parents: Everett and Marie Tom: \$5,400, Sep-2015, Kip Tom For Congress.
5. Grandparents: Everett and Violet Tom—deceased; Ellis and Francis Eby—deceased.
6. Brothers and Spouses: Kevin Tom—deceased.
7. Sisters and Spouses: Melinda and Russell Woda: \$5,400, Nov-2015, Kip Tom for Congress; Melodie and Scott Thompson: \$1,000, Oct-2015, Kip Tom for Congress; Melissa and Ray Gerber: none.

Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq.

Nominee: Matthew H. Tueller.

Post: Iraq.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.
2. Spouse: DeNeece G. Tueller: none.
3. Children and Spouses: Marie Amara Tueller: none; Kyle Newkirk: none; Margaret Tueller Proffitt: none; Clark Proffitt: none; David G. Tueller: none; Ayae T. Tueller: none; Daniel B. Tueller: none; Christian M. Tueller: none.
4. Parents: Blaine C. Tueller, none; Jean Marie H. Tueller, none.
5. Grandparents: Lamont Tueller—deceased; Elva C. Tueller—deceased; Leland

Heywood—deceased; Marie E. Heywood—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: James B. Tueller, none; Beth D. Tueller, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Jan T. Lowman, none; Winfield N. Lowman, none; Anna T. Stone, none; Bernell Stone, none; Marie T. Emmett, none; Chad Emmett, none; Diane T. Pritchett, none; Lant H. Pritchett, none; Martha T. Barrett, \$150, 03/2016, Bernie 2016; Jeff Barrett, \$150, 03/2016, ActBlue; Elisabeth T. Dearden, none; Kirk Dearden, none; Rachel Tueller, none; Jeanne T. Krumperman, none; Paul Krumperman, none.

Robert K. Scott, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Malawi. Nominee: Robert K. Scott.

Post: Malawi.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

- Contributions, amount, date, and donee:
1. Self: None.
 2. Spouse: None.
 3. Children and Spouses: Jennifer Anne Scott: None. Nicolas Kennet Scott: None.
 4. Parents: Deceased.
 5. Grandparents: Deceased.
 6. Brothers and Spouses: Neil and Cindy Scott, \$100, 2016 H. Clinton.
 7. Sisters and Spouses: Leslie and David Loomis, None. Pat and Carl Napor, None. Carol and Konstantin Magalow, None.

John Barsa, of Florida, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

R. Clarke Cooper, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Political-Military Affairs).

Jane L. Corwin, of New York, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

Brett P. Giroir, of Texas, to be Representative of the United States on the Executive Board of the World Health Organization.

Mark Rosen, of Connecticut, to be United States Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of two years.

Robert C. Sisson, of Michigan, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

David Stilwell, of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (East Asian and Pacific Affairs).

Lance V. Yohe, of North Dakota, to be Commissioner on the part of the United States on the International Joint Commission, United States and Canada.

Keith Krach, of California, to be an Under Secretary of State (Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment).

Keith Krach, of California, to be United States Alternate Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Keith Krach, of California, to be United States Alternate Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of five years; United States Alternate Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank for a term of five years.

By Mr. WICKER for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Ann Marie Buerkle, of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2018.

*Ann Marie Buerkle, of New York, to be Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

*Rick A. Dearborn, of Oklahoma, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years.

*Diana Furchtgott-Roth, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation.

*Joseph Ryan Gruters, of Florida, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years.

*Heidi R. King, of California, to be Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

*Barry Lee Myers, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

*Leon A. Westmoreland, of Georgia, to be a Director of the Amtrak Board of Directors for a term of five years.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Capt. Brendan C. McPherson and ending with Capt. Todd C. Wiemers, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 30, 2019.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. DAINES, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. JONES, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 997. A bill to recognize and honor the service of individuals who served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 998. A bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to expand support for police officer family services, stress reduction, and suicide prevention, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 999. A bill to provide for Federal coordination of activities supporting sustainable chemistry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 1000. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the designation of opportunity zones for population census tracts affected by Hurricane Florence, Hurricane Michael, and the Mendocino, Carr, Camp, Woolsey, and Hill wildfires; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 1001. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to allow the Indian Health Service to cover the cost of a copayment of an Indian or Alaska Native veteran receiving medical care or services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1002. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to increase usage of the Federal student loan income-based repayment plan and improve repayment options for borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 1003. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration and the Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 1004. A bill to increase the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations officers and support staff and to require reports that identify staffing, infrastructure, and equipment needed to enhance security at ports of entry; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. WARREN:

S. 1005. A bill to stop financial institution crime, require certain officers of companies to certify that they have conducted due diligence relating to criminal conduct or civil fraud, create accountability in deferred prosecution agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1006. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to empower the States to set the maximum annual percentage rates applicable to consumer credit transactions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 1007. A bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under the Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act, improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 1008. A bill to amend and enhance the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act to improve the conservation of sharks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 1009. A bill to establish a demonstration program to explore effective practices to improve early detection and management of injuries indicative of potential abuse in infants under the age of 7 months, in order to prevent future cases of child abuse and related

fatalities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN:

S. 1010. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to establish criminal liability for negligent executive officers of major corporations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. JONES):

S. 1011. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for multiple employer plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KING, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 1012. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to protect the confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1013. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize school-based health centers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 1014. A bill to establish the Route 66 Centennial Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1015. A bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to review and make certain revisions to the Standard Occupational Classification System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 1016. A bill to prohibit the sale food that is, or contains, unsafe poppy seeds; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 1017. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 in order to address the needs of caregivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. JONES, and Mr. COTTON):

S. 1018. A bill to establish the Refund to Rainy Day Savings Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. JONES (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 1019. A bill to allow employers to offer short-term savings accounts with automatic contribution arrangements for financial emergencies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. JONES):

S. 1020. A bill to provide for an additional nondiscrimination safe harbor for automatic contribution arrangements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 1021. A bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 with respect to a portion of the Wendell H. Ford (Western Kentucky) Parkway, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. WARREN,

Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BENNET, Ms. SMITH, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1022. A bill to clarify the effect of certain final rules and determinations of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions standards for light-duty vehicles; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1023. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans, members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and dependents who were stationed at military installations at which they were exposed to perfluorooctanoic acid or other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, to provide for a presumption of service connection for those veterans and members of the reserve components, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 1024. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to furnish hospital care and medical services to veterans, members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and dependents who were stationed at Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Michigan, and were exposed to volatile organic compounds, to provide for a presumption of service connection for those veterans and members of the reserve components, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. HAWLEY):

S. 1025. A bill to provide humanitarian relief to the Venezuelan people and Venezuelan migrants, to advance a constitutional and democratic solution to Venezuela's political crisis, to address Venezuela's economic reconstruction, to combat public corruption, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. Res. 140. A resolution urging the establishment of a Cyber League of Indo-Pacific States to address cyber threats; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 151

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 151, a bill to deter criminal robocall viola-

tions and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes.

S. 169

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 169, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exemption from gross income for civil damages as recompense for trafficking in persons.

S. 179

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 179, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a clinical trial of the effects of cannabis on certain health outcomes of adults with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder, and for other purposes.

S. 192

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 192, a bill to provide extensions for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, teaching health centers that operate GME programs, and the special diabetes programs.

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 192, *supra*.

S. 206

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 206, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the female telephone operators of the Army Signal Corps, known as the "Hello Girls".

S. 209

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 209, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian Tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 362

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 362, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 427

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 427, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on autism spectrum disorder and enhance programs relating to autism, and for other purposes.

S. 433

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr.

ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 433, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve home health payment reforms under the Medicare program.

S. 595

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 595, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coordination of programs to prevent and treat obesity, and for other purposes.

S. 659

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 659, a bill to provide for certain additional requirements with respect to patent disclosures.

S. 679

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 679, a bill to exempt from the calculation of monthly income certain benefit paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

S. 692

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 692, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 696

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 696, a bill to designate the same individual serving as the Chief Nurse Officer of the Public Health Service as the National Nurse for Public Health.

S. 727

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 727, a bill to combat international extremism by addressing global fragility and violence and stabilizing conflict-affected areas, and for other purposes.

S. 821

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 821, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit certain member banks from using discount window lending programs, and for other purposes.

S. 827

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 827, a bill to designate certain National Forest System land and certain public land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior in the States of Idaho, Montana, Or-

egon, Washington, and Wyoming as wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, wildland recovery areas, and biological connecting corridors, and for other purposes.

S. 846

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 846, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to limit certain rolling stock procurements, and for other purposes.

S. 861

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 861, a bill to establish in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the Department of State a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Peoples, and for other purposes.

S. 893

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 893, a bill to require the President to develop a strategy to ensure the security of next generation mobile telecommunications systems and infrastructure in the United States and to assist allies and strategic partners in maximizing the security of next generation mobile telecommunications systems, infrastructure, and software, and for other purposes.

S. 909

At the request of Mr. SASSE, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 909, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, with respect to the judicial review of agency interpretations of statutory and regulatory provisions.

S. 910

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 910, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

S. 919

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 919, a bill to reduce regulatory burdens and streamline processes related to commercial space activities, and for other purposes.

S. 993

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 993, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain tax credits related to electric cars, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 85

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 85, a res-

olution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the founding of Easterseals, a leading advocate and service provider for children and adults with disabilities, including veterans and older adults, and their caregivers and families.

S. RES. 112

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 112, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States condemns all forms of violence against children globally and recognizes the harmful impacts of violence against children.

S. RES. 123

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 123, a resolution supporting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and recognizing its 70 years of accomplishments.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 1001. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to allow the Indian Health Service to cover the cost of a copayment of an Indian or Alaska Native veteran receiving medical care or services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1001

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Tribal Veterans Health Care Enhancement Act".

SEC. 2. LIABILITY FOR PAYMENT.

Section 222 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1621u) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(d) VETERANS AFFAIRS COPAYMENTS.—The Service may pay, in accordance with section 412, the cost of a copayment assessed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to an eligible Indian veteran (as defined in section 412) for covered medical care (as defined in such section)."

SEC. 3. COPAYMENTS FOR TRIBAL VETERANS RECEIVING CERTAIN MEDICAL SERVICES.

Title IV of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1641 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 412. PAYMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE INDIAN VETERANS RECEIVING COVERED MEDICAL CARE AT VA FACILITIES.

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term 'appropriate committees of Congress' means—

"(A) in the Senate—

"(i) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; and

“(ii) the Committee on Indian Affairs; and
“(B) in the House of Representatives—

“(i) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs; and

“(ii) the Committee on Natural Resources.
“(2) COVERED MEDICAL CARE.—The term ‘covered medical care’ means any medical care or service that is—

“(A) authorized for an eligible Indian veteran under the contract health service and referred by the Service; and

“(B) administered at a facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including any services rendered under a contract with a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider.

“(3) ELIGIBLE INDIAN VETERAN.—The term ‘eligible Indian veteran’ means an Indian or Alaska Native veteran who is eligible for assistance from the Service.

“(b) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (3), the Secretary (or a designee, including the director of any area office of the Service), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (or a designee), and any tribal health program, as applicable, shall enter into a memorandum of understanding, in consultation with Indian tribes to be impacted by the memorandum of understanding (on a national or regional basis), that authorizes the Secretary or tribal health program, as applicable, to pay to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs any copayments owed to the Department of Veterans Affairs by eligible Indian veterans for covered medical care.

“(2) FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION.—In entering into a memorandum of understanding under paragraph (1), the Secretary, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and any tribal health program, as applicable, shall take into consideration any findings contained in the report under subsection (e).

“(3) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and any tribal health program, as applicable, shall not be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding under paragraph (1) if the Secretary, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and any tribal health program, as applicable, jointly certify to the appropriate committees of Congress that such a memorandum of understanding would—

“(A) decrease the quality of health care provided to eligible Indian veterans;

“(B) impede the access of those veterans to health care; or

“(C) substantially decrease the quality of, or access to, health care by individuals receiving health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs or beneficiaries of the Service.

“(c) PAYMENT BY SERVICE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law and in accordance with the relevant memorandum of understanding described in subsection (b), the Service may cover the cost of any copayment assessed by the Department of Veterans Affairs to an eligible Indian veteran receiving covered medical care.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT FUNDS.—Notwithstanding section 407(c), section 2901(b) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (25 U.S.C. 1623(b)), or any other provision of law, and in accordance with the relevant memorandum of understanding described in subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may accept a payment from the Service under subsection (c).

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that describes—

“(1) the number of veterans, disaggregated by State, who—

“(A) are eligible for assistance from the Service; and

“(B) have received health care at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(2) the number of veterans, disaggregated by State and calendar year, who—

“(A) are eligible for assistance from the Service; and

“(B) were referred to a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs from a facility of the Service during the period—

“(i) beginning on January 1, 2013; and

“(ii) ending on December 31, 2018; and

“(3) an update regarding efforts of the Secretary and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to streamline health care for veterans who are eligible for assistance from the Service and have received health care at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs and at a facility of the Service, including a description of—

“(A) any changes to the provision of health care required under this Act; and

“(B) any barriers to efficiently streamline the provision of health care to veterans who are eligible for assistance from the Service.”

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 1017. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 in order to address the needs of caregivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1017

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting America’s Caregivers and Families Act”.

SEC. 2. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CAREGIVERS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT.—Section 303(e) of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3023(e)) is amended by striking “\$154,336,482” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “\$360,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024”.

(b) IMPROVING CAREGIVER ASSESSMENT.—

(1) INCREASING USE OF CAREGIVER ASSESSMENT TOOLS.—Section 202 of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3012) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) By not later than January 1, 2021, the Assistant Secretary shall—

“(1) in consultation with caregivers, older individuals, the aging network, and other experts and stakeholders, develop and implement a strategy to increase the use of comprehensive caregiver assessment tools that—

“(A) are standardized across a planning and service area;

“(B) assess the specific problems, needs, strengths, and resources of caregivers—

“(i) as identified by a recognized caregiver, as appropriate, through voluntary participation;

“(ii) through direct contact with the caregiver, which may include in-person, phone, or online contact; and

“(iii) at appropriate intervals, including to accommodate significant changes in the caregiving situation;

“(C) determine whether a caregiver would benefit from support services; and

“(D) lead to providing targeted caregiver support services to best benefit caregivers, where appropriate and available based upon identified unmet needs, including through referrals;

“(2) conduct a study on the best practices and potential considerations regarding mandatory use of comprehensive caregiver assessment tools standardized across a planning and service area by an area agency on aging, which shall examine—

“(A) the current use of caregiver assessments, as of the date of the study;

“(B) the efficacy and feasibility of mandatory use of comprehensive caregiver assessment tools standardized across a planning and service area, including the value to caregivers and the older individuals to whom they provide care; and

“(C) the potential impact on the aging network of using such assessments; and

“(3) prepare and submit to Congress a report regarding the study under paragraph (2) that provides recommendations for the appropriate use of comprehensive caregiver assessments standardized across a planning and service area by an area agency on aging, and a proposed budget, based on the Assistant Secretary’s professional judgment, for appropriately implementing the recommendations.”

(2) ASSESSING NEEDS OF CAREGIVERS.—Section 373(e)(3) of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3030s-1(e)(3)) is amended by inserting “assess the needs of family caregivers or older relative caregivers and” before “provide”.

(3) FAMILY CAREGIVER RESOURCE CENTER AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 202(b) of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3012(b)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (10), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (11) as paragraph (12); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (10) the following:

“(11) establish and operate the National Family Caregiver Resource and Technical Assistance Center, which will—

“(A) by grant or contract with a public or private nonprofit entity, provide information and assistance to State agencies, area agencies on aging, and community-based service providers funded under this Act, including—

“(i) through technical assistance, research, training, program analysis, and data collection;

“(ii) activities described in section 411(a)(11); and

“(iii) dissemination of best practices, including best practices for conducting assessments of caregiver needs using comprehensive assessment tools standardized across a planning and service area; and

“(B) directly or through grant or contract, provide information, education, and assistance to family caregivers in a manner that is accessible and understandable to the family caregivers.”

(c) BUSINESS ACUMEN PROVISIONS.—

(1) ASSISTANCE RELATING TO GROWING AND SUSTAINING CAPACITY.—Section 202(b)(9) of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3012(b)(9)) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “and” after the semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) business acumen, capacity building, organizational development, innovation, and other methods of growing and sustaining the capacity of the aging network to serve older adults and caregivers most effectively.”

(2) CLARIFYING PARTNERSHIPS FOR AREA AGENCIES ON AGING.—Section 306 of the Older

Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3026) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) Nothing in this Act shall restrict an area agency on aging from providing services not provided or authorized under this Act, including through—

- “(1) contracts with health care payers;
- “(2) consumer private pay programs; or
- “(3) other arrangements with entities or individuals that increase the availability of home and community-based services and supports in the planning and service area supported by the area agency on aging.”.

By Mr. McCONNELL:

S. 1021. A bill to amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 with respect to a portion of the Wendell H. Ford (Western Kentucky) Parkway, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1021

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

SECTION 1. WENDELL H. FORD (WESTERN KENTUCKY) PARKWAY.

(a) DESIGNATION AS HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDOR.—Section 1105(c) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240; 105 Stat. 2032; 131 Stat. 797) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(91) The Wendell H. Ford (Western Kentucky) Parkway from the interchange with the William H. Natcher Parkway in Ohio County, Kentucky, west to the interchange of the Western Kentucky Parkway with the Edward T. Breathitt (Pennyriple) Parkway.”.

(b) DESIGNATION AS FUTURE INTERSTATE.—Section 1105(e)(5)(A) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240; 109 Stat. 597; 131 Stat. 797) is amended in the first sentence by striking “and subsection (c)(90)” and inserting “subsection (c)(90), and subsection (c)(91)”.

(c) NUMBERING OF PARKWAY.—Section 1105(e)(5)(C)(i) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-240; 109 Stat. 598; 126 Stat. 426; 131 Stat. 797) is amended by adding at the end the following: “The route referred to in subsection (c)(91) is designated as Interstate Route I-369.”.

(d) OPERATION OF VEHICLES.—Section 127(1)(3)(A) of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), in the first sentence, by striking “clause (i) or (ii)” and inserting “clauses (i) through (iii)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) The Wendell H. Ford (Western Kentucky) Parkway (to be designated as a spur of Interstate Route 69) from the interchange with the William H. Natcher Parkway in Ohio County, Kentucky, west to the interchange of the Western Kentucky Parkway with the Edward T. Breathitt (Pennyriple) Parkway.”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 140—URGING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CYBER LEAGUE OF INDO-PACIFIC STATES TO ADDRESS CYBER THREATS

Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 140

Whereas the world has benefitted greatly from technological innovations under the leadership of the United States in the post-World War era, including the creation of the World Wide Web which has provided an entirely new platform for wealth creation and human flourishing through cyber-commerce and connectivity;

Whereas cybercrime affects companies large and small, as well as infrastructure that is vital to the economy as a whole;

Whereas a 2018 study from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in partnership with McAfee, estimates that the global economic losses from cybercrime are approximately \$600,000,000,000 annually and rising;

Whereas, according to the Pew Charitable Trust, 64 percent of people in the United States had fallen victim to cybercriminals as of 2017;

Whereas, on July 9, 2012, General Keith Alexander, then-Director of the National Security Agency, termed theft of United States intellectual property “the greatest transfer of wealth in history”;

Whereas, on September 25, 2015, the United States and the People’s Republic of China announced a commitment that “neither country’s government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information, with the intent of providing competitive advantages to companies or commercial sectors”;

Whereas the People’s Republic of China nonetheless continues to contribute to the rise of cybercrime, exploiting weaknesses in the international system to undermine fair competition in technology and cyberspace, including through theft of intellectual property and state-sponsored malicious actions to undermine and weaken competition;

Whereas, according to the 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment by the Director of National Intelligence: “China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea increasingly use cyber operations to threaten both minds and machines in an expanding number of ways—to steal information, to influence our citizens, or to disrupt critical infrastructure.”;

Whereas, from 2011 to 2018, more than 90 percent of cases handled by the Department of Justice alleging economic espionage by or to benefit a foreign country involved the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas more than 2/3 of the cases handled by the Department of Justice involving theft of trade secrets have a nexus to the People’s Republic of China;

Whereas experts have asserted that the Made in China 2025 strategy of the Government of the People’s Republic of China will incentivize Chinese entities to engage in unfair competitive behavior, including additional theft of technologies and intellectual property;

Whereas the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has also contributed to the rise of cybercrime and according to the 2018 Worldwide Threat Assessment by the Director of

National Intelligence: “We expect the heavily sanctioned North Korea to use cyber operations to raise funds and to gather intelligence or launch attacks on South Korea and the United States. . . . North Korean actors developed and launched the WannaCry ransomware in May 2017, judging from technical links to previously identified North Korean cyber tools, tradecraft, and operational infrastructure. We also assess that these actors conducted the cyber theft of \$81 million from the Bank of Bangladesh in 2016.”;

Whereas section 2(a)(8) of the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (22 U.S.C. 9201(a)(8)) states, “The Government of North Korea has provided technical support and conducted destructive and coercive cyberattacks, including against Sony Pictures Entertainment and other United States persons.”;

Whereas the United States has taken action on its own against international cybercrime, including through—

(1) the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-122), which imposed mandatory sanctions against persons engaging in significant activities undermining cybersecurity on behalf of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; and

(2) criminal charges filed by the Department of Justice on October 25, 2018, in which the Department alleged that the Chinese intelligence services conducted cyber intrusions against at least a dozen companies in order to obtain information on a commercial jet engine;

Whereas the March 2016 Department of State International Cyberspace Policy Strategy noted that “the Department of State anticipates a continued increase and expansion of our cyber-focused diplomatic efforts for the foreseeable future”;

Whereas concerted action by countries that share concerns about state-sponsored cyber theft is necessary to prevent the growth of cybercrime and other destabilizing national security and economic outcomes; and

Whereas section 215 of the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-409) calls for “robust cybersecurity cooperation between the United States and nations in the Indo-Pacific region” and “authorized to be appropriated \$100,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to enhance cooperation between the United States and the Indo-Pacific nations for the purpose of combatting cybersecurity threats”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges the President to propose and champion the negotiation of a treaty with like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific to ensure a free and open Internet free from economically crippling cyberattacks;

(2) calls for the treaty, which can be referred to as the Cyber League of Indo-Pacific States (in this resolution referred to as “CLIPS”), to include the creation of an Information Sharing Analysis Center to provide around-the-clock cyber threat monitoring and mitigation for governments that are parties to the treaty; and

(3) calls for members of CLIPS—

(A) to consult on emerging cyber threats;

(B) to pledge not to conduct or support theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information;

(C) to introduce and enforce minimum criminal punishment for cyber theft;

(D) to extradite alleged cyber thieves, consistent with existing agreements and respecting national sovereignty;

(E) to enforce laws protecting intellectual property, including patents;

(F) to ensure that government agencies comply with software license terms;

(G) to minimize data localization requirements (consistent with the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada, signed at Buenos Aires November 30, 2018 (commonly known as the “United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement”));

(H) to seek cooperation with respect to the standards described in the Arrangement on the Recognition of Common Criteria Certificates in the field of Information Technology Security, dated May 14, 2014;

(I) to provide for public input when devising legislation on cybersecurity; and

(J) to cooperate on the attribution of cyberattacks and impose appropriate consequences.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 247. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 201 proposed by Mr. SHELBY to the bill H.R. 268, making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 247. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 201 proposed by Mr. SHELBY to the bill H.R. 268, making supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 16, strike “milk” and insert “milk, on-farm stored commodities, crops prevented from being planted in 2019.”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I have 7 requests for committees to meet during

today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on pending legislation.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, “Enhancing Tribal self-governance and safety of Indian roads.”

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 2:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, “Reauthorization, of the SBA’s access to capitol programs.”

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 3, 2019, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Subcommittee on Intellectual Property of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 2, 2019, at 2:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing, “Trailblazers and lost Einsteins: Women inventors and the future of American innovation.”

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2019

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 11 a.m., Thursday, April 4; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Calabria nomination.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:42 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 4, 2019, at 11 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 3, 2019:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

JEFFREY KESSLER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.