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No. 36

House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 28, 2024.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2024, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

PUBLIC TELEVISION IS IMPORTANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, this week we are having a public media summit in our Nation's Capital, with representatives from independent television stations from across the country.

Thirteen years ago, the prospects were not particularly encouraging. We had just had a takeover in the House of

Representatives with people intent on reducing government spending, and public media was in the crosshairs. Today, 13 years later, the Federal funding is still flowing at record levels to America's public broadcasters. We noted the retirement of the head of America's Public Television Stations, Pat Butler, who helped guide us through these difficult times.

Congress has enacted a new infrastructure investment program for public media nearly three times as large as the one it replaced. When COVID struck, the economy imploded. Congress provided \$250 million in emergency financial assistance to America's public media. Our partnership for public radio and television includes our State governments, as well, who will commit a record \$365 million to support public media.

There are hundreds of advocates who will hit Capitol Hill to share the strong positive message of public broadcasting. In a way, this should be the easiest of lobbying assignments. Public broadcasting is the most trusted name in media; 180 million people watch or listen to it every week.

The Senate passed the appropriation out of committee 24-2, at a funding level overwhelmingly approved last spring by Congress with the agreement with the President to avert a shutdown. It included 149 Republicans. The benefits are powerful and almost universally supported, and it is not just news, but most point out that PBS and NPR are where even the critics go when they need to know what is actually going on.

Part of our challenge now is that there are a handful of people who are holding the budget hostage, which is unfortunate, because there is overwhelming support in the House and the Senate if we are able to see our way clear. It is perplexing because funding for public media is overwhelmingly supported by rural and small-town America.

There is always going to be public broadcasting in New York, San Francisco, Boston, or even Portland, Oregon, but there will not be as much and the programming won't be as good, but it will be there. However, that is not the case for rural and small-town America, in the mountain States, in the rural Midwest, in Alaska.

That is why the late Republican dean of the House, Don Young, was such a fierce champion for public broadcasting in his State and nationally. He knew that it was more important in rural America where there are fewer choices, and it is more expensive. Federal support was critical.

News, entertainment, culture, think of where we would be during COVID without the public educational component. It is also increasingly important for public safety. The network supplied by public broadcasting is the emergency communications for natural disasters, for efforts in terms of fires and floods. It is a system that we depend upon, and it is public broadcasting that provides the backbone. People literally depend on it for their lives.

Let's hope, as the visitors from the public television stations visit Capitol Hill, meeting with our staff, providing this information, that people are receptive because this is an opportunity for us on a bipartisan basis to strengthen the ability of Americans to be able to learn, to be able to promote culture, education, and public safety. It is the best bargain for the taxpayer dollar, and I hope that we will be supportive.

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS SCAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, last week, President Biden announced a plan to cancel \$1.2 billion

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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H699

in Federal student loans for 150,000 borrowers.

As Americans, we have always followed a simple rule: If you take out a loan, you pay back the loan. It is time to call a spade a spade. This student loan scam isn't forgiveness; it is an election-year handout to President Biden's far-left voters to transfer debt to the American taxpayer. This gimmick transfers the burden of the loans from the students who took the loans onto every American taxpayer.

Repaying these loans certainly has no personal benefit to 87 percent of taxpayers who don't have student loans and to the 100 million Americans who never attended college.

This program takes advantage of Americans who are already struggling to support their families under the weight of President Biden's inflation. It is time to send a message to President Biden and his administration that we cannot allow hardworking Americans, who have kept their word and repaid their personal loans, to be ripped off by yet another pandering scheme to the far left.

RARE DISEASE WEEK

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Rare Disease Week.

Right now, more than 25 million Americans and their loved ones are impacted by over 7,000 conditions which are classified as rare diseases.

Since the Orphan Drug Act was enacted in 1983, more than 600 drugs have been developed to combat these illnesses and ultimately save lives. Now, because of President Biden's so-called Inflation Reduction Act, the environment that has allowed these treatments to develop is being threatened.

This week, I am proud to be working alongside my colleagues to advance bipartisan legislation, the ORPHAN Cures Act, which would expand the orphan drug exemption for medicines with multiple indications involving rare diseases and cancers.

It is critical that Congress acts to support research and development into treatments and therapies that address rare diseases and further work to ensure that patients have access to the care and treatment that they need.

As we recognize Rare Disease Week, let's commit to standing with patients who are living with rare diseases, including pediatric cancers and diseases like cystic fibrosis, classified as rare, but they are not rare to the families and the patients who are suffering with them.

Let's commit to working together to ensure that every patient, regardless of the rarity of the condition, receives the support, the care, and the treatment that they need.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF LARRY MAKOBEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LALOTA). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and celebrate the life of Larry Makoben of Bettendorf, Iowa.

Larry's remarkable work in the Quad Cities was transformative. Over the years, Larry was president of the Bettendorf Jaycees and the Bettendorf Chamber of Commerce, where he served for many years as an Ambassador. He was also a member of the Bettendorf and Quad Cities Morning Optimist Club, the Bettendorf Kiwanis Club, and Larry served as the district chairman for the Boy Scouts of America. His unwavering dedication, leadership, and passion for excellence set a standard that will continue to inspire us all.

As we reflect on Larry's achievements, his military service, and his service to our community, let us remember the positive influence he had on those around him.

I offer my deepest condolences to Larry's wife, Carolyn, and his family during this difficult time. May we honor Larry by carrying forward his spirit of resilience, creativity, and commitment to making a difference.

ZACH BOTT NAMED IOWA WINE GROWERS ASSOCIATION WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of Zach Bott, a winemaker at Fireside Winery in Marengo and Ackerman Winery in Amana for being named the 2024 Iowa Wine Growers Association Winemaker of the Year.

In a region known for its rich agricultural history, Zach's dedication and passion for winemaking have truly set him apart. Zach Bott has not only mastered the art of winemaking but has also become a symbol of excellence in the industry. His commitment to producing high-quality wine reflects the spirit of innovation and hard work that defines Iowa's winemaking industry.

Congratulations to Zach Bott on this well-deserved honor. May his success inspire a new generation of winemakers and continue to elevate Iowa's presence in the world of wines. Cheers.

PERMANENT UNIVERSITY OF IOWA ATHLETICS DIRECTOR BETH GOETZ

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate Beth Goetz, who was recently named the permanent athletics director for the University of Iowa. She is now the first woman to oversee the university's entire athletics program since Christine Grant led the then-separate women's athletic department from 1973 to 2000.

Beth's groundbreaking appointment not only marks a significant milestone for women working in athletics, but the promotion also reflects Iowa's commitment to excellence and diversity in leadership. With an impressive track record and a visionary approach, Beth is ready to lead Iowa athletics to new heights. Congratulations, Beth, and Go Hawks.

HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Iowa Department of Transportation, the city crews, the county crews, and all the volunteers who worked tirelessly during the recent winter storm in Iowa's First Congressional District.

With another storm coming in today, their work has been so helpful to all Iowans, and to those who are crossing the country on Interstate 80 or Interstate 35. Their unwavering commitment and dedication ensured that our roads were cleared, our sidewalks were usable, our communities remained safe, and ensured that our essential services continued uninterrupted. It was a challenging and dangerous job to do.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the women and men who, through their hard work, kept our cities running smoothly and our roads safe. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S BORDER BRUTALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, last week our country lost yet another innocent soul to President Biden's administration's inexcusable and shameful open-border policy when 22-year-old Laken Hope Riley was brutally murdered by a Venezuelan citizen who illegally entered our country in September 2022.

Laken Riley was a nursing student at Augusta University's Athens campus who was out on a morning run near the intramural fields at the University of Georgia. May her soul rest in peace.

Unfortunately, this is what Americans across the country have come to expect since President Biden took office. His administration has enacted and implemented numerous open-border policies which directly and inevitably result in these sorts of tragedies.

In addition to this terrible tragedy that occurred in Georgia, local authorities in Virginia arrested a 32-year-old Venezuelan migrant in connection with the sexual assault of a minor. Just like the murderer who allegedly killed Laken Riley, this individual also entered the country in September of 2022 after being detained and released by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol in El Paso, Texas.

In our Nation's Capital, Washington, D.C., a man accused of shooting three District of Columbia police officers was found to be in our country illegally with an active deportation order with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. All three of these terrible, completely avoidable tragedies occurred in the same calendar month, just a week apart.

□ 1215

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, pure and simple, these are the consequences of

the Biden's administration indefensible open-border policies.

There is no doubt that President Biden's feckless border policies are the direct causes of this once unimaginable level of crime and loss of life.

To make matters worse, just days after both of these immigrants entered our country illegally, President Biden, instead of trying to secure the border, erroneously stated that the border was actually secure and that it was "not rational" to deport illegal immigrants from Venezuela.

If deporting illegal immigrants is not rational, then that begs the question, Madam Speaker, what is rational? Simply doing nothing but keeping the border wide open surely isn't rational.

As a father of two young children growing up in President Biden's United States where every town has become a border town, I fear it is only a matter of time until one of these families that I represent in middle Tennessee faces the same consequences of the Biden administration's open-border policies.

I pray that day never comes. I also pray the President comes to his senses and ends the humanitarian crisis at the southern border that his administration's policies have caused.

The administration has already admitted they have the authority to restrict migrants' ability to seek asylum at the border. It is well past time that the President used that authority.

Until then, House Republicans like me will continue sounding the alarm and beating the drum to shed light on this administration's open-border policies and blatant abuse of our immigration laws.

Border security is national security, and strong borders make for strong countries and safe countries.

STANDING WITH AMERICA'S FARMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, at this very moment, America's dedicated farmers and the Nation's entire agricultural community are facing a serious threat.

That threat is the Communist Chinese Party's continued purchasing of American farmland. This is a threat that I take very seriously and one that I remain committed to fixing.

Here is the truth: The Chinese Communist Party has absolutely no interest in supporting our Nation's food supply.

It cares only about improving its own bottom line while kneecapping a community that has always put food on the tables of families in every ZIP Code in America.

Think about the threat that is being posed to our national security as more American farmland is acquired by the Chinese Communist Party.

My record is crystal clear on standing with farmers, and I have recently

taken action to confront and expose the Chinese Communist Party's covert agenda.

I have cosponsored H.R. 7131, the AFIDA Improvements Act of 2024, legislation that makes serious reforms related to how the United States Department of Agriculture shares data on foreign investments in agricultural land.

What is more, I have cosponsored H.R. 809, the Prohibition of Agricultural Land for the People's Republic of China Act.

This legislation requires the President to take necessary actions to prohibit the purchase of public or private agricultural real estate located in the United States by nonresident aliens, foreign businesses, or any agent, trustee, or fiduciary associated with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Further, under this legislation, individuals or businesses with direct ties to the Government of the People's Republic of China will be prohibited from certain programs administered by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Madam Speaker, the simple truth is that our Nation's food supply and supply chain are better off when American farmers are put first.

The interests of the Chinese Government should never be put first. This threat is one that should not be ignored.

I have long held that North Carolina's agricultural industry is the best that our Nation has to offer. It has always been and will always be a force to be reckoned with.

Last Congress, I was proud to be a recipient of the Friend of the Farm Bureau award in recognition of my voting record in support of farmers across North Carolina and the Nation.

These hardworking men, women, and families work tirelessly every day to support our Nation. I will always stand with them and push back against every attempt to undermine their livelihoods.

CONTINUED ACCESS TO FERTILITY CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from South Carolina (Ms. MACE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MACE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join my resolution in regard to IVF. My resolution expresses support for continued access to fertility care and assisted reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization in light of Alabama's court ruling last week that has jeopardized access to in vitro fertilization and other assisted reproductive technology in the State of Alabama.

For years now, since 2019, I have been advocating for women's issues and women's rights on the issue of contraception, on the issue of contraceptives, and on the issue of abortion exceptions, particularly for the life of the mother, rape, and incest.

In 2019, as a State lawmaker, I told my story as a survivor of rape. When the State of South Carolina was doing its fetal heartbeat bill, it had no exceptions for women who were raped or for girls who were victims of incest, and I was frustrated by that argument because very few women are actually speaking up about women and about those exceptions.

Ever since then, I have become very passionate about protecting women, about protecting their rights, and about protecting access to IVF, et cetera.

Today, I want to point out I have cosponsored legislation and resolutions by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle as it relates to contraception, as it relates to contraceptives, as it relates to providing information and protecting IVF, and, yet, not a single one of them got criticized for the legislation because they were Democrats.

Yet today, I am trying to work with Members on both sides of the aisle together to condemn the ruling in Alabama, to express our sentiment and express our support for IV access for women all across the country.

When a Republican does it, it should be equally supported by the corporate media, but, apparently, it is not.

I am urging my colleagues today to get beyond the divisive politics and look forward to how we can actually work together because this IVF issue shouldn't be Republican, and it shouldn't be Democrat.

The vast majority of Americans—I dare say almost every single American in this country, almost a hundred percent—support efforts to protect women's access to IVF.

I also want to mention, last year I cosponsored H. Res. 345, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ' resolution, that recognizes that infertility is a widespread problem that affects populations of diverse ages, races, ethnicities, and genders.

Madam Speaker, 12 percent of women in the U.S. have difficulty getting pregnant or staying pregnant, and 9 percent of men experience infertility.

The resolution acknowledged that infertility is a disease and that infertility is not just a women's issue because it impacts men also. This is a families' issue.

The Federal Government has a moral obligation to ensure the availability of infertility-related services to all individuals and families without barriers such as access, cost, and coverage.

I remind the press that I also was only one of eight Republicans that voted in favor of KATHY MANNING'S Right to Contraception Act.

The Greater Access to Contraceptive Options Act ensures women and families across the country have a right to obtain and use contraceptions. It is a commonsense measure in the case of rape, incest, or in order to maintain a healthy and well-functioning body. Reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies requires ensuring contraceptives are available to couples, women, et cetera.

Finally, beyond the numbers as it relates to my resolution regarding support for IVF, IVF has a genuinely positive impact on individuals, families, and communities.

IVF and other assisted reproductive technologies contribute to the birth of over 10 million babies globally every single year. In the U.S., 12 percent of women of reproductive age have utilized assisted reproductive technology.

Infertility is a deeply personal and obviously devastating issue. I am calling on my colleagues today on both sides of the aisle, Republican and Democrat alike, to join me in expressing the sentiment in the whole House of Representatives that we are dedicated to protecting the American Dream of starting a family by cosponsoring this resolution.

BRINGING KAI LI HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, we, the United States Government, must do everything in our power to bring my constituent, Kai Li, home from his unlawful imprisonment by the Chinese Communist Party.

Since 2016, Kai Li, of Huntington, New York, has been unjustly imprisoned by the Chinese Communist Party.

In 2016, Kai Li visited Shanghai to mark the first anniversary of his mother's death. When he arrived at the airport in Shanghai, Chinese Communist Party authorities immediately arrested him on what they called espionage charges.

For months, Kai was held in secret detention without access to legal counsel. Almost 2 years later, in July of 2018, in a one-hour secret trial, Kai was convicted of espionage.

This is yet another example of the Chinese Communist Party's long history of aggressively targeting and detaining individuals on trumped-up charges of spying.

Since coming into office 14 months ago, I have called on the administration to do everything in its power to bring Kai Li home to his family, including his son, Harrison.

Soon, I will be introducing legislation to urge this administration to prioritize bringing Kai Li home and end his unlawful detainment. We must right this wrong and fix a broken situation.

POLICE EXPLORERS PROGRAM

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, the Suffolk County Police Department has an exciting program to increase interest among teenagers in pursuing a career in law enforcement. It is called the Police Explorers.

Participants in the program must show an interest in a law enforcement career, meet minimum academic standards, and have no criminal convictions or history.

The Police Explorers program is a learning-for-life program, which pro-

vides participants with police training and community service experience.

I had the chance to meet with Sergeant Linda Piotrowski of the Suffolk County Police Department in my Hauppauge office, and she briefed me on this program.

We had a great discussion about public safety and how to increase awareness among young people interested in a career in law enforcement.

As the son and grandson of police officers, I am thrilled to see efforts to increase law enforcement recruitment numbers and to help those interested in a career in law enforcement. Together, we must continue to support and back the blue at every opportunity.

COMBATING THE RISE IN ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. LALOTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to condemn the disturbing rise in anti-Semitism in this country and around the world, especially in the months following the October 7 terrorist attacks committed by Hamas against the people of Israel.

Since October 7, America has seen a demonstrable rise in anti-Semitism on college campuses where students have been harassed and even insulted simply for being Jewish.

Despite their years of elitist rhetoric, talk of safe spaces, and feigning how they welcome all cultures, duplicitous liberal college presidents have refused to take action to protect these students.

In America, every student should be free to live and learn without fear of harassment or physical violence. America's colleges must do better.

Here in Washington, I am proud to cosponsor several pieces of legislation to support Israel, hold Hamas and Iran accountable, and condemn anti-Semitism, including H.R. 6090, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, which would require the Department of Education to clearly define anti-Semitism and ensure anti-Semitic hate crimes on college campuses are properly investigated and prosecuted.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LALOTA) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

O sovereign Lord, 2 years into this unrelenting conflict between Russia

and Ukraine, we appeal to You to act in condemnation against the unprovoked and the unjustified aggression and the heinous and hateful crimes against the Ukrainian people.

Uphold the cause of justice and defend these men and women who have called to You in their need. For they have been a testimony to faith, waiting patiently for You, fearing not when evil people have succeeded, and never losing heart even as the wicked carry out their schemes.

Protect them from their enemy but preserve them also from themselves, that they would refrain from acting out in anger and responding in wrath. In the horror of this interminable war, prevent them from resorting to vengeance, deliver them from exercising the very evil they are now enduring.

May all who suffer at the hands of such aggressors be assured that You, O Lord, laugh at the wicked for You know their day is coming. Though they draw the sword and bend the bow, You, O righteous one, will cause their weapons to pierce their own hearts. You will cause their strongholds to break.

Make firm the steps of those who delight in You. Though they may stumble, they will not fall, for You, O Lord, will uphold them with Your hand.

In the strength found only in Your name do we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. PLASKETT 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.

LEAP DAY

(Mr. ROSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Leap Day, which means the folks I represent in Tennessee will be subject to an extra day of the disastrous economic policies of the Biden administration that have resulted in record-high inflation and an unaffordable cost of living.

Look no further, Mr. Speaker, than a recent report that said December was the least affordable month on record to own a home, as home prices hit an all-time high.

December marked the 11th straight month of higher home prices and a 5 percent increase in prices over the entire year.

Coupled with higher interest rates, thanks to the Biden administration's reckless deficit spending, the American Dream of owning a home is quickly evaporating.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am committed to passing policies that make purchasing and owning a home more affordable and lowering the cost of living for the average American and the Tennesseans that I represent.

RECOGNIZING THE 180TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S INDEPENDENCE

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 180th anniversary of the Dominican Republic's independence.

This past weekend, the streets in downtown Christiansted, St. Croix, and Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, were alive with the spirit of the Independence Day Parade, a tradition that has graced our islands for 15 years and serves as a testament to the rich tapestry of our shared heritage.

The Virgin Islands prides itself on being a melting pot of cultures, and the active participation and integration of the Dominican community showcase the strength and beauty of that diversity.

It is inspiring to see members of the Dominican community opening businesses, contributing to our economy, and taking on key roles in our government as they share their passion and their ideas.

Those efforts and achievements reinforce the value of cultural exchange and mutual respect that are the foundation of our society.

It is the fabric that weaves our communities together and allows every ethnicity and nationality to celebrate their unique culture and traditions.

Here is to many more years of friendship, collaboration, and shared prosperity between the Virgin Islands and, indeed, the United States and the Dominican Republic.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. VAN DUYNE) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

ATOMIC ENERGY ADVANCEMENT ACT

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6544) to advance the benefits of nuclear energy by enabling efficient, timely, and predictable licensing, regulation, and deployment of nuclear energy technologies, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6544

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Atomic Energy Advancement Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Subtitle A—Efficiency, Performance, and Preparation for the Future

Sec. 101. NRC mission alignment.

Sec. 102. Nuclear licensing efficiency.

Sec. 103. Strengthening the NRC workforce.

Subtitle B—Fee Reduction

Sec. 111. Advanced reactor fee reduction.

Sec. 112. Advanced nuclear reactor prize.

Subtitle C—Siting, Licensing, and Oversight Reviews

Sec. 121. Modernization of nuclear reactor environmental reviews.

Sec. 122. Nuclear for Brownfield sites.

Sec. 123. Advancement of nuclear regulatory oversight.

TITLE II—NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT

Sec. 201. Advanced nuclear deployment.

Sec. 202. Global nuclear cooperation.

Sec. 203. American nuclear competitiveness.

TITLE I—NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Subtitle A—Efficiency, Performance, and Preparation for the Future

SEC. 101. NRC MISSION ALIGNMENT.

(a) MISSION OF THE COMMISSION.—

(1) UPDATE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission shall, while remaining consistent with the policies of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (including to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of the public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment), update the mission statement of the Commission to include that licensing and regulation of nuclear energy activities be conducted in a manner that is efficient and does not unnecessarily limit—

(A) the potential of nuclear energy to improve the general welfare; and

(B) the benefits of nuclear energy technology to society.

(2) REPORT.—Upon completion of the update to the mission statement required under paragraph (1), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) the updated mission statement; and

(B) the guidance that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will provide to staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ensure effective performance of such mission.

(b) OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION.—Section 203 of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5843) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “(a) There” and inserting the following:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT; APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR.—There”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “(b) Subject” and inserting the following:

“(b) FUNCTIONS OF DIRECTOR.—Subject”;

and

(ii) by striking “delegate including:” and inserting “delegate, including the following:”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “for the discharge of the” and inserting “to fulfill the licensing and regulatory oversight”;

(3) in subsection (c), by striking “(c) Nothing” and inserting the following:

“(d) RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFE OPERATION OF FACILITIES.—Nothing”; and

(4) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

“(c) LICENSING PROCESS.—In carrying out the principal licensing and regulation functions under subsection (b)(1), the Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation shall—

“(1) establish techniques and guidance for evaluating applications for licenses for nuclear reactors to support efficient, timely, and predictable reviews of applications for such licenses to enable the safe and secure use of nuclear reactors;

“(2) maintain the techniques and guidance established under paragraph (1) by periodically assessing and, if necessary, modifying such techniques and guidance; and

“(3) obtain approval from the Commission if establishment or modification of the techniques and guidance established under paragraph (1) or (2) involves policy formulation.”.

SEC. 102. NUCLEAR LICENSING EFFICIENCY.

(a) EFFICIENT LICENSING REVIEWS.—

(1) GENERAL.—Section 181 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2231) is amended—

(A) by striking “The provisions of” and inserting the following:

“(a) The provisions of”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) Consistent with the declaration in section 1, the Commission shall provide for efficient, timely, and predictable reviews and proceedings for the granting, suspending, revoking, or amending of any license or construction permit, or application to transfer control, and in any proceeding for the issuance or modification of rules and regulations dealing with the activities of licenses.”.

(2) CONSTRUCTION PERMITS AND OPERATING LICENSES.—Section 185 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2235) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“c. APPLICATION REVIEWS FOR PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION FACILITIES OF AN EXISTING SITE.—In reviewing an application for an early site permit, construction permit, operating license, or combined construction permit and operating license for a production facility or utilization facility located at the site of a production facility or utilization facility licensed by the Commission, the Commission shall, to the extent practicable, use

information that was part of the licensing basis of the licensed production facility or utilization facility.”.

(b) **PERFORMANCE METRICS AND MILESTONES.**—Section 102(c) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking “180” and inserting “90”; and

(B) by striking “180” and inserting “90”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) **PERIODIC UPDATES TO METRICS AND SCHEDULES.**—

“(A) **REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT.**—Not less frequently than once every 3 years, the Commission shall review and assess, based on the licensing and regulatory activities of the Commission, the performance metrics and milestone schedules developed under paragraph (1).

“(B) **REVISIONS.**—After each review and assessment under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall revise, as appropriate, the performance metrics and milestone schedules developed under paragraph (1) to provide the most efficient performance metrics and milestone schedules reasonably achievable.”.

(c) **CLARIFICATION ON FUSION REGULATION.**—Section 103(a)(4) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2133 note; Public Law 115-439) is amended—

(1) by striking “Not later” and inserting the following:

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) **EXCLUSION OF FUSION REACTORS.**—Notwithstanding section 3(1), for purposes of subparagraph (A), the term ‘advanced nuclear reactor applicant’ does not include an applicant for a license for a nuclear fusion reactor.”.

(d) **TECHNICAL CORRECTION.**—Section 104 c. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2134(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking the third sentence and inserting the following:

“(3) **LIMITATION ON UTILIZATION FACILITIES.**—The Commission may issue a license under this section for a utilization facility useful in the conduct of research and development activities of the types specified in section 31 if—

“(A) not more than 75 percent of the annual costs to the licensee of owning and operating the facility are devoted to the sale, other than for research and development or education and training, of—

“(i) nonenergy services;

“(ii) energy; or

“(iii) a combination of nonenergy services and energy; and

“(B) not more than 50 percent of the annual costs to the licensee of owning and operating the facility are devoted to the sale of energy.”;

(2) in the second sentence, by striking “The Commission” and inserting the following:

“(2) **REGULATION.**—The Commission”; and

(3) by striking “C. The Commission” and inserting the following:

“C. **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the Commission”.

(e) **FUSION MACHINES.**—

(1) **DEFINITION.**—Section 11 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2041) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“‘kk. **FUSION MACHINE.**—The term ‘fusion machine’ means a particle accelerator that is capable of—

“(1) transforming atomic nuclei, through fusion processes, into other elements, isotopes, or particles; and

“(2) directly capturing and using the resultant products, including particles, heat, and other electromagnetic radiation.”.

(2) **TECHNOLOGY-INCLUSIVE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 103(a) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2133 note) is further amended—

(i) in paragraph (4), by adding at the end the following:

“(C) **FUSION MACHINE APPLICANTS.**—Not later than December 31, 2027, the Commission shall complete a rulemaking to establish a technology-inclusive, regulatory framework for optional use by fusion machine applicants for new license applications.”; and

(ii) in paragraph (5)(B)(ii), by inserting “and fusion machine license applications” after “commercial advanced nuclear reactor license applications”.

(B) **DEFINITIONS.**—Section 3 of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(21) **FUSION MACHINE.**—The term ‘fusion machine’ has the meaning given such term in subsection kk. of section 11 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954.”.

(3) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission shall submit to Congress a report on—

(A) the results of a study, conducted in consultation with Agreement States (as defined in section 3 of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215 note) and the private fusion sector, on risk- and performance-based, design-specific licensing frameworks for mass-manufactured fusion machines (as defined in subsection kk. of section 11 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as added by this subsection), that includes evaluation of the Federal Aviation Administration’s design, manufacturing, and operations certification process for aircraft as a potential model for mass-manufactured fusion machine regulations; and

(B) the estimated timeline for the Commission to issue consolidated guidance or regulations for licensing mass-manufactured fusion machines, taking into account the results of such study and the anticipated need for such guidance or regulations.

SEC. 103. STRENGTHENING THE NRC WORKFORCE.

(a) **COMMISSION WORKFORCE.**—

(1) **GENERAL AUTHORITY.**—The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 161A the following:

“SEC. 161B. COMMISSION WORKFORCE.

“(a) **DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding section 161 d. of this Act and section 2(b) of Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1980 (94 Stat. 3585; 5 U.S.C. app.), and without regard to any provision of title 5 (except sections 3303 and 3328), United States Code, governing appointments in the civil service, if the Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (in this section referred to as the ‘Chairman’) issues or renews a certification that there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for covered positions to carry out the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s (in this section referred to as the ‘Commission’) responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner, the Chairman may, during any period when such a certification is in effect—

“(A) recruit and directly appoint highly qualified individuals into the excepted service for covered positions; and

“(B) establish in the excepted service term-limited covered positions and recruit and directly appoint highly qualified individ-

uals into such term-limited covered positions, which may not exceed a term of 4 years.

“(2) **LIMITATIONS.**—

“(A) **MERIT PRINCIPLES.**—To the maximum extent practicable, any action authorized pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be consistent with the merit principles of section 2301 of title 5, United States Code.

“(B) **NUMBER.**—The number of highly qualified individuals serving in—

“(i) covered positions pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) may not exceed 210 at any one time; and

“(ii) term-limited covered positions pursuant to paragraph (1)(B) may not exceed 80 at any one time.

“(C) **COMPENSATION.**—The Chairman may not use authority under paragraph (1)(A) or paragraph (1)(B) to compensate individuals recruited and directly appointed into a covered position or a term-limited covered position at an annual rate of basic pay higher than the annual salary payable for level III of the Executive Schedule under section 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

“(D) **SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE POSITION.**—The Chairman may not, under paragraph (1)(A) or paragraph (1)(B), appoint highly qualified individuals to any Senior Executive Service position, as defined in section 3132 of title 5, United States Code.

“(3) **RENEWAL.**—The Chairman may renew a certification issued or renewed under this subsection if the Chairman determines there is still a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for covered positions to carry out the Commission’s responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

“(4) **TERMINATION.**—A certification issued or renewed under this subsection shall terminate on the earlier of—

“(A) the date that is 10 years after the certification is renewed or issued; or

“(B) the date on which the Chairman determines there is no longer a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for covered positions to carry out the Commission’s responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

“(5) **LEVEL OF POSITIONS.**—To the extent practicable, in carrying out paragraph (1) the Chairman shall recruit and directly appoint highly qualified individuals into the excepted service to entry, mid, and senior level covered positions, including term-limited covered positions.

“(b) **ADDRESSING INSUFFICIENT COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES AND OTHER PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSION.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Chairman issues or renews a certification that compensation for employees or other personnel of the Commission serving in a covered position is insufficient to retain or attract such employees and other personnel to allow the Commission to carry out the responsibilities and activities of the Commission in a timely, efficient, and effective manner, the Chairman may, during any period when such a certification is in effect, fix the compensation for such employees or other personnel serving in a covered position without regard to any provision of title 5, United States Code, governing General Schedule classification and pay rates.

“(2) **CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.**—A certification issued or renewed under this subsection shall—

“(A) apply to employees or other personnel who serve in covered positions;

“(B) terminate on the earlier of—

“(i) the date that is 10 years after the certification is issued or renewed; or

“(ii) the date on which the Chairman determines that the use of the authority of the

Chairman under this subsection to fix compensation for employees or other personnel serving in a covered position is no longer necessary to retain or attract such employees and other personnel to allow the Commission to carry out the Commission's responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner; and

“(C) be no broader than necessary to achieve the objective of retaining or attracting employees and other personnel serving in a covered position to allow the Commission to carry out the Commission's responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

“(3) RENEWAL.—The Chairman may renew a certification issued or renewed under this subsection if the Chairman determines that use of the authority of the Chairman under this subsection to fix compensation for employees or other personnel serving in a covered position is still necessary to retain or attract such employees or other personnel to allow the Commission to carry out the Commission's responsibilities and activities in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

“(4) APPLICABILITY.—The authority under this subsection to fix the compensation of employees or other personnel during any period when a certification issued or renewed under paragraph (1) is in effect shall apply with respect to an employee or other personnel serving in a covered position regardless of when the employee or other personnel was hired.

“(5) RETENTION OF LEVEL OF FIXED COMPENSATION.—The termination of a certification issued or renewed under paragraph (1) shall not affect the compensation of an employee or other personnel serving in a covered position whose compensation was fixed by the Chairman in accordance with paragraph (1).

“(6) LIMITATION ON COMPENSATION.—The Chairman may not use the authority under paragraph (1) to fix the compensation of employees or other personnel at an annual rate of basic pay higher than the annual salary payable for level III of the Executive Schedule under section 5314 of title 5, United States Code.

“(7) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Chairman may—

“(i) obtain the services of experts and consultants in accordance with section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

“(ii) compensate those experts and consultants for each day (including travel time) at rates not in excess of the rate of pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of that title; and

“(iii) pay to the experts and consultants serving away from the homes or regular places of business of the experts and consultants travel expenses and per diem in lieu of subsistence at rates authorized by sections 5702 and 5703 of that title for persons in Government service employed intermittently.

“(B) LIMITATIONS.—The Chairman shall—

“(i) to the maximum extent practicable, limit the use of experts and consultants pursuant to subparagraph (A); and

“(ii) ensure that the employment contract of each expert and consultant employed pursuant to subparagraph (A) is subject to renewal not less frequently than annually.

“(C) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AUTHORITY.—

“(1) FOR NEW EMPLOYEES.—The Chairman may pay a person recruited and directly appointed under subsection (a) a 1-time hiring bonus in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

“(2) FOR EXISTING EMPLOYEES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), an employee or other personnel who the Chairman determines exhibited exceptional performance in a fiscal year may be paid a

performance bonus in an amount not to exceed the least of—

“(i) \$25,000; and

“(ii) the amount of the limitation that is applicable for a calendar year under section 5307(a)(1) of title 5, United States Code.

“(B) LIMITATIONS.—

“(1) SUBSEQUENT BONUSES.—Any person who receives a performance bonus under subparagraph (A) may not receive another performance bonus under that subparagraph for a period of 5 years thereafter.

“(ii) HIRING BONUSES.—Any person who receives a 1-time hiring bonus under paragraph (1) may not receive a performance bonus under subparagraph (A) unless more than one year has elapsed since the payment of such 1-time hiring bonus.

“(d) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND REPORT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Chairman shall develop and implement a plan to carry out this section. Before implementing such plan, the Chairman shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and the Office of Personnel Management a report on the details of the plan.

“(2) REPORT CONTENT.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) evidence and supporting documentation justifying the plan; and

“(B) budgeting projections on costs and benefits resulting from the plan.

“(3) CONSULTATION.—The Chairman may consult with the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Comptroller General of the United States in developing the plan under paragraph (1).

“(e) DELEGATION.—The Chairman shall delegate, subject to the direction and supervision of the Chairman, the authority provided by subsections (a), (b), and (c) to the Executive Director for Operations of the Commission.

“(f) INFORMATION ON HIRING, VACANCIES, AND COMPENSATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall include in its budget materials submitted in support of the budget of the President (submitted to Congress pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code), for each fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this section, information relating to hiring, vacancies, and compensation at the Commission.

“(2) INCLUSIONS.—The information described in paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) an analysis of any trends with respect to hiring, vacancies, and compensation at the Commission;

“(B) a description of the efforts to retain and attract employees or other personnel to serve in covered positions at the Commission;

“(C) information that describes—

“(i) if a certification under subsection (a) was in effect at any point in the previous year, how the authority provided by that subsection is being used to address the hiring needs of the Commission;

“(ii) the total number of highly qualified individuals serving in—

“(I) covered positions pursuant to subsection (a)(1)(A); and

“(II) term-limited covered positions pursuant to subsection (a)(1)(B);

“(iii) if a certification under subsection (b) was in effect at any point in the previous year, how the authority provided by that subsection is being used to address the hiring or retention needs of the Commission;

“(iv) the total number of employees or other personnel serving in a covered position

that have their compensation fixed pursuant to subsection (b);

“(v) if a certification under subsection (a) or (b) was terminated or was not in effect at any point in the previous year, why such a certification was terminated or was not in effect;

“(vi) the attrition levels with respect to term-limited covered positions appointed under subsection (a)(1)(B), including the number of individuals leaving a term-limited covered position before completion of the applicable term of service and the average length of service for such individuals as a percentage of the applicable term of service; and

“(vii) the number of experts and consultants retained under subsection (b)(7); and

“(D) an assessment of—

“(i) the current critical workforce needs of the Commission and any critical workforce needs that the Commission anticipates in the next five years; and

“(ii) additional skillsets that are or likely will be needed for the Commission to fulfill the licensing and oversight responsibilities of the Commission.

“(g) COVERED POSITION.—In this section, the term ‘covered position’ means a position in which an employee or other personnel is responsible for conducting work of a scientific, technical, engineering, mathematical, legal, managerial, or otherwise highly specialized or skilled nature.”

(2) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 161 the following:

“Sec. 161A. Use of firearms by security personnel.

“Sec. 161B. Commission workforce.”

(b) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2032, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report that—

(1) evaluates the extent to which the authorities provided under subsections (a), (b), and (c) of section 161B of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (as added by this Act) have been utilized;

(2) describes the role in which the highly qualified individuals recruited and directly appointed pursuant to section 161B(a) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (as added by this Act) have been utilized to support the licensing of advanced nuclear reactors;

(3) assesses the effectiveness of the authorities provided under subsections (a), (b), and (c) of section 161B of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (as added by this Act) in helping the Nuclear Regulatory Commission fulfill its mission;

(4) makes recommendations to improve the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's strategic workforce management; and

(5) makes recommendations with respect to whether Congress should enhance, modify, or discontinue the authorities provided under subsections (a), (b), and (c) of section 161B of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (as added by this Act).

(c) ANNUAL SOLICITATION FOR NUCLEAR REGULATOR APPRENTICESHIP NETWORK APPLICATIONS.—The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, on an annual basis, shall solicit applications for the Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network.

Subtitle B—Fee Reduction

SEC. 111. ADVANCED REACTOR FEE REDUCTION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 3 of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215 note; Public Law 115-439) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (15) as paragraphs (3), (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (14), (15), (16), (17), (18), (19), and (20), respectively;

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

“(2) **ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR APPLICANT.**—The term ‘advanced nuclear reactor applicant’ means an entity that has submitted to the Commission an application for a license for an advanced nuclear reactor under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).”;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(4) **ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR PREAPPLICANT.**—The term ‘advanced nuclear reactor preapplicant’ means an entity that has submitted to the Commission a licensing project plan for the purposes of submitting a future application for a license for an advanced nuclear reactor under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).”;

“(5) **AGENCY SUPPORT.**—The term ‘agency support’ has the meaning given the term ‘agency support (corporate support and the IG)’ in section 170.3 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).”;

(4) by inserting after paragraph (11) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(12) **MISSION-DIRECT PROGRAM SALARIES AND BENEFITS.**—The term ‘mission-direct program salaries and benefits’ has the meaning given such term in section 170.3 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).”;

“(13) **MISSION-INDIRECT PROGRAM SUPPORT.**—The term ‘mission-indirect program support’ has the meaning given such term in section 170.3 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).”;

(b) **EXCLUDED ACTIVITIES.**—Section 102(b)(1)(B) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215(b)(1)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) The total costs of mission-indirect program support and agency support that, under paragraph (2)(B)(ii), may not be included in the professional hourly rate charged for fees assessed and collected from advanced nuclear reactor applicants.”;

“(v) The total costs of mission-indirect program support and agency support that, under paragraph (2)(C)(ii), may not be included in the professional hourly rate charged for fees assessed and collected from advanced nuclear reactor preapplicants.”;

(c) **FEES FOR SERVICE OR THING OF VALUE.**—Section 102(b) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215(b)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) **FEES FOR SERVICE OR THING OF VALUE.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—In accordance with section 9701 of title 31, United States Code, the Commission shall assess and collect fees from any person who receives a service or thing of value from the Commission to cover the costs to the Commission of providing the service or thing of value.”;

“(B) **ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR APPLICANTS.**—The professional hourly rate charged for fees assessed and collected from an advanced nuclear reactor applicant under this paragraph relating to the review of a submitted application for an advanced nuclear reactor may not—

“(i) exceed the professional hourly rate for mission-direct program salaries and benefits of the Nuclear Reactor Safety Program; and

“(ii) include the costs of mission-indirect program support and agency support.”;

“(C) **ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR PREAPPLICANTS.**—The professional hourly rate charged for fees assessed and collected from an advanced nuclear reactor

preapplicant under this paragraph relating to the review of submitted materials as described in the licensing project plan of such advanced nuclear reactor preapplicant may not—

“(i) exceed the professional hourly rate for mission-direct program salaries and benefits of the Nuclear Reactor Safety Program; and

“(ii) include the costs of mission-indirect program support and agency support.”;

“(D) **CALCULATION OF HOURLY RATE.**—In this paragraph, the professional hourly rate for mission-direct program salaries and benefits of the Nuclear Reactor Safety Program equals the quotient obtained by dividing—

“(i) the full-time equivalent rate (within the meaning of the document of the Commission entitled ‘FY 2023 Final Fee Rule Work Papers’ (or a successor document)) for mission-direct program salaries and benefits of the Nuclear Reactor Safety Program (as determined by the Commission) for a fiscal year; by

“(ii) the productive hours assumption for that fiscal year, determined in accordance with the formula established in the document referred to in clause (i) (or a successor document).”;

(d) **SUNSET.**—Section 102(f) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215(f)) is amended to read as follows:

“(f) **CESSATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.**—Paragraphs (1)(B)(v) and (2)(C) of subsection (b) shall cease to be effective on September 30, 2029.”;

(e) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2024.

SEC. 112. ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR PRIZE.

Section 103 of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (Public Law 115-439; 132 Stat. 5571) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) **PRIZES FOR ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR LICENSING.**—

“(1) **DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—In this subsection, the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a non-Federal entity; and

“(B) the Tennessee Valley Authority.”;

“(2) **PRIZE FOR ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR LICENSING.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding section 169 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2209) and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary is authorized to make, with respect to each award category described in subparagraph (C), an award in an amount described in subparagraph (B) to the first eligible entity—

“(i) to which the Commission issues an operating license for an advanced nuclear reactor under part 50 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), for which an application has not been approved by the Commission as of the date of enactment of this subsection; or

“(ii) for which the Commission makes a finding described in section 52.103(g) of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), with respect to a combined license for an advanced nuclear reactor—

“(I) that is issued under subpart C of part 52 of that title (or successor regulations); and

“(II) for which an application has not been approved by the Commission as of the date of enactment of this subsection.”;

“(B) **AMOUNT OF AWARD.**—Subject to paragraph (3), an award under subparagraph (A) shall be in an amount equal to the total amount assessed by the Commission and collected under section 102(b)(2) from the eligible entity receiving the award for costs relating to the issuance of the license described in that subparagraph, including, as

applicable, costs relating to the issuance of an associated construction permit described in section 50.23 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), or early site permit (as defined in section 52.1 of that title (or successor regulations)).

“(C) **AWARD CATEGORIES.**—An award under subparagraph (A) may be made for—

“(i) the first advanced nuclear reactor for which the Commission—

“(I) issues a license in accordance with clause (i) of subparagraph (A); or

“(II) makes a finding in accordance with clause (ii) of that subparagraph;

“(ii) an advanced nuclear reactor that—

“(I) uses isotopes derived from spent nuclear fuel (as defined in section 2 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 (42 U.S.C. 10101)) or depleted uranium as fuel for the advanced nuclear reactor; and

“(II) is the first advanced nuclear reactor described in subclause (I) for which the Commission—

“(aa) issues a license in accordance with clause (i) of subparagraph (A); or

“(bb) makes a finding in accordance with clause (ii) of that subparagraph;

“(iii) an advanced nuclear reactor that—

“(I) is a nuclear integrated energy system—

“(aa) that is composed of 2 or more co-located or jointly operated subsystems of energy generation, energy storage, or other technologies;

“(bb) in which not fewer than 1 subsystem described in item (aa) is a nuclear energy system; and

“(cc) the purpose of which is—

“(AA) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both the power and nonpower sectors; and

“(BB) to maximize energy production and efficiency; and

“(II) is the first advanced nuclear reactor described in subclause (I) for which the Commission—

“(aa) issues a license in accordance with clause (i) of subparagraph (A); or

“(bb) makes a finding in accordance with clause (ii) of that subparagraph;

“(iv) an advanced reactor that—

“(I) operates flexibly to generate electricity or high temperature process heat for nonelectric applications; and

“(II) is the first advanced nuclear reactor described in subclause (I) for which the Commission—

“(aa) issues a license in accordance with clause (i) of subparagraph (A); or

“(bb) makes a finding in accordance with clause (ii) of that subparagraph; and

“(v) the first advanced nuclear reactor for which the Commission grants approval to load nuclear fuel pursuant to the technology-inclusive regulatory framework established under subsection (a)(4).”;

“(3) **FEDERAL FUNDING LIMITATION.**—

“(A) **EXCLUSION OF TVA FUNDS.**—In this paragraph, the term ‘Federal funds’ does not include funds received under the power program of the Tennessee Valley Authority established pursuant to the Tennessee Valley Authority Act of 1933 (16 U.S.C. 831 et seq.).

“(B) **LIMITATION ON AMOUNTS EXPENDED.**—An award under this subsection shall not exceed the total amount expended (excluding any expenditures made with Federal funds received for the applicable project and an amount equal to the minimum cost-share required under section 988 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16352)) by the eligible entity receiving the award for licensing costs relating to the project for which the award is made.”;

“(C) **REPAYMENTS AND DIVIDENDS NOT REQUIRED.**—Notwithstanding section 9104(a)(4) of title 31, United States Code, or any other

provision of law, an eligible entity that received an award under this subsection shall not be required—

“(i) to repay that award or any part of that award; or

“(ii) to pay a dividend, interest, or other similar payment based on the sum of that award.”.

Subtitle C—Siting, Licensing, and Oversight Reviews

SEC. 121. MODERNIZATION OF NUCLEAR REACTOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (in this section referred to as the “Commission”) shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report on the efforts of the Commission to facilitate efficient, timely, and predictable environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications, including through expanded use of categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and generic environmental impact statements.

(b) REPORT.—In completing the report under subsection (a), the Commission shall—

(1) describe the actions the Commission will take to implement the amendments to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) made by section 321 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023;

(2) consider—

(A) using through adoption, incorporation by reference, or other appropriate means, categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and environmental impact statements prepared by other Federal agencies to streamline environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(B) using categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and environmental impact statements prepared by the Commission to streamline environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(C) using mitigated findings of no significant impact in environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission to reduce the impact of a proposed action to a level that is not significant;

(D) the extent to which the Commission may rely on prior studies or analyses prepared by Federal, State, and local governmental permitting agencies to streamline environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(E) opportunities to coordinate the development of environmental assessments and environmental impact statements with other Federal agencies to avoid duplicative environmental reviews and to streamline environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(F) opportunities to streamline formal and informal consultations and coordination with other Federal, State, and local governmental permitting agencies during environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(G) opportunities to streamline the Commission's analyses of alternatives, including the Commission's analysis of alternative sites, in environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications by the Commission;

(H) establishing new categorical exclusions that could be applied to actions relating to new nuclear reactors applications;

(I) amending section 51.20(b) of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, to allow the Commission to determine on a case-specific basis whether an environmental assessment (rather than an environmental impact statement or supplemental environmental impact statement) is appropriate for a particular nuclear reactor application, including in pro-

ceedings in which the Commission relies upon a generic environmental impact statement for advanced nuclear reactors;

(J) authorizing the use of an applicant's environmental impact statement as the Commission's draft environmental impact statement, consistent with section 107(f) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336a(f));

(K) opportunities to adopt online and digital technologies, including technologies that would allow applicants and cooperating agencies to upload documents and coordinate with the Commission to edit documents in real time, that would streamline communications between—

(i) the Commission and applicants; and

(ii) the Commission and other relevant cooperating agencies;

(L) in addition to implementing measures under subsection (c), potential revisions to part 51 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, and relevant Commission guidance documents, to—

(i) facilitate efficient, timely, and predictable environmental reviews of nuclear reactor applications;

(ii) assist decision-making about relevant environmental issues;

(iii) maintain openness with the public;

(iv) meet obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(v) reduce burdens on licensees, applicants, and the Commission; and

(3) include a schedule for promulgating the rule required under subsection (c).

(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 2 years after the submission of the report under subsection (a), the Commission shall promulgate a final rule implementing, to the maximum extent practicable, measures considered by the Commission under subsection (b)(2) that are necessary to streamline the Commission's review of nuclear reactor applications.

SEC. 122. NUCLEAR FOR BROWNFIELD SITES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BROWNFIELD SITE.—The term “brownfield site” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601).

(2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(3) COVERED SITE.—The term “covered site” means a brownfield site, a retired fossil fuel site, or a site that is both a retired fossil fuel site and a brownfield site.

(4) PRODUCTION FACILITY.—The term “production facility” has the meaning given the term in section 11 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2014).

(5) RETIRED FOSSIL FUEL SITE.—The term “retired fossil fuel site” means the site of 1 or more fossil fuel electric generation facilities that are retired or scheduled to retire, including multiunit facilities that are partially shut down.

(6) UTILIZATION FACILITY.—The term “utilization facility” has the meaning given the term in section 11 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2014).

(b) IDENTIFICATION OF REGULATORY ISSUES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall evaluate the extent to which modification of regulations, guidance, or policy is needed to enable efficient, timely, and predictable licensing reviews for, and to support the oversight of, production facilities or utilization facilities at covered sites.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Commission shall consider how licensing reviews for production facilities or utilization facilities at covered sites may be expedited by—

(A) siting and operating a production facility or a utilization facility at or near existing site infrastructure to support the reuse of such infrastructure, including—

(i) electric switchyard components and transmission infrastructure;

(ii) heat-sink components;

(iii) steam cycle components;

(iv) roads;

(v) railroad access; and

(vi) water availability;

(B) using early site permits;

(C) using plant parameter envelopes or similar standardized site parameters on a portion of a larger site; and

(D) using a standardized application for similar sites.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 14 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing any regulations, guidance, and policies evaluated under paragraph (1).

(c) LICENSING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall, based on the evaluation under subsection (b)—

(A) develop and implement strategies to enable efficient, timely, and predictable licensing reviews for, and to support the oversight of, production facilities or utilization facilities at covered sites; and

(B) initiate a rulemaking to enable efficient, timely, and predictable licensing reviews for, and to support the oversight of, production facilities or utilization facilities at covered sites.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), consistent with the mission of the Commission, the Commission shall consider matters relating to—

(A) the use of existing site infrastructure;

(B) existing emergency preparedness organizations and planning;

(C) the availability of historical site-specific environmental data;

(D) previously completed environmental reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(E) activities associated with the potential decommissioning of facilities or decontamination and remediation at covered sites; and

(F) community engagement and historical experience with energy production.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report describing the actions taken by the Commission under subsection (c)(1).

SEC. 123. ADVANCEMENT OF NUCLEAR REGULATORY OVERSIGHT.

(a) IMPLEMENTING LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on actions taken by the Commission during the public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) on January 31, 2020, with respect to COVID-19.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) identify any processes, procedures, and other regulatory policies that the Commission revised or temporarily suspended during the public health emergency described in paragraph (1);

(B) examine how any revision or temporary suspension of a process, procedure, or other

regulatory policy identified under subparagraph (A) affected the ability of the Commission to license and regulate the civilian use of radioactive materials in the United States to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment;

(C) discuss lessons learned from the matters described in subparagraph (B);

(D) list actions that the Commission has taken or will take to incorporate into the licensing and oversight activities of the Commission, without compromising the mission of the Commission, the lessons described in subparagraph (C); and

(E) describe when the actions listed under subparagraph (D) were implemented or may be implemented.

(b) **ADVANCING EFFICIENT, RISK-INFORMED OVERSIGHT AND INSPECTIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall develop and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that identifies specific improvements to the nuclear reactor and materials oversight and inspection programs carried out pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 that the Commission may implement to maximize the efficiency of such programs through, where appropriate, the use of risk-informed, performance-based procedures, expanded incorporation of information technologies, and staff training.

(2) **STAKEHOLDER INPUT.**—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Commission shall, as appropriate, seek input from—

- (A) the Secretary of Energy;
- (B) the National Laboratories;
- (C) the nuclear energy industry; and
- (D) nongovernmental organizations that are related to nuclear energy.

(3) **CONTENTS.**—The report submitted under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) assess specific elements of oversight and inspections that may be modified by the use of technology, improved planning, and continually updated risk-informed, performance-based assessment, including—

- (i) use of travel resources;
- (ii) planning and preparation for inspections, including entrance and exit meetings with licensees;
- (iii) document collection and preparation, including consideration of whether nuclear reactor data are accessible prior to onsite visits or requests to the licensee and that document requests are timely and within the scope of inspections;
- (iv) the cross-cutting issues program; and
- (v) the scope of event reporting required by licensees to ensure decisions are risk-informed;

(B) identify and assess measures to improve oversight and inspections, including—

- (i) elimination of areas of duplicative or otherwise unnecessary activities;
- (ii) increased use of templates in documenting inspection results; and
- (iii) periodic training of Commission staff and leadership on the application of risk-informed criteria for—

- (I) inspection planning and assessments;
- (II) agency decision making processes on the application of regulations and guidance; and

(III) the application of the Commission's standard of reasonable assurance of adequate protection;

(C) assess measures to advance risk-informed procedures, including—

- (i) increased use of inspection approaches that balance the level of resources commensurate with safety significance;
- (ii) increased review of the use of inspection program resources based on licensee performance;

(iii) expansion of modern information technology, including artificial intelligence and machine learning to risk inform oversight and inspection decisions; and

(iv) updating the Differing Professional Views or Opinions process to ensure any impacts on agency decisions and schedules are commensurate with the safety significance of the differing opinion;

(D) assess the ability of the Commission, consistent with its obligations to provide reasonable assurance of adequate protection of health and safety pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, to enable licensee innovations that may advance nuclear reactor operational efficiency and safety, including the criteria of the Commission for timely acceptance of licensee adoption of advanced technologies, including digital technologies;

(E) identify recommendations resulting from the assessments described in subparagraphs (A) through (D);

(F) identify specific actions that the Commission will take to incorporate into the training, inspection, oversight, and licensing activities, and regulations of the Commission, without compromising the mission of the Commission, the recommendations identified under subparagraph (E); and

(G) describe when the actions identified under subparagraph (F) may be implemented.

(c) **OFFICE AND FACILITY SPACE REVIEW.**—

(1) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

- (A) review office and other facility space requirements of the Commission; and
- (B) submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report, with recommendations, on the results of such review.

(2) **CONTENTS.**—The report described in paragraph (1) shall include—

- (A) an examination of—
 - (i) the costs associated with the headquarters, regional offices, and technical training center of the Commission, including examination of—

(I) costs that do not support the Commission's mission, including rent subsidies for other Federal agencies; and

(II) opportunities to reduce future costs through reduction in unnecessary office space, consolidation of offices, use of advanced information technology, or any other appropriate means; and

(ii) current and anticipated office and facility requirements to efficiently accomplish the mission of the Commission; and

(B) recommendations to Congress, the Commission, and the General Services Administration for actions that may assist in reducing office and facility costs to licensees and taxpayers.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

(2) **COMMISSION.**—The term “Commission” means the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(3) **LICENSEE.**—The term “licensee” means a person that holds a license issued under section 103 or section 104 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2133; 2134).

TITLE II—NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT

SEC. 201. ADVANCED NUCLEAR DEPLOYMENT.

(a) **ENABLING PREPARATIONS FOR ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTOR DEMONSTRATIONS ON FEDERAL SITES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 102(b)(1)(B) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215(b)(1)(B)) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(vi) Costs for—

“(I) activities to review and approve or disapprove an application for an early site permit (as defined in section 52.1 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation)) to demonstrate an advanced nuclear reactor on a Department of Energy site or any site or installation that is critical national security infrastructure (as defined in section 327(d) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019); and

“(II) pre-application activities relating to an early site permit (as so defined) to demonstrate an advanced nuclear reactor on a Department of Energy site or any site or installation that is critical national security infrastructure (as defined in section 327(d) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019).”

(2) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on October 1, 2024.

(b) **REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR MICRO-REACTORS.**—

(1) **MICRO-REACTOR LICENSING.**—The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (in this subsection referred to as the “Commission”) shall—

(A) not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, develop risk-informed and performance-based strategies and guidance to license and regulate micro-reactors pursuant to section 103 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2133), including strategies and guidance for—

- (i) staffing and operations;
- (ii) oversight and inspections;
- (iii) safeguards and security;
- (iv) emergency preparedness;
- (v) risk analysis methods, including alternatives to probabilistic risk assessments;
- (vi) decommissioning funding assurance methods that permit the use of design- and site-specific cost estimates;
- (vii) the transportation of fueled micro-reactors; and

(viii) siting, including in relation to—

(I) the population density criterion limit described in the policy issue paper on population-related siting considerations for advanced reactors dated May 8, 2020, and numbered SECY-20-0045;

(II) licensing mobile deployment; and

(III) environmental reviews; and

(B) not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, implement, as appropriate, the strategies and guidance developed under subparagraph (A)—

(i) within the existing regulatory framework;

(ii) through the technology-inclusive, regulatory framework to be established under section 103(a)(4)(A) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2133 note; Public Law 115-439); or

(iii) through a pending or new rulemaking.

(2) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—In developing and implementing strategies and guidance under paragraph (1), the Commission shall consider—

(A) the unique characteristics of micro-reactors, including characteristics relating to—

- (i) physical size;
- (ii) design simplicity; and
- (iii) source term;

(B) opportunities to address redundancies and inefficiencies;

(C) opportunities to consolidate review phases and reduce transitions between review teams;

(D) opportunities to establish integrated review teams to ensure continuity throughout the review process; and

(E) other relevant considerations discussed in the policy issue paper on policy and licensing considerations related to micro-reactors dated October 6, 2020, and numbered SECY-20-0093.

(3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Commission shall consult with—

- (A) the Secretary of Energy;
- (B) the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate;
- (C) micro-reactor technology developers; and
- (D) other stakeholders.

(c) EXPEDITED SUBSEQUENT COMBINED LICENSES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with this subsection, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (referred to in this subsection as the “Commission”) shall establish and carry out an expedited procedure for issuing a combined license pursuant to section 185 b. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2235).

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—To qualify for the expedited procedure under paragraph (1), an applicant—

(A) shall submit a combined license application for a new nuclear reactor based off a previously licensed design;

(B) shall propose to construct the new nuclear reactor on or adjacent to a site on which a nuclear reactor already operates or previously operated; and

(C) may not be subject to an order of the Commission to suspend or revoke a license under section 2.202 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulation).

(3) EXPEDITED PROCEDURE.—With respect to a combined license for which the applicant has satisfied the requirements described in paragraph (2), the Commission shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

(A) not later than 1 year after the application is accepted for docketing, issue a draft environmental impact statement;

(B) not later than 18 months after the application is accepted for docketing—

(i) complete the technical review process; and

(ii) issue a safety evaluation report and final environmental impact statement;

(C) not later than 2 years after the application is accepted for docketing, complete any necessary public licensing hearings and related processes; and

(D) not later than 25 months after the application is accepted for docketing, make a final decision on whether to issue the combined license.

(4) PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING.—

(A) DELAYS IN ISSUANCE.—Not later than 30 days after the applicable deadline, the Executive Director for Operations of the Commission shall inform the Commission of any failure to meet a deadline under paragraph (3).

(B) DELAYS IN ISSUANCE EXCEEDING 90 DAYS.—If any deadline under paragraph (3) is not met by the date that is 90 days after the applicable date required under such paragraph, the Commission shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report describing the delay, including a detailed explanation accounting for the delay and a plan for completion of the applicable action.

(d) PILOT PROGRAM FOR NUCLEAR POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle B of title VI of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58; 119 Stat. 782) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 639A. LONG-TERM NUCLEAR POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT PILOT PROGRAM.

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary may establish a pilot program under which the Secretary may enter into at least one long-term power purchase agreement for power generated by a commercial nuclear reactor with respect to which an initial operating license is issued by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission after January 1, 2024.

“(b) CONSULTATION.—In establishing a pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall consult with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies that may benefit from purchasing nuclear power for a period of longer than 10 years, including the Secretary of Defense.

“(c) PERIOD OF AGREEMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an agreement entered into pursuant to this section to purchase power from a commercial nuclear reactor shall be made for a period of at least 10 years and not more than 40 years.

“(d) PRIORITY.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall prioritize entering into long-term power purchase agreements for power generated by first-of-a-kind or early deployment commercial nuclear reactors that will provide reliable and resilient power—

“(1) to high-value assets for national security purposes; or

“(2) for other purposes that the Secretary determines are in the national interest, including for remote off-grid scenarios or grid-connected scenarios that provide capabilities commonly known as ‘islanding power capabilities’ during an emergency.

“(e) RATES.—A long-term power purchase agreement entered into under this section may not be at a rate that is higher than the average market rate, unless the agreement is for power generated by a commercial nuclear reactor described in subsection (d).

“(f) ADVANCED FUNDING.—The Secretary—

“(1) may not enter into any power purchase agreement under this section unless funds are specifically provided for such purposes in advance in appropriations Acts enacted after the date of enactment of this section; and

“(2) may only enter into such a power purchase agreement if the full extent of anticipated costs stemming from such agreement is recorded as an obligation up front and in full at the time such agreement is made.”.

(2) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58; 119 Stat. 594) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 639 the following:

“Sec. 639A. Long-term nuclear power purchase agreement pilot program.”.

SEC. 202. GLOBAL NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

(a) GLOBAL NUCLEAR ENERGY ASSESSMENT STUDY.—

(1) STUDY REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Commission, shall conduct a study on the global status of—

(A) the civilian nuclear energy industry; and

(B) the supply chains of the civilian nuclear energy industry.

(2) CONTENTS.—The study conducted under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) information on the status of the civilian nuclear energy industry, the long-term risks to such industry, and the basis for such risks;

(B) information on how the use of the civilian nuclear energy industry, relative to

other types of energy industries, can reduce the emission of criteria pollutants and carbon dioxide;

(C) information on the role the United States civilian nuclear energy industry plays in United States foreign policy;

(D) information on the importance of the United States civilian nuclear energy industry to countries that are allied to the United States;

(E) information on how the United States may collaborate with such countries in developing, deploying, and investing in nuclear technology;

(F) information on how foreign countries use nuclear energy when crafting and implementing their own foreign policy, including such use by foreign countries that are strategic competitors;

(G) an evaluation of how nuclear non-proliferation and security efforts and nuclear energy safety are affected by the involvement of the United States in—

(i) international markets; and

(ii) setting civilian nuclear energy industry standards;

(H) an evaluation of how industries in the United States, other than the civilian nuclear energy industry, benefit from the generation of electricity by nuclear power plants;

(I) information on utilities and companies in the United States that are involved in the civilian nuclear energy supply chain, including, with respect to such utilities and companies—

(i) financial challenges;

(ii) nuclear liability issues;

(iii) foreign strategic competition; and

(iv) risks to continued operation; and

(J) recommendations for how the United States may—

(i) develop a national strategy to increase the role nuclear energy plays in diplomacy and strategic energy policy;

(ii) develop a strategy to mitigate foreign competitor's utilization of their civilian nuclear energy industries in diplomacy;

(iii) align its nuclear energy policy with national security objectives; and

(iv) remove regulatory barriers to the development of the United States civilian nuclear energy supply chain.

(3) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 6 months after the study is conducted under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Energy shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report, including a classified annex as necessary, on the results of such study.

(b) PROGRAM TO TRAIN AND SHARE EXPERIENCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Commission, shall develop and carry out a program under which the Secretary of Energy shall train foreign nuclear energy experts and standardize practices.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the program developed under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Energy shall—

(A) issue guidance for best safety practices in the global civilian nuclear energy industry based on practices established in the United States;

(B) train foreign nuclear energy experts on the operation and safety and security practices used by the United States civilian nuclear energy industry;

(C) review global supply chain risks for foreign civilian nuclear energy industries;

(D) identify weaknesses and concerns found in foreign civilian nuclear energy industries; and

(E) establish partnerships with foreign countries that have developed or are developing civilian nuclear energy industries.

(3) FOREIGN NUCLEAR ENERGY EXPERT.—In this subsection, the term “foreign nuclear energy expert” does not include a person who is from a country—

(A) in which intellectual property theft is legal;

(B) that takes actions to undermine the civilian nuclear energy industry or other critical industries of the United States; or

(C) which the Secretary of Energy determines is inimical to the interest of the United States.

(c) INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR REACTOR EXPORT AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES.—

(1) COORDINATION.—The Commission shall—

(A) coordinate all work of the Commission relating to—

(i) issuing a license for the import or export of a nuclear reactor under section 103 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2133); and

(ii) international regulatory cooperation and assistance relating to nuclear reactors; and

(B) support—

(i) the consideration of international technical standards to assist the design, licensing, and construction of advanced nuclear systems;

(ii) efforts to help build competent nuclear regulatory organizations and legal frameworks in foreign countries that are seeking to develop civilian nuclear energy industries; and

(iii) exchange programs and training provided in coordination with the Secretary of State to foreign countries relating to civilian nuclear energy industry regulation and oversight to improve nuclear technology licensing.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In supporting exchange programs and training under paragraph (1)(B)(iii), the Commission shall consult with—

(A) the Secretary of Energy;

(B) the Secretary of State;

(C) the National Laboratories;

(D) the private sector; and

(E) institutions of higher education.

(3) NUCLEAR REACTOR EXPORT AND INNOVATION BRANCH.—The Commission may establish within the Office of International Programs of the Commission a branch, to be known as the “International Nuclear Reactor Export and Innovation Branch”, to carry out the nuclear reactor export and innovation activities described in paragraph (1) as the Commission determines appropriate.

(4) EXCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES FROM THE FEE BASE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 102 of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2215) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

“(4) INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR REACTOR EXPORT AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES.—The Commission shall identify in the annual budget justification international nuclear reactor export and innovation activities described in section 202(c)(1) of the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)(1)(B), as amended by the preceding provisions of this Act, by adding at the end the following:

“(vii) Costs for international nuclear reactor export and innovation activities described in section 202(c)(1) of the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.”.

(B) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subparagraph (A) shall take effect on October 1, 2024.

(d) DENIAL OF CERTAIN DOMESTIC LICENSES FOR NATIONAL SECURITY PURPOSES.—

(1) DEFINITION OF COVERED FUEL.—In this subsection, the term “covered fuel” means enriched uranium that is fabricated into fuel assemblies for nuclear reactors by an entity that—

(A) is owned or controlled by the Government of the Russian Federation or the Government of the People’s Republic of China; or

(B) is organized under the laws of, or otherwise subject to the jurisdiction of, the Russian Federation or the People’s Republic of China.

(2) PROHIBITION ON UNLICENSED POSSESSION OR OWNERSHIP OF COVERED FUEL.—Unless specifically authorized by the Commission in a license issued under section 53 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2073), no person subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission may possess or own covered fuel.

(3) LICENSE TO POSSESS OR OWN COVERED FUEL.—

(A) CONSULTATION REQUIRED PRIOR TO ISSUANCE.—The Commission shall not issue a license to possess or own covered fuel under section 53 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2073) unless the Commission has first consulted with the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State before issuing the license.

(B) PROHIBITION ON ISSUANCE OF LICENSE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (iii), a license to possess or own covered fuel shall not be issued if the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State make the determination described in clause (ii).

(ii) DETERMINATION.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The determination referred to in clause (i) is a determination that possession or ownership, as applicable, of covered fuel poses a threat to the national security of the United States that adversely impacts the physical and economic security of the United States.

(II) JOINT DETERMINATION.—A determination described in subclause (I) shall be jointly made by the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State.

(III) TIMELINE.—

(aa) NOTICE OF APPLICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Commission receives an application for a license to possess or own covered fuel, the Commission shall notify the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State of the application.

(bb) DETERMINATION.—The Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State shall have a period of 180 days, beginning on the date on which the Commission notifies the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State under item (aa) of an application for a license to possess or own covered fuel, in which to make the determination described in subclause (I).

(cc) COMMISSION NOTIFICATION.—On making the determination described in subclause (I), the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State shall immediately notify the Commission.

(dd) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State notify the Commission under item (cc), the Commission shall notify the appropriate committees of Congress of the determination.

(ee) PUBLIC NOTICE.—Not later than 15 days after the date on which the Commission notifies Congress under item (dd) of a determination made under subclause (I), the Commission shall make that determination publicly available.

(iii) EFFECT OF NO DETERMINATION.—The prohibition described in clause (i) shall not apply if the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of State do not make the determina-

tion described in clause (ii) by the date described in subclause (III)(bb) of that clause.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means each of the following:

(A) The Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

(B) The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(C) The Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

(D) The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

(E) The Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

SEC. 203. AMERICAN NUCLEAR COMPETITIVENESS.

(a) PROCESS FOR REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF PART 810 GENERALLY AUTHORIZED DESIGNATIONS.—

(1) IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF FACTORS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, shall identify and evaluate factors, other than agreements for cooperation entered into in accordance with section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2153), that may be used to determine a country’s generally authorized destination status under part 810 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, and to list such country as a generally authorized destination in Appendix A to part 810 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) PROCESS UPDATE.—The Secretary of Energy shall review and, as appropriate, update the Department of Energy’s process for determining a country’s generally authorized destination status under part 810 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, and for listing such country as a generally authorized destination in Appendix A to part 810 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, taking into consideration, and, as appropriate, incorporating factors identified and evaluated under paragraph (1).

(3) REVISIONS TO LIST.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, and at least once every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary of Energy shall, in accordance with any process updated pursuant to this subsection, review the list in Appendix A to part 810 of title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, and amend such list as appropriate.

(b) LICENSING DOMESTIC NUCLEAR PROJECTS IN WHICH UNITED STATES ALLIES INVEST.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibitions against issuing certain licenses for utilization facilities to certain aliens, corporations, and other entities described in the second sentence of section 103 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2133(d)) and the second sentence of section 104 d. of that Act (42 U.S.C. 2134(d)) shall not apply to an entity described in paragraph (2) of this subsection if the Nuclear Regulatory Commission determines that issuance of the applicable license to that entity is not inimical to—

(A) the common defense and security; or

(B) the health and safety of the public.

(2) ENTITIES DESCRIBED.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An entity referred to in paragraph (1) is an alien, corporation, or other entity that is owned, controlled, or dominated by—

(i) the government of—

(I) a country, other than a country described in subparagraph (B), that is a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development on the date of enactment of this Act; or

(II) the Republic of India;

(ii) a corporation that is incorporated in a country described in subclause (I) or (II) of clause (i); or

(iii) an alien who is a citizen or national of a country described in subclause (I) or (II) of clause (i).

(B) EXCLUSION.—A country described in this subparagraph is a country—

(i) any department, agency, or instrumentality of the government of which, on the date of enactment of this Act, is subject to sanctions under section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9525); or

(ii) any citizen, national, or entity of which, as of the date of enactment of this Act, is included on the List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons maintained by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury pursuant to sanctions imposed under section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (22 U.S.C. 9525).

(3) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 103 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2133(d)) is amended, in the second sentence, by striking “any any” and inserting “any”.

(4) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this subsection affects the requirements of section 721 of the Defense Production Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. 4565).

(C) LICENSING CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR NONELECTRIC APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (in this subsection referred to as the “Commission”) shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report addressing any unique licensing issues or requirements relating to—

(A) the flexible operation of advanced nuclear reactors, such as ramping power output and switching between electricity generation and nonelectric applications;

(B) the use of advanced nuclear reactors exclusively for nonelectric applications; and

(C) the collocation of advanced nuclear reactors with industrial plants or other facilities.

(2) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Commission shall seek input from—

(A) the Secretary of Energy;

(B) the nuclear energy industry;

(C) technology developers;

(D) the industrial, chemical, and medical sectors;

(E) nongovernmental organizations; and

(F) other public stakeholders.

(3) CONTENTS.—The report under paragraph (1) shall describe—

(A) any unique licensing issues or requirements relating to the matters described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (1), including, with respect to the nonelectric applications referred to in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of that paragraph, any licensing issues or requirements relating to the use of nuclear energy—

(i) for hydrogen or other liquid and gaseous fuel or chemical production;

(ii) for water desalination and wastewater treatment;

(iii) for heat used in industrial processes;

(iv) for district heating;

(v) in relation to energy storage;

(vi) for industrial or medical isotope production; and

(vii) other applications, as identified by the Commission;

(B) options for addressing such issues or requirements—

(i) within the existing regulatory framework;

(ii) through the technology-inclusive, regulatory framework to be established under section 103(a)(4)(A) of the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act (42 U.S.C. 2133 note; Public Law 115-439); or

(iii) through a new rulemaking;

(C) the extent to which Commission action is needed to implement any matter described in the report; and

(D) cost estimates, proposed budgets, and proposed timeframes for implementing risk-informed and performance-based regulatory guidance for licensing advanced nuclear reactors for nonelectric applications.

(d) REPORT ON ADVANCED METHODS OF MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (in this subsection referred to as the “Commission”) shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report on advanced methods of manufacturing and construction for nuclear energy projects.

(2) STAKEHOLDER INPUT.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Commission shall seek input from—

(A) the Secretary of Energy;

(B) the nuclear energy industry;

(C) the National Laboratories;

(D) institutions of higher education;

(E) nuclear and manufacturing technology developers;

(F) the manufacturing and construction industries;

(G) standards development organizations;

(H) labor unions;

(I) nongovernmental organizations; and

(J) other public stakeholders.

(3) CONTENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The report under paragraph (1) shall—

(i) examine any unique licensing issues or requirements relating to the use, for nuclear energy projects, of—

(I) advanced manufacturing techniques; and

(II) advanced construction techniques;

(ii) examine—

(I) the requirements for nuclear-grade components in manufacturing and construction for nuclear energy projects;

(II) opportunities to use standard materials, parts, or components in manufacturing and construction for nuclear energy applications; and

(III) opportunities to use standard materials that are in compliance with existing codes and standards to provide acceptable approaches to support or encapsulate new materials that do not yet have applicable codes or standards;

(iii) identify safety aspects of advanced manufacturing processes and advanced construction techniques that are not addressed by existing codes and standards, so that generic guidance for nuclear energy projects may be updated or created as necessary by the Commission;

(iv) identify options for addressing the issues, requirements, and opportunities examined under clauses (i) and (ii)—

(I) within the existing regulatory framework; or

(II) through a new rulemaking; and

(v) describe the extent to which Commission action is needed to implement any matter described in the report.

(B) COST ESTIMATES, BUDGETS, AND TIMEFRAMES.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include cost estimates, proposed budgets, and proposed timeframes for implementing risk-informed and performance-based regulatory guidance for advanced man-

ufacturing and construction for nuclear energy projects.

(e) EXTENSION OF THE PRICE-ANDERSON ACT.—

(1) EXTENSION.—Section 170 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2210) (commonly known as the “Price-Anderson Act”) is amended by striking “December 31, 2025” each place it appears and inserting “December 31, 2065”.

(2) LIABILITY.—Section 170 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2210) (commonly known as the “Price-Anderson Act”) is amended—

(A) in subsection d. (5), by striking “\$500,000,000” and inserting “\$2,000,000,000”; and

(B) in subsection e. (4), by striking “\$500,000,000” and inserting “\$2,000,000,000”.

(3) REPORT.—Section 170 p. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2210(p)) (commonly known as the “Price-Anderson Act”) is amended by striking “December 31, 2021” and inserting “December 31, 2061”.

(4) DEFINITION OF NUCLEAR INCIDENT.—Section 11 q. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2014(q)) is amended, in the second proviso, by striking “if such occurrence” and all that follows through “United States:” and inserting a colon.

(f) RISK POOLING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.—

(1) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall carry out a review of, and submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report on, the Secretary of Energy's actions with respect to the program described in section 934(e) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17373(e)).

(2) CONTENTS.—The report described in paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) an evaluation of the Secretary of Energy's actions to determine the risk-informed assessment formula under section 934(e)(2)(C) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17373(e)(2)(C)); and

(B) a review of the Secretary of Energy's methodology to collect information to determine and implement the formula.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAL-LONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act. I first thank my colleague and friend, the ranking member of the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee, for leading this effort with me, Congresswoman DIANA DEGETTE.

Madam Speaker, this is a package of nuclear bills and is comprised of the

work of many members of the Committee on Energy and Commerce on both sides of the aisle. I thank them for their work in advancing the use of nuclear energy here in the United States.

The Atomic Energy Advancement Act will advance durable, bipartisan policy that will expand nuclear energy and its many benefits for the Nation, while maintaining the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's global gold standard for safety.

Our goal is to bring America's nuclear promise back into alignment with the goals that Congress established when passing the Atomic Energy Act. This ushered in the age of the peaceful use of the atom, demonstrating American leadership around the world and the amazing benefits of nuclear power.

The NRC Mission Alignment Act provision in this bill, which I authored, does just that. It directs the NRC to update its mission statement to include that its licensing and regulation of nuclear energy activities will be conducted in a manner that is efficient and does not unnecessarily limit the potential of nuclear energy.

The NRC should not be an impediment but rather a facilitator of nuclear advancement in America.

There are many provisions in this bill that modernize the NRC and advance nuclear technology deployment, including American technology exports. For example, the bill requires the NRC to provide efficient, timely, and predictable reviews; strengthens the NRC workforce to address the new technologies coming down the pike; reduces hourly fee rates for advanced nuclear reactor licenses; avoids duplicative environmental reviews; updates the DOE's nuclear expert reviews; and extends the critical liability protections necessary for nuclear investment.

Now more than ever, it is essential that America lead in nuclear energy, especially as our adversaries work actively to undercut our strength. Russia and China are seeking to dominate the nuclear markets and supply chains for these technologies. America can and must continue to set the global nuclear standard, and the Atomic Energy Advancement Act will ensure that we do.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, as well as all who have had input on this bipartisan legislation. I thank them for their work and dedication.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, February 6, 2024.

Hon. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS,
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR RODGERS: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the text of H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act, and incorporating requested edits. I agree that Foreign Affairs

may be discharged from further consideration of the bill, so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

This agreement is made with the understanding that it does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, or prejudice our jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future.

I would appreciate it if you could include this letter in your committee report on the bill, or place it into the Record during Floor consideration. I look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2024.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Wash-
ington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 6544, the "Atomic Energy Advancement Act." I appreciate your willingness to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I agree that your decision to forgo action on this bill does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, or prejudice that Committee's jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future.

As you requested, I will include a copy of our exchange of letters in the Committee on Energy and Commerce's report on H.R. 6544, and I will place it in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Thank you again for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS,
Chair.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2024.

Hon. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS,
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR RODGERS: I am writing concerning H.R. 6544, the "Atomic Energy Advancement Act", which was referred primarily to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, with an additional referral to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

H.R. 6544 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done based on our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2024.

Hon. FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LUCAS: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 6544, the "Atomic Energy Advancement Act." I appreciate your willingness to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor.

I agree that your decision to forgo action on this bill does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, or prejudice that Committee's jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future.

As you requested, I will include a copy of our exchange of letters in the Committee on Energy and Commerce's report on H.R. 6544, and I will place it in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Thank you again for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS,
Chair.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act. This bill makes important changes to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ensure that our Nation will be able to license the advanced nuclear reactors that could play a vital role in combating the climate crisis.

H.R. 6544 will ensure that developers of advanced reactors are not asked to pay more than their fair share of their licensing costs. It will also help create commonsense pathways to site nuclear reactors on brownfield sites and sites that already have a nuclear reactor. Most importantly, it will do these things while ensuring that nothing about the NRC's core mission of safety is compromised.

Madam Speaker, the legislation will also help the NRC attract and retain staff, which is critical since the Commission needs to be at full capacity to license the fleet of new reactors that will apply for licenses over the next decade.

This was a particularly important provision championed by Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee Ranking Member DEGETTE, and I am very happy that it was included in this package.

I also thank Chair DUNCAN for the bipartisan way in which this package of bills was assembled. This is how Congress should always work. We held bipartisan oversight hearings, issued a joint request for information, had a legislative hearing to solicit feedback on the proposals, and eventually moved the legislation through committee, with Democrats and Republicans working together every step of the way. As a result, the bill before us today is much stronger than the bill that was first introduced.

The bill is certainly not perfect. It is a product of compromise, and like all

compromises, no one got everything they wanted. Further compromise will be necessary as we work together with the Senate to find a path forward to get this bill to the President's desk.

Madam Speaker, this is a strong bill that will protect communities while unlocking our Nation's nuclear potential. It will help lower emissions and ensure that new nuclear plants have a place in our Nation's energy economy, all while ensuring protection of public health and safety. I hope it is something all Members can support.

Madam Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, Ranking Member PALLONE and his staff have been very good to work with the majority staff on this bill, and I thank them for that.

Last year, when I was given the opportunity to chair the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee, Chairwoman CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS and I had a lot of talk about nuclear energy. This is a culmination of a lot of that initial discussion.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS), the chair of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.

We have worked very hard, and most agree that a robust and growing nuclear industry is critical for reducing emissions and providing reliable and affordable clean energy to Americans.

Nuclear energy can help us build durable, economic, and strategic relationships around the world, especially as the influence of China and Russia in this industry grows. We know our allies are eager for American leadership and technology, and our nuclear industry is ready to lead.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has a rich history of plowing the hard ground necessary to legislate, coming together on solutions that improve people's lives and that make our country stronger and prosperous.

H.R. 6544 continues that leadership, and I am grateful for the leadership of the chairman of the subcommittee, JEFF DUNCAN, as well as the ranking member, DIANA DEGETTE, and the ranking member of the full committee, FRANK PALLONE, for working together so that we can move this legislation forward, helping to maintain a robust and growing nuclear industry, which is vital to delivering reliable, affordable, and clean energy to all Americans.

This much-needed modernization of our regulatory framework will restore America's nuclear dominance; encourage innovation; enable industry to deploy safe, reliable nuclear energy; and

usher in a new era of U.S. energy leadership.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN), a member of the committee.

Mrs. TRAHAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue as ranking member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation, in particular, the important changes it makes to how we regulate commercial fusion energy.

Last spring, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission took an important vote to regulate commercial fusion energy under its existing regulatory framework—specifically, the byproduct materials framework. This was a critical step toward unlocking commercialized fusion energy, and it was made possible by a recognition that fusion does not need to be regulated the same way as fission.

Since then, the Congressional Fusion Energy Caucus, which I have the honor of co-chairing alongside Representatives DON BEYER, JAY OBERNOLTE, and CHUCK FLEISCHMANN, put pen to paper on the Fusion Energy Act, which will codify the Commission's decision and provide the fusion industry the regulatory certainty that it needs to continue pursuing their innovative research and development.

During consideration of this package in December, we offered the Fusion Energy Act as an amendment, which was adopted unanimously and is included in this legislation today.

I cannot overstate the importance of passing this package because fusion is the game changer. A future with fusion means thousands of good-paying, family-sustaining, clean energy jobs that we will create along the way.

Fusion unlocks a future where energy production is no longer tied to access to a resource. It means an endless supply of baseload clean energy, without any emissions. It means dictators like Vladimir Putin won't be able to manipulate energy markets to suit their needs.

Madam Speaker, but make no mistake, both our allies and our adversaries are racing to unlock fusion energy. The U.K. is investing 660 million pounds; Germany recently announced a 1-billion-euro investment; and China has already invested 1.8 billion in their state-owned facilities, with plans to massively ramp up over the next decade.

In China, there is no private industry investment in fusion. It is all government-controlled, and that is a huge competitive advantage that we have on them.

What the United States does best is innovate through public-private partnerships that leverage Federal research dollars with the work happening at

cutting-edge startups and businesses across our country.

One of those companies, Commonwealth Fusion Systems, is located in the district I represent. Since its founding roughly 5 years ago, CFS has raised more than \$2 billion in private investment, employs over 600 people, and is well on its way to building SPARC, a fusion machine that will achieve net energy and demonstrates that producing commercial fusion energy in just a few years is possible.

Madam Speaker, if we are going to beat China to fusion, then it is absolutely critical that we provide companies like CFS with the regulatory certainty that they need. Passing this bipartisan package does just that.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important, commonsense legislation that will advance commercial fusion energy.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I agree that with fusion SMR advanced nuclear technology, the nuclear renaissance is right before us.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), my good friend.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that the Energy and Commerce Committee is championing nuclear energy, a clean, safe, and reliable energy source for which America should be paving the way.

Going forward, it must be a significant component of America's energy profile, and to make that happen, we need to cut the red tape at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, expediting environmental reviews for nuclear reactors.

Time and time again, the environmental review process takes entirely way too long. My bill, the Modernize Nuclear Reactor Environmental Reviews Act, is a part of this Atomic Energy Advancement Act. It will reduce duplicative efforts and speed up the review process for nuclear reactor applications.

Madam Speaker, let me reiterate: Nuclear is clean and safe and plays a critical role in putting reliable as well as dispatchable energy onto our grid.

I am proud to see that DIANA DEGETTE and FRANK PALLONE and their staff are working with us. It is encouraging that we are working across the aisle. I urge my colleagues to support this critical bill to advance nuclear energy in the United States of America.

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Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE).

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy for yielding.

Madam Speaker, Pennsylvania has a long and proud history of developing energy innovation. From the first oil

well in 1859 to leading the way on natural gas development to Westinghouse's work developing nuclear energy in the 1950s, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has been a leader in producing the power that Americans, and the entire world, rely on to keep their homes warm and their refrigerators cold.

For decades, the United States has been a leader in the development of new technologies and innovation with regard to nuclear energy.

As demands on our Nation's electric grid continue to grow, small modular and microreactors are poised to be the next generation of clean, safe, and reliable nuclear technology.

It is vital that these reactors are permitted efficiently in order to allow American consumers to utilize the energy they rely on each and every day.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE), the chair of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support today of H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.

I represent western Kentucky coal communities, including Muhlenberg, McLean, and Ohio Counties. Unfortunately, Washington Democrats' war on coal has resulted in the loss of good-paying jobs and key energy production for our Commonwealth and our Nation.

I introduced the Nuclear for Brownfields Site Preparation Act, which is included in this package, to ensure that we continue to use Kentucky's experienced energy workers to bring back American energy independence and ensure our leadership as an energy producer. We have an opportunity to repurpose sites, like retired coal facilities, to reinstate American energy dominance.

I am committed to making sure we have affordable, reliable energy from a diverse energy portfolio, while empowering communities who powered our Nation for generations to help us continue to keep the lights on for years to come.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), who will probably talk about what is going on at Plant Vogtle, the newest reactors to have been constructed in our lifetime.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

America used to be the leader in nuclear energy. It should be one of the key parts of our energy security and the awe of the globe. However, we have allowed it to deteriorate and for other countries to take the lead on the global stage.

Instead, Russia and China are building a larger and larger presence in global nuclear power. Together, the

two account for nearly 70 percent of reactors under construction or being planned worldwide.

The United States cannot stand by and allow China and Russia to be the standard bearers of nuclear energy. Just imagine the nuclear proliferation implications, let alone the economic ones. Don't be fooled. This is just another way for China and Russia to exert influence and manipulate countries around the globe. We have seen it with the Belt and Road Initiative, and with nuclear plants, this means decades and decades of developing countries tied to China.

Thankfully, this doesn't have to be the case. We can have a new American nuclear renaissance. This bill, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act, will provide important steps to do so.

We have proved that in the State of Georgia with the two newest reactors built in this country in over 30 years.

This bill includes reforms to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to increase licensing efficiency, strengthen our nuclear workforce, make advanced nuclear technology more accessible through fee reductions, modernize reviews, and other important improvements to how nuclear is approached in the U.S.

I am pleased to have my bill, the Global Nuclear Energy Assessment and Cooperation Act, which I introduced along with Representative SCOTT PETERS from California, included as a section of this bill.

This bill will take a multipronged approach to promoting nuclear energy around the globe by providing global nuclear energy assessment, providing a program for training and sharing of expertise, and provide for an International Nuclear Reactor Export and Innovation Branch.

This will inspire coordination, research, and development for the U.S. and our allies, which is extremely important.

Lastly, it will prohibit the import of nuclear fuel assemblies from hostile foreign nations, including Russia and China.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, this will encourage energy independence and prevent our country from being reliant on our enemies for our nuclear energy needs.

My hope is that my bill will be just one small part of improving the global competition for nuclear energy. This is how we begin to secure a safe, reliable energy future for the United States of America and democracies across the globe.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As you have heard today, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act is really setting America up to get ready for what is next. What is next is advanced nu-

clear reactors and small modular reactors. As the gentlewoman from Massachusetts said, the possibility of fusion is very exciting.

There are the industries that could be set up around the nuclear hub of these advanced reactors, jobs that will be created, keeping that intellectual property here in America, and addressing our supply issues for critical components, enriched uranium, the fuel that is necessary to make these reactors work. Lessening the Nation's dependence on Russia and China for nuclear technology or nuclear fuel just makes sense to a lot of folks in America.

In order to get ready for that nuclear renaissance that I mentioned earlier, we have got to make sure that the government agencies, specifically the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is truly prepared as they move into the 21st century in the advancement of nuclear energy in this country.

We have got friends and allies who are looking to the United States to export the technology to help their countries meet their energy independence needs, to be cleaner in their energy production, and lessen their dependence on foreign adversaries.

For example, we were in the Czech Republic last spring, and they commissioned both small modular reactors and traditional light-water reactors. They were looking to the United States. They were looking to the NRC. They were looking to America to lead and help them as they develop their nuclear technology and their nuclear energy development in their countries. Poland was the same way with light-water reactors, the future of SMRs.

I think about what is going on in this country with SMR development. I think about what our neighbors in Canada are doing up in Ontario with probably the first SMR that will be full-scale brought online. Nuclear development is important to the cleaner energy future for America.

Madam Speaker, I don't have other speakers on this side, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting H.R. 6544, the Atomic Energy Advancement Act.

This bipartisan bill, which passed out of the Energy and Commerce Committee in December, includes a number of policies designed to facilitate the deployment of advanced nuclear reactor technologies while not compromising on safety.

The bill will ensure that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is up to the job and prepared for the potential license applications for new reactor designs that are expected to come its way over the next decade.

Included in this package are provisions co-led by Democratic Members, including language that would:

First, allow the NRC to retain its current workforce and attract new talent to license new reactors;

Second, lower the regulatory costs imposed upon new reactor developers so they are only paying for the expenses they are directly incurring;

Third, ease the processes allowing for demonstration reactors at Department of Energy sites, sites with critical national security infrastructure, and brownfield sites;

Fourth, make it easier to co-locate new nuclear reactors on sites with currently operating reactors; and

Fifth, allow for DOE to enter into long-term agreements to purchase electricity from a new nuclear reactor.

Now, I would say nuclear energy is a vital source of zero-carbon baseload power. It is imperative in our fight against the worsening climate crisis that we strengthen the NRC's regulatory processes so the agency is prepared to license 21st century reactors in a timely fashion that does not compromise on safety or public health. H.R. 6544 will do just that.

Again, I intend to vote for the bill while it is on the floor under suspension, and we urge all Members to join us in supporting the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ALLEN), who represents Augusta, Georgia, where Plant Vogtle is.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6544, the bipartisan Atomic Energy Advancement Act, which aims to incentivize and advance nuclear energy production in the United States.

An all-of-the-above strategy is critical to reclaiming American energy dominance. As the Nation's largest source of clean energy, nuclear has a pivotal role to play.

Included in today's legislation is a bill I sponsored, the Nuclear Licensing Efficiency Act, which would improve the licensing review process for future nuclear projects by establishing updated procedures and timelines for reviewing nuclear licensing applications.

With the first two nuclear reactors built in over three decades in the United States located at Plant Vogtle, in my district, Georgia 12, we are leading our Nation's nuclear future. As we saw through the construction process, nuclear projects in the U.S. are often bogged down by burdensome licensing and permitting processes that result in unnecessary delays and cost overruns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. ALLEN. Madam Speaker, by modernizing the inefficient procedures that hamper our nuclear energy expansion, we can fully embrace the reliability of clean, 24/7 nuclear energy.

I am proud to have my bill as part of this broader, bipartisan Atomic Energy

Advancement Act to improve our nuclear energy regulatory process.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge a "yes" vote on H.R. 6544.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I am thankful, once again, for the bipartisan nature of this legislation. I thank Ranking Member DEGETTE on the subcommittee and Ranking Member PALONE and their staff for all they have done. Let's get this passed. Let's work with our Senate colleagues. Let's get something to the President's desk and get something signed into law to move the Nation forward.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the Energy and Commerce Committee and Subcommittee Chairman DUNCAN for leading on this issue.

The Atomic Energy Advancement Act is an urgent and necessary package of bipartisan, commonsense reforms that will help unleash the full potential of America's commercial nuclear energy.

According to the Department of Energy, the United States will require at least 200 gigawatts of new electric power generation by 2030 to replace aging infrastructure and to meet growing energy needs. This demand will be impossible to fulfill without federal support for nuclear energy.

The Atomic Energy Advancement Act contains numerous, sensible regulatory reforms and market incentives that will empower the nuclear industry to provide affordable, resilient, reliable, and responsible power for Americans. Among these much-needed provisions are requirements that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission commits to efficiency and streamlines the licensing of safer and more affordable nuclear reactors.

Right now is the time for America to go all-in on nuclear power.

This package gives a modern regulatory framework to bring safe, clean, and affordable power. It unleashes American innovation, ensuring future generations of Americans energy abundance and energy independence.

I look forward to voting in support of this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6544, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

D.C. ROBERT F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL STADIUM CAMPUS REVITALIZATION ACT

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4984) to amend the District of

Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the Administrator of General Services and the leasing of the Campus to the District of Columbia for purposes which include commercial and residential development, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4984

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 "D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act".

SEC. 2. TRANSFER OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OVER RFK MEMORIAL STADIUM CAMPUS TO DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

(a) EXERCISE OF TRANSFER AUTHORITY.—

(1) TRANSFER.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (hereafter referred to as the "Secretary"), acting under the authority of section 8124 of title 40, United States Code (except as provided under paragraph (2)), shall transfer administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus (hereafter referred to as the "Campus") to the District of Columbia (hereafter referred to as the "District"), subject to a Declaration of Covenants with the District which is consistent with the succeeding provisions of this Act and which includes such other terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the Secretary and the District.

(2) WAIVER OF REQUIREMENT FOR PRIOR RECOMMENDATION OF NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION.—The second sentence of section 8124(a) of title 40, United States Code, shall not apply to the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section.

(3) NO EFFECT ON STATUS OF OWNERSHIP OF CAMPUS.—Consistent with section 8124 of title 40, United States Code, the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section does not change the status of the ownership of the Campus by the United States.

(b) DEVELOPMENT AND USES OF CAMPUS.—After transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section, the District may develop and use, and permit the development and use of, the Campus for any of the following purposes:

(1) Stadium purposes, including training facilities, offices, and other structures necessary to support a stadium.

(2) Commercial and residential development.

(3) Facilities, open space, and public outdoor opportunities, which may include supporting cultural activities, educational activities, and recreational activities, as such terms are defined in section 3306(a) of title 40, United States Code.

(4) Such other public purposes for which the Campus was used or approved for use prior to June 1, 1985.

(5) Demolition purposes to facilitate development and use of the Campus under subparagraphs (1) through (4).

(c) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF CAMPUS.—The Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include provisions to require the District to meet the following requirements as a condition of the development and use of the Campus as set forth

under subsection (b) after transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section:

(1) The District shall ensure that the development and use does not materially degrade or adversely impact any lands under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, including the restoration of the wetlands south of Kingman Island.

(2) The District shall designate, develop, operate, and maintain at least 30 percent of the Campus (excluding the riparian area of the Campus as defined in subsection (g)(2)) as the "Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Park" as parks and open space to provide land for passive and active outdoor recreation and shall require that portion to be reserved for such purposes for the duration of the transfer.

(3) The District shall ensure that the development and use provides for improved public access to the Anacostia River and shall not interrupt the Anacostia River Trail.

(4) The District shall, to the extent necessary, ensure that parking facilities are provided to accommodate the development.

(5) The District shall provide for adequate public safety and security measures and resources in the planning and ongoing management of the development.

(6) The District shall carry out measures that, to the greatest extent practicable, will reduce the impact of noise and traffic of the development on surrounding residential areas in the District.

(7) The District shall operate and maintain the riparian area of the Campus in accordance with subsection (g).

(8) The District shall ensure that no Member of Congress, Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress, or any other official of the Government of the United States or the Government of the District of Columbia shall be admitted to any share or part of any lease entered into by the District in the exercise of the administrative jurisdiction over the Campus transferred under this section, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom, including any contract or agreement made, entered into, or accepted by or on behalf of the District as a result of this section. Nothing in the previous sentence may be construed to apply to a person who is a shareholder or other beneficial owner of any publicly held corporation or other entity, if the lease is for the general benefit of such corporation or other entity.

(d) SURVEY.—

(1) REQUIRING SURVEY.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the District shall conduct a survey of the Campus, which shall determine the exact acreage and legal description of the Campus by a boundary survey prepared by a qualified Federally-, State-, or District-licensed surveyor who is approved by the Secretary.

(2) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Upon completion, the survey conducted under paragraph (1) shall be submitted to—

(A) the Committee on Oversight and Accountability and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

(3) INCORPORATION IN DECLARATION OF COVENANTS FOR TRANSFER.—The survey conducted under paragraph (1) shall be incorporated in the Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1).

(4) AVAILABILITY OF SURVEY AND MAP FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION.—The survey conducted under paragraph (1), together with the map of the Campus referred to in subsection (m), shall be kept on file and available for public

inspection in the appropriate offices of the Secretary.

(e) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—As a condition of the development and use of the Campus after transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section, the Secretary and the District shall enter into a memorandum of understanding to determine an allocation of the costs of carrying out all responsibilities of the United States and the District with respect to the Campus under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) and the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), including any costs of any response action with respect to any contamination present on the Campus.

(f) COSTS.—

(1) COSTS OF TRANSFER.—The District shall be responsible for payment of any costs of carrying out the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section, including—

(A) any costs of carrying out the survey under subsection (d); and

(B) any costs of carrying out any environmental analysis required under Federal law.

(2) COSTS AFTER TRANSFER.—Except as provided under the memorandum of understanding entered into under subsection (e), the Secretary shall not be responsible for payment of any costs or expenses that are incurred by the District or any other party (other than the United States) associated with the Campus after the transfer of administrative jurisdiction under this section.

(g) SPECIAL RULES FOR RIPARIAN AREA.—

(1) RESTRICTION ON DEVELOPMENT AND USE.—The Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include provisions to ensure that the riparian area of the Campus may not be developed or used for any purposes other than the continuing maintenance of any development, use, or infrastructure (including roads and pathways) existing at the time of the execution of the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section.

(2) RIPARIAN AREA OF THE CAMPUS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "riparian area of the Campus" means the area designated in the map referred to in subsection (m) as "Riparian Area (Area F)".

(h) PROHIBITING USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR STADIUM.—The Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include provisions to ensure that the District may not use Federal funds for stadium purposes on the Campus, including training facilities, offices, and other structures necessary to support a stadium.

(i) TERM.—The transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section shall be in effect for a term of not less than 99 years, and may be renewed for subsequent periods agreed to by the Secretary and the District.

(j) REVERSION OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION.—

(1) GROUNDS FOR REVERSION.—The Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include provisions stating that administrative jurisdiction over the Campus transferred under this section shall revert to the Secretary if each of the following occurs:

(A) The terms and conditions of the Declaration of Covenants have not been complied with, as reasonably determined by the Secretary.

(B) Such noncompliance has not been corrected within 90 days after written notice of such noncompliance has been received by the District. Such noncompliance shall be treated as corrected if the District and the Secretary enter into an agreement that the Secretary finds adequate to ensure that the

Campus will be developed and used in a manner consistent with the purposes referred to in subsection (b).

(2) TIMING.—The Secretary may not seek the reversion of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this subsection before the expiration of 90 days after the date on which written notice of the alleged violation is received by the District. The notice shall include notice of the Secretary's intention for administrative jurisdiction over the Campus to revert to the Secretary.

(3) COST OF REHABILITATING PROPERTY.—The Declaration of Covenants entered into under subsection (a)(1) shall include provisions requiring the District to bear the actual cost of removing structures from or rehabilitating the Campus if administrative jurisdiction over the Campus reverts to the Secretary under this subsection.

(k) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION RELATED TO THE APPLICABILITY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION TRANSFER.—Nothing in this section may be construed to affect or limit the application of or obligation to comply with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) and the Solid Waste Disposal Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.).

(l) CONFORMING AMENDMENT; TERMINATION OF EXISTING LEASE.—Effective on the date of the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Campus under this section—

(1) the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 (sec. 3-321 et seq., D.C. Official Code) is repealed; and

(2) the lease dated January 14, 1988, between the United States and the District for the use of the Campus, as authorized by section 7(b)(1)(B) of such Act (sec. 3-326(b)(1)(B), D.C. Official Code), is terminated.

(m) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term "Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus" means the approximately 174 acres of Federal land as generally depicted on the map entitled "Anacostia Park, Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus - Transfer of Administrative Jurisdiction", numbered 831/189,767, and dated January 2024.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

□ 1630

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4984, a bill that will provide economic opportunities to an area of our Nation's Capital in dire need of revitalization.

The bill transfers administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium campus from our National Park Service to the District of Columbia.

Under H.R. 4984, the Federal Government will retain ownership of the land while the District of Columbia manages the development, costs, and the use of the land.

Transferring administrative jurisdiction over property is a unique tool for the Congress, which allows the Federal Government to retain title to lands while the district assumes the responsibilities of administration and maintenance.

This tool has already been used multiple times to great effect in our Nation's Capital.

Under the current law granting D.C. a 99-year lease of land, the District cannot engage in any commercial or residential development of the land. With the lease set to expire in 2038, there are few options for future use of the property without congressional action.

This status quo is untenable.

H.R. 4984 fixes this problem by allowing stadium purposes, recreational purposes, and residential and commercial development. This allows the District of Columbia to revitalize this site, turning what was once a blight on our Nation's Capital into a thriving area of commerce and community.

Importantly, the bill also imposes any remediation or environmental costs onto the District of Columbia, saving taxpayer dollars that would otherwise be spent by the National Park Service.

As Congress continues to carry out its oversight duties over our Nation's Capital, this bipartisan bill will help create jobs and improve our great Capital City.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bipartisan bill. This bill would allow the District of Columbia to transform the RFK Stadium campus, 174 acres of underutilized Federal land in D.C. that primarily consists of parking lots, sports fields, and a long-vacant stadium in the process of being demolished, into a thriving mixed-use development.

The National Capital Planning Commission, the central planning agency for the Federal Government in the District of Columbia, has long called for the revitalization of the campus, and the Department of the Interior testified in support of the goals of this bill.

During my tenure, Congress has passed several bipartisan bills to transform underutilized land in D.C. into thriving mixed-use developments, including The Yards on the southeast waterfront and The Wharf on the southwest waterfront. Reservation 13, 67 acres next to the RFK campus, is now being transformed into a mixed-use development.

Since 1988, D.C. has leased, without consideration, the RFK Stadium campus from the Department of the Interior. The lease only permits D.C. to use

the campus for recreation, a stadium, and open space. The lease expires in 2038.

This bill would give D.C. administrative jurisdiction over the campus for at least 99 years and permit D.C. to use the campus for commercial and residential development, recreation, a stadium, parks, and open space.

This bill would require D.C. to preserve 30 percent of the campus for parks and open space, and prohibit D.C. from building along the waterfront.

This bill is a win-win for the Federal and D.C. Governments. As the Department of the Interior testified, this bill would allow D.C. to transform the campus from "acres of asphalt to a complex focused on community sports, recreation, park space, and community amenities" and would "guarantee public access to a sizable amount of park land and outdoor recreation areas."

At the same time, this bill would allow D.C. to create a mixed-use development and to generate significant revenue for D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman COMER for his leadership and partnership on this bill, and I also thank Chairman WESTERMAN and Ranking Member GRIJALVA for their work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER), the sponsor of the bill and the great chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for yielding, and I thank my cosponsor, the gentlewoman from Washington, D.C., (Ms. NORTON).

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4984, which repurposes approximately 174 acres of unused Federal land in Washington, D.C.

Despite its long history and importance to D.C. residents, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium campus in southeast D.C. has been abandoned to become unused parking lots, open fields, and a deteriorating stadium that is being demolished.

The campus is currently under a lease that requires the land to be used for stadium purposes, recreational purposes, or other public purposes. Under current law, the campus cannot be used for commercial or residential development.

Absent congressional action, this land in our Nation's Capital will remain unused with ongoing maintenance costs and environmental liabilities remaining the full responsibility of the National Park Service—an ongoing burden for the American taxpayer.

My bill, H.R. 4984, will change that.

The bill transfers administrative jurisdiction from the National Park Service to Washington, D.C., while preserving the Federal Government's ownership of the land. This allows Wash-

ington, D.C., to use the land for stadium purposes, commercial and residential development, recreational facilities, open spaces, or additional public purposes.

However, D.C. may not use Federal funds for any potential future development of a sports stadium. The bill enables D.C. to transform the unused RFK campus into stores, restaurants, office buildings, and apartment complexes.

This economic development will help revitalize the RFK stadium campus, creating new jobs and tax revenue for the District's residents.

Let me be clear. Congress has a constitutional duty to oversee the Nation's Capital City. We have diligently exercised this role by holding numerous oversight hearings in the Oversight Committee this Congress with the Mayor of D.C., and the D.C. City Council.

We have also successfully blocked, in bipartisan fashion with the President's support, the city council's ill-advised criminal reform legislation from going into effect last year—the first law of the 118th Congress.

We will continue looking for legislative opportunities to return order to the District by addressing the rising crime crises, returning Federal workers to their offices in the District to contribute to the local economy, and seeking ways to bolster the educational system.

The D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act also represents Congress doing its job to oversee the District by authorizing the best utilization of area land to help the city thrive.

We should want this for our Nation's Capital City—a home to the taxpayer's Federal workforce and a city that hosts millions of American visitors and global tourists each year.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my committee colleague, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for working with me to write this smart, bipartisan legislation. I thank the Natural Resource chairman, Mr. WESTERMAN, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, and their staff, for working with my staff to write the improved bill we are considering today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill so that we can help revitalize our Nation's Capital.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4984, the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act.

Just 2 miles from Capitol Hill, the RFK Stadium was a prime sports and entertainment venue for almost 50 years. Today, the stadium and the land that surrounds it sits vacant on the shore of the Anacostia River.

This long-awaited bill would permit the District of Columbia to revitalize the underused Federal lands of the

RFK Stadium, enriching the culture of our Nation's Capital and making good on our responsibility to be good stewards of the land for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing the plans that Mayor Bowser and the D.C. leaders are developing to make good use of the space and better meet the needs of the local community.

I acknowledge and thank the tireless advocacy of our colleague, Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, on this issue, and I applaud the bipartisan collaboration that made this legislation possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this timely legislation.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4984, which is bipartisan legislation that I am cosponsoring to allow development of the RFK Memorial Stadium campus in the heart of Washington, D.C.

As a former football player at the University of Arkansas, I know the powerful ways that sports can bring communities and even States together.

The current RFK Memorial Stadium, located just down the road from the Capitol, has had a long and complex history but is now decrepit and falling apart. The legislation before us today will allow D.C. to mark the end of decades of legal limbo and the start of an age of economic revitalization.

Under the bill, the National Park Service will no longer have to maintain and operate the campus, freeing up finite resources to focus on their deferred maintenance backlog. In turn, D.C. will be able to revitalize this area and create thousands of jobs with new commercial, residential, and recreational facilities. This can serve as a model going forward for other communities, particularly those with large footprints of Federal land, and represents a win-win for both the Federal Government and D.C.

I would take a moment to clarify the intent of Congress with respect to this legislation and the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

Over the course of several months of bipartisan negotiations that involved the Natural Resources Committee, the Oversight and Accountability Committee, as well as the city of D.C., and the National Park Service, several improvements were made to the bill. During these negotiations, we reached a bipartisan consensus that after this bill passes, the National Park Service will conduct a NEPA analysis on the transfer of administrative jurisdiction itself. After the transfer, NEPA will no longer apply to D.C.'s development and use of the site because those activities will not be considered major Federal actions.

This follows decades of precedent with previous administrative jurisdiction transfers, as well as technical as-

sistance and advice provided by the Department of the Interior. The National Park Service also provided several examples of instances in which the agency transferred administrative jurisdiction of land to D.C., including as recently as 2022. In none of these instances did NEPA apply after the transfer of administrative jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, the examples below were provided by the National Park Service (NPS) to the House Committee on Natural Resources during the consideration of amendments to H.R. 4984 of instances in which NPS transferred administrative jurisdiction of NPS lands within the District of Columbia. According to NPS, "in executing each transfer, the NPS complied with all applicable laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act. After transfer of administrative jurisdiction under this authority, the District of Columbia assumed the management and legal responsibilities for the properties."

1. 2010 transfer of approximately 15 acres in the northern section of Fort Dupont Park

Prior to the transfer, NPS issued a finding of no significant impact (FONSI), which stated: "After the transfer of jurisdiction, the property will be the responsibility of the District since it will no longer be managed by NPS and will no longer be a part of Fort Dupont Park, and District environmental standards will apply."

2. 2014 transfer of a portion (Reservation 520) of Fort Lincoln

Prior to the transfer, NPS issued a finding of no significant impact (FONSI), which stated: "After the land transfer, the property would no longer be owned by the NPS and would be the responsibility of the District. Consequently, the District's environmental standards would apply."

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=198&projectID=44032&documentID=100579>

3. 2022 transfer of another portion (Reservation 405) of Fort Dupont Park

Prior to the transfer, NPS issued a decision form finding that the transfer was categorically excluded from further analysis under NEPA.

[https://www.nepc.gov/files/projects/2021/8324 Reservation 405 - Portion of Fort Dupont Park Transfer of Jurisdiction - NEPA Document - CATEX Nov2021.pdf](https://www.nepc.gov/files/projects/2021/8324%20Reservation%20405%20-%20Portion%20of%20Fort%20Dupont%20Park%20Transfer%20of%20Jurisdiction%20-%20NEPA%20Document%20-%20CATEX%20Nov2021.pdf)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, because there was a clear consensus and prior historical evidence demonstrating that NEPA would not apply to the development of the campus after the administrative jurisdiction transfer, the legislative text did not include superfluous savings clauses regarding NEPA's applicability.

In addition to this, it is my hope that both D.C. and the Department of the Interior will abide by Congress' 6-month timeframe provided in the legislation to reach all necessary agreements and complete the transfer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the hard work and collaboration of Chairman COMER, Delegate HOLMES NORTON, and the entire staff of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

I would also thank Ranking Member GRIJALVA and his team, the Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Trans-

portation and Infrastructure Committee for their assistance in getting this legislation to the floor today.

Finally, I would recognize several people without whom this legislation would not be possible: Beverly Perry, Tara Hupman, Jerry Couri, and Lisa Pittman. From the House Natural Resources Committee staff, I thank Aniela Butler, Brandon Miller, Colen Morrow, and Taylor Wiseman.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the legislation.

□ 1645

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4984, the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act.

This legislation presents an opportunity to revitalize the RFK Stadium Campus, a historic site that has served as a cornerstone of our Nation's Capital sporting legacy for over five decades. However, over the past two decades, the campus has sadly remained underutilized due to outdated statutory restrictions.

These restrictions have limited the use of the RFK campus to stadium purposes only, leading to a gradual decline and erosion. This legislation focuses on transforming the RFK campus into a mixed-use site, which will create thousands of jobs.

Additionally, it ensures that District residents gain direct access to premium recreational opportunities, including green spaces and scenic walking trails along the riverfront.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical legislation.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. IVEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 4984, the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act.

Like other members of the Maryland delegation, I believe Prince George's County and Maryland should be able to compete on a level playing field to keep the Washington Commanders, but this bill would give an unfair advantage to D.C. It is most certainly not a level playing field when one interested jurisdiction receives a free transfer of Federal Government-subsidized land.

I am not opposed to D.C. bidding to be the new home of the Washington Commanders, but its pursuit of the Commanders should be no different than its efforts to compete with Virginia for the Wizards and Capitals.

This is also a bad deal for Federal taxpayers. This bill transfers control over Federal Government property at no apparent cost to the District of Columbia so that private ownership can

build a football stadium. This is not a District of Columbia home rule issue. This is no different than any other city or State competing for a sports franchise or stadium, no different than the State of New Jersey competing with the State of New York for the Jets or the Giants.

I also do not object to the redevelopment or renovation of the current RFK campus. I think it would be outstanding to have new housing, retail use, and park space there. As a matter of fact, I live near the stadium and drive by it every day, but I do not believe a cost-free land transfer largely for stadium purposes provides the best opportunity to achieve these goals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to respond to the comments from my friend from Maryland.

The National Park Service has a maintenance backlog of \$23 billion, including \$2 billion in the District of Columbia alone. The National Park Service does not have the money to transform the RFK Stadium site from acres of asphalt into parks or mixed uses.

There is precedent for Congress giving title to or administration jurisdiction over Federal land to States and other jurisdictions for no consideration. We do not have to look far for examples. Let's look at two of the many examples in D.C.

First, section 8124 of title 40 of the U.S. Code has long permitted the Federal Government to transfer administrative jurisdiction over Federal land in D.C. to the D.C. government for no consideration. Second, in 1986, Congress directed the Department of the Interior to enter into a 50-year lease with D.C. for the RFK Stadium site for no consideration.

While it is true that H.R. 4984 does not require D.C. to pay the Federal Government for administrative jurisdiction over the RFK Stadium site, it is expected D.C. will spend hundreds of millions of dollars transforming the site from acres of asphalt into mixed-use development.

This bill would not require a stadium to be built at the site. Whether to build a stadium would be a decision for the elected D.C. government. Several members of the D.C. Council have expressed opposition to a new football stadium at the site.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act will allow D.C. to develop the vacant RFK Stadium site.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill that will promote economic growth and revitalization for Southeast D.C.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, while Chairman COMER and I often have plenty to disagree on, today I join him and Delegate NORTON to rise in support of H.R. 4984, the D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act.

This bipartisan bill will allow the District of Columbia to reenergize Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium campus and redevelop the 174 acres of underutilized federal land into a new stadium, additional housing units, and green spaces.

As a result, these developments will spur economic growth, improve the surrounding infrastructure, and substantially transform the neighborhood.

H.R. 4984 represents the fight to protect and expand Home Rule.

As a former local government official having served on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 14 years, including five as chairman and as a former chairman of the Council of Governments I have consistently supported autonomy for the District.

Congress must do the same to uphold the will of thousands of constituents and civil servants who live and work in the District.

Let me remind my colleagues of what my fellow Virginian, James Madison, said in the Federalist Papers, Number 43, with respect to the intent of the Congressional authority.

In referring to the residents of this federal District, Madison said "they will have had their voice in the election of the government which is to exercise authority over them; as a municipal legislature for local purposes."

There is no more basic exercise of municipal authority than planning critical investments for the community.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4984, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Avery M. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN OPPORTUNITIES IN SMALL BUSINESS ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3511) to amend the

Small Business Act to require training on increasing contract awards to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3511

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 "Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act".

SEC. 2. TRAINING ON INCREASING CONTRACT AWARDS TO SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS.

Section 36 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657f) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(j) TRAINING ON INCREASING CONTRACT AWARDS TO SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Office of Veterans Business Development, shall provide to covered employees at each Federal agency that has not met the goal established under section 15(g)(1)(A)(ii) training on how to increase the number of contracts awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans.

"(2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the Office of Veterans Business Development, shall issue guidance and best practices on increasing the number of contracts awarded to small businesses owned and controlled by service disabled veterans for Federal agencies to which the goal established under section 15(g)(1)(A)(ii) applies.

"(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Administration shall submit to Congress a report detailing, for the fiscal year covered by the report—

"(A) a list of each Federal agency that failed to meet the goal established under section 15(g)(1)(A)(ii);

"(B) the number of trainings provided to each Federal agency described in paragraph (1); and

"(C) an overview of the content included in such training sessions."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this is the first of eight bills from the Committee on Small Business that we will

be considering today. That goes to show that the Committee on Small Business is a committee that gets things done, and I hope our Senate counterparts follow our lead to get these bills to the President's desk.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3511, the Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act, which is sponsored by my good friend, Representative LALOTA, from the great State of New York.

H.R. 3511 builds on this Congress' dedication to America's veterans. Our country asks a lot from our brave servicemen and -women. Therefore, we must support them when they return to civilian life and ensure that they have a fair shot to succeed back home.

That is why this bill is critical to ensuring that our veterans are supported as entrepreneurs. The Federal Government is the largest consumer in the world, and each year, these agencies have a goal to spend a portion of their contracts with small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans.

In last year's NDAA, Congress raised the spending goal to 5 percent of all contracting dollars. Unfortunately, not every Federal agency has met its commitment to the men and women who bravely served our country. H.R. 3511 would remedy this by requiring the Small Business Administration to help failing agencies improve their inclusion of service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. Our veterans deserve to have every chance to succeed in the Federal contracting space.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support H.R. 3511, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we are considering eight bills, six sponsored by Republicans and two by Democrats.

I look forward to working with the chairman to bring the additional five Democratic bills to the floor that were unanimously approved by the committee in a timely manner.

I thank my colleagues, Representatives LALOTA and MCGOVERN, for their work to bring this bill to the floor today.

In fiscal year 2022, Federal agencies awarded 4.57 percent of contract dollars and a record of just over \$28 billion to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses, but this number does not tell the whole story.

Every year, a handful of agencies do not meet their individual agency goals, showing that there is more that can be done. This legislation will require SBA to issue guidance and to provide training for agencies when they come up short. It is also important to highlight that Congress has raised the service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses' goal to 5 percent of Federal contracting dollars moving forward, so additional guidance and training will be timely.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for yielding, for his leadership in the Committee on Small Business, and most importantly for recognizing the importance of this legislation and its importance to the veterans community.

Mr. Speaker, America owes a great debt of gratitude to our service-disabled veterans. Those who have served our Nation in uniform deserve our utmost thanks, support, and respect. They put our great country before themselves.

As service-disabled veterans transition into civilian life and some look to enter the government contracting space, Congress must identify and implement ways to make that transition easier. My bipartisan bill does just that. The Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act will provide greater opportunities to our Nation's disabled veterans by increasing government contracting opportunities for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Currently, Federal agencies are required to contract with service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses for at least 5 percent of contracts awarded, yet the prior lower standard, 3 percent for all, wasn't even being met by many agencies.

My legislation will help solve that problem by requiring the Office of Veterans Business Development and the Small Business Administrator to provide training to Federal agency officials who fall below their procurement goals and issue guidance on best practices to increase the number of contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support the Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MCGARVEY), the ranking member of the Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Subcommittee.

□ 1700

Mr. MCGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3511, the Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act, which I am proud to lead with Representative LALOTA.

I am grateful for his partnership, and I am grateful that the bill is on the floor today. I will echo the remarks of my colleague, Mr. LALOTA. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the men and women who have put on the uniform who were willing to fight for us and, of course, were injured in their service. It is up to us to support our veterans coming out of the military as much as

we support them going in, especially those who return with the wounds from their service, both visible and invisible.

So many veterans come home looking for ways to continue serving their communities, including by starting small businesses, and the Small Business Administration does a great job of connecting veteran and disabled veteran entrepreneurs to critical resources they need to start businesses, but the Federal Government must do more to ensure all veteran entrepreneurs have the tools and opportunities they need for their new businesses to thrive.

For disabled veteran entrepreneurs, opportunity can come in the form of sole-source or set-aside contracts, but Federal agencies all too often fail to meet their service-disabled vet contracting goals.

This bill requires the SBA to issue guidance to other Federal agencies to better meet the contracting goals for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and it would additionally require the SBA to provide training to agencies that fail to meet these goals.

If the agencies fail to meet their contracting goals, then this bill requires a report to Congress detailing which agencies haven't met their goals so we can better understand what works, what doesn't, and what we can do to continue improving business opportunities for service-disabled veteran businessowners. We shouldn't stop until we are delivering on all of our promises.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this good bipartisan legislation and look forward to its passage today.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal procurement goals are one way that Congress helps to ensure that small business government contractors can enter, compete, and remain in the Federal marketplace and that they receive a fair share of contracting dollars when doing so.

This bill will provide agencies with additional tools and training to maximize awards to firms owned by service-disabled veterans and meet their small business goals.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work of my colleagues on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation that Mr. MCGARVEY and Mr. LALOTA did a great job on, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEUSER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House

suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3511.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DOE AND SBA RESEARCH ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4669) to provide for Department of Energy, National Laboratories, and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4669

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 “DOE and SBA Research Act”.

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION JOINT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration (in this section referred to as the “covered officials”) shall enter into a memorandum of understanding or other appropriate agreement to carry out cross-cutting and collaborative research and development activities focused on the joint advancement of Department of Energy and Small Business Administration mission requirements and priorities.

(b) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OR AGREEMENT.—The covered officials shall carry out and coordinate the activities described in subsection (a) by entering into one or more memoranda of understanding or other appropriate agreements, as jointly determined by the covered officials.

(c) INCLUSION OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS.—In carrying out the activities described in subsection (a), the covered officials shall ensure the inclusion of small business concerns (as defined under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)) in such activities, as appropriate.

(d) OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the activities described in subsection (a), the covered officials may—

(1) carry out reimbursable agreements between the Department of Energy, the Small Business Administration, and appropriate entities in order to maximize the effectiveness of research and development activities carried out pursuant to a memorandum or agreement described in subsection (b); and

(2) collaborate with other Federal agencies as appropriate to carry out such activities.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the covered officials shall submit to Congress a report on activities carried out pursuant to a memorandum or agreement described in subsection (b) that includes the following:

(1) Coordination between the covered officials involved in such activities.

(2) Potential opportunities to expand the technical capabilities of the Department of Energy and the Small Business Administration.

(3) Collaborative research achievements.

(4) Areas of future mutually beneficial success.

(5) Continuation of coordination activities between the Department of Energy and the Small Business Administration.

(f) RESEARCH SECURITY.—The activities carried out pursuant to a memorandum or agreement described in subsection (b) shall be applied in a manner consistent with subtitle D of title VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (Public Law 117-167; 42 U.S.C. 19231 et seq.).

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4669, the DOE and SBA Research Act, sponsored by my good friend, Representative LALOTA, from the great State of New York.

Our national laboratories provide some of the most cutting-edge scientific research initiated by the U.S. Government. The 17 national labs across the country help ensure we remain world leaders in a variety of disciplines, including our Nation's self-defense.

This legislation will ensure that the great work of our national labs and SBA are ensuring small businesses can play a part in these crucial activities. Small businesses play an important role in American innovation. The Committee on Small Business has heard countless testimonies from entrepreneurs who have found inefficiencies in many different industries and have since gone to work fixing these problems.

This is very similar to the work of our national labs as this bill, establishing a memorandum of understanding, will prove mutually beneficial to both parties.

The DOE and SBA Research Act is vital to increasing the opportunities that innovative small businesses must work with some of the most innovative federally funded research organizations in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 4669, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Washington, DC, December 1, 2023.

Hon. ROGER WILLIAMS,
Chairman, Committee on Small Business,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: I am writing concerning H.R. 4669, the “DOE and SBA Research Act”, which was referred primarily to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, with an additional referral to the Committee on Small Business.

H.R. 4669 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Washington, DC, December 1, 2023.

Hon. FRANK LUCAS,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN LUCAS: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4669, the DOE and SBA Research Act. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively to ensure that H.R. 4669 is considered expeditiously before the House of Representatives.

I recognize that this bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. I also acknowledge that your Committee's decision to forgo consideration would not prejudice your Committee regarding the appointment of conferees, to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill, or to similar legislation falling under your Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. In addition, should a conference on this bill become necessary, I would support your request to have members of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology represented on the conference committee.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included the Congressional Record during consideration on the House floor. Thank you again, I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ROGER WILLIAMS,
Chairman.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4669, as amended.

This legislation would allow SBA and the Department of Energy to enter into an MOU to formalize the research and

development activities that are currently under way. Investments in R&D are critical to providing high-paying jobs for Americans, increasing small business innovation, and ensuring our country remains competitive.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LALOTA and Mr. THANEDAR for their bipartisan work, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for yielding and for his leadership on the Small Business Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of my bill, the bipartisan DOE and SBA Research Act.

The DOE and SBA Research Act would simply require the Small Business Administration and America's 17 national labs to collaborate to ensure that small businesses are better utilized within the Department of Energy procurement process.

The Department of Energy is one of the largest procurers of small business goods and services in the government. Through the DOE's national laboratories, small businesses can play a critical role in executing the DOE's mission.

My district, which is home to one of these laboratories, Brookhaven National Lab, which is leading the way by prioritizing working with small businesses, specifically BNL and Suffolk County small businesses have created a mutually beneficial relationship based upon cooperative research and technical assistance.

Despite good intentions throughout the Federal system, far too often small businesses have been made to endure tremendous frustrations related to Federal contracting because the Federal contracting process is incredibly complex and bureaucratic and plagued with many inconsistencies and nuances.

Some programs, such as the Small Business Innovation Research program, operate differently in each agency. This means a small business utilizing the same program may have to meet significantly different requirements from one agency to the next.

My bill, the DOE and SBA Research Act, seeks to remedy this problem.

A small business' work with the Federal Government can be a frustrating maze, and this bipartisan bill will help bring existing resources and opportunities to innovative and successful small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support the DOE and SBA Research Act.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am ready to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses produce more than 14 times more patents than large businesses and universities and employ nearly 40 percent of scientists and engineers. Enhancing coordination between the Small Business Administration and the Department of Energy will hopefully increase opportunities for small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors for their work, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Mr. THANEDAR and Mr. LALOTA, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4669, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to provide for Department of Energy and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOSB CERTIFICATION AND OPPORTUNITY EXPANSION ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7105) to establish requirements relating to certification of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7105

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 "WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act".

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION OF SELF-CERTIFIED SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY WOMEN FROM GOALS.

(a) EXCLUSION OF SELF-CERTIFIED WOSBS FROM GOVERNMENTWIDE AND AGENCY GOALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 15(g) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) EXCLUSION OF SELF-CERTIFIED WOSBS FROM GOALS.—Only small business concerns owned and controlled by women that have been certified under section 8(m)(2)(E) shall be included in calculating the goals established—

"(A) under paragraph (1)(A)(v); and

"(B) by the head of a Federal agency for small business concerns owned and controlled by women under paragraph (2)."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the first day after the end of the second fiscal year beginning after the Administrator issues the regulations required under subsection (b)(2).

(b) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO SELF-CERTIFIED WOSBS.—

(1) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN SELF-CERTIFIED WOSBS IN GOALS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a small business concern described in subparagraph (B) shall be deemed to have been certified by the Administrator or a national certifying entity approved by the Administrator under section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)) as a small business concern owned and controlled by women under paragraph (2)(E) of such section (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)(E)) for the purposes of calculating the goals described in paragraph (4) of section 15(g) of the such Act (as added by subsection (a) of this Act) until the Administrator or such a national certifying entity make a determination with respect to the certification of such concern.

(B) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS DESCRIBED.—A small business concern described in this subparagraph is a small business concern—

(i) that is self-certified as a small business concern owned and controlled by women as of the date on which the amendments made by subsection (a) take effect;

(ii) that files a certification application with the Administrator or a national certifying entity approved by the Administrator under section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)) prior to such date; and

(iii) for which the Administrator or such a national certifying entity does not make a determination prior to such date regarding certification pursuant to such certification application.

(2) RULEMAKING.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue regulations carrying out this section.

(c) QUARTERLY BRIEFINGS REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and on a quarterly basis thereafter until the date specified in subsection (b), the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Committee Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate a briefing on the implementation of the requirements of this section. Such briefings shall include—

(1) the total number of small business concerns expected to seek certification as a small business concern owned and controlled by women;

(2) the number of applications for certification pending with the Administrator or a national certifying entity approved by the Administrator under section 8(m) of the Small Business Act during the period covered by the briefing;

(3) the total number of applications approved by the Administrator or such a national certifying entity since the date of the enactment of this Act;

(4) the timelines associated with processing such applications by the Administrator or such a national certifying entity between submission and approval;

(5) the administrative costs to the Administration to make determinations on such applications and the estimated cost to such applicant to seek certification from a national certifying entity;

(6) a discussion of the Administrator's current and future outreach efforts to small business concerns owned and controlled by women and to Federal agencies on the requirements of this Act; and

(7) recommendations for additional legislative authority or resources required to fully implement the requirements of this Act.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administration” means the Small Business Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

(3) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term “small business concern” has the meaning given under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(4) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY WOMEN.—The term “small business concern owned and controlled by women” has the meaning given the term in section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)).

(e) COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7105, the WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act, sponsored by the Committee on Small Business' Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ.

One of the Committee on Small Business' top priorities is combating fraud and abuse within the government's contracting programs. Small business participation in Federal contracting ensures a strong and resilient industrial base.

Congress sets a governmentwide goal to spend at least 5 percent of its procurement dollars with women-owned small businesses. However, since this goal contains self-certified firms, it is hard to tell the accuracy of the data. This bill would remove self-certified firms from this governmentwide goal. This will add accountability measures to make sure the businesses competing for these contracting dollars are not misrepresenting themselves.

I was proud to work with the ranking member on this important piece of legislation. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for H.R. 7105 and ensure that certified women small business owners are not unfairly shut out of the Federal marketplace by fraudsters.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, empowering female entrepreneurs has long been a top priority of mine and enhancing the programs that impact the success of women-owned small businesses continues to guide my work on our committee.

That is why I am pleased we are considering my legislation, the WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act, which, as amended, will improve and enhance the SBA's women-owned small business contracting program.

The WOSB program is a valuable tool for Federal agencies to contract with small businesses that are owned by women. However, a number of factors hinder the program's effectiveness. These limitations then translate into reduced contracting opportunities.

As a result, the data continues to show that women-owned small businesses are not seeing the contracting opportunities that should accompany the level of participation in the Federal marketplace.

My bill will move away from self-certification and require Federal agencies to only count contracts awarded to certified WOSBs toward their procurement goals.

This bill will help address a major concern that I regularly hear from WOSBs: that the program is more difficult to use than the other SBA programs, and that it is in part because WOSBs are not SBA certified.

Stakeholders highlight that when combined with other confusing and cumbersome WOSB-specific requirements, the lack of SBA certification creates a risk that disincentivizes use of the authorities by contracting officers.

□ 1715

It is my hope that by moving more WOSBs through the SBA certification process, we will see Federal agencies more confidently and frequently set aside sole source contracts to women-owned small businesses.

That has always been the goal of the WOSB program: to level the playing field for women in industries where they are underrepresented. My bill helps to do just that, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for yielding me the time today and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ, a fellow proud New Yorker, for leading this effort with me. It is a good day when Members of the same State delegation from different parties can work together to benefit New York's small businesses and small businesses throughout this great country of ours.

Mr. Speaker, our bipartisan WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act would phase out self-certified,

women-owned small businesses from the governmentwide procurement goals. In doing so, this bill would achieve two main things. It will protect the integrity of the women-owned small business program, and it will prevent the abuse of Federal small business contracting goals.

Self-certification, according to the SBA Office of Inspector General and others, presents significant risks of fraud and impedes the progress of businesses which rightfully qualify. While others can self-certify, women small business owners in the SBA's women-owned small business program undergo a certification program to ensure that only women-owned firms enter.

This bill aligns the women-owned small business program with similar programs that no longer count self-certified firms in the SBA's goals. A similar provision phasing out self-certified service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses from the procurement goals passed in the FY24 NDAA.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I have drafted this bill in a way that I believe ensures women-owned small businesses will not be harmed during the transition away from self-certification and that Congress has the tools necessary to conduct oversight of that transition.

There are sufficient protections built into the legislation so that women-owned firms are not penalized and specifically will not lose contracts if issues arise during implementation. Utilizing WOSBs in our Federal marketplace is critical for their success and the success of our national economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important bill to enhance the WOSB program, bolster its use, and provide female entrepreneurs with additional opportunities for success. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ and Congressman LALOTA. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7105, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION RURAL PERFORMANCE REPORT ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5265) to amend the Small Business Act to require a report on the performance of the Office of Rural Affairs, to require a report on the memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture entered into on April 4, 2018, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5265

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 “Small Business Administration Rural Performance Report Act”.

SEC. 2. SMALL BUSINESS RURAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS.

(a) OFFICE OF RURAL AFFAIRS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT.—Section 26 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 653) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) REPORTS.—

“(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Administrator shall make available on a website of the Administration, and submit to the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, a report on the activities of the Office during the year preceding the date of the report that includes the following elements:

“(A) How the Office is promoting financial assistance pursuant to subsection (c)(1).

“(B) Annual statistics compiled pursuant to subsection (c)(2).

“(C) How the Office is providing information pursuant to subsection (c)(3).

“(D) How the Office is providing information pursuant to subsection (c)(4).

“(E) The number of outreach events conducted by the Office to provide information described in paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (c).

“(F) Details of any partnerships that the Office engaged in to provide the outreach described in paragraph (5), including any partnerships with the National Travel and Tourism Office of the Department of Commerce.

“(G) The name of the director of the Office and the number of staff employed by the Office.

“(2) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall annually submit, along with the budget the budget justification materials submitted in support of the Small Business Administration budget for a fiscal year (as submitted with the budget of the President under section 1105(a) of title 31), a report that includes the elements described in paragraph (1).”.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 26(c)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 653(c)(5)) is amended by striking “United States Tourism and Travel Administration” and inserting “National Travel and Tourism Office of the Department of Commerce”.

(c) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall make available on a website of the Administration and submit to the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Small Business

and Entrepreneurship of the Senate a report on the MOU. Such report shall include a description of the following:

(1) How many working groups convened pursuant to the MOU the Administration was part of and if the Administration is still part of any such working groups.

(2) How many staff employed by the Administration were and are still involved with a working group convened pursuant to the MOU.

(3) The findings specified in clauses (i) through (iv) of paragraph (1) of part 2 of the MOU.

(4) The findings specified in clauses (i) through (iv) of paragraph (2) of part 2 of the MOU.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administration” means the Small Business Administration.

(3) MOU.—The term “MOU” means the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration entered into on April 4, 2018, about collaborative efforts to promote stronger businesses and agricultural economies in rural America.

SEC. 4. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5265, the Small Business Administration Rural Performance Report Act, sponsored by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

It should come as no surprise that rural entrepreneurs face unique challenges. In extending assistance to these entrepreneurs, the Department of Agriculture and the Small Business Administration offer a variety of programs to help them start and grow their businesses.

Unfortunately, government agencies often act in a silo and become ineffective in their outreach. That is why the Trump administration created a partnership between the USDA and the SBA to better tailor their outreach and services to rural entrepreneurs.

After our committee marked up this bill, we were happy to see the SBA announce that they are going to work to

renew another agreement with the Department of Agriculture. While this progress should not go unnoticed, this bill goes further to require a report to track the effectiveness of this agreement and the SBA's Office of Rural Affairs. If we are going to be spending taxpayer dollars to help accomplish a goal, there must be performance metrics to see where the ROI is for the taxpayers and the businesses they are helping.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital that Congress knows just how impactful these efforts are so we can ensure our rural entrepreneurs are not left behind. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5265, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, we are considering H.R. 5265, the Small Business Administration Rural Performance Report Act, which, as amended, requires an annual performance report and budget justification for the Office of Rural Affairs.

Mr. GOLDEN has worked relentlessly to increase SBA outreach to rural small businesses and make sure the Office of Rural Affairs remains active. I commend Mr. GOLDEN for his efforts, and I am quite disappointed we are not considering his legislation today, which would have enhanced the Office of Rural Affairs and was unanimously approved by the committee in September. I look forward to its speedy consideration.

Today, we are considering legislation that would require a performance report and budget updates from the Office of Rural Affairs so that we can stay apprised of its activities. Currently, we get this information by simply asking the agency for an update, but this bill would now statutorily mandate that it is provided.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. PAPPAS for joining Mr. ALFORD in sponsoring this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD).

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership of our Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ and our esteemed Chairman WILLIAMS. It is, indeed, a pleasure to be on this committee. There are many Members here today who are on the Small Business Committee and are making a difference for America in every piece of legislation we pass.

I rise today to speak on the Small Business Administration Rural Performance Report Act, a bill that we introduced to support our rural small businesses.

These businesses are essential to rural America, providing over 54 percent of employment in rural communities and counties. This bill would help us understand how the Small Business Administration is really helping them succeed.

The bill requires two reports. First, it would give us insight into the Office

of Rural Affairs, ensuring that they are providing the proper help to rural businesses.

We are all aware of the crucial role that these businesses play in our economy, yet the support that they offer is often unknown to small business owners. At a hearing just last summer, several small business owners, including Jennifer Cassaday, a constituent of mine who owns Byrd's Pecan Delights in Adrian, Missouri, came here to testify that she didn't even know that the Office of Rural Affairs existed.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would change that. It demands clear, detailed reports on the Office of Rural Affairs and its efforts to aid these businesses and people like Jennifer.

Are they providing the right assistance? Are the resources and information reaching those who need it the most?

It is time we had solid answers. This bill would provide them.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of this report requires a review of a memorandum of understanding between the SBA and the Department of Agriculture. This Trump-era MOU was a recognition that ag goes hand in hand with rural small businesses.

Supporting this bill means that we are committed to making sure that our rural entrepreneurs have the support they need in a timely fashion. We are standing up for the underrepresented, ensuring our rural small businesses are not left behind in America. We are promoting the accountability and oversight needed to support the backbone of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote for transparency, responsibility, and the success of our rural small business owners.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses are powerful drivers of economic growth across the United States, employing 46 percent of the workforce and generating two-thirds of new jobs. In rural areas, self-employment tends to be higher than in urban and suburban areas, but the challenges they face are much greater. Rural small businesses have a harder time securing affordable capital, finding talented workers, and making ends meet.

Administrator Guzman is increasing SBA's commitment to rural America by appointing a new director to the office and improving the outreach and engagement with rural small businesses. She recognizes the importance of ensuring rural small businesses have access to SBA's vital programs. With this type of assistance, rural small businesses can thrive and, in turn, create good-paying jobs and lift up communities.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Mr. ALFORD, Mr. PAPPAS, and Mr. GOLDEN for their leadership on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this

commonsense legislation brought to us by Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. GOLDEN, and Mr. ALFORD. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5265, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENCOURAGING SUCCESS ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6591) to amend section 8(a) of the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to regularly reassess the asset and net worth thresholds for qualifying as an economically disadvantaged individual, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6591

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 "Encouraging Success Act".

SEC. 2. REGULAR REASSESSMENT OF THE THRESHOLDS FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8(a)(6) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(a)(6)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(F)(i) Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, and not less frequently than every four years thereafter, the Administrator shall assess and, if appropriate, revise the maximum value of asset and the maximum net worth an individual may have to qualify as an economically disadvantaged individual under subparagraph (A) to account for changes in the economy, including inflation and other factors as determined appropriate by the Administrator.

"(ii) The Administrator shall make each covered revision by issuing a rule after an opportunity for public notice and comment.

"(iii) To the extent practicable, the Administrator shall coordinate the activities carried out under clause (i) with the activities required under section 1344(a)(2) of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (15 U.S.C. 632 note).

"(iv) In this subparagraph, the term 'covered revision' means a revision described in clause (i) that the Administrator determines is appropriate pursuant to an assessment under such clause."

(b) COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all

Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6591, the Encouraging Success Act, sponsored by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY), my good friend.

The 8(a) program allows certain small businesses to compete for valuable contracting opportunities. However, SBA regulations threaten to remove the participating firms if the owner reaches certain financial thresholds. While these thresholds are necessary to ensure that only true small businesses are utilizing this program, it can force some small business owners to make a tough decision: proactively stop expanding their business so they can stay in the program or grow outside the limits set by the SBA and get kicked out of the program.

I spoke with a female veteran in my district who was facing this exact issue. The bill doesn't solve all the issues in this program, but it requires the SBA to reassess the 8(a) asset threshold cap every 4 years, ensuring it is in line with market realities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 6591, the Encouraging Success Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives ELLZEY and THANEDAR, for their work on this bill, the Encouraging Success Act.

The 8(a) program is one of the most effective tools for minority businessowners to get their foot in the door of the Federal marketplace.

The program is critical for entrepreneurs who have faced discrimination. This bill requires the SBA to regularly assess, and, when necessary, update the economic threshold for program participation.

I share the sponsors' concerns that the lack of reassessment or readjustment can penalize growth and that a regular assessment will ensure that the program keeps pace with changing economic environments.

Mr. Speaker, the National Minority Supplier Development Council has said that this legislation will enhance the effectiveness of SBA programs, including the esteemed 8(a) program, ensuring they continue to serve as powerful catalysts for community wealth building and inclusive economic development.

The 8(a) program remains a win-win for the government and for communities across the country. It has led to

a more diverse Federal market and supply chain, provided billions of dollars annually through streamlined contracting processes for minority businessowners, and continues to work to help minority businessowners overcome the real and ongoing discrimination that would otherwise hold them back.

Keeping 8(a) intact and relevant must remain a top priority. I appreciate the sponsors for their work, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY).

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS and Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for allowing me to lay out H.R. 5961, the Encouraging Success Act. Bipartisanship on this committee is alive and well, and I thank Congressman THANEDAR for joining me on this bill.

The Small Business Administration's 8(a) program was established in the 1970s to help small businesses compete with large corporations for U.S. Government contracts.

A qualifying small business can only be a part of the program for 9 years. To initially qualify and remain in the 8(a) program, there is a cap to the value of a small business' assets.

Since the program's inception, the asset cap has only been raised twice and is currently at the very small amount of \$6.5 million.

The asset threshold is set through an SBA-determined regulation, and the law does not outline any process of when or how the SBA should reassess the threshold to remain in line with market changes.

Unfortunately, because the requirements to initially qualify for the program or to remain in it haven't kept up with market changes, the cap is set to a level at which a small business is disadvantaged to compete in the open market at the end of the 9-year program.

The SBA's slow-to-change attitude with the asset cap can limit the success of an 8(a) small business or outright kill it.

With the threat of being graduated out of the 8(a) program, small business owners must decide whether their firm's growth is worth being removed from the program.

Our bill, H.R. 6591, helps solve the situation and encourages success of small businesses by compelling the SBA administrator to review the qualification caps with greater frequency to ensure that small businesses participating in the 8(a) program are allowed to grow big enough to compete with larger companies, once their participation in the program ends. We ask for your support for H.R. 6591.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate the great work of my colleagues on this bill, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

I will close by noting that 3 weeks ago, the committee held a hearing on

small business size standards and contracting policies and the barriers they can pose to growth.

As we discussed, the Federal Government needs to both recruit and retain small business government contractors.

We are seeing that retaining small firms, like those in the 8(a) program, is a necessity for the health of the industrial base.

This bill will contribute to the retention of growing small businesses. It is a productive step designed to ensure that minority businessowners can succeed, thrive, and grow in the Federal marketplace and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Congressmen ELLZEY and THANEDAR, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6591, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING WEBSITE TO REPORT FRAUD RELATING TO CERTAIN COVID-19 LOANS

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5426) to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to provide a link to resources for submitting reports on suspected fraud relating to certain COVID-19 loans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5426

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. WEBSITE TO REPORT FRAUD RELATING TO CERTAIN COVID-19 LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall include on the primary website of the Administration a link to a website of the Office of the Inspector General of the Small Business Administration regarding reporting fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct, and containing a resource for individuals to report suspected cases of fraud with respect to a covered loan to the Administration.

(b) COVERED LOAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered loan” means—

(1) a loan made under paragraph (36) or (37) of section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)); or

(2) a loan made under section 7(b) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) in response to COVID-19 during the covered period (as defined in section 1110(a) of the CARES Act (15 U.S.C. 9009)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5426, a bill to require the SBA's administrator to place a visible link on their website to report COVID fraud.

Last summer, the SBA's Inspector General testified to our committee that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the SBA distributed more than \$200 billion in potentially fraudulent loans.

The committee was also told that in order to work through all these cases, it will take more than 100 years of work. That is simply not a realistic feat, and they need all the help they can get from the American people.

Reporting fraud in the SBA should be easy for everyday Americans to do. Our committee now has a direct fraud reporting link on our website, and the SBA should do the same.

When our committee was researching the need for this bill, we found that the only link to report COVID fraud redirected users to a different website that was in Spanish.

Even after we figured out how to correct the language, it was unclear how to actually report the fraud. This bill will ensure that reporting fraud is simply one click away.

It should be a top priority of this body to recoup as many of these taxpayer dollars as possible and in the most timely and efficient manner possible.

H.R. 5426 is a commonsense bill that will help individuals easily report suspected fraudulent activity and help the SBA and the OIG prioritize which potentially fraudulent loans to investigate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today we are considering H.R. 5426, which will require the SBA to put a link to the IG's fraud hotline on its website for whistleblowers to report suspected fraud.

The good news is that the Biden administration SBA already has a link to the OIG's hotline on its main landing page, but with this bill, it will be here to stay.

In July, Inspector General Ware testified that his office has received 250,000 hotline complaints since the beginning of the pandemic, and more than 90,000 have been identified as actionable. This amounts to more than 100 years of investigative casework.

To that end, the single most important action we can take to support the OIG is to make sure we give them the resources they need to investigate bad actors.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of Ms. VAN DUYNE and Mr. LANDSMAN to curb fraud, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. VAN DUYNE).

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support of this legislation.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Small Business Administration oversaw what has been described as “the biggest fraud in a generation,” doling out more than \$200 billion to scammers, foreign crime rings, and others who took advantage of a pandemic to enrich themselves.

According to the Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz, the SBA invited this fraud by failing to implement basic safeguards to ensure taxpayer funds were going to the right people. Some of the pandemic aid even went to people involved in transnational crime organizations.

When government mandates forced small businesses to close their doors, some resulting in permanent closures, fraudsters were out taking expensive vacations, buying Lamborghinis, mansions, private jets, horses, luxury jewelry, and more, all on the taxpayers’ dime. While we work to recover the stolen funds, those criminals must be identified and prosecuted.

The Small Business Administration not only failed to implement safeguards to prevent fraud of this scope, but they also failed to comply with the law originally authorizing the aid, which required the agency to include an easily accessible link for the public to report suspected fraud. Instead, the SBA has ignored legal requirements and made it incredibly difficult to report fraud.

As my colleagues and I highlighted during a hearing last year, if you were even able to locate the SBA’s link to report fraudulent COVID-19 loans—which were buried in their website—where did it take you? As our chairman noted, it took you to a different website that was written entirely in Spanish.

The Republican-led Small Business Committee has created a direct link for Americans to easily report pandemic fraud, and the Small Business Administration must do the same.

I urge my colleagues to support our bipartisan legislation to make it easier to report pandemic fraud.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Over the past 3 years, this committee has played an important role in examining the pandemic relief programs, which helped millions of small businesses stay afloat in unprecedented times.

While there may be disagreement on the actual estimates of fraud, it is clear we need to work together to protect the integrity of the SBA programs from bad actors.

The SBA, under the leadership of Administrator Guzman, has taken strong steps to root out fraud in the pandemic relief programs and put strong controls in place to prevent future fraud.

In 2022, SBA established a Fraud Risk Management Board, aligning its practices with GAO’s oversight policies.

A new role was also created, the SBA Special Counsel for Enterprise Risk, to advise the administrator of fraud and risk management activities.

The agency continues to work collaboratively with the SBA Inspector General, the Interagency COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force, and the Department of Justice to recover stolen funds.

I thank Ms. VAN DUYNE and Mr. LANDSMAN for looking for ways to enhance the work that the SBA is undertaking to combat fraud, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Congresswoman VAN DUYNE and Congressman LANDSMAN, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5426.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

THE WOSB INTEGRITY ACT OF 2024

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7128) to establish requirements relating to size standard compliance of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7128

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 “The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. WOMEN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SIZE STANDARD COMPLIANCE FOR RESTRICTED COMPETITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8(m)(2)(E) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)(E)) is amended by inserting “, including that each such concern does not exceed the applicable size standard established under section 3(a)” after “by women”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not be construed as disqualifying any small business concern owned and controlled by women that, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, is certified by a Federal agency, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, or a national certifying entity approved by the Administrator as a small business concern owned and controlled by women from competing for contracts restricted under section 8(m)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)) before the earlier of—

(1) the date on which the small business concern owned and controlled by women submits a notice that such concern is no longer a small business concern owned and controlled by women; or

(2) the date on which the Administrator, Federal agency, or entity that provided such certification determines that the concern exceeds the applicable size standard established under section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(a)).

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act shall be construed to require the Administrator to perform a formal size determination on a small business concern when considering an application from such concern for certification as a small business concern owned and controlled by women.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

(2) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN.—The term “small business concern” has the meaning given under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632).

(3) SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY WOMEN.—The term “small business concern” and “small business concern owned and controlled by women” has the meaning given in section 8(m)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(1)).

(e) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 8(m)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)(2)(C)) is amended by striking “paragraph (3)” and inserting “paragraph (4)”.

(f) COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

□ 1745

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7128, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024, sponsored by Representative MALOY from the great State of Utah.

The WOSB Integrity Act removes self-certification of size from this contracting program that is reserved for women-owned small businesses.

It is vital that there are programs to help small business owners access Federal contracting opportunities. That is where the Small Business Administration's women-owned small business program, also known as WOSB, comes in. This program allows women entrepreneurs to compete for unique contracting opportunities.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government currently does not independently verify that these businesses are truly small businesses. Firms can simply self-certify themselves as small businesses, potentially leading to misrepresentation and fraud to obtain contracting opportunities.

It is vital that women-owned entrepreneurs who participate in the WOSB do not have to worry that their competitors misrepresent themselves as a small business.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 7128, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Representatives Maloy and Scholten, for their work on this bill.

Since its inception, the WOSB program and the administration of the program have been a challenge for SBA. Similarly, Federal agencies have faced challenges using the authorities that Congress has put in place to streamline contracting with women-owned small businesses.

While working to boost participation of WOSBs and enhance the use of these authorities, Congress must also advance initiatives that are designed to protect the integrity of the program.

One issue we are addressing today is the inspector general's report that states there is a discrepancy in SBA's implementation of the program. The purpose of this bill is to align SBA processes with the IG's report and to clarify that we expect SBA to have a process similar to the other socioeconomic contracting programs for WOSB certifications.

Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate my colleagues for their work on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY).

Ms. MALOY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WILLIAMS for yielding me time. I also thank Ranking Member VELÁZQUEZ for her support on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, The WOSB Integrity Act of 2024.

The purpose of this bill is to make sure that the businesses that are taking advantage of the WOSB program are, in fact, small businesses. They are certifying that they are women-owned, but they are self-certifying that they are small.

The SBA inspector general found that there is room for fraud in this program, so this is simply a commonsense solution to close a loophole to make sure this program is serving the purpose it was intended to serve, which is giving women-owned small businesses the opportunity to compete in Federal contracting. It encourages fair competition, levels the playing field in government contracting, and ensures the opportunities are awarded justly and contribute to a competitive small business sector.

We have a goal of awarding 5 percent of government contracts to women-owned small businesses. We have no way of knowing how well we are doing in meeting that goal if we don't have any way of certifying that these WOSBs are, in fact, small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, and I thank Ms. MALOY and Ms. SCHOLTEN for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation from Congresswoman MALOY and SCHOLTEN, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7128.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

NATIVE AMERICAN ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7102) to establish an Office of Native American Affairs within the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7102

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 “Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act”.

SEC. 2. OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 49 (15 U.S.C. 631 note) as section 50; and

(2) by inserting after section 48 (15 U.S.C. 657u) the following:

“SEC. 49. OFFICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ‘Assistant Administrator’ means the Assistant Administrator for Native American Affairs appointed under subsection (c).

“(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term ‘Indian Tribe’ has the meaning given the term ‘Indian tribe’ in section 8(a)(13).

“(3) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘Native Hawaiian Organization’ has the meaning given the term in section 8(a)(15).

“(4) OFFICE.—The term ‘Office’ means the Office of Native American Affairs described in this section.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established within the Administration the Office of Native American Affairs, which shall be responsible for establishing a working relationship with Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations by targeting programs of the Administration relating to entrepreneurial development, contracting, and capital access to—

“(A) establish or expand small business concerns owned and controlled by individuals who are members of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations; and

“(B) promote economic development in Indian country (as defined in section 1151 of title 18, United States Code).

“(2) CONNECTION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—To the extent reasonable, the Office shall educate Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations about programs administered by other Federal agencies related to the interests described in paragraph (1).

“(c) ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR.—The Office shall be headed by an Assistant Administrator for Native American Affairs, who shall—

“(1) be appointed by and report to the Administrator;

“(2) have knowledge of Native American cultures and experience providing culturally tailored small business development assistance to Native Americans;

“(3) provide assistance to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations and small business concerns owned and controlled by individuals who are members of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations;

“(4) formulate policies, and promote policies and existing programs, to better address the entrepreneurial, capital access, business development, and contracting needs of persons described in paragraph (3);

“(5) collaborate with Associate Administrators within the Administration and officials of other Federal agencies to develop policies and plans to implement programs of the Administration to holistically address the needs described in paragraph (4);

“(6) provide assistance, including grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other financial assistance, to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations, or to private

nonprofit organizations governed by members of Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian Organizations that have the experience and capability to use the assistance to—

“(A) deploy training, counseling, workshops, educational outreach, and supplier events; and

“(B) access the entrepreneurial, capital, and contracting programs of the Administration;

“(7) assist the Administrator in conducting, or conduct, Tribal consultation to solicit input and facilitate discussion of potential modifications to programs and procedures of the Administration; and

“(8) recommend annual budgets for the Office.

“(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—On an annual basis until the termination date, the Assistant Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the Office of Native American Affairs that includes the number of clients served in Tribal communities, the number of consultations conducted, and the number of trainings held in Tribal country.

“(e) TERMINATION.—The authority under this section shall terminate seven years after the date of the enactment of this section.”.

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH CUTGO.

No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) and the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 7102, the Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act, introduced by Representatives Davids of Kansas and Crane of Arizona.

This bill would codify into law the Office of Native American Affairs, which has been providing services like counseling, training, and Tribal consultations for many years.

Additionally, this bill installs specific reporting requirements from the office. If we are going to be spending taxpayer dollars providing a service, it is critical we understand how effectively the services are being performed.

This bill would not appropriate any additional funds or expand government in any way, but it would provide Congress with better oversight and performance metrics to ensure that this office is performing to its fullest extent.

Native American entrepreneurs, Tribal-owned corporations, and Native

American small businesses are vital to their local economies.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative DAVIDS and Representative CRANE for their work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7102, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 7102, the Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act.

Let me begin by commending Ms. DAVIDS for her leadership and bipartisan efforts to codify the Office of Native American Affairs at SBA. She is a valued member of the Committee on Small Business and has remained committed to working with stakeholders to make this bill a reality.

The office has been a tremendous resource for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians seeking to launch and grow their small businesses. Throughout the year, it engages in several outreach activities, including consultations, development and distribution of promotional materials, and participation in national economic development conferences.

Codifying the office would ensure that Tribal small businesses have access to SBA's full range of business development tools regardless of the administration.

Importantly, the legislation requires that the assistant administrator report directly to the Administrator, ensuring the voice of the Tribal communities will be heard at SBA.

I also thank Mr. CRANE for joining Ms. DAVIDS in her efforts, and I strongly support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE).

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to co-introduce this legislation to officially establish the Office of Native American Affairs at the Small Business Administration, and I thank Representative DAVIDS for her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent over half of Arizona's Tribes. Something I hear often is there is a need for economic growth and opportunity.

Tribal entrepreneurs who run businesses on reservations face complex hurdles when it comes to understanding tax implications, property rights, regulatory burdens, and lending. Tribal entrepreneurs should have the ability to access SBA's programs just like anyone else, but in reality, these communities do not experience adequate access or outreach.

Most importantly, they need specialized expertise to assist them in navigating the unique complexities of running a business on a reservation—com-

plexities mostly created by us, the Federal Government.

Economic development in our Tribal communities is crucial. I am hopeful that establishing the Office of Native American Affairs into statute will bring attention to resources the Small Business Administration can provide to Tribal businessowners and encourage the office to continue developing new methods for outreach to ensure that Tribal businesses are not overlooked. This bill would also ensure that Congress can practice proper oversight of the office's activities and effectiveness going forward.

I encourage representatives from this office to come out and visit Tribal communities in my district and begin a dialogue with small business owners who may be unaware that this office even exists. Doing so will allow the Office of Native American Affairs to adjust and enhance their programs so they can best serve Tribal small business owners.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. DAVIDS).

Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that our Nation's entrepreneurs face challenges in starting and operating small businesses. Finding a skilled workforce, establishing an effective online presence, and building a customer base are hurdles common to all small business owners.

However, our Native American small business owners face these challenges in a more severe way. Today, I will highlight a few reasons for that disparity.

First, Native Americans are twice as likely to live in poverty as compared to other Americans. This significantly impacts their ability to use savings and assets to fund their small businesses, to access credit, and to take on the risk of entrepreneurship.

Second, these businessowners face geographical barriers, with longer distances for supply deliveries and a lack of reliable broadband and telephone service. These physical obstacles make networking, finding mentors, and reaching out to a consumer base a bit more difficult, ultimately reducing their chances of success.

Third, Native Americans who are entrepreneurs often face greater hurdles in attracting private investment and accessing Federal contracting opportunities. Addressing these challenges is crucial to leveling the playing field for Tribal small business communities and bolstering our overall economy.

Currently, the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Native American Affairs works diligently to connect Native businessowners with entrepreneurial development, lending, and procurement programs. However, the absence of a congressional mandate for this office limits its capacity and

leaves it vulnerable to changes from one administration to the next.

That is why we really need to pass this Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act. This bill would codify the SBA's Office of Native American Affairs into Federal law, establishing an assistant administrator role to oversee operations and report directly to SBA leadership. It would also require the office to report to Congress on its successes in Indian Country.

Native-owned businesses employ over 300,000 Americans and are vital drivers of our national economy. These Tribal businesses deserve a seat at the table to advocate not only for the challenges that I mentioned earlier but also for the successes and achievements that they have.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman CRANE, my Republican colleague and co-lead on this, for his partnership in introducing this bill. I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to stand united in support of this crucial legislation and vote in favor of successful entrepreneurship in Tribal communities.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, Native American-owned businesses are powerful economic engines, contributing over \$33 billion to the U.S. economy every year and employing more than 200,000 people in their communities.

□ 1800

By enhancing the Office of Native American Affairs, SBA will be able to work on behalf of Indian Country and better target resources to Indian Tribes.

I once again thank Representatives DAVIDS and CRANE for their bipartisan work to provide assistance to these critically important businesses and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation brought to us by Congresswoman DAVIDS and Congressman CRANE, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7102.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PREVENTING ACCESS TO AMERICANS' BULK SENSITIVE PERSONAL DATA AND UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT-RELATED DATA BY COUNTRIES OF CONCERN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 118-109)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and further addressed with additional measures in Executive Order 14034 of June 9, 2021 (Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries).

The continuing effort of certain countries of concern to access Americans' sensitive personal data and United States Government-related data constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Access to Americans' bulk sensitive personal data or United States Government-related data increases the ability of countries of concern to engage in a wide range of malicious activities, including espionage, influence, kinetic, or cyber operations, or to identify other potential strategic advantages over the United States.

To address this threat and to take further steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873, the order authorizes the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to issue, subject to public notice and comment, regulations to prohibit or otherwise restrict the large-scale transfer of Americans' personal data to countries of concern and to provide safeguards around other activities that can give those countries access to sensitive data. Section 2(b) of the order authorizes the Attorney General, in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of the order.

In addition, section 2(d) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Director

of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, in coordination with the Attorney General and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to propose, seek public comment on, and publish security requirements that address the unacceptable risk posed by restricted transactions, as identified by the Attorney General. Section 2(e) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, to take such actions, including promulgating rules, regulations, standards, and requirements; issuing interpretive guidance; and employing all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes described in section 2(d) of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 28, 2024.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MORAN) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 6544; and
H.R. 4984.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

ATOMIC ENERGY ADVANCEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6544) to advance the benefits of nuclear energy by enabling efficient, timely, and predictable licensing, regulation, and deployment of nuclear energy technologies, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 365, nays 36, answered “present” 1, not voting 29, as follows:

[Roll No. 55]

YEAS—365

Adams	Dean (PA)	Johnson (LA)
Aderholt	DeGette	Johnson (SD)
Aguilar	DeLauro	Jordan
Alford	DelBene	Joyce (OH)
Allen	Deluzio	Joyce (PA)
Allred	DeSaulnier	Kean (NJ)
Amo	DesJarlais	Keating
Amodi	Diaz-Balart	Kelly (IL)
Armstrong	Dingell	Kelly (MS)
Arrington	Donalds	Kelly (PA)
Auchincloss	Duarte	Kiggans (VA)
Babin	Duncan	Kildee
Bacon	Dunn (FL)	Kiley
Baird	Edwards	Kilmer
Balderson	Ellzey	Kim (CA)
Banks	Emmer	Kim (NJ)
Barr	Escobar	Krishnamoorthi
Bean (FL)	Eshoo	Kuster
Beatty	Estes	Kustoff
Bentz	Evans	LaHood
Bera	Ezell	LaLota
Bergman	Fallon	LaMalfa
Beyer	Feenstra	Landsman
Bice	Ferguson	Langworthy
Biggs	Finstad	Larsen (WA)
Bishop (GA)	Fischbach	Larson (CT)
Blumenauer	Fitzgerald	Latta
Blunt Rochester	Fitzpatrick	LaTurner
Boebert	Fleischmann	Lawler
Bost	Fletcher	Lee (FL)
Bowman	Flood	Lee (NV)
Boyle (PA)	Foster	Lesko
Brecheen	Foushee	Letlow
Brown	Fox	Lieu
Brownley	Frankel, Lois	Lofgren
Buchanan	Franklin, Scott	Loudermilk
Buck	Fry	Luetkemeyer
Budzinski	Fulcher	Luna
Burchett	Gaetz	Luttrell
Burgess	Gallagher	Lynch
Burlison	Gallego	Mace
Calvert	Garamendi	Magaziner
Cammack	Garbarino	Malliotakis
Caraveo	Garcia (TX)	Maloy
Carbajal	Garcia, Mike	Mann
Cardenas	Jimenez	Manning
Carey	Golden (ME)	Massie
Carl	Gomez	Mast
Carson	Gonzales, Tony	Matsui
Carter (GA)	Gonzalez,	McCaul
Carter (LA)	Vicente	McClain
Carter (TX)	Good (VA)	McClellan
Cartwright	Gooden (TX)	McClintock
Case	Gottheimer	McCormick
Casten	Granger	McGarvey
Castor (FL)	Graves (LA)	Meeks
Castro (TX)	Graves (MO)	Menendez
Chavez-DeRemer	Green (TN)	Meng
Cherfilus	Green, Al (TX)	Meuser
McCormick	Greene (GA)	Mfume
Chu	Griffith	Miller (IL)
Ciscomani	Grothman	Miller (OH)
Clark (MA)	Guest	Miller (WV)
Cleaver	Guthrie	Miller-Meeks
Cline	Hageman	Mills
Cloud	Harder (CA)	Molinaro
Clyburn	Harris	Moolenaar
Clyde	Harshbarger	Mooney
Cohen	Hayes	Moore (AL)
Cole	Hern	Moore (UT)
Collins	Higgins (LA)	Moran
Comer	Hill	Morelle
Connolly	Himes	Moskowitz
Correa	Hinson	Moulton
Costa	Horsford	Mrvan
Courtney	Houchin	Mullin
Crane	Houlahan	Napolitano
Crawford	Hoyer	Neal
Crenshaw	Hoyle (OR)	Neguse
Crockett	Hudson	Nehls
Crow	Issa	Nickel
Cuellar	Ivey	Norcross
D'Esposito	Jackson (NC)	Norman
Dauids (KS)	Jacobs	Nunn (IA)
Davidson	James	Obernolte
Davis (IL)	Jeffries	Ogles
Davis (NC)	Johnson (GA)	Owens

Pallone	Scholten	Thompson (PA)
Palmer	Schrier	Tiffany
Panetta	Schweikert	Timmmons
Pappas	Scott (VA)	Titus
Pascarell	Scott, David	Tokuda
Payne	Self	Tonko
Pelosi	Sessions	Torres (CA)
Peltola	Sewell	Torres (NY)
Pence	Sherman	Trahan
Perez	Sherrill	Trone
Perry	Simpson	Turner
Peters	Slotkin	Underwood
Pettersen	Smith (MO)	Valadao
Pfleger	Smith (NE)	Van Drew
Pocan	Smith (NJ)	Van Dune
Posey	Smith (WA)	Van Orden
Quigley	Smucker	Vargas
Reschenthaler	Sorensen	Vasquez
Rodgers (WA)	Soto	Veasey
Rose	Spanberger	Wagner
Rosendale	Spartz	Walberg
Ross	Stanton	Wasserman
Rouzer	Stauber	Schultz
Roy	Steel	Watson Coleman
Ruiz	Stefanik	Webster (FL)
Ruppersberger	Steil	Wenstrup
Rutherford	Steube	Westerman
Ryan	Stevens	Williams (GA)
Salazar	Strickland	Williams (NY)
Salinas	Strong	Williams (TX)
Eshoo	Swallow	Wilson (FL)
Sanchez	Sykes	Wilson (SC)
Sarbanes	Tenney	Wittman
Scalise	Thanedar	Womack
Scanlon	Thompson (CA)	Yakym
Schiff	Thompson (MS)	
Schneider		

NAYS—36

Balint	Jackson (IL)	Omar
Barragan	Jayapal	Pingree
Bonamici	Kamlager-Dove	Porter
Bush	Khanna	Pressley
Casas	Lee (CA)	Ramirez
Clarke (NY)	Lee (PA)	Raskin
Doggett	Leger Fernandez	Schakowsky
Espallat	Levin	Stansbury
Frost	McGovern	Takano
Garcia (IL)	Moore (WI)	Tlaib
Garcia, Robert	Nadler	Velázquez
Huffman	Ocasio-Cortez	Waters

ANSWERED “PRESENT”—1

Kaptur

NOT VOTING—29

Bilirakis	Hunt	Phillips
Bishop (NC)	Jackson (TX)	Rogers (AL)
Bucshon	Jackson Lee	Rogers (KY)
Craig	Lamborn	Scott, Austin
Curtis	Lucas	Waltz
De La Cruz	McBath	Weber (TX)
Goldman (NY)	McCollum	Wexton
Gosar	McHenry	Wild
Grijalva	Murphy	Zinke
Huizenga	Newhouse	

□ 1858

Ms. PORTER, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. BALINT, SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. LEE of California, MOORE of Wisconsin, and CLARKE of New York changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 55.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2024.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a letter received from Ms. Kristen Zebrowski Stavisky and Mr. Raymond J. Riley, III, Co-Executive Directors, New York State Board of Elections, indicating that, according to the unofficial results for the Special Election held on February 13, 2024, the Honorable Thomas R. Suozzi was elected for Representative to Congress for the Third Congressional District of New York.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,

Acting Clerk.

NEW YORK STATE

BOARD OF ELECTIONS,

February 14, 2024.

Hon. KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Acting Clerk, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. MCCUMBER: This is to advise you that the unofficial results of the Special Election held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, for Representative in Congress from the Third Congressional District of New York, show that Thomas R. Suozzi received 91,338 or 53.70% of the total number of votes cast for that office.

It would appear from these unofficial results that Thomas R. Suozzi was elected as Representative in Congress from the Third Congressional District of New York.

To the best of our knowledge and belief at this time, there is no contest to this election.

As soon as the official results are certified to this office by the New York City Board of Elections and the Nassau County Board of Elections, representing all jurisdictions involved, an official Certificate of Election will be prepared for transmittal as required by law.

Sincerely,

KRISTEN ZEBROWSKI

STAVISKY,

Co-Executive Director.

RAYMOND J. RILEY III,

Co-Executive Director.

SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. SUOZZI OF NEW YORK, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from New York, the Honorable THOMAS R. SUOZZI, be permitted to take the oath of office today.

His certificate of election has not arrived, but there is no contest and no question has been raised with regard to his election.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect and the members of the New York delegation present themselves in the well.

All Members will rise and the Representative-elect will please raise his right hand.

Mr. SUOZZI appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 118th Congress.

WELCOMING THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. SUOZZI TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, as dean of the New York delegation, it is my distinct honor to rise today to welcome my good friend Congressman Tom Suozzi back to the people's House.

The people of New York's Third Congressional District have elected a Representative with the experience, character, and commitment to solve problems confronting everyday Americans and deliver for his constituents.

TOM is also a great family man. He is a devoted father, husband, and public servant who upholds the values instilled in him by his family. He has devoted most of his adult life to public service: first as the mayor of his hometown, Glen Cove, for 8 years; then as the county executive of Nassau County for 8 years, before serving as a United States Congressman for 6 years.

From working tirelessly to secure investments for the Northport VA Medical Center in Long Island to helping secure billions in Federal support for New York in pandemic relief and infrastructure funding, TOM's outstanding record in Congress speaks for itself.

TOM loves New York, he loves his country, and his love for public service runs deep. He is the kind of person we need serving in this House at this moment, and it gives me great pleasure to reintroduce him as our colleague, the gentleman from New York, TOM SUOZZI.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to Mr. SUOZZI.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I thank JERRY and the New York delegation, all my colleagues, and my friends and supporters who are here tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would be back here, but the Lord works in mysterious ways, and God made a way when there was no way.

I thank God for blessing me with this great responsibility, and I thank God for my best friend and partner for 30 years, my wife, Helene. She hates that.

Mr. Speaker, on the night of my election victory, I promised the people of Long Island and Queens I would deliver a simple message to this Chamber: Wake up. The people are sick and tired of the finger-pointing and the petty partisan bickering. They want us to work together.

They want you guys to work together, too. What are you doing? You are supposed to be clapping for that.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are so many good people in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle, but people are worried about the cost of living; they are worried about the chaos at the border; they are worried about Israel, Gaza, and Ukraine.

They look to Congress, and what do they see? The extremists get all the attention. We are letting ourselves be bullied by our base. We aren't getting anything done. We need less chaos and more common sense.

The last few months, I have talked with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, and they all ask the same thing: What about me? What are you doing for me? Enough with the theater and the drama, enough with the hyperbole and the histrionics, enough with the shutdowns and the put-downs.

The people aren't paying us to make things worse. The people pay us to be in the solutions business.

Mr. Speaker, you and I came to Congress together in 2017. I remember when you founded the Honor and Civility Caucus. You said at the time it was to restore collegiality and encourage productive dialogue. Sign me up. Sign me up right away. Mr. Speaker, I know you believe in collegiality and productive dialogue. We need more of that and less of the hot air fanning the flames of anger that happens much too often in our country these days.

Mr. Speaker, after my recent election you said something I must gently take exception to. You said: TOM SUOZZI ran like a Republican. Now, I know you meant that as a compliment. Let me be clear. Mr. Speaker, I am a true blue, dyed-in-the-wool Democrat; but more important, like you, Mr. Speaker, and the men and women in this Chamber, I am a true blue, dyed-in-the-wool American.

Like any patriot of the greatest country on Earth, I am willing to compromise to try and solve problems like the chaos at the border. The bipartisan Senate bill doesn't have everything I wanted. I believe that Dreamers and TPS recipients should be granted a pathway to citizenship, and millions of others should have a path to legalization, but I will support a bipartisan compromise.

□ 1915

To not do so will keep the border open, will endanger peace in Israel, and will empower Vladimir Putin.

I know compromise is hard in this town, Mr. Speaker, but bring a bipartisan compromise to the floor, and I guarantee it will pass.

All of the issues we face in this country are complicated, every single one of them, and you can't solve anything in an environment of fear and anger. We can't fix them with a tweet or a press conference or even a speech.

I know many of you in this Chamber. I know a whole lot of you. You are in-

spired to do this work because of the command: Love thy neighbor. Let's actually do that. Let's do the hard work and get back to the solutions business.

Sadly, many of the people in America believe Democrats and Republicans can't work together. They have told me, Tom, wake up. You have to face the real world.

The real world is not something we must simply face. The real world is something that we as free men and women actively create. We make the real world.

I love this country. My father came here from Italy as a young boy, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during World War II, and went to Harvard Law School on the GI Bill.

It is hard to imagine today, but he faced rampant discrimination as an Italian immigrant, and no one would hire him, even though he went to Harvard, so he started his own law firm.

At 28 years old, he ran for city court judge and became the youngest judge in the history of New York State. What a country.

My father lived a great American success story like many of the stories in this room, and I will do everything I can to honor my father's legacy. More importantly, I will do everything I can to honor this Nation's legacy.

We all know what politics has become. Let's think about what it could be. While I may be the only one being sworn in today, what if we all see this as a fresh start?

What if we all took this chance to break some of our bad habits? What if today we remembered why we ran for office in the first place? Let's get back into the solutions business.

God bless the men and women of this Chamber. God bless the important work we do. God bless the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath of office to the gentleman from New York, the whole number of the House is 432.

D.C. ROBERT F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL STADIUM CAMPUS REVITALIZATION ACT

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4984) to amend the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the Administrator of General Services and the leasing of the Campus to the District of Columbia for purposes which include commercial and residential development, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 348, nays 55, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 56]

YEAS—348

Adams	Diaz-Balart	Kelly (PA)
Aderholt	Dingell	Khanna
Aguilar	Doggett	Kiggans (VA)
Alford	Donalds	Kildee
Allen	Duarte	Kiley
Allred	Duncan	Kilmer
Amo	Dunn (FL)	Kim (CA)
Amodei	Edwards	Kim (NJ)
Armstrong	Ellzey	Krishnamoorthi
Arrington	Emmer	Kuster
Auchincloss	Escobar	Kustoff
Bacon	Eshoo	LaHood
Baird	Espallat	LaLota
Balderson	Estes	Landsman
Balint	Evans	Langworthy
Banks	Ezell	Larsen (WA)
Barr	Fallon	Larson (CT)
Barragán	Feenstra	Latta
Beatty	Ferguson	LaTurner
Bentz	Finstad	Lawler
Bera	Fischbach	Lee (CA)
Bergman	Fitzgerald	Lee (FL)
Beyer	Fitzpatrick	Lee (NV)
Bice	Fleischmann	Lee (PA)
Bishop (GA)	Fletcher	Leger Fernandez
Blumenauer	Flood	Lesko
Blunt Rochester	Foster	Letlow
Bonamici	Foushee	Levin
Bost	Fox	Lieu
Bowman	Frankel, Lois	Lofgren
Brown	Franklin, Scott	Loudermilk
Brownley	Frost	Luetkemeyer
Buchanan	Fulcher	Luttrell
Budzinski	Gallagher	Lynch
Burgess	Gallego	Mace
Bush	Garamendi	Magaziner
Calvert	Garbarino	Malliotakis
Caraveo	Garcia (IL)	Maloy
Carbajal	Garcia (TX)	Mann
Cárdenas	Garcia, Mike	Manning
Carey	Garcia, Robert	Matsui
Carl	Gimenez	McBath
Carson	Golden (ME)	McCaul
Carter (GA)	Gomez	McClain
Carter (LA)	Gonzales, Tony	McClellan
Cartwright	Gonzalez,	McClintock
Casas	Vicente	McCormick
Case	Gottheimer	McGarvey
Casten	Graves (LA)	McGovern
Castor (FL)	Graves (MO)	Meeks
Castro (TX)	Green (TN)	Menendez
Chavez-DeRemer	Green, Al (TX)	Meng
Cherfilus-	Guthrie	Meuser
McCormick	Hageman	Miller (WV)
Chu	Harder (CA)	Miller-Meeks
Ciscomani	Hayes	Molinaro
Clark (MA)	Hern	Moolenaar
Clarke (NY)	Hill	Mooney
Cleaver	Himes	Moore (UT)
Cloud	Hinson	Moore (WI)
Clyburn	Horsford	Moran
Cohen	Houchin	Morelle
Cole	Houlahan	Moskowitz
Collins	Hoyle (OR)	Moulton
Comer	Hudson	Mrvan
Connolly	Huffman	Mullin
Correa	Huizenga	Nadler
Costa	Issa	Napolitano
Courtney	Jackson (IL)	Neal
Crawford	Jackson (NC)	Neguse
Crenshaw	Jacobs	Newhouse
Crockett	James	Nickel
Crow	Jayapal	Norcoss
Cuellar	Jeffries	Nunn (IA)
D'Esposito	Johnson (GA)	Obernolte
Davids (KS)	Johnson (SD)	Ocasio-Cortez
Davis (IL)	Joyce (OH)	Omar
Davis (NC)	Joyce (PA)	Owens
Dean (PA)	Kamlager-Dove	Pallone
DeGette	Kaptur	Palmer
DeLauro	Kean (NJ)	Panetta
DeBene	Keating	Pappas
Deluzio	Kelly (IL)	Pascarell
DeSaulnier	Kelly (MS)	Payne

Pelosi	Scott, David
Peltola	Sessions
Pence	Sewell
Perez	Sherman
Peters	Sherrill
Pettersen	Simpson
Pfleger	Slotkin
Pingree	Smith (MO)
Pocan	Smith (NE)
Porter	Smith (NJ)
Pressley	Smith (WA)
Quigley	Smucker
Ramirez	Sorensen
Reschenthaler	Soto
Rodgers (WA)	Spanberger
Ross	Stansbury
Rouzer	Stanton
Ruiz	Stauber
Rutherford	Steel
Ryan	Stefanik
Salazar	Steil
Salinas	Stevens
Sánchez	Strickland
Scalise	Strong
Scanlon	Suozi
Schakowsky	Swalwell
Schiff	Sykes
Schneider	Takano
Scholten	Tenney
Schrier	Thanedar
Schweikert	Thompson (CA)
Scott (VA)	Thompson (MS)
Scott, Austin	Tiffany

NAYS—55

Babin	Greene (GA)
Bean (FL)	Griffith
Biggs	Grothman
Boebert	Guest
Brecheen	Harris
Buck	Harshbarger
Burchett	Higgins (LA)
Burlison	Hoyer
Cammack	Ivey
Carter (TX)	Jordan
Cline	LaMalfa
Clyde	Luna
Crane	Massie
Davidson	Mast
DesJarlais	Mfume
Fry	Miller (IL)
Gaetz	Miller (OH)
Good (VA)	Mills
Gooden (TX)	Moore (AL)

NOT VOTING—28

Bilirakis	Grijalva	Raskin
Bishop (NC)	Hunt	Rogers (AL)
Boyle (PA)	Jackson (TX)	Rogers (KY)
Bucshon	Jackson Lee	Waltz
Craig	Lamborn	Weber (TX)
Curtis	Lucas	Wexton
De La Cruz	McCollum	Wild
Goldman (NY)	McHenry	Zinke
Gosar	Murphy	
Granger	Phillips	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1923

Messrs. WILSON of South Carolina and BABIN changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. DONALDS changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the District of Columbia so that the District may use the Campus for purposes including residential and commercial development, and for other purposes.”.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “nay” on rollcall No. 56.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. WEXTON. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not able to be present to vote today. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 55 and “yea” on rollcall No. 56.

HONORING LAKEN HOPE RILEY

(Mr. COLLINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, we, the Georgia delegation, rise tonight to honor the life and legacy of Laken Riley, who was murdered last week in Athens, Georgia, on the campus of the University of Georgia.

Allow me to share a few words about Laken directly from her parents:

Laken was an amazing daughter, sister, and friend.

She was selfless, lived to be an example for others, and was a dedicated servant of her community from a young age.

Laken's servant heart came from her love for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who guided her steps and shaped the way she lived.

Her faith informed her decision to enter the nursing program at Augusta University where she joined the A Chi O sorority and made countless friends who loved her and miss her dearly.

I will conclude with this message to Laken from her mom and dad: “Rest in peace, our angel. We look forward to seeing you again one day in heaven. Until then, we will do our best to make you proud.”

God help us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK).

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for taking this moment to recognize the life of Laken Hope Riley.

Mr. Speaker, parents and communities across the State of Georgia are extremely shocked, heartbroken, and outraged about the murder of Laken Hope Riley.

She was only 22 years old. She had a lot of life before her, but we should also focus mostly on the life and the legacy that she lived in her short time here.

She was a nursing student from Woodstock, Georgia, but her tragic death has devastated our community and sent shock waves across the State. Our prayers are with Laken's family and friends as they begin to navigate this tremendously difficult time.

It is clear from her parents that Laken was a special young lady who went out of her way to make everyone feel special and part of her family.

She was a gifted and exemplary student, a talented athlete, and the light of her family and community. Her parents describe her character and her loving nature this way:

She knew when to listen. She knew when to speak. She knew when to give you some tough love, and she knew when you needed a hug.

She will forever be our loving oldest daughter and the best big sister and role model a parent could ask for.

We will not rest until we ensure justice for her and her family.

Colleagues, will you please join in a moment of silence for Laken Hope Riley, a wonderful young woman taken from her family and this world much too soon.

□ 1930

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FOR A CEREMONY AS PART OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on House Administration be discharged from further consideration of H. Con. Res. 89, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 89

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL FOR A CEREMONY AS PART OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center is authorized to be used on May 7, 2024, for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 7056

Ms. LUNA. Mr. Speaker, I hereby remove my name as cosponsor of H.R. 7056.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's request is granted.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 7298

Mr. JAMES. Mr. Speaker, I hereby remove my name as cosponsor of H.R. 7298.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's request is granted.

PERMISSION FOR MEMBER TO BE CONSIDERED AS FIRST SPONSOR OF H.R. 1634

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I may hereafter be considered to be the first sponsor of H.R. 1634, a bill originally introduced by Representative JOHNSON of Ohio, for the purpose of adding cosponsors and requesting reprints pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING PRIVATE CHARLES D. STALEY

(Mr. BURCHETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Private Charles D. Staley, an American hero who served during the Korean war.

Private Staley was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and moved to Blount County in the sixth grade. His family owned and operated Maryville Monument, which played a large role in placing many veterans' headstones and markers throughout the county.

Private Staley was also drafted in the Army on May 11, 1953. He served his country with honor and an unflinching sense of duty as a military policeman at Fort Jackson.

Private Staley volunteered for overseas duty in March 1954 where he served behind the Iron Curtain during the Berlin Crisis. He was discharged from the Army on April 30, 1955.

He then served as the Blount County veterans service officer for 30 years. During that time, Private Staley demonstrated incredible professionalism and integrity. He has won the respect and admiration of his colleagues, his fellow veterans, and people all over our community.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Private Charles Staley as the Tennessee Second District's February 2024 Veteran of the Month.

REPUBLICANS' FAILED FOCUS

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the continued Republican leadership crisis.

Here we go again—2 days away from a government shutdown due to a lack of funding. Republican leadership is so poor that it can only achieve stopgap funding measures. There is no long-term solution because MAGA Republicans have no long-term goals.

They have no long-term goals because there is no long-term vision to better the country. They do not see

how a lack of humanitarian care for innocent Palestinian families causes more instability and extremism in the Middle East.

They do not understand how a lack of funding for Ukraine creates more political and economic instability across the globe. They deny that their rejection of an incredibly popular border security bill allows more fentanyl and illegal drugs to threaten American communities. They do not see because they do not care.

BIDEN'S BORDER CRISIS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, since Biden took office, there have been nearly 10 million illegal aliens entering America, with over 340 on the terrorist watch list. Sadly, this includes thousands of unaccompanied military-aged young men from dictatorships, as confirmed last night by Senator MARCO RUBIO with Sean Hannity.

Last month, I joined Speaker MIKE JOHNSON at Eagle Pass, Texas, and witnessed the madness. It is intentional irresponsibility thinking potential mass murderers will be low-information voters for a permanent, one-party Democrat, Big Government, as violent criminals cross to murder more Americans on our streets.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, who successfully protected America for 20 years as the global war on terrorism moves from the Afghanistan safe haven to America.

We do not need new border laws. We need to enforce the laws that we have. Biden safely opened borders for dictators as more 9/11 attacks across America are imminent, as warned by the FBI.

War criminal Putin will face trial for the assassination of Alexei Navalny. His widow, Yulia, is a hero for the oppressed people of Russia.

VISIT TO WAR-TORN UKRAINE

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as a result of intense fighting on the front line, a Ukrainian soldier's leg was blown off. However, he lived to share his story with me. He now uses a prosthetic leg to stand.

February 24 marked 2 years that Ukraine has successfully resisted Russia's unprovoked invasion.

During my recent visit to war-torn Ukraine, I witnessed the undeniable resilience of its people. While Ukrainian soldiers have given so much, including life and limbs, much like this soldier, we must not ignore their urgent plea for assistance to finish the fight.

Democracies around the world look to us, and the eyes of the world are on

us, including Putin's. Ukrainians are fighting tirelessly on the front lines, not just for their nation, but for democracy.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of these threats, the time to act is now.

CONGRATULATING MARK BURNS ON RECEIVING LIFETIME AVIATION INDUSTRY LEADER AWARD

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mark Burns, who recently received the Lifetime Aviation Industry Leader Award.

The Living Legends of Aviation Awards was founded in 2003 by the Kiddie Hawk Air Academy to recognize notable individuals who contributed to the aviation industry.

Prior to being named Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation's president in July of 2015, Burns worked in various areas spanning the company, including engineering and customer support. While president, Burns has guided Gulfstream during a time of rapid growth, innovation, and investment.

Additionally, Burns sits on the board of directors for the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, Georgia Power, and the Corporate Angel. He is a board member of the National Air and Space Museum, and he is a member of the National Committee for the Performing Arts, amongst others.

Burns is also a proud alumnus of Georgia Southern University, where he received his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, and from there, built a career worth applause and appreciation by Georgia residents.

Congratulations, Mark.

ATTACKS ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

(Ms. MANNING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, we knew extreme MAGA Republicans wouldn't stop with attacking abortion rights. We knew they would come for birth control.

I introduced the Right to Contraception Act to codify the right to use all forms of FDA-approved birth control.

We also knew they would come for IVF. Last week, the Alabama Supreme Court decided frozen embryos are children, forcing clinics in Alabama to stop IVF treatments.

Republicans are now scrambling to claim they support contraception and IVF. Actions speak louder than words.

Mr. Speaker, 195 House Republicans voted against my bill to protect the right to contraception, and over 120 Republicans cosponsored the Life at Conception Act, a bill that uses the same reasoning as the Alabama court, that

includes no protection for IVF or birth control, and would decimate IVF and abortion access nationwide.

Earlier today, Senate Republicans blocked a bill to protect the right to access IVF. They don't care about protecting reproductive rights, they care about controlling women's bodies.

RECOGNIZING COMMAND SERGEANT CORY M. BELL

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a Pennsylvania 15th District native, Command Sergeant Cory M. Bell for his service to the United States of America.

Command Sergeant Bell is retiring as a master sergeant after 24 years of serving in the United States Army. He was raised in Eldred, McKean County, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the Army on August 24, 2000.

After completing his One Station Unit Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he became a 12B combat engineer. Over the next 24 years, Command Sergeant Bell's service took him around the United States and the world in a variety of posts and positions. He is currently serving in the 3-393rd Brigade Engineer Battalion at Fort Cavazos, Texas.

Regardless of location, Command Sergeant Bell consistently provided leadership and guidance to his fellow soldiers.

Following his retirement, he will return to Kane, Pennsylvania, with his loving wife, Kristen, and three daughters.

Mr. Speaker, we owe Command Sergeant Bell a sincere debt of gratitude for his sacrifice, dedication, and courage to our country. On behalf of a grateful Nation, we thank him for his service to the United States of America. His dedication to our country is admirable. Enjoy retirement, you deserve it.

CRIMINALIZING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Mr. Speaker, recently Speaker JOHNSON and most House Republicans cosponsored a bill that could ban IVF nationwide and criminalize reproductive healthcare. The Alabama Supreme Court's anti-IVF ruling is consistent with these extreme attempts to steal women's freedom to decide when, how, and if to have a family.

Trump and the MAGA extremists want a Federal abortion ban. Packing the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* wasn't enough for them. Every State law and constitutional amend-

ment protecting women's reproductive freedoms from New Mexico to Kansas to Ohio could be overturned if Donald Trump and Republicans win in 2024.

Criminalizing pregnancies, outlawing IVF and birth control, and forcing pregnancies on children who have been raped—that is the nightmare we face unless women and those that love them act now to defeat this extremism. Women need healthcare, not handcuffs.

□ 1945

UNLEASHING FULL POTENTIAL OF DOMESTIC NUCLEAR ENERGY

(Mr. FULCHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, nuclear energy development has made tremendous strides to become one of the most carbon-free, safe, and reliable sources of energy.

Beyond powering cities, the nuclear industry provides jobs to Americans and fuels the economy. For example, the Idaho National Laboratory, in my home State of Idaho, is a major economic driver, bringing an economic impact of nearly \$4 billion just last year.

The Atomic Energy Advancement Act provides a clear pathway for industry leaders such as INL to continue the production of affordable and sustainable energy by removing barriers that hinder the development of nuclear power, unleashing the full potential of our domestic nuclear energy, and taking away the need to rely on foreign adversaries.

This legislation will streamline the licensing process, accelerate the development of nuclear power, and expedite the regulatory process for advanced reactors while building the nuclear workforce at the NRC.

For this and many other reasons, I voted in support of H.R. 6544 to bolster our energy security and drive innovation through the atomic energy industry.

HONORING TOM SKILLING

(Mr. SORENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SORENSEN. Mr. Speaker, as the only meteorologist in Congress, I rise today to honor one of the best in the history of local television: Tom Skilling of Chicago's Very Own WGN-TV. He retires tonight after 45 years in Chicago, tracking storms, blizzards, and tornadoes.

It wasn't just being a trusted resource on television. He mentored hundreds of interns, setting the bar high for generations of local meteorologists now serving all over the country.

For more than 20 years, I have known Tom to be a man of intense character with no limitation to his focus on perfecting the craft of analyzing, forecasting, and communicating.

I would not be standing here today without him sharing the belief that we are all just neighbors to one another, experiencing the same crazy weather together.

As the kids say, he is the GOAT. I am so proud to stand here and wish my friend the best in his retirement. He is the greatest.

RECOGNIZING JOHN MURPHY

(Mr. LAWLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAWLER. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize an individual who has been a beacon of service and steadfast advocate for those in need, John Murphy.

John's service began in the Marine Corps before he ran for county legislature and served there for over 40 years.

John has also committed himself to helping veterans and the developmentally disabled community, serving on the board of Camp Venture in support of the Venture Foundation for over 40 years, as well.

His work in this space led to many services being provided for the IDD community in the Hudson Valley, and his efforts remind us that the true measure of a society is found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.

In late 2023, John's other venture, Homes for Heroes, unveiled its new Phase II residences at Camp Shanks. This organization, headed by John, houses homeless veterans, something all of us in this body must continue to focus on.

I applaud John Murphy, a true hero for heroes, for his decades of service and his undying commitment to improving lives.

His legacy is built on the lives he has changed and the futures he has secured. I thank him for his service.

BORDER FUNDING TIED TO UKRAINE FUNDING

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, in Ukraine, the real battle for liberty grinds on. Vladimir Putin dines on caviar while Speaker JOHNSON and his majority House Conference paralyze our Nation. They refuse to bring up the Senate aid bill to provide Ukraine ammunition.

The Speaker pretends Congress won't fix our southern border so we shouldn't arm Ukraine's freedom fighters. Fixing our southern border requires Congress to vote for the funds to secure it, yet the Speaker refuses to bring up border funding while Ukraine's soldiers face the third largest military in the world.

Courageous freedom champion Alexei Navalny was tortured and imprisoned by Putin because he wanted a free nation. He was killed in a bitter, frigid, arctic prison colony.

What an awesome, heroic son of liberty for the future of his countrymen and -women. He died for liberty.

Meanwhile, this House is paralyzed. For shame. History will render harsh judgments against those elected officials who do not stand up for liberty at its time of severe testing on a continent where 500,000 American soldiers died in the last century so that our generation could be free.

The Speaker should bring up the Senate bill. Stand tall for liberty. Don't shrink from it.

HONORING JACK BODNER

(Mr. FITZPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of an extraordinary serviceman from my district, my hometown, Jack "Pop-Eye" Bodner, who passed away at the age of 102 years old.

Mr. Speaker, Jack was a well-accomplished member of the United States Navy, having earned the European Theater Medal with four stars, the Good Conduct Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Three years ago, our office had the honor to present Jack with his Combat Action Ribbon for his courageous service during World War II.

Jack enlisted with the U.S. Navy shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served our Nation across the globe. He was involved in several military operations, such as the Battle of Gela, the landing in Salerno, Italy, and the landing at Omaha Beach on D-Day in a U.S. amphibious landing craft.

Mr. Speaker, his service abroad garnered him the status of knight within the Legion of Honour, the highest decoration given by the Honorary Consul of France, in recognition of his contribution to the liberation of France.

May Jack Bodner's memory inspire all of us to strive toward courage and remind us of the heroes living amongst us. May God bless him and his family.

HONORING CALE YARBOROUGH

(Mr. FRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Timmonsville, South Carolina, native and American legend Cale Yarborough.

The NASCAR Hall of Famer started racing in Darlington at the soapbox derby. From there, he went on to win 83 cup races and became the sport's first driver to win three consecutive championships.

Cale's legacy is reflected not only in his record-breaking career but also his role in popularizing NASCAR. When Cale Yarborough was racing, America was watching.

Following his decorated career, Cale bought and operated a racing team of

his own. He also served the Pee Dee community in South Carolina on the Florence County Council.

We mourn the loss of a true legend, but we remember and celebrate a life that was well lived.

SERIOUS DEBATE ON IMMIGRATION

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, sometime in the next month, there is going to finally be a serious debate on the number of people streaming across our border. It may be over an appropriations bill. It may be over an aid bill to Ukraine. There are going to be a lot of people who say there are other issues more important than this and to just wait a little longer to solve the problem at the border.

We have waited for 3 years to do something at the border as the Biden administration has watched the number of people who crossed the border every month go from 10,000 to 20,000 to 370,000 people. That is unacceptable.

We had testimony in my subcommittee last week that the people who are coming across the border are 3½ to 4 times as likely to commit a crime as the native-born, and we saw tragedy in Atlanta just on that topic.

We know very well, if you talk to people, that all of these people streaming across here have to live somewhere and are partly responsible for the increase in rental costs that we have across our country.

We don't want to shut down the government, and we don't want to say no more aid to Ukraine, but we have no choice. If it is not now, when? We have waited 3 years.

DIRECT VICTIMS OF BIDEN BORDER POLICY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, indeed, a very somber thought is that we have three young ladies who are direct victims of the wide-open Biden border policy. They are not getting much notoriety for that. They are not getting talked about a whole lot.

Kayla Hamilton, 1½ years ago, was taken by an illegal immigrant in this country. Lizbeth Medina, just this last December, was taken by somebody who had overstayed their visa and was here illegally. Now, most recently, Laken Riley, who we are starting to hear about a little bit, was taken by an illegal immigrant just a few days ago.

All of this is at the hands of the Biden border policy, which is endangering our citizens and causing them to lose their lives. What are we going to do about this? What are people doing? Are there protests out there? Are there

marches? Is there national outrage? Is there national media coverage?

I guess we are trying to do that here a little bit tonight because the media seems to not want to report this. They want to report other things. They don't seem to care about this issue that is affecting Americans so negatively.

Laken, Lizbeth, and Kayla are not forgotten. We are going to fix this border. These are not migrants. This is an illegal immigrant invasion hurting Americans.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 57 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Member of the 118th Congress, pursuant to the provisions of 2 U.S.C. 25:

THOMAS R. SUOZZI, Third District of New York.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-3247. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-395, "Certificate of Assurance Moratorium Second Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3248. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-396, "Medical Cannabis Program Enforcement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3249. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-397, "School Improvement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3250. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-398, "Protecting Adjacent and Adjoining Property Owners from Construction Damage Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3251. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-399, "Housing in Downtown Tax Abatement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3252. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 25-400, "Protecting Consumers from Unjust Debt Collection Practices Technical Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

EC-3253. A letter from the Director, Regulations and Disclosure Law Division, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule—Management of Customs Ports of Entry and Customs Stations (RIN: 1651-AB44) received February 7, 2024, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

EC-3254. A letter from the Inspector General, Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, transmitting the biennial "Joint Report on the Implementation of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015", pursuant to 6 U.S.C. 1506(b)(1); Public Law 114-113, Sec. 107(b)(1); (129 Stat. 2952); to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. GRANGER:

H.R. 7463. A bill making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YAKYM:

H.R. 7464. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for access standards with respect to the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs of hospital care, medical services, or extended care services that are applicable to certain veterans with mental disorders; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. BICE (for herself, Ms. SANCHEZ, Mr. FEENSTRA, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. TORRES of New York):

H.R. 7465. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to index dependant care assistance programs to inflation; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BURCHETT:

H.R. 7466. A bill to amend the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 to reduce the

rates of pay of Members of Congress during a fiscal year if Congress has not agreed to a concurrent resolution on the budget for such fiscal year, to repeal the automatic appropriation of funds for the salaries of Members of Congress, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CISCOMANI (for himself and Ms. SHERRILL):

H.R. 7467. A bill to amend the Head Start Act to permit some teachers in Early Head Start programs to teach while earning a child development associate credential; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DE LA CRUZ (for herself, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SELF, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Mr. NEHLS, Ms. CROCKETT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Ms. VAN DUYN, Mr. VICENTE GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. HUNT, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas, Mr. MORAN, Mr. ARRINGTON, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. BABIN, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. CLOUD, Mr. FALLON, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. ROY, Mr. ELLZEY, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. LUTTRELL, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. VEASEY, and Ms. GRANGER):

H.R. 7468. A bill to ensure that United States diplomats and officials of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission are able to advance efforts seeking compliance by the United Mexican States with the 1944 Treaty on Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. EVANS, and Ms. SCANLON):

H.R. 7469. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 28 East Airy Street in Norristown, Pennsylvania, as the "Charles L. Blockson Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. DUNN of Florida (for himself, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. VASQUEZ, and Mr. GIMENEZ):

H.R. 7470. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat spaceports like airports for purposes of exempt facility bond rules; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 7471. A bill to provide firearm licenses an opportunity to correct statutory and regulatory violations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCGARVEY (for himself and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 7472. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 835 South 7th Street in Louisville, Kentucky, as the "Alberta Odell Jones Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

By Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. THANEDAR, Mrs. FOUSHEE, and Mr. CASTRO of Texas):

H.R. 7473. A bill to ensure continued appropriations for certain Small Business Administration programs during a Government shutdown in fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. TRONE (for himself, Mr. HOYER, Mr. IVEY, Mr. MFUME, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. SARBANES):

H.R. 7474. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to remove the Robert E. Lee Monument at Antietam National Battlefield, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. VAN DUYNE:

H.R. 7475. A bill to require the GAO to conduct a study detailing the total cost of unused construction materials that were obtained for the construction of a border wall along the United States-Mexico border; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H. Res. 1033. A resolution expressing support for the designation of February 28, 2024, as Community Arts Education Day; to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND SINGLE SUBJECT STATEMENTS

Pursuant to clause 7(c)(1) of rule XII and Section 3(c) of H. Res. 5 the following statements are submitted regarding (1) the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution and (2) the single subject of the bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. GRANGER:

H.R. 7463.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 9, Clause 7:

"No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time."

The single subject of this legislation is:

Making further continuing appropriations.

By Mr. YAKYM:

H.R. 7464.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

The single subject of this legislation is:

This legislation would decrease the VA community care access standards for mental healthcare to five days for veterans that are over 50 percent disabled for a mental health disorder.

By Mrs. BICE:

H.R. 7465.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The single subject of this legislation is:

Modifying an existing provision in the Tax Code.

By Mr. BURCHETT:

H.R. 7466.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To reduce the pay of Members of Congress during a fiscal year if Congress fails to pass a budget for such fiscal year, and to repeal the automatic appropriation of funds for the salaries of Members of Congress.

By Mr. CISCOMANI:

H.R. 7467.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Change requirements for Head Start teachers

By Ms. DE LA CRUZ:

H.R. 7468.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is: Seeking water deliveries by Mexico.

By Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 7469.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Post Office naming

By Mr. DUNN of Florida:

H.R. 7470.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

The bill will add spaceports to the Internal Revenue Code to ensure that local government investment in spaceports qualify as approved activities for municipal revenue bonds.

By Mr. ISSA:

H.R. 7471.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

The single subject of this legislation is:

To provide firearm licensees an opportunity to correct statutory and regulatory violations, and for other purposes.

By Mr. MCGARVEY:

H.R. 7472.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

Post Office

By Mr. SCHIFF:

H.R. 7473.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

The single subject of this legislation is:

Small Business

By Mr. TRONE:

H.R. 7474.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

The single subject of this legislation is:

To remove the Robert E. Lee Monument from Antietam National Battlefield

By Ms. VAN DUYNE:

H.R. 7475.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

The single subject of this legislation is:

To require the GAO to conduct a study detailing the total cost of unused construction materials that were obtained for the construction of a border wall along the United States-Mexico border.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 148: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 233: Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 273: Mr. WITTMAN.

H.R. 307: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 354: Mrs. HARSHBARGER.

H.R. 470: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 543: Ms. SALINAS and Mr. ALLRED.

H.R. 544: Mrs. TRAHAN and Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ.

H.R. 620: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. CARTER of Louisiana.

H.R. 661: Mr. MCCLINTOCK and Mr. PFLUGER.

H.R. 669: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 681: Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas.

H.R. 703: Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 705: Mrs. HARSHBARGER.

H.R. 789: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 856: Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 866: Ms. SALINAS and Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 871: Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. TORRES of New York, and Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 880: Mr. LIEU.

H.R. 884: Ms. PEREZ.

H.R. 894: Mr. KHANNA.

H.R. 926: Mr. PAPPAS.

H.R. 936: Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 972: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 1002: Mr. NEGUSE and Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 1008: Mr. MOYLAN.

H.R. 1097: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HIMES, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Ms. MANNING, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MENG, Mr. MOORE of Utah, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. VAN DUYNE, and Mr. FEENSTRA.

H.R. 1117: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 1179: Mr. NEWHOUSE and Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 1194: Mr. DUARTE.

H.R. 1199: Ms. ROSS and Mr. BALDERSON.

H.R. 1235: Mr. CARSON.

H.R. 1247: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 1255: Ms. TITUS and Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 1310: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.

H.R. 1315: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 1359: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1641: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

H.R. 1697: Mr. LAWLER.

H.R. 1699: Ms. PORTER.

H.R. 1744: Mr. MAGAZINER and Mr. KIM of New Jersey.

H.R. 1770: Mr. SWALWELL and Mr. GRIFFITH.

H.R. 1788: Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms.

PORTER, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. HORSFORD.

H.R. 1797: Mr. MEEKS and Ms. MALLIOTAKIS.

H.R. 1833: Ms. ADAMS and Ms. ROSS.

H.R. 2381: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.

H.R. 2389: Ms. SPANBERGER, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Ms. MALLIOTAKIS, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 2401: Mr. LAWLER.

H.R. 2413: Ms. DELBENE, Mr. POSEY, Ms.

NORTON, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mr. CASAR.

H.R. 2447: Mrs. HARSHBARGER.

H.R. 2451: Mrs. HINSON.

H.R. 2630: Ms. MENG and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 2666: Ms. CARAVEO.

H.R. 2695: Ms. STANSBURY.

H.R. 2708: Mr. IVEY and Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ.

H.R. 2756: Mr. LIEU.

H.R. 2768: Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 2827: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.

H.R. 2871: Mr. MULLIN and Mr. NEGUSE.

H.R. 2909: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 3038: Ms. PORTER.

H.R. 3039: Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 3161: Mr. GROTHMAN.

H.R. 3199: Mr. NEGUSE and Mr. MOLINARO.

H.R. 3220: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.

H.R. 3269: Ms. VAN DUYNE.

H.R. 3396: Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 3413: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Mr. EMMER.

H.R. 3433: Mr. MEUSER, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Ms. DAVIDS of Kansas, and Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.

H.R. 3435: Mr. DUNCAN and Mr. THANEDAR.

H.R. 3497: Ms. MALOY.

H.R. 3507: Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Ms. SCHOLTEN, and Ms. TOKUDA.

H.R. 3538: Mr. GOTTHEIMER.

H.R. 3611: Mr. WILSON of South Carolina and Mr. BACON.

H.R. 3646: Mr. THANEDAR.

H.R. 3651: Mr. HARDER of California and Mr. QUIGLEY.

H.R. 3654: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 3659: Mr. THANEDAR.

H.R. 3730: Mr. BAIRD.

H.R. 3811: Mr. FINSTAD.
H.R. 3852: Mr. MILLS.
H.R. 3916: Mr. GOTTHEIMER and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 4031: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 4104: Mrs. STEEL.
H.R. 4138: Mr. MEUSER.
H.R. 4167: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
H.R. 4184: Mr. RASKIN, Ms. BROWNLEY, and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 4261: Mr. MEUSER.
H.R. 4273: Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK.
H.R. 4274: Ms. PORTER, Mr. HARDER of California, and Mr. BOWMAN.
H.R. 4285: Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY.
H.R. 4315: Mr. RUIZ.
H.R. 4322: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 4333: Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4335: Mr. FLEISCHMANN and Mr. GOLDMAN of New York.
H.R. 4340: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. THANEDAR, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. BUSH, Mr. TONKO, Mr. COHEN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. COSTA, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Ms. SALINAS, Mr. NADLER, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. BEATTY, Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. KILDEE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. RYAN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DELUZZIO, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 4343: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 4392: Mr. CORREA.
H.R. 4530: Ms. PORTER.
H.R. 4583: Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4602: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.
H.R. 4603: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 4611: Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 4663: Mr. MOLINARO.
H.R. 4713: Mr. SABLAN and Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 4721: Mr. VAN DREW.
H.R. 4745: Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia.
H.R. 4758: Mr. CAREY, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mrs. HARSHBARGER.
H.R. 4769: Mr. TRONE.
H.R. 4818: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 4845: Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 4906: Ms. SALINAS.
H.R. 4972: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.
H.R. 4974: Ms. OMAR and Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 5008: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 5030: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 5064: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 5097: Mr. HOYER.
H.R. 5127: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 5159: Mr. KIM of New Jersey.
H.R. 5251: Mr. GARBARINO.
H.R. 5256: Ms. PETTERSEN.
H.R. 5266: Mr. MOLINARO and Mr. DUNN of Florida.
H.R. 5353: Mrs. FOUSHEE.
H.R. 5361: Mr. LIEU.
H.R. 5403: Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. MOONEY, Mr. D'ESPOSITO, Mrs. BICE, Mr. FRY, Mr. BANKS, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. COLE, Mr. STRONG, and Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 5456: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 5463: Mrs. HAYES.
H.R. 5530: Mr. KILMER, Mr. MCCORMICK, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington.
H.R. 5532: Mr. TURNER.
H.R. 5535: Mr. MEUSER.
H.R. 5566: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 5601: Ms. MCCLELLAN and Mr. KIM of New Jersey.
H.R. 5611: Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ.
H.R. 5668: Mr. COSTA.
H.R. 5685: Ms. GARCIA of Texas.
H.R. 5717: Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida.

H.R. 5720: Mr. THANEDAR.
H.R. 5728: Ms. NORTON, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 5799: Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.
H.R. 5842: Mr. GOODEN of Texas.
H.R. 5851: Ms. PETTERSEN.
H.R. 5864: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
H.R. 5909: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 5957: Ms. PEREZ.
H.R. 5989: Mr. NEGUSE.
H.R. 6031: Ms. LEE of California.
H.R. 6046: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
H.R. 6049: Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. HINSON, and Mr. HARDER of California.
H.R. 6089: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. MEUSER, and Mr. VAN DREW.
H.R. 6094: Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. THANEDAR, and Mrs. TRAHAN.
H.R. 6202: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 6203: Ms. DELBENE and Mr. CARTER of Louisiana.
H.R. 6319: Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. PORTER, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. THANEDAR, and Mr. MOYLAN.
H.R. 6361: Mrs. RAMIREZ.
H.R. 6405: Mrs. FOUSHEE, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. THANEDAR, and Ms. SHERRILL.
H.R. 6414: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 6416: Ms. WILD.
H.R. 6417: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 6425: Mr. NUNN of Iowa.
H.R. 6438: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.
H.R. 6446: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 6451: Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. TLAIB, and Mr. RASKIN.
H.R. 6455: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. BOWMAN.
H.R. 6470: Mr. ALLRED, Mr. MORELLE, and Ms. SALINAS.
H.R. 6487: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 6515: Mr. BEYER and Ms. SALINAS.
H.R. 6542: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York and Mr. NICKEL.
H.R. 6555: Mr. MEUSER.
H.R. 6592: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 6598: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
H.R. 6600: Mr. BACON.
H.R. 6610: Mr. ALLRED and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE.
H.R. 6654: Mr. FROST and Ms. TLAIB.
H.R. 6720: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina.
H.R. 6744: Mr. BARR.
H.R. 6756: Mr. MAGAZINER.
H.R. 6770: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 6780: Mr. SCHNEIDER, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mrs. TRAHAN.
H.R. 6805: Ms. SLOTKIN.
H.R. 6831: Mr. SELF and Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 6832: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.
H.R. 6880: Mr. VAN ORDEN.
H.R. 6887: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
H.R. 6892: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 6938: Ms. BALINT and Mr. THANEDAR.
H.R. 6951: Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 6952: Mr. GUTHRIE and Ms. PEREZ.
H.R. 6963: Mr. TRONE.
H.R. 6981: Ms. SCANLON.
H.R. 7037: Mr. FITZGERALD and Mr. VAN ORDEN.
H.R. 7039: Mr. RASKIN and Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 7056: Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. PAPPAS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. POCAN, Mr. BERA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. MENG, Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Ms. SALINAS, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. SWALWELL, Ms. TITUS, Mr. SORENSON, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. PETTERSEN, Ms. BARRAGAN, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. LOIS FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEU, Mr. HORSFORD, Mr. DELUZZIO, Ms. LEE of Nevada, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. ROBERT GARCIA of California, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MRVAN, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. BROWN, Ms. TOKUDA, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. PHILLIPS, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms.

VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Ms. BALINT, Mr. RYAN, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 7108: Ms. SLOTKIN and Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 7109: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri.
H.R. 7127: Mr. CASAR.
H.R. 7131: Mr. VAN ORDEN and Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 7137: Ms. BUDZINSKI and Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H.R. 7143: Mr. NORMAN.
H.R. 7156: Mr. LAWLER.
H.R. 7171: Mr. BURGESS and Mr. BUCK.
H.R. 7185: Mr. HARDER of California and Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
H.R. 7203: Mr. KILMER, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, and Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 7204: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
H.R. 7218: Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 7231: Mr. D'ESPOSITO.
H.R. 7244: Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 7249: Mr. NORMAN and Mr. LANGWORTHY.
H.R. 7288: Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. MENG, Mr. DUARTE, Mrs. TRAHAN, and Mr. MENENDEZ.
H.R. 7296: Ms. SCHOLTEN.
H.R. 7297: Mr. FLOOD and Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 7300: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 7334: Mr. PFLUGER.
H.R. 7346: Mr. MCGOVERN and Ms. STANSBURY.
H.R. 7349: Mr. VAN ORDEN.
H.R. 7352: Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, Mrs. MCBATH, and Mr. QUIGLEY.
H.R. 7361: Mr. CARTER of Georgia and Mr. ROSE.
H.R. 7365: Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 7377: Ms. HAGEMAN.
H.R. 7378: Mr. MCGOVERN and Mr. CUELLAR.
H.R. 7382: Mr. LAWLER, Mr. GIMENEZ, and Mr. STRONG.
H.R. 7384: Mr. HUDSON, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN.
H.R. 7412: Ms. SCHOLTEN.
H.R. 7413: Ms. LEE of Florida.
H.R. 7428: Mr. DONALDS.
H.R. 7434: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
H.R. 7438: Mr. NEHLS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. LIEU, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, and Mrs. DINGELL.
H.R. 7442: Mr. CASE.
H.R. 7445: Mr. WILLIAMS of New York.
H.R. 7450: Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. BEAN of Florida, Mr. WALBERG, Mrs. CAMMACK, and Mr. GUEST.
H.R. 7455: Mr. BUCK, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Ms. LEE of Florida, Mr. STRONG, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.J. Res. 107: Mr. GREEN of Tennessee.
H.J. Res. 110: Mrs. HINSON.
H. Con. Res. 42: Mr. SCHIFF.
H. Con. Res. 74: Mr. MURPHY.
H. Con. Res. 76: Ms. PORTER.
H. Con. Res. 82: Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Ms. LEE of Nevada.
H. Con. Res. 90: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H. Con. Res. 92: Ms. TLAIB, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. CLEAVER, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. BOWMAN.
H. Res. 82: Mr. POSEY and Mr. MOOLENAAR.
H. Res. 733: Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 736: Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 753: Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 881: Ms. PORTER.
H. Res. 882: Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER.
H. Res. 901: Mr. SARBANES, Mr. VICENTE GONZÁLEZ of Texas, Mr. CASAR, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KIM of New Jersey, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, and Ms. SHERRILL.

H. Res. 915: Mr. FINSTAD and Mr. VAN DREW.
H. Res. 983: Mr. HARDER of California.
H. Res. 990: Mr. SORENSEN.
H. Res. 1012: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
H. Res. 1013: Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin.
H. Res. 1022: Mr. BEAN of Florida.

H. Res. 1026: Ms. SALINAS, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H. Res. 1031: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H. Res. 1032: Mr. EVANS, Mrs. TORRES of California, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. STANSBURY, and Mr. NADLER.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS
Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:
H.R. 7056: Mrs. LUNA.
H.R. 7298: Mr. JAMES.



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WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

No. 36

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our rock and redeemer, by Your will we came into being, and at Your command, when the right hour is come, we shall one day leave this world. Do not be silent when we need to hear You speak.

Lord, let Your Spirit lead our Senators. May they increase in self-forgetfulness, in simplicity, in courage, and in trust so that each day they will approach nearer to Your likeness.

Lord, help them to offer themselves afresh to be used in Your service. Show them Your ways, and may they obey Your precepts.

Give wisdom to the perplexed, fresh vigor to the discouraged, and a clearer vision to all who seek Your will.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 28, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, negotiators in both Chambers continue working to ensure the government will not shut down at the end of the week. We continue to make very good

progress on an agreement, and we are very close to getting it done.

I met yesterday with President Biden, with Speaker JOHNSON, with Leader MCCONNELL, and Leader JEFFRIES; and we all agree a shutdown is a loser for the American people. In a shutdown, costs would go up, safety would go down, and the American people would pay the price.

I am hopeful that the four leaders can reach this agreement very soon so we can not only avoid a shutdown on Friday but get closer to finishing the appropriations process altogether.

If our House Republican colleagues of good will want to avert a shutdown—if they want to govern responsibly, as they say they do—they must resist the centrifugal pull of the extreme hard right who want to burn everything down, who openly use the threat of a shutdown to push their extreme agenda. They are brazen about it. They are brazen.

We know what the hard right has been pushing. They want to restrict women's reproductive freedoms—we saw the case in Alabama. They want to rip apart gun safety laws and reward corporate polluters. Or else, they say, they want a shutdown. This is no way to govern.

If our House Republican colleagues of good will want to do the right thing, they must accept a fundamental truth about divided government: Republicans cannot pass a bill without Democratic support; it takes both sides working together—and ignoring the extremes of the hard right—to get anything done.

I have said this over and over again directly to the Speaker, even in my first conversation with him: The only way we will get things done is by bipartisanship. And I am proud in our Chamber, not just on the supplemental but in bill after bill after bill, we are working in a bipartisan way. I am proud of that record. The Speaker should understand that.

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



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So I am hopeful that soon we will have an agreement for keeping the government open beyond Friday's deadline. We will keep working very diligently today. And I ask my colleagues to stay flexible and be ready to act quickly when the time comes.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, on Ukraine, the meeting I had yesterday with President Biden and congressional leaders over Ukraine was one of the most intense discussions I have ever had—or witnessed—in the Oval Office.

Every single one of us yesterday understood the basic facts: The situation in Ukraine is getting increasingly dire. Russia has made a major advance by taking the city of Avdiivka, which they did simply because Ukraine was running short of ammo and long-range artillery basic equipment. It wasn't the lack of the will of the fighters. It wasn't the lack of plan. It was, simply, that they ran out of ammunition. Imagine being a brave soldier fighting for freedom, fighting for your country, and you no longer have the ammo.

Without more aid from the United States, Ukraine will lose. In fact, one American leader over there told me that he wouldn't be surprised if Russian tanks were on the Polish border if we didn't give any aid. What kind of legacy would that leave for the House Republicans who seem to want to stall that aid? It is not all of them, of course, but too many.

Everyone in the room, with the exception of the Speaker, agreed that Congress must finish the work on the supplemental ASAP because the future of Ukraine and the West is at stake. Speaker JOHNSON said he wants to continue to think it over.

I was candid with the Speaker that I hope he gives it careful thought because the eyes of history are upon him.

I said to the Speaker: If you are the one stopping Ukraine aid, then no matter what the consequences may be in the short term, you will regret your decision 2 years from now and could potentially regret it for the rest of your life, because this will be remembered as a turning point in America for our strength, our credibility on the world stage, for our national security.

If we don't provide this aid, every year the United States could lose out to its enemies: the autocrats of the world, the Putins, the Xis, the heads of North Korea, and Iran. We could lose out economically, militarily, diplomatically, politically because of a shortsighted decision not to provide the much needed aid.

The Speaker has a legacy-defining decision to make on Ukraine. If he lets this bill move forward, he can go down as a fierce defender of America's core values. But if he shrinks from the importance of the moment, it will be the greatest gift Putin, other autocrats, and enemies of our country could possibly ask from the American Congress.

ALABAMA IVF COURT DECISION

Mr. President, on the Alabama IVF decision, after last week's stunningly

radical decision by the Alabama Supreme Court jeopardizing IVF access, the United States has become an embarrassment to the world when it comes to reproductive freedom.

Even sadder, this didn't happen in a vacuum. The hard-right MAGA Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* opened the floodgates for Republicans to force their anti-reproductive freedom—their anti-women agenda—down the throats of all Americans.

The decision by the Alabama Supreme Court is as cruel as it is enraging. There are countless people today who have the joy of children because of IVF. But now, families have to worry that this option could be taken away.

Make no mistake, Republicans own the consequences of the Alabama Supreme Court's decision. Republicans know it. That is why Republicans are scrambling, desperate, to backpedal and try to sound reasonable and supportive of IVF all of a sudden, because they see what they have done.

Republicans in Alabama—even a conservative State like Alabama—are now trying to save face by introducing legislation they claim will protect IVF providers. Even they know how the American people are reacting to this terrible decision—even in Alabama.

Republicans in Florida are now trying to save face by postponing the consideration of anti-abortion legislation. This is the State that said no abortions after 6 weeks, when most women don't even know they are pregnant. And, by the way, the popularity of the Governor has dramatically dropped after he passed that legislation, because Floridians don't like it.

Even Republicans here in Washington are trying to save face by putting off the introduction of national abortion bans because they recognize the mess they have gotten themselves into.

And, of course, they are not fooling anyone. Republicans are like the arsonists who set the house on fire and then said: Why is it burning? Amazing, confounding, perturbing, and sad.

Let me be clear: Republicans spent decades calling for a national abortion ban. Republicans spent decades packing our courts with hard-right MAGA reactionary judges. So Republicans deserve zero benefit of the doubt now that the consequences of their agenda are sinking in and even spreading.

Republicans can do and say all they want to try and run away from the truth, but the American people are not buying it. They are not buying it today. They won't buy it tomorrow. They won't buy it come November.

Democrats remain absolutely committed to doing everything—everything—we can to protect women, families, reproductive freedom.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRADY BILL

Mr. President, back when I introduced the Brady bill, I was a House Member representing Brooklyn and Queens. I knew firsthand the terrible toll of gun violence because the streets of my district—and so many other dis-

tricts—were witness to it. So I jumped at the opportunity to work alongside two brave and stalwart people, Jim and Sarah Brady—two American heroes whose lives, of course, were forever changed by gun violence—to help write and pass the Brady Law.

Looking back at the legacy of the Brady bill after three decades, there is no doubt it has saved countless lives. There is no way to count because you don't know who didn't get the gun who would have, but it is going to be a number with many, many zeros. And it paved the way for future gun safety legislation, like the bipartisan bill we passed 2 years ago.

The bipartisan gun safety legislation we passed in 2022, in fact, was the most significant and comprehensive action on gun safety since the Brady bill. And just like its predecessors, it, too, is already saving lives.

But it shouldn't take an assassination attempt against a President or a mass shooting among these innocent children in elementary school for elected leaders to make change happen. Gun violence is one of America's greatest ills. But it shouldn't have to be that way. And so our work, thinking of Jim and Sarah hovering over us, is far from over.

Democrats remain committed to combating gun violence and making our communities safer. And we will keep pushing. We will keep fighting. We will never let the grief of parents and kids and neighbors and teachers—and all of those who have been scarred by gun violence—to recede to the back of our memories.

Again, a salute to Jim and Sarah Brady and what they have done for America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, it has been a month since the Biden administration announced its de facto ban on new export permits for America's abundant stores of natural gas; 1 month since the President chose to bring growth in a critical sector of our economy, with massive, global consequences, to a screeching halt.

At the risk of understating things, the condemnations of President Biden's decision were swift and full-throated, and it is not hard to understand why. With the stroke of a pen, the President threatened the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Americans, from Texas to Pennsylvania, who produce and transport natural gas.

From the outset, the administration tried to cast the freeze as an effort to look out for American consumers, but the facts tell a different story. By the Energy Department's own analysis, the United States has more than enough natural gas to meet both domestic and export demand.

In fact, if the Biden administration was really concerned about access to one of the Nation's most abundant, reliable, and affordable energy sources, they would release their stranglehold on domestic energy exploration and energy infrastructure. Millions of Americans live near massive natural gas reserves but can't reap the benefits because the President is afraid of upsetting climate activists by investing in safe and efficient energy infrastructure.

Some of the most scathing criticism of the President's decision has come from his own former Democratic colleagues. As former Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana observed last month, the administration's so-called "pause" on LNG export permits was like "throwing a match in a bale of hay."

America's allies and partners already doubt our resolve to deter common adversaries, but now the world wonders why the Biden administration just handed them a gift.

Just last week, a German state-owned energy company confirmed that it would actually keep an LNG supply contract with Putin. But it gets worse. The company had a contract in hand to begin purchasing American LNG instead until the administration announced its freeze last month. In other words, the President of the United States essentially told a NATO ally to keep on enriching the dictator responsible for the first major land war in Europe since 1945.

To make matters worse, it is increasingly clear that President Biden's decision had another adversary's fingerprints all over it. Leftwing activists have been in the driver's seat of the President's energy policy since day one. That much is not news, but his top climate advisers taking private meetings with influencers on a Chinese-owned social media platform or the campaign to ban LNG permits being driven by a private foundation invested heavily in China's funds—that is news.

LNG exports are one of the only areas of U.S.-China trade in which the PRC is reliant on the United States. Beijing would be all too happy for an excuse to buy less clean U.S. energy and more of what President Biden's Energy Secretary called "the dirtiest form of natural gas on Earth"—Russian LNG. Well, it appears that President Biden has given our top strategic adversary precisely such an excuse.

It is hard to understand the President's decision as anything other than a compulsive, shortsighted grab for more fleeting praise from his activist base. Clearly, it makes no strategic or economic sense. As one expert analyst

and Deputy National Security Advisor under the previous administration put it, "Our partners and allies are baffled and [our] adversaries are pleased. That's never a good formula."

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. President, on another matter, 3 days ago, a member of Harvard's anti-Semitism task force stepped down over concerns the university would not actually implement the group's recommendations. Unfortunately, if recent events are any indication, this professor's concerns about the unchecked wave of hate on campus are well-founded.

A few weeks ago, multiple Harvard student groups circulated a blatantly anti-Semitic cartoon of Muhammad Ali and former Egyptian President Nasser being hanged by a hand bearing a Star of David with a dollar sign at its center. True to form, the university's response amounted to a sternly worded letter.

Not to be outdone on this backslide into brutish hate, fliers were found on Columbia's campus depicting an Israeli flag in the shape of a skunk. A Columbia Law School student senate rejected a proposal from fellow students seeking to form a club to combat anti-Semitism.

By now, it is also painfully clear that the moral failures of campus administrators go well beyond weak responses to student behavior. Rutgers recently hosted an event with a professor who described the events of October 7 as "awesome scenes . . . witnessed by millions of jubilant Arabs." City University of New York tried to schedule a panel titled "Globalize the Intifada."

As the glaring moral rot on college campuses invites scrutiny, even further evidence of decline has emerged. Not only are some of the Nation's most elite institutions breeding grounds for the world's oldest form of hate, they are also infested with academic misconduct.

Last month, Harvard's chief diversity officer was found to have copied her husband's work extensively without citation, and perhaps even more shockingly, a top neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School was found to have falsified data in 21 different papers—profoundly unserious behavior at a university that professes world-leading academic caliber.

So it is no surprise to see donors continue to vote with their checkbooks. Another prominent billionaire and longtime donor to Harvard announced last month that he would end his support. He said that until Harvard got back on the right track and focused on educating future leaders, he said, "I'm not interested in supporting the institution."

For their part, American families are right to reconsider whether an Ivy League diploma is worth the cost—or, for that matter, the hate.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration isn't making it any easier for students and parents to make informed

decisions. Beginning with the failure to launch last fall, the Department of Education was slow to post the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online. Now, months behind schedule, prospective students and parents are stuck with incomplete information on the cost of attending college.

But while the Department is slowing down and muddling the financial aid process, they are simultaneously speeding up their student loan socialism scheme rollout. It is almost as though the Biden administration wants more young people to incur excessive debt so that they can turn around and force taxpayers to foot an even larger bill to bail them out.

Not only has the Supreme Court ruled President Biden's student loan socialism unconstitutional, the scheme is also profoundly bad policy, and it won't help American families struggling to afford college. Heaping billions of dollars of student loan debt on taxpayers will only drive up tuition prices at universities that are failing miserably at their most basic responsibilities.

So perhaps—perhaps—it is time the government followed the lead of parents and business leaders and stopped providing taxpayer subsidies to institutions that have clearly lost their grip on reality.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Republican whip.

FARM BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, America needs farmers and ranchers. We need the men and women—and often entire families—who are willing to do the hard work to feed our country and the world. In places like my home State of South Dakota, farming and ranching are just part of our way of life.

But this important work involves a great deal of risk. Few jobs, for example, are as subject to the whims of the weather and fluctuations of the market. So, for almost 100 years, Congress has regularly passed a farm bill to back agriculture producers with programs and policies that mitigate risk and help them to keep going through the tough times.

And with the 2018 farm bill expiring last year, Congress needs to take up this important task once again. And while I am glad Congress passed an extension of critical farm bill programs through the 2024 growing season, a temporary extension is no substitute for a full, updated bill.

I have been able to help craft four farm bills during my time in Congress, and, for me, the process always begins and ends with farmers and ranchers. In

addition to my regular discussions with farmers and ranchers as I travel around our State, I have held a number of roundtable discussions across South Dakota, focused on the next farm bill, to receive direct input from our State's agriculture producers, and most of my priorities for the farm bill come directly from the conversations that I have had.

One thing I consistently hear from farmers and ranchers is the importance of a farm safety net. Crop insurance, commodity, and livestock programs play a critical role in helping producers manage risk in their operations.

Crop insurance is the cornerstone of the safety net, and we need to strengthen it wherever possible in the next farm bill. And while crop insurance has historically supported row crop production, I am pleased with the progress we have made in recent years to improve and expand insurance options for livestock producers.

But commodity programs like Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage need to be improved so that they sufficiently mitigate producers' losses. And livestock programs like the Livestock Forage Disaster Program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock Program need to be modified to improve the assistance that they provide and make them workable for producers.

So one of my top priorities for the next farm bill is improving commodity and livestock programs so they provide the support that farmers and ranchers need during tough times.

As I said, while I am glad we have extended key provisions of the 2018 farm bill through this growing season, we are overdue for a full, updated, multiyear farm bill, and Republicans on the Agriculture Committee are ready to get to drafting a bill.

I am disappointed, however, that some of my Democrat colleagues don't seem to share our sense of urgency.

The Biden administration and congressional Democrats have put funding their climate and nutrition priorities ahead of helping farmers and ranchers, which has stalled what has traditionally been—traditionally been—a bipartisan farm bill process.

With an expected \$1.5 trillion pricetag for the next farm bill—thanks in part to the Biden USDA's SNAP Thrifty Food Plan update, which is expected, by the way, to cost more than a quarter of a trillion dollars over the next 10 years—there needs to be some give and take when it comes to meaningfully funding the farm safety net and other components of the farm bill.

Since the last farm bill passed in 2018, farmers and ranchers have faced a number of challenges. Inflation has driven up farm production expenses by \$100 billion since the last farm bill. USDA is forecasting another decrease in net farm income this year, following last year's drop. And farm input costs are projected to stay near record highs this year.

The Biden administration's failure to promote trade and new market access opportunities will continue to negatively impact farmers and ranchers in their bottom lines. This year, the United States is on track to post a record-high agriculture trade deficit, and recent disruptions to shipping in the Middle East could have impacts on global markets that negatively affect American farms and ranches.

Our focus needs to be on helping farmers deal with these challenges. Simply put, we need to put more farm in the farm bill, and we need to get moving now.

America's farmers and ranchers can't afford more unnecessary delays or partisan exercises. It is time to get the farm bill done and done right.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, tomorrow President Biden will do something he has done only once before in his term as President of the United States, he will travel to the U.S.-Mexico border to Brownsville, TX, in an attempt to address his biggest political liability. Since the President took office 3 years ago, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has logged more than 7.2 million migrant encounters at the southern border. By that, we mean people who have shown up at the border and, by and large, have simply been released into the interior based on an initial claim of asylum which has yet to be put in front of an immigration judge. And it may be as long as, in places like New York, 10 years in the future before they ever get in front of an immigration judge; or, as we have seen tragically here most recently, these migrants will be paroled or simply released into the interior of the country—even without a claim of asylum—given a work permit, and stay here indefinitely.

Mr. President, 7.2 million is higher than the total number of migrants who came across the southern border under President Obama, who served 8 years, and President Trump, who served 4 years. So the Biden administration has done in 3 years what it took 12 years for the two previous administrations to accomplish. We have experienced more illegal immigration in the last 3 years than in the last 12.

The American people have become increasingly concerned at the southern border because they see with their own eyes that this is a humanitarian crisis, and it is a public safety crisis. And they overwhelmingly—and quite appropriately—blame Biden administration

policies and the President himself. They see that his policies and his rhetoric, rather than deter illegal immigration, have actually encouraged it.

Let me say that again: They understand that the policies of this administration and the rhetoric that has been used are the driving force behind America's most serious border crisis in history.

But, as usual, the President refuses to accept any responsibility. He has tried to blame everybody but himself. He has blamed congressional dysfunction. He has blamed MAGA Republicans. He has blamed anybody and everybody that he can possibly think of, rather than accept responsibility himself. Not only that, he has, at different times, claimed that he lacks the tools to fix this crisis. At different times, he has claimed that his hands are tied unless Congress passes new laws.

The problem with that storyline, that narrative, is the facts simply don't support it. For one, the suggestion that only Congress can fix the crisis implies that Congress created the crisis. I would point out the same laws that were in effect during President Trump's administration are still in effect during President Biden's administration with far different outcomes.

As each of our colleagues knows, Congress has struggled to pass any immigration laws in recent years; and, certainly, it has not passed any that would cause the dramatic surge in immigration that began the day that President Biden took office. The President was dealt exactly the same hand as his recent predecessors. The only difference is he used these authorities entirely differently and sent an entirely different message.

As I have spoken before on the floor, the Border Patrol, which are the experts on border security, tell me that there are two main drivers of illegal immigration: One is push factors, they call it—poverty, violence, a desire for a better life. And we understand that. America is a nation of immigrants, of legal immigrants.

But there is also the pull factors, like a magnet encouraging people to make the dangerous journey to our border, even in the form of unaccompanied children designed to exploit gaps in Biden administration policies and permanently reside in the United States.

Earlier this week, I was surprised by a New York Times article that acknowledged the fundamental hypocrisy behind President Biden's efforts to shift the blame once again. This is a quote from February 26, 2024, the New York Times. David Leonhardt is the columnist. He said, in part:

Biden is the president, after all, and a president has significant authority to shape immigration policy even without new legislation. Biden himself has been aggressive about using this authority—albeit to loosen immigration policy rather than tighten it.

So the current phenomenon, this crisis—humanitarian and public safety crisis—is as a result of President

Biden's own policies. It is not the laws that are broken or inadequate; it is his will to actually enforce the law and his active encouragement for people to come to the border because they know they will successfully be able to stay in the United States.

I have mentioned before about a trip that several of us colleagues on a bipartisan basis went to Yuma, AZ, a little sleepy agricultural community in southwest Arizona right across the border from Mexico. The Border Patrol Chief said: Welcome to the Yuma sector. Last year we welcomed people from 140-plus countries—not Mexico, not Central America, but from 140-plus countries that speak more than 200 languages.

Senator KELLY, our colleague from Arizona, pointed out that there was an airport in northern Mexico, in Mexicali—which is a fairly large city in northern Mexico—and, apparently, what happens is people fly into Mexicali and literally Uber over to the Border Patrol and declare amnesty—well, declare “asylum” is the right word.

Well, I know the President will have a hard time with this, his second drive-by of the American-Mexico border during his term as President, but, of course, his goal is to try to shift the blame once again. As this journalist wrote, President Biden is the President. He wanted to be President. He got elected President. He ought to do the job that Presidents do, which is to enforce the laws. That is what the executive branch of government does: Congress passes laws. The judicial branch decides disputes about those laws as applied to given facts, but it is the President and the executive branch—the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security—that are responsible under our constitutional order for actually enforcing the law.

And what has President Biden done with that authority? He has loosened immigration policy rather than tightened it. This is what I have been saying for 3 years; and, even now, I can't tell you how surprised and pleased I am to see this stated in the New York Times. But President Biden could listen to Mayor Adams, the mayor of New York City. He has said: This has been a disaster for New York. You hear the similar complaints from people like the Mayor of Washington, DC, the mayor of Chicago. These are self-styled sanctuary cities that you think would welcome these migrants, but they have been overwhelmed.

Well, what about 7.2 million that are showing up on our back doorstep in Texas? It is hard to have much sympathy for the mayors of New York and Chicago and Washington, DC, when they have dealt with just a fraction of the numbers that we have had to deal with in Texas without any help from the Federal Government.

And the Federal Government has been actively undermining efforts by

the State of Texas to reduce illegal immigration.

During his first few days in office, President Biden signed a raft of Executive orders related to immigration and border security: He halted construction of the border wall. He dismantled the agreement we had with Mexico that migrants could remain in Mexico while they waited for their asylum claim to be adjudicated. But he ripped that up too. He ended an asylum agreement with Northern Triangle countries and even issued a 100-day pause on deportations. So even if you were here illegally, you knew, at least for 100 days—and very likely for the rest of your life—that you would not be deported because of President Biden's policies.

These are just a few examples of the Executive orders President Biden issued within days of taking office. In the 3 years since, he and other leaders in the administration have gone to great lengths to roll out the welcome mat.

One of the most egregious examples is the administration's widespread use of parole. Parole, in this context, means that is a temporary entry for foreigners under rare and dire circumstances. It was never meant to be used categorically or in a blanket fashion as the Biden administration has done. It is meant to be used on a case-by-case basis in extreme cases—someone experiencing a medical emergency at a port of entry; somebody is donating a kidney or serving as a witness in a trial. It was meant to be used on a case-by-case basis which, by nature, gives the administration a good amount of discretion. But to provide some comparison, during the two previous administrations, an average of 5,600 migrants were paroled into the United States each year—5,600. Once President Biden took office, that number skyrocketed.

The Biden administration has used parole to facilitate catch-and-release at the border at an unprecedented pace, but its use of parole extends beyond illegal crossings at the southern border. The Biden administration announced a new program which allows individuals from four countries—Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela—to enter and remain in the United States, all under the guise of parole. You don't need to claim asylum. If you can make it to the border, if you pay the smugglers enough money to get you there, you know you are going to be able to stay here. This program that the Biden administration set up intentionally and with great deliberation provides 2 years of legal status and work authorization to 30,000—30,000—migrants from these four countries each month. That is 360,000 a year. The Biden administration: Roll out the welcome mat. Give them a work permit. Say “You can stay,” knowing that they probably will be able to stay indefinitely.

In total, the Biden administration has used its case-by-case parole authority to grant parole to 1.6 million mi-

grants in less than 2 years—1.6 million. As President Biden has shown repeatedly, if you give him an inch, he will take a mile.

Another example of gratuitous discretion came from Secretary Mayorkas, who has been impeached by the House of Representatives. Secretary Mayorkas issued a final directive for immigration enforcement priorities in the fall of 2021. This really should be called—instead of immigration enforcement priorities, this should be immigration nonenforcement priorities. That would be a more accurate title.

But under this guidance—one headline summed up the contents rather succinctly. It said the “U.S. Will No Longer Deport Illegal Immigrants Based on Undocumented Status Alone.” We are not going to deport people who are illegally entering the country? What kind of message does that send?

But the memo went on to explicitly discourage ICE officers. ICE is Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Once you get past the border, ICE is the one responsible for repatriating or returning people who are here illegally. This memo explicitly discouraged ICE officers from arresting or removing illegal immigrants unless they have been convicted of a serious crime.

It defies all common sense to ask law enforcement officers, who take an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States—it makes no sense to tell them at the same time to turn a blind eye when you encounter people who are here illegally just because the Biden administration doesn't want to enforce the law.

Secretary Mayorkas went further. He laid out mitigating factors that should be considered before arresting or removing illegal immigrants, including their age, how long they have been in the United States, and the impact the removal would have on their family. Even in the case of an alien convicted of a very serious offense, like murder, like rape, receipt and possession of child pornography, ICE would have to consider these mitigating factors before they could take action and remove that person.

The reality of the situation, no matter how inconvenient it may be for our Democratic colleagues, is that by entering the United States illegally, these migrants are breaking the law.

There is nothing wrong with prioritizing the removal of the most dangerous criminals. Previous administrations have prioritized certain categories of illegal immigrants, like those suspected of terrorism or those who could be a threat to national security or public safety. But there is a difference between prioritizing certain groups for removal and exempting entire categories from enforcement.

Given everything we have witnessed over the past 3 years, President Biden has no right—no right—to claim that

his hands are tied when it comes to addressing the border crisis by Executive action.

From day one, President Biden made clear that he was willing to use Executive action, as David Leonhardt notes here, but he did it to loosen illegal immigration, make it easier, not harder. He used Executive action to stop border wall construction, end the “Remain in Mexico” policy, halt deportations, exclude broad classes of migrants from removal, parole more than 1.6 million migrants into the United States, and so much more. So this is a crisis of President Biden’s making. This is a manmade disaster, and that man is President of the United States.

If the President believed that he had this much latitude to loosen immigration policy, he shouldn’t feel constrained by Congress when it comes to tightening immigration policy. It would be good politics for him. I pointed out that this is a major political liability for the President going into an election. He could fix it, just like he broke it.

Executive actions have been used in the past to address migration surges—and with a great deal of success.

Back in 2005, then-DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that I serve on and spoke about the Department’s response to a surge of migrants from Brazil.

All of a sudden, a bunch of migrants from Brazil showed up at the border. But what did they do? What did the Bush administration do? They used their existing authorities to expand the use of expedited removal, which allows agents to quickly remove migrants who have no legal basis to remain in the United States. As Secretary Chertoff noted, word spread fast. After 30 days, the number of Brazilians dropped by more than 50 percent. After 60 days, it dropped more than 90 percent.

President Biden can do precisely the same thing, but he won’t do it. President Biden has the exact same authority to replicate that effort today. He could expand expedited removal, send a clear message that our southern border is no longer an open corridor. But, as Mr. Leonhardt points out, all the messages he is sending are “You can come. You can stay.” What more powerful magnet, what more powerful pull factor for illegal immigration can you imagine?

As I pointed out time and time again, it is not just about illegal immigration; it is about the drugs, because the cartels have figured out that if you flood the border with people, you can overwhelm the Border Patrol. Many of them would have to leave the frontlines to process paperwork, provide transportation, food, shelter, clothing to migrants in order to treat them humanely while they are here, but they are not on the border.

Last year alone, 108,000 Americans died from drugs that come across that

border, 71,000 of them from fentanyl, the synthetic opioid pressed into counterfeit-looking pills that high school-age children are taking across the country, thinking that they are taking something relatively innocuous, but, in fact, it kills them. Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18 and 45. We know where it comes from. It comes across that border. It is manufactured in Mexico from precursors shipped in from China. But that is part of the disaster that the Biden administration’s open border policy has wrought—108,000 dead Americans last year alone.

Well, news reports are that President Biden could announce new Executive actions on his trip to the border tomorrow. I am eager to see whether he will reverse course and issue an Executive order that will actually tighten the border or actually do his duty of securing the border or whether these are measures more designed to loosen immigration policy.

Of course, I expect that the American people, being very smart, will understand why President Biden has chosen this time to take this trip—the second driveby of the border since he has been President. It is all about the election in November, and he understands that this is a gaping political liability, and he is trying to plug that. Not only is he trying to plug that hole, he is also trying to blame others for his failure, and that will not work. The American people, being very smart and perceptive, can see through that smoke screen.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled rollcall vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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 legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 472, Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

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

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “nay.”

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 55 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rubio
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Butler	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Lujan	Shaheen
Carper	Manchin	Sinema
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	Menendez	Tester
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warnock
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—43

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tuberville
Cramer	Lummis	Vance
Crapo	Marshall	Wicker
Cruz	McConnell	Young
Daines	Moran	
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Smith	Tillis
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(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The yeas are 54, the nays are 43.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as some of you may know, this has been a particularly difficult time for my family. We tragically lost Elaine’s younger sister, Angela, just a few weeks ago.

When you lose a loved one, particularly at a young age, there is a certain introspection that accompanies the grieving process. Perhaps it is God’s way of reminding you of your own life’s journey to reprioritize the impact on the world that we will all inevitably leave behind.

I turned 82 last week. The end of my contributions is closer than I would prefer.

My career in the U.S. Senate began amidst the Reagan revolution. The truth is, when I got here, I was just happy if anybody remembered my

name. President Reagan called me Mitch O'Donnell. Close enough, I thought.

My wife Elaine and I got married on President Reagan's birthday, February 6. It is probably not the most romantic thing to admit, but Reagan meant a lot to both of us. For 31 years, Elaine has been the love of my life, and I am eternally grateful to have her by my side.

I think back to my first days in the Senate with deep appreciation for the time that helped shape my view of the world. I am unconflicted about the good within our country and the irreplaceable role we play as the leader of the free world. That is why I worked so hard to get the national security package passed earlier this month.

Believe me, I know the politics within my party at this particular moment in time. I have many faults. Misunderstanding politics is not one of them.

That said, I believe more strongly than ever that America's global leadership is essential to preserving the shining city on a hill that Ronald Reagan discussed. For as long as I am drawing breath on this Earth, I will defend American exceptionalism.

So, as I have been thinking about when I would deliver some news to the Senate, I always imagined a moment when I had total clarity and peace about the sunset of my work, a moment when I am certain I have helped preserve the ideals I so strongly believe. That day arrived today.

My goals when I was narrowly elected to the Senate in 1984 were fairly modest: Do a good job for the people of Kentucky and convince them that, by doing so, they might rehire me for a second term. That was it. That was the plan. If you would have told me, 40 years later, that I would stand before you as the longest serving Senate leader in American history, frankly, I would have thought you had lost your mind.

I have the honor of representing Kentucky in the Senate longer than anyone else in our State's history. I just never could have imagined—never could have imagined—that happening when I arrived here in 1984 at 42. I am filled with heartfelt gratitude and humility for the opportunity.

But now it is 2024. I am now 82. As Ecclesiastes tells us, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven."

To serve Kentucky in the Senate has been the honor of my life. To lead my Republican colleagues has been the highest privilege. But one of life's most underappreciated talents is to know when it is time to move on to life's next chapter.

So I stand before you today, Mr. President and my colleagues, to say this will be my last term as Republican leader of the Senate. I am not going anywhere any time soon. However, I will complete the job my colleagues have given me until we select a new leader in November and they take the helm next January. I will finish the job

the people of Kentucky hired me to do, as well, albeit from a different seat. And I am actually looking forward to that.

So it is time for me to think about another season.

I love the Senate. It has been my life. There may be more distinguished Members of this body throughout our history, but I doubt there were any with more admiration for the Senate. After all this time, I still get a thrill walking into the Capitol and especially on this venerable floor, knowing that we—each of us—have the honor to represent our States and do the important work of our country.

But Father Time remains undefeated. I am no longer the young man sitting in the back, hoping colleagues would remember my name. It is time for the next generation of leadership.

As Henry Clay said in this very body in 1850, "The Constitution of the United States was not made merely for the generation that then existed, but for posterity—unlimited, undefined, endless, perpetual posterity."

So time rolls on. There will be a new custodian of this great institution next year. It won't surprise you to know I intend to turn this job over to a Republican majority leader. I have full confidence in my conference to choose my replacement and lead our country forward.

There will be other times to reminisce. I am immensely proud of the accomplishments I have played some role in obtaining for the American people. Today is not the day to discuss all of that because, as I said earlier, I am not going anywhere anytime soon.

There are many challenges we must meet to deliver for the American people, and each will have my full effort and attention.

I still have enough gas in my tank to thoroughly disappoint my critics, and I intend to do so with all the enthusiasm with which they have become accustomed.

So to my colleagues, thank you for entrusting me with our success. It has been an honor to work with each of you. There will be plenty of time to express my gratitude in greater detail as I sprint toward the finish line, which is now in sight.

I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I just want to very briefly recognize my good friend, the Republican leader, for his extraordinary service, not only to our caucus but, more important, to the Senate as an institution and to our country.

His tenure as leader will be remembered, not just for its historic longevity but also for his unparalleled devotion to this great institution, which he has always defended.

I also admire the leader for stepping forward when it wasn't popular to do the right thing for our country and for our world.

There will be plenty of time for all of us to honor him in more detail as time goes on, but I felt compelled to speak today to thank him—to thank him—for devoting his life to public service for all the right reasons: to improve the lives of the people living in our great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President:

I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

That is the oath that we all take once we become Senators of the United States.

Just imagine that you are Allyson and John Phillips. Last Thursday afternoon, you get a phone call from law enforcement in Athens, GA. The voice on the other end of the phone says that your daughter has been murdered by an illegal immigrant. I cannot imagine what that feels like. I cannot even begin to understand the shock and sadness and anger.

Laken Riley was a nursing student at Augusta, GA, this past year. On Wednesday morning, she went out for a jog on the campus of the University of Georgia. She never came back. Police found her body in the woods a few hours later around noontime. She was covered with blood and injuries from head to toe.

An autopsy found that she died of blunt force trauma to the head. The charging documents in this case say that her skull was disfigured. This was a brutal murder of an innocent young woman.

Laken Riley was just 22 years old. She had her whole life ahead of her. She had a bright future. Now that future will never be realized.

You know, I spent 40 years of my life on college campuses. I have dedicated my life to coaching young adults, but I wasn't just a coach; I was also a mentor. There is nothing more heartbreaking than losing a promising young person like Laken Riley, and I want to offer my condolences to the Riley family.

Our No. 1 commodity in this country is our young people. Laken's death is even more heartbreaking because it could have been prevented and should have been prevented. On Friday night, police arrested and charged Jose Antonio Ibarra with malice murder, felony murder, aggravated battery, aggravated assault, false imprisonment, kidnapping, and hindering a 911 call.

Jose Ibarra is an illegal immigrant from Venezuela. In other words, he should never have been in this country in the first place. This brutal and horrific murder would have been prevented

if Joe Biden and Democrats had done their job by enforcing the law.

Jose Ibarra crossed the southern border in El Paso in September of 2022, a year and a half ago. He was paroled into our country, and I will talk about parole here in just a minute. His social media accounts show that he went from El Paso to New York City. New York is a sanctuary State and city. That means that illegals who commit crimes will not be turned over to the immigration police when their jail time is up.

This is an open invitation by New York City to criminals. We have a lot of these sanctuary cities in our country today. According to ICE immigration police, he was arrested just 5 months ago in New York, charged with acting in a manner to injure a child and for driving without a license. Specifically, he was arrested for allegedly endangering a 5-year-old child, 5 months ago.

Athens police called the murder of Laken Riley a crime of opportunity. In other words, this was, essentially, a random act of violence. It could have been anyone's daughter. She did absolutely nothing wrong.

So my question is: Where are Georgia's Senators today? What are Georgia Senators doing to secure the border, to protect more people like Laken Riley? Where is their outrage? Soon, the Senate will hold a trial on articles of impeachment against Secretary of Homeland Security Mayorkas, the guy that is in charge of our border.

Georgia Senators, how are they going to vote when the trial comes up? Are they going to vote for Secretary Mayorkas since he has been impeached in the House? Because he is the one that let this killer in.

Are Senators from border States like California and Arizona going to save Mayorkas' job, the job that he has refused to do for the last 3½ years? We will find out and find out soon.

In the House, every single Democrat fell in line and voted—and voted to save Mayorkas' job just a few weeks ago, every single Democrat—and the guy hasn't done his job in 3½ years.

Every single House Democrat endorsed the job that Secretary Mayorkas is doing; that includes five Democrats from the State of Georgia where Laken Riley was killed.

In a separate vote, 150 House Democrats voted against deporting illegals who had been convicted of drunk driving.

Mr. President, 150, all Democrats, voted against deporting illegals if they got caught drunk driving. That includes all five of Georgia's Democrats in the House.

This is today's Democrat Party, and I go back to the oath that we all took to protect domestic and foreign, to protect.

Are Senate Democrats going to put their political careers on the line by continuing to support the least popular President in modern history, who has

not done his job at the border? We will soon find out.

Or are they going to stand beside somebody who has broken the law? If Laken Riley were my daughter—if Laken Riley were my daughter, Secretary Mayorkas would have a lot more to worry about than a pending impeachment trial. He would need to go into hiding. It is embarrassing to this country of how these people are holding people accountable under the law.

I would do everything in my power to ensure he never forgot her name and that his inaction led to her death. Blood is on his hands.

I cannot possibly understand what this family is going through today. But for open borders—all the open-border crowd—she is just collateral damage, just somebody else that has been murdered. It won't be talked about again. Don't worry about it. All we care about is votes. All we care about is power.

To Democrats in this administration, Laken Riley is just another sacrifice on the altar of woke ideology. The blame for this crime lies with this administration and with the Democratic Senate majority. Democrats run Washington right now. The buck stops with them. They uphold the laws.

Democrats could have stopped this if they would have secured the border, if they had done their job. But they have utterly refused for the last 3½ years.

In fact, this administration has done exactly the opposite. This is globalism. This is putting the interest of other countries ahead of our own country, our own people, our own citizens.

Joe Biden has effectively erased our southern border—we don't have a border—and has invited the world in with no oversight or plan to figure out who is here and why.

I have been talking about this issue since I was elected to office 3 years ago. Nearly every American—excuse me. Nearly every Republican has been talking about it in both the House and the Senate.

I haven't seen Georgia Senators down here on the floor sounding the alarm on the southern border, not one time in the last 3½ years. I haven't seen California Senators giving speeches about the border and why is it open, because they are being overrun. I haven't seen Arizona Senators down here giving speeches on the border: You have got to help us. Let's close the border.

I haven't seen that. I am not sure I have seen one Democratic Senator on this floor in the last 3½ years talking about the open borders that we have—not one.

This is the biggest problem facing our country by far. President Biden says it is climate change. You have got to be kidding me.

Democrats don't want to talk about this. Republicans have tried to fix the problem.

I introduced the Border Safety and Security Act, which would close the border until the Federal Government regained control of operations along

the southern border. I have sponsored legislation like H.R. 2, which is the best border security bill that we have had. I have offered more than 50 border amendments to the recently passed national security supplemental bill—any one of them which would have helped fix the border crisis.

Democrats have blocked me and the Republicans at every turn. They are the majority of the Senate, and they control the floor. I understand that.

A few weeks ago, we almost took up a so-called border bill from Senator SCHUMER and Senator MURPHY. They worked on it for months. For months, they worked on it—embarrassing. It was more of a border giveaway—a border giveaway—than a border bill.

This would have not stopped the deaths of these young people. It would not have stopped and prevented the death of Laken Riley.

Unbelievably, the senior Senator from California actually opposed it for being too conservative. The people of California are suffering because of a wide-open border, just like all the people across our country.

I will just mention a few, starting in California. Last May, an illegal alien named Carlos Dominguez stabbed three people in Davis, CA. Two of them died, David Breaux and a student named Karim Najm. A third person was stabbed but survived, named Kimberlee Guillory. The alleged attacker in this case, Carlos Dominguez, came here in 2009 as an unaccompanied minor. He just had his first preliminary hearing in court this past week. Where is the outrage from the California Senators about the death and the stabbings of these people?

Let's talk about Arizona. Last year a young man named Harly Sellers was killed by a drunk driver in Fountain Hills, AZ. The alleged drunk driver who killed him is named Hilario Ortiz Cruz. He is an illegal alien who had previously been deported in 2013.

It is a felony to reenter this country after being deported. A lot of people don't realize that, but it is. We don't go by many laws anyway.

Harly Sellers was 29 years old. He was engaged to be married in just 2 months. That wedding will never happen. Harly Sellers left behind two young children, including a 1-year-old baby named Carter. Carter will never know his dad.

This was a crime that could have and should have been prevented. Where are the Senators from Arizona? Where is their outrage? The silence is deafening.

Part of the blame for this crime falls on this city, here in Washington, DC. This city should be blamed because we make the laws, and we push the laws.

Just a couple of weeks ago in Texas, a 16-year-old girl named Lizbeth Medina was killed in her own bedroom—just a couple of weeks ago. A grand jury has now charged an illegal alien in the case. He is charged with breaking into the home and then beating her to death and stabbing her.

This is happening all across our border. But it is not just limited to the border. Every State in our country now is a border State.

Just last night, people arrested and charged an illegal alien just a few miles from this building—just a few miles. It is about a 30-minute drive from the U.S. Senate. Police allege that an illegal alien named Nilson Granados-Trejo was among a group of gang members who shot at another group of gang members. Police say it was all about a drug dispute.

Caught in the middle of the crossfire was a mom and her 2-year-old son. That 2-year-old, Jeremy, has died. He didn't have a say about the border.

Nilson Granados has previously been arrested twice for alleged theft. The guy that shot this kid right here, twice has been arrested. He was subject to a deportation order from a judge in New Jersey, but he was released from custody several times, even though immigration police filed a detainer. He was never sent back.

Nilson Granados should not and should have not been in this country. He should have never been here in the first place. He should have been deported when he was caught the first and second time. Like the judge says, this crime could have and should have been prevented. But it was not prevented because of Joe Biden's open border.

Just this week, an illegal alien was arrested in Louisiana for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl. He also allegedly stabbed someone in the face during an armed robbery a few weeks before.

A month ago, an illegal alien pled guilty in court to stabbing a man to death in Bozeman, MT, in 2022.

Just yesterday, in my home State of Alabama, in Albertville, police arrested two illegal aliens for alleged child exploitation. This goes on and on and on. I could have been up here all day.

Americans are dying due to our open borders at the southern and northern borders, and they are dying every single day. Who cares? We are worried about a budget here. We are worried about sending \$60 billion to Ukraine. We are not worried about the citizens of the United States.

People are going to wake up, and when they do, there is going to be a huge change around here, and I hope it happens.

Americans are dying due to open borders every single day when it comes to drugs, and 100,000 Americans die every year because of drug overdose. You would think that would be something that people would talk about. Nobody cares. Nobody cares. That is 300 Americans a day dying from fentanyl—300 a day. That is like a commercial airliner crashing every day.

Nobody cares. This building doesn't care. Everybody is worried about their next election, getting reelected. That is our problem here. They don't do what is right.

The DEA tells us drugs that were brought here over our southern border are absolutely destroying the young people in this country. So Joe Biden, our President, is going to the southern border tomorrow—hallelujah.

This will be only—I want you to think about this. This is a guy who has been up here for 50 years. Now, I don't know why. I don't know why anyone would want to be up here 50 years to watch what goes on here. He has been up here 50 years as Senator, Vice President, and President. This is only the second time he has been to the border. And he asked why we don't have border policies.

Well, hell, man, you have been here forever. What did you do while you were in office?

He did zero. His first time ever at the border was last January, after 50 years in politics. And he is trying to run for reelection again. Good luck.

He went to El Paso. Border Patrol cleared the streets of all illegal camps and immigrants. There was nobody there. He didn't talk to any illegal immigrants. He didn't go to the Border Patrol station. He just took his picture, walked around with his sunglasses on, had a relaxing day, not worrying about the border, not worrying about what is coming across the border. He just went down there to have his picture taken.

Now, the media says he is going to Brownsville, TX, tomorrow to get his picture taken. He is going to Brownsville, TX. Yesterday, 12 illegals come across at the border there.

You know we have got another President, former President Trump. He is also going to the border tomorrow. He has been down there many times. He is going to Eagle Pass, TX. Yesterday, there were over 500 that came across the border there. No matter what you think about President Trump, he actually cares.

One of Joe Biden's Executive orders was to let asylum officers give out asylum at the border without ever going to a judge.

In other words, when you come to this country, you are supposed to be given a time and a day to go see a judge to see whether you get to stay here or not. But, in the last 3½ years, we have been giving asylum at the border, giving a piece of paper which has a destination that you are going to; put on an airplane and flown somewhere across the country, and finding out what you can do to make a living and where you can go.

I know. I was on a plane not too long ago with a plane load from McAllen, TX, of illegals that were put on there, on this plane, going to cities all over the country. I was on there with them.

I am watching them come on. I am thinking: You know, it took me 45 minutes to go through TSA. I got patted down. All my stuff was scanned and didn't have anything on.

They brought them up straight to the plane, opened up the door, and let them get on. It was absolutely amazing.

Why do we need TSA? That is another point.

Meanwhile, as we are giving out all this asylum, Joe Biden has taken 94 Executive actions against immigration enforcement since he has been in office. In other words, 94 times he says: OK, we don't need this at the border. That is my law. That stands. We don't need this one—94 times.

Meanwhile, he said we can't do anything to fix the border.

If you want to fix the border, Mr. President, just take those 94 Executive actions and put them back somewhere on the shelf, and let law enforcement do their job. One of these Executive actions was the abuse of the parole system, and I said I was going to say something about this.

(Ms. CORTEZ MASTO assumed the Chair.)

That is how Jose Ibarra, who killed Laken Riley, got into this country. Joe Biden paroled him into the country, meaning he was arrested when he got to the border by Homeland Security and then released.

Federal laws say that parole is supposed to be used only on a case-by-case basis. Why are you here? Why do you need to come here? Full information given by the immigrant and should be on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons. That is the reason you are here. They just wave him on through.

That is not what Joe Biden is doing. He is not looking into the backgrounds of these people. They are just coming right through the front door, laughing at us—we have seen the pictures at the border—and going on.

Joe Biden is paroling massive numbers of people into this country. We better wake up. This is illegal, but Joe Biden is doing it anyway. And now Laken Riley is dead. People will forget about her, except for her parents and her friends. I mean, we will go on to some other tragedy down the road. But we had better wake up. We had better wake up.

We need to bring back the "Remain in Mexico" policy. We have to bring it back. We do not need more asylum officers. Joe Biden has just turned our Border Patrol and our asylum officers into Walmart greeters at the border. Again, I have been down there several times, and these people need help.

He is going to go there tomorrow and say: Oh, we need a lot more help down here, more secretaries. We don't need law enforcement.

We don't need any more Walmart greeters. We need a wall. We need to bring back the "Remain in Mexico" policy, as I said a few minutes ago. We need to go back to the policies of President Trump. President Trump's policies worked, and the reason Joe Biden changed them is because he wanted to do exactly opposite of what Trump was doing. He didn't want to give him any credit. Joe Biden has the exact same laws on the books that President Trump had, but the difference is day and night.

Laken Riley's death and the death of every other American caused by this border crisis rests with President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas. I hope they can't sleep at night, because this could have been prevented. We need to go back to the policies that work, stop playing these dang games, and stop playing politics. Otherwise, this will keep happening.

We are here, and we took an oath of office to say we are going to watch over the citizens of this country. If we don't do something, more Americans will die, more Americans like Laken Riley. More parents will be forever scarred for what happened last week. We have to do something. We can't forget about this.

Every time we have somebody who has lost their life in this country because of an illegal alien, I am coming back up here and I am going to rub it in the faces of the Democratic Party, Secretary Mayorkas, Senator SCHUMER, and Joe Biden. It is 100 percent their fault.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, earlier this month, House Republicans impeached Secretary Mayorkas because the Homeland Security Secretary refuses to carry out his constitutional duty of securing the homeland.

More than 9 million illegal immigrants, including 1.7 million known "got-aways," have entered our country under the Biden administration. Now, this number is larger than the population of 39 States. At the same time, hundreds of individuals on the Terrorist Watchlist have been caught on the southern border, including 58 since the start of fiscal year 2024. Just in January, there were more than 176,000 illegal crossings along the southern border. This is the worst January on record. Yet, under Secretary Mayorkas and President Biden, Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported just 142,000 people in all of 2023. That is less than 5 percent of illegal crossings.

There is no doubt that this administration has abused both our asylum and our parole systems, but unlike asylum—you have parole, which is granted by DHS for different reasons, and President Biden has abused his parole authority to usher in millions of migrants who are unknown to us and who receive both public benefits and work authorizations.

One thing is clear: The parole system is just another way for the Biden administration to circumvent congressional authority and make illegal immigrants legal.

Over the course of four Presidents—go back and look at the years from 1983 to 2003—the average yearly total for all paroles was no more than 150,000, and on average, the Obama and Trump administrations paroled just 5,600 migrants per year. There is a contrast here. In 2022, Joe Biden paroled nearly

800,000 migrants into the country, and in fiscal year 2023, the Biden administration paroled approximately 1.2 million migrants. That is more than 200 times the number that President Obama and President Trump paroled into this country. This administration is abusing the parole system and that authority.

This administration's open border agenda is already having tragic consequences. Last week, an illegal immigrant in Georgia was arrested for allegedly murdering Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, while she went for a jog on the University of Georgia's campus. The suspect should never have been allowed to set foot in America. Yet the Biden administration paroled him. They paroled him into this country after he illegally crossed our border in 2022.

There is no doubt that Secretary Mayorkas has breached the public trust by making illegal immigration legal, but according to recent reports, Majority Leader SCHUMER is looking for any way he can to prevent a Senate trial when the House transmits the Articles of Impeachment on Secretary Mayorkas to this Chamber. By tabling the Articles of Impeachment, Democrats would be abandoning our core constitutional duty to hold an impeachment trial.

The American people suffer through this administration's border crisis every single day, and they deserve an open debate about whether Secretary Mayorkas, who has done so much to cause this national security and humanitarian catastrophe, is fit to hold public office. Based on everything we have seen over the last 3 years, Secretary Mayorkas is not fit for office, and if this Chamber upholds its constitutional duty, I will vote to convict him.

KIDS ONLINE SAFETY ACT

Madam President, late last month, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing with the CEOs of five big tech companies—Meta, TikTok, X, Snap, and Discord. We did it for a simple reason: Big Tech needs to be held accountable for putting profit over children's safety.

When our children are online on these platforms, they are the product. With addictive algorithms, infinite scroll, and endless push notifications, social media sites are keeping teenagers on their platforms for an average of 8½ hours a day. It is a disaster for the mental health of young Americans.

But the more time minors spend on these platforms, the more data Big Tech can collect, allowing them to rake in billions of dollars in revenue. Discord's 2022 revenue, the latest available, was \$445 million. X—their revenue for 2023 is estimated to be \$3.4 billion. Snap—their 2023 revenue was \$4.6 billion. The 2023 revenue for ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese Communist Party-affiliated owner, was \$110 billion. Meta's 2023 revenue was \$134.9 billion.

At the same time, big tech companies have turned a blind eye to how their

platforms are exposing minors to harmful content, drug dealers, and predators. But when provided the opportunity to explain themselves, the CEOs continued to make excuses for their platforms' failures to protect our children online on their platforms.

During this hearing, Meta's Mark Zuckerberg said he would absolutely work with lawmakers to address these problems, but for years, Meta and other Big Tech platforms have funded an army of lawyers and lobbyists who have fought us on this issue every single day in every single possible way. Many of these groups argue that the free market can solve this problem, but even though the free market is an incredible force for good, it can't stop Meta from putting a lifetime value of \$270 per teenager who is on their site during their teenage years.

Still, Zuckerberg claimed that Meta is "on the side of parents everywhere working hard to raise their kids," and he wants "everyone who uses [their] services to have safe and positive experiences." Yet, when questioned about this issue—and it is a vast pedophile network. That is not how I termed it; it is how the Wall Street Journal termed it in a report. So I questioned him about how this vast pedophile network was allowed to grow on Instagram, including content showing teenagers for sale to older men. The tech CEO was unable to explain how this content does not violate Meta's terms of service and their community standards.

Now, we would think that building out what the Wall Street Journal called a "vast pedophile network" and having postings showing teenagers for sale to older men would indeed violate community standards or terms of service, but he could not answer that question. Instead, he insisted that his company is not "perfect"—his choice of word. I have to tell you that is a huge understatement.

Just last month, newly released internal documents revealed that Meta executives refused to take action after learning that their algorithms connected children with potential child predators. According to the documents, which were revealed through a lawsuit brought by the New Mexico attorney general against Meta, Meta executives refused to act even though they knew about this and knew that 100,000 minors were receiving sexually abusive content from adults on their platform every single day. Think about those numbers.

Last week, the Wall Street Journal reported that, last year, Meta employees warned executives that Facebook and Instagram's paid subscription service enabled child exploitation by likely pedophiles, but the company pushed ahead with this feature anyway even though they knew it was endangering children.

These are stunning revelations. They corroborate the testimony from Facebook whistleblower Arturo Bejar,

who testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee last November. Bejar is a former engineering director at Facebook. He told us that Meta executives knew that millions of teens face bullying, eating disorder content, the solicitation of lethal drugs, and sexual exploitation on their platforms while they are using those platforms, but rather than raise the alarm that their platforms were endangering children, company executives withheld this damaging information from congressional oversight, rolled back safety tools, and dismantled teams responsible for children's safety. In other words, they chose to make the problem worse instead of fixing it.

Why did they do that? Because when our children are on their platforms, our children are the product. They are the product. They need money. Remember that \$270 per-teen amount that they subscribed? That is of value.

So to parents, think about this next time your child is on Instagram. Meta sees them as a \$270 profit—profit. They put the profit before the kids.

Unfortunately, this isn't just limited to Facebook and Meta. Across the board, we have seen social media platforms, including Snapchat and the Chinese-owned TikTok, become open drug markets where dealers connect with children and sell illicit drugs, including fentanyl.

We have heard from countless families from across the country who have seen their children die from suicide after facing relentless bullying on social media. And we have seen digital platforms become havens for sex traffickers and child predators who use social media to prey on the most vulnerable among us.

For years, Big Tech companies have made empty promises about how they will address the rampant abuse, the malicious content, criminal activity on their platforms. But do you know what? Nothing has changed.

Big Tech has proven they can't police themselves. They won't act. So it is imperative that Congress steps in.

Over the last 3 years, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have crafted the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act, which would provide parents and children with the tools, safeguards, and transparency they need to protect against these online harms. This legislation, which has reached a total of 64 cosponsors, includes crucial provisions to hold Big Tech companies accountable; mandatory audits to ensure that platforms are mitigating harms to children; new tools for parents to identify harmful behavior and report abuse directly to these social media platforms; new controls for families to support their children, including to opt out of algorithmic recommendations. Perhaps most importantly, the legislation would create a duty of care for online platforms to prevent and mitigate specific dangers to minors, including the promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation.

Without real and enforceable reforms, social media companies will only continue to pay lipservice to the issue of protecting children while continuing to put profits above their safety. Yes, they need that \$270 per kid. That is what our children are worth to them.

Now is the time to bring about some real change. Now is the time—it is past time—to hold Big Tech accountable. We have to make certain, we have to ensure, our children can be free to be children again.

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

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

VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, when Alexei Navalny died 2 weeks ago, he had been in solitary confinement for almost 300 days. Outside his window, the Russian dissident and anti-corruption campaigner could only see a tall fence and no light.

Far above the Arctic Circle, the prison was built on the site of a Soviet gulag, a place the Kremlin has sent generations of Russian citizens to break their spirit. But despite the sub-zero temperatures, despite the months of darkness, despite the violence, Alexei Navalny never gave up. He never lost his sense of humor. He never wavered in his commitment to fight for a better Russia. And what really bothered the Kremlin: He never gave up on telling the truth about Putin. After all, he is the one who aptly described Putin's United Russia party as "the party of crooks and thieves." He saw that Putin is still the KGB agent who never turned away from the Soviet legacy that crushed rebellion in Hungary in 1956, that suppressed reforms in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and that declared martial law in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to crush Solidarity in Poland in 1981.

There was a chance for Russia to take a different path in the 1990s. Many Russians leapt at the opportunity after the collapse of the USSR. There were independent political parties. There were open elections. There was a free press. Civil society emerged. Russians connected with counterparts in Europe and around the world.

But since his rise to power at the turn of the century, Putin has turned Russia in a very different direction, ruling with a regime as repressive and corrupt as anything under Brezhnev or Khrushchev. He is old-school Soviet. Today, Putin wraps himself in an ideology of White Christian nationalism. He has cracked down on ethnic and religious minorities. He has persecuted the gay and lesbian community. He has

shut down independent media and jailed journalists like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, a Russian-born American citizen who went to visit her ailing mother, and even Americans like Evan Gershkovich of the Wall Street Journal, who was imprisoned for doing his job as a reporter.

Vaclav Havel would have recognized these Soviet tactics. He was a playwright, a dissident, and of course, later, President of the democratic Czech Republic. He wrote in the Washington Post:

I come from a country where, as late as mid-1989, while all around us totalitarian icebergs were cracking and thawing . . . I was in prison. Yet by the end of that same year, I was elected the president of a free Czechoslovakia.

Long before that, Havel wrote a famous essay, "The Power of the Powerless." In it, he explained that dictatorial regimes are mortally afraid of the courageous individual who speaks up for their rights, who tells the truth when the regime is telling lies. Havel could have been writing about Alexei Navalny.

The Putin regime is a house of cards built on corruption and violence.

I was in Germany earlier this month at the Munich Security Conference when the news of Navalny's death broke. I met with his widow, Yulia, who spoke movingly about her husband's death. I wanted to convey condolences and demonstrate solidarity with her at a painful time.

Despite Putin's continuing threats, she is not afraid, and she is committed to continuing her husband's mission. His team at the Anti-Corruption Foundation is not afraid. They still have their list of "bribe-takers and war-mongers." Navalny himself was not afraid. Even after they poisoned him and left him in critical condition, he still went back to Russia. Courage only begets more courage. That is what scares Putin: Navalny was not alone.

I want to speak briefly about another brave Russian democrat who is unjustly imprisoned in Putin's gulag. Only a few weeks after appearing before a Helsinki Commission hearing I chaired, they also poisoned Vladimir Kara-Murza. Like Navalny, he refused to be intimidated. He refused to be exiled from his homeland and returned to Russia time and again. They threw him in jail almost 2 years ago for his criticism of Putin's unjust war in Ukraine. There are others, too, like Ilya Yashin, who was sentenced to 8 years after publishing reports about the war crimes by Putin's forces in Ukraine in 2022.

We in the free world must do everything we can to lift up their voices. We must give material support to activists, both inside Russia and across the diaspora.

I was pleased to see the Biden administration levy more sanctions against Putin's regime last week, including against the warden of the prison, whom Putin promoted to the rank of colonel general 3 days after Navalny's death.

We must hold those responsible accountable, including using Global Magnitsky Sanctions. At the same time, the House of Representatives must pass the supplemental funding request to help support the Ukrainians fighting against Putin's repression.

The fight against Putin in Ukraine is also the fight against Putin in Russia. This is something Navalny clearly understood when he said:

Russia must leave Ukraine alone and allow it to develop the way its people want.

I realize there is a painful sadness for so many across the Russian community in the wake of Navalny's death. It is a terrible loss. But remember what he told us:

If they decide to kill me, it means that we are incredibly strong.

Navalny personified what Havel long ago described as "the power of the powerless." So to the friends and family of Alexei Navalny and all those in Putin's prisons, to the Ukrainian people fighting against the Russian war machine, to the Russian diaspora who still dream of returning home, don't give up hope. Have faith that we will one day see a peaceful and prosperous and democratic Russia where freedom and justice reign.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to finish my remarks before the scheduled vote.

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

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT WEISS

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, my colleagues, I come to the floor today to celebrate a remarkable man, a really important friend of mine, an irreplaceable member of a community that is very important to me. Monsignor Robert Weiss—more affectionately known as Father Bob—retired last month from his post at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newton, CT.

A Florida native, Father Bob was just a teenager when he heard his calling to join the priesthood. In 1968, he entered St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, NY. He was ordained 5 years later.

His first assignment led him to St. Andrew Parish in Bridgeport, CT, and 26 years later, he was assigned to St. Rose in Newton, CT, what became his last job in the church. Father Bob gave his final sermon just weeks ago.

I am going to tell you the story in a moment of why Father Bob is a household name in Connecticut. He is a hero to many of us, forged by fire and tragedy. But that is not the sum of Robert Weiss because during his 50 years in the priesthood, he has brought such great joy to the people and the families he has served. He is such an easy person to talk to. You just meet him for the first time, and you see why it is no wonder that over his years of leadership, thousands and thousands of pa-

rishioners have sought out his counsel and advice, confided in him, relied upon him. He has this wonderful smile, a buoyancy to him. He will admit that a little bit of that has been robbed from him in the last 10 years, but it does just make you feel better just by being around him. He is also wise. He has a gravitas about him that he carries with him. It just makes you feel safer. It makes you feel cared for when you are around him.

He cares about his church community. He helped grow St. Rose, but he cares about the community beyond the church just as heartily. He reaches out and builds bridges between religious institutions, between church and state, between believers and nonbelievers. He isn't judgmental. He is a consensus- and community-builder. He is an exceptional leader. That is who he was before December 14, 2012. That is who he has been after December 14, 2012. But that is the day, whether he likes it or not, that defines his career.

It started out like any other day for Father Bob. He went to his favorite diner in Sandy Hook. He ordered his usual: French toast. He was going to spend the morning wrapping Christmas presents. He didn't have a mass that day. Then he got a call from the Newton Police Department: A gunman had opened fire at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

He told the administrators at St. Rose School, the school affiliated with his church, to put the students in lockdown, and then he drove to Sandy Hook. He stopped at the firehouse, where parents and teachers and kids were waiting. He went to the parking lot of the school. The State police officer on the scene asked him if he would bless the children—the 20 bodies that lay on the floor of that school—and the 6 educators who lay on the floor as well, all waiting to be identified. So he stood at the front door of that building, knowing that those children and those educators were no longer living on this Earth, and he prayed for them.

Then he went back to the firehouse, where he stayed for the rest of the day and held the hands of these parents as they waited to find out whether their child was in that school dead or somewhere alive. He had officiated the weddings of these parents. He had baptized these children. These parents had confessed their regrets and their fears to him.

By 3 p.m., Governor Malloy had alerted the families who remained at that firehouse about the fate of their children. But Father Bob's day wasn't done. He led an impromptu service at St. Rose that evening. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I were there. It was maybe the most emotional night of my life when Father Bob, with no time to prepare, stood up in front of thousands who had come to grieve that tragedy at his church—because that is where so many of the families belonged—and he told the crowd: Evil visited us today, but we have to get through it, and we have to find some good.

Even after the service, Father Bob didn't stop. From there, he joined the State police until 1 or 2 a.m. in the morning so that he could be there when the final body identifications were made and he could be there with the parents when they were given that final, awful, tragic news.

The following week, Father Bob officiated 8 of the 26 funerals. They were all students at St. Rose's religious education program. He wrote eight homilies. He picked three lessons from each of their short lives that the community could learn from.

It is hard for me to explain to you what Father Bob meant to that community in those days, in those weeks and months after. In many ways, he was the emotional sponge for that entire community, not just for his parishioners. He was so unbelievably generous with himself, with his time, and with his heart—in one-on-one time with those who were grieving; in big groups who needed to hear some spiritual guidance, who needed one of the preeminent religious leaders in the community to make sense of what happened; and on television, where Father Bob would speak for the community, relieving that burden from so many others who weren't yet ready to process and talk about what all of this meant.

He did it all: the one-on-one hand holding, the group counseling, the spokesman for the community.

The Catholic Church requires bishops retire upon their 75th birthday. But when Father Bob's 75th birthday was around the corner in September of 2021, he realized he wasn't ready to be done.

In his resignation letter, he requested a very rare extension to stay on at St. Rose of Lima for 2 more years because he wanted to mark the 10th anniversary of Sandy Hook. He wanted to see through that journey the first decade after this tragedy that had ripped a hole in the heart of the community that he loved so much.

I remember talking to Father Bob at that moment when he decided to stay on. He acknowledged what he had gone through, how much pain he had experienced, how different he was from the man that took that job. But he still knew that he had to see that finish line, at least the first decade after the tragedy.

Father Bob may have celebrated his final mass as pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church, but he will remain a pillar of this community. We will never, ever forget how in the days, weeks, and years after that tragedy in Sandy Hook, he led with his heart on his sleeve. He helped heal a broken community. More than anyone else, he bore the burden, separate and aside from the families who bore the majority of that burden.

Father Bob's career would have been remarkable even if December 14, 2012, never happened. But what he did that day, what he did in the days and the weeks and years that followed, that makes him a legend.

NOMINATION OF JULIE SIMONE SNEED

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Julie Sneed to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida.

Born in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Judge Sneed received her B.S. from the University of Florida and her J.D. from Florida State University. After completing law school, Judge Sneed clerked for Judge Chris W. Altenbernd of the Second District Court of Appeal of Florida before beginning her legal career as a litigation associate at Trenam, Kemker, Scharf, Barkin, Frye, O'Neill & Mullis, P.A. After clerking for Judge James D. Whittemore on the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, she continued her litigation career at Fowler White Boggs Banker, P.A. and Akerman LLP, where she represented large corporations in civil business and commercial litigation in State and Federal courts. In 2015, Judge Sneed was appointed to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge for the same district to which she is nominated, where she has since issued more than 1,000 orders and opinions.

The American Bar Association unanimously rated Judge Sneed "well qualified" to serve on the district court, and she has the strong support of Senators Rubio and Scott.

Judge Sneed's deep ties to the Florida legal community, combined with her courtroom experience on and off the bench, will make her ready to serve the Middle District of Florida with distinction.

I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

Mr. MURPHY. I yield the floor.

VOTE ON SNEED NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sneed nomination?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Collins	Hickenlooper
Bennet	Coons	Hirono
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Kaine
Booker	Duckworth	Kelly
Brown	Durbin	King
Butler	Fetterman	Lujan
Cantwell	Gillibrand	Manchin
Cardin	Graham	Markey
Carper	Hassan	Menendez
Casey	Heinrich	Merkley

Murkowski	Rubio	Tester
Murphy	Sanders	Van Hollen
Murray	Schatz	Warner
Ossoff	Schumer	Warnock
Padilla	Scott (FL)	Warren
Peters	Shaheen	Welch
Reed	Sinema	Whitehouse
Rosen	Stabenow	Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Grassley	Ricketts
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Cramer	Lummis	Tuberville
Crapo	Marshall	Vance
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Mullin	

NOT VOTING—2

Klobuchar

Smith

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 469, Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

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

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be 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 executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 57 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Boozman	Cantwell
Barrasso	Brown	Capito
Bennet	Budd	Cardin
Blumenthal	Butler	Carper

Casey	Kelly	Rounds
Cassidy	Kennedy	Rubio
Collins	King	Sanders
Coons	Lee	Schatz
Cornyn	Lujan	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Lummis	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Manchin	Shaheen
Cramer	Markey	Sinema
Cruz	McConnell	Stabenow
Duckworth	Menendez	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Tillis
Ernst	Moran	Van Hollen
Fetterman	Murkowski	Vance
Gillibrand	Murphy	Warner
Graham	Murray	Warnock
Grassley	Ossoff	Warren
Hassan	Padilla	Welch
Heinrich	Peters	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Reed	Wicker
Hirono	Ricketts	Wyden
Hyde-Smith	Romney	Young
Kaine	Rosen	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Braun	Hoeven	Schmitt
Britt	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Daines	Marshall	Thune
Fischer	Mullin	Tuberville
Hagerty	Paul	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker

Klobuchar

Smith

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 20.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CRUZ. On Saturday, March 2, the great State of Texas will celebrate 188 years since we declared our independence from Mexico and fought for liberty. In the fight for our independence, many brave Texans laid down their lives at the Alamo, including William Barret Travis, James Bowie, and Davy Crockett. They risked everything to make liberty a reality for generations of Texans to come.

It is a tradition on Texas Independence Day to read the words of Colonel Travis, leader of the besieged forces at the Alamo. His call for reinforcements resounded across Texas, across America, and across the world, and it reminds us of the bravery of those who fought there and died for liberty.

I have had the blessing to read this letter aloud many, many times, and every time, it stirs the spirit and speaks to the heart.

COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO,

Bejar, Feby 24th, 1836.

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS & ALL AMERICANS IN THE WORLD—

Fellow Citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, &

our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

[SIGNED] WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS.

[Lieutenant colonel commandant].

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels and got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

TRAVIS.

At the battle of Santa Jacinto on April 21, 1836, the Texans finally secured a decisive victory. We won our independence and formed the Republic of Texas, a new nation. Texas was an independent nation for 9 years before we officially became part of the United States of America in February of 1846.

Sam Houston, the founding father, the George Washington of the Lone Star State, was also born 231 years ago on March 2, on Texas Independence Day. Sam Houston was an extraordinary American. He was born in Virginia. He spent many years in Tennessee, where he served in the U.S. House of Representatives and then became Governor of Tennessee. In Texas, he led the Texans to victory in the Battle of San Jacinto.

When Texas became an independent nation, Sam Houston served as President twice before Texas finally became part of the United States. Later, he served in the U.S. Senate and finally as Governor of Texas. He is the only man in American history to serve as Governor of two separate States.

Sam Houston was a tireless, talented leader and a great statesman who believed in liberty. His words, "Govern wisely and as little as possible," still ring true today, and the Lone Star State still follows that adage.

To every Texan, I wish you a gloriously happy Texas Independence Day.

May God continue to bless the great State of Texas and the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

ACCESS TO FAMILY BUILDING ACT

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have been called a lot of names in my life: "Tammy," "Lieutenant Colonel," "Senator," and a couple others I shouldn't mention in polite company.

"Mommy," though, is, without a doubt, my favorite name. It is the one my 5-year-old uses when she runs into the house after dance class and pulls on my sleeve, eager to show me what she learned during her lesson.

It is the one my 9-year-old says when she announces her latest life plan. When she was little, she wanted to grow up to be a garbage collector; now, she is leaning towards being an Army cyber warrior.

My girls are my everything. But they, likely, would have never been born if I hadn't had access to the basic reproductive rights that Americans—up until recently—had been depending on for nearly a half century, because after a decade struggling with infertility after my service in Iraq, I was only able to get pregnant through the miracle of IVF.

IVF is the reason I get to experience the chaos and the beauty, the stress and the joy that is motherhood. IVF is the reason that my husband and I aren't just Tammy and Bryan but we are "Mom" and "Dad." IVF made our family. It made my heart whole. It made my life full.

But for countless women in Alabama, that desperately sought-after dream of becoming a mom just became so much harder. Last week, that State's supreme court ruled that frozen embryos created through IVF should be considered children under State law—a ruling that paints women like me and our doctors as criminals and one that throws IVF access into chaos as countless women and doctors try to figure out whether they might be criminalized for simply trying to create a family.

If you are thinking that this makes no sense, you are right. You are not misunderstanding anything; you are not missing something. It is the nightmarish blend of hypocrisy and misogyny that you think it is.

The very people who claim to be defending family values are the ones trying to enact dystopian policies that would prevent Americans from starting their own families.

This is no longer a hypothetical worst-case scenario. IVF providers around the State have already paused treatments out of fear that their doctors and patients could be punished.

Organizations that transport embryos to and from medical facilities in Alabama have already announced that they will stop doing so, meaning that would-be parents there won't even be able to start their families in any other States either.

And now that the first domino has fallen, it seems like it could only be a matter of time before more hospitals and more organizations make the same call, before more State courts issue similar rulings, before more extremist politicians succeed in enacting even more draconian laws nationwide.

Think about that. Think about what is at stake if State courts simply can strip away access to IVF. Think about how many would-be moms might never be able to hear their child's first little gurgle of a laugh. Think about how many hopeful dads might never be able to play tooth fairy when his would-be daughter loses her first tooth.

You know, I lived in Alabama for a bit when I was in the Army, stationed at what is now called Fort Novosel. And I didn't know it at the time, but infertility would become one of the most heartbreaking struggles of my

life, my miscarriage more painful than any wound I ever earned on the battlefield.

I also almost lost the opportunity to even try IVF because a doctor in a well-known Catholic hospital that my VA hospital referred me to told me I was simply too old for treatment; that at 42, I should just "go home and enjoy my husband," instead, and if it was meant to be, I would get pregnant.

It was pure luck that I found out that that doctor was lying to me, that she wasn't basing her advice on medical science but rather on her personal religious beliefs, nearly costing me my chance to have my two little girls.

So it is a little personal when a majority male State supreme court suggests that people like me who became parents with the help of modern medicine should be in jail cells and not nurseries. And I know I am not the only one who struggles to understand how elected representatives who back these kinds of policies can call themselves members of the so-called "party of life."

No, rulings like this one and the bills with the same intent that are being pushed forward in State legislatures around the country are not about being pro-life. They are about catering to an extremist base by exerting even more control over women's bodies, inserting politicians into some of the most intimate, personal decisions anyone could ever make.

Look, back when I was going through IVF, three of my five fertilized eggs were deemed nonviable. If a version of this ruling had been in place then, I might have been forced to implant each of those three nonviable embryos. I might have been forced to suffer through three more miscarriages or else risk me or my doctor being convicted of manslaughter for discarding nonviable fertilized eggs.

That is the kind of extremism that we are talking about here. That is the level of cruelty that we are facing. That is the kind of future we are fighting to prevent, where frozen embryos have more rights than the women who would carry them.

Let's be clear about what led to this moment, the overturning of Roe is what made last week's ruling even possible, as it stripped women of a constitutional right, transferring the power to decide whether or when to start families from us to politicians in State houses across the country.

Donald Trump is the one who brags about taking down Roe v. Wade. Donald Trump is the one who acts as if that is something to be proud of. So while it may now be convenient for him to claim that he had nothing to do with what happened in Alabama, we know the truth. IVF is at risk because of him. He is to blame. Him and every other GOP official who shamelessly kisses his ring, proving with every word they say that they care more about protecting his poll numbers than protecting Americans' freedoms.

After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned—actually, even before then, when the Senate was deciding whether to confirm Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court—I warned that red States would come for IVF. And now they have. But they aren't going to stop in Alabama. Mark my words, if we do not act now, it will only get worse.

There are a lot of nuanced tough calls we must make as Senators. This, simply, isn't one of them. We know what is right, even if extremist courts would like to rob millions of us of our rights. We shouldn't need to wait until women and doctors are thrown in jail before we act to protect them.

That is why today I am begging my colleagues to help me pass my Access to Family Building Act. A bill that would ensure that every American's right to become a parent via treatments like IVF is fully protected, regardless of what State they live in, helping guarantee that no hopeful parent or doctor in this country can be held criminally liable for starting or growing a family through IVF.

The reality is, one in four married women have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term. That number doesn't even include partnerless Americans or other families also trying to have kids. That is one in four in red States and in blue States, in big cities and rural towns, in the wealthiest neighborhoods and in the poorest of ZIP Codes, because infertility doesn't discriminate between party lines. It doesn't recognize State borders.

No one should feel that someone else's religious beliefs or partisan slants could rob them of their chance to get pregnant, and no doctor should have to risk a criminal record just to provide women basic healthcare.

So to my Republican colleagues, please, think about how many that one in four equates to in your State. Women willing to go through expensive, painful medical treatments just for a chance to experience the smallest, most banal moments of parenthood. Just to have a newborn to swaddle, a baby whose diaper needs to be changed, a toddler who needs their shoes to be tied. And if you believe that they have the right to be called "Mom" without also being called a criminal, then all you have to do to prove it is to let us pass this should-be-obvious legislation, because in this nightmarish moment, it is nowhere near enough to send out a vaguely worded tweet claiming you care about women's rights, despite a voting record to the contrary.

No, this is where the rubber meets the road. If you truly care about the sanctity of families, if you are genuinely, actually, honestly interested in protecting IVF, then you need to show it by not blocking this bill today. It is that simple.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3612

Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that

the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration of S. 3612 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Madam President, I support the ability for mothers and fathers to have total access to IVF in bringing new life into the world. I also believe human life should be protected. These are not mutually exclusive.

Let's be clear about what the Alabama case is about. This was a case brought by families whose human embryos were killed when an unauthorized individual walked into the fertility clinic through an unsecured door, removed several human embryos, and dropped them, causing their deaths.

The court's holding in favor of the parents found that these frozen human embryos are children under Alabama law. It did not ban IVF, nor has any State banned IVF.

The bill before us today is a vast overreach that is full of poison pills that go way too far—far beyond ensuring legal access to IVF. The act explicitly waives the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and would subject religious and pro-life organizations to crippling lawsuits.

Religious and pro-life organizations could be forced to facilitate procedures that violate their core beliefs, including their health insurance plans. This would be the first time the bipartisan Religious Freedom Restoration Act introduced by then-Representative CHUCK SCHUMER was explicitly waived.

The bill's expansion definition of "artificial reproductive technology" sweeps in much more than IVF and has far-reaching implications. It would legalize human cloning. It would legalize commercial surrogacy, including for young girls without parental involvement. It would legalize gene-edited designer babies and lift the Federal ban on the creation of three-parent embryos. It would legalize the creation of human-animal chimeras. Other developed countries like Germany, New Zealand, and Australia, as well as States like Louisiana, have policies that allow for IVF coupled with commonsense protections to respect human life.

Creating rights to human cloning, the genetic engineering of human embryos, and surrogacy is too extreme and goes far beyond IVF. This bill misses the mark.

We should strive to do both, and this bill does not do that. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I have the greatest respect and admiration for my friend from Mississippi, but I have to say that I disagree with her interpretation of my piece of legislation.

This bill does three things and three things only: It protects the right of individuals to seek assistive reproductive technology without fear of being prosecuted for seeking that technology. It preserves the right of physicians to provide that assistive reproductive technology without fear of being prosecuted, and it also allows insurance companies to cover assistive reproductive technology.

That is all that it does. It does not force anyone to seek reproductive technology; it does not force anyone to offer it; it does not force anyone to cover it. It simply says you have a statutory right, should you choose to pursue assistive reproductive technology that you will be able to do so.

I also want to note that in Louisiana there is already State law that prohibits the "discarding" of frozen embryos or of frozen fertilized eggs.

This has already started. In Florida, there is a bill pending before the State legislature that would deem that a fertilized egg is a human being and provide the opportunity for penalties to be put into judgments for those who would discard those fertilized eggs. So this is a real threat today.

With that, I would like to yield to my colleague from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, first of all, I want to start off by thanking my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH for not only sharing her story of her wonderful family and beautiful two daughters—I have seen myself what an incredible mother they have, and they are fantastic girls. I also have to thank her for bringing forward this important legislation.

Women across the country use IVF to start their own families. You are hearing that not only from Senator DUCKWORTH. I have heard it from so many people in Nevada and really across the country. They make that choice in consultation with their partners, their families, and their doctors, not a government official—not a government official.

There is no logical reason to deny women that right, and yet, after *Roe v. Wade* fell, we could see from a mile away that IVF was in danger. Senator DUCKWORTH was one of the first to come forward in recognizing that, and that is why her legislation is so important. Why? Because attacking IVF was yet another chance for anti-choice Republicans to erode women's rights in this country.

They have introduced a Federal abortion ban that would supersede State laws. They have stacked the courts with anti-choice judges. They have limited funding to women's healthcare,

and they have repeatedly ignored the very science behind reproductive healthcare in order to push their agenda.

We knew this was coming. In fact, we tried to do something about it a year ago. After Roe was overturned, not only did Senator DUCKWORTH come to the floor with her legislation, but we have introduced numerous legislation on this floor to protect women's rights. And every single time, unfortunately, one of our Republican colleagues comes forward to object, without any explanation, but continuing to really erode women's rights in this country.

And I have to say, these extreme GOP colleagues of ours claim to be pro-life. They claim to champion family planning. But, really, when it comes down to it, they don't support it. You just have to be in our communities and listen to the women and their families, and you understand that.

The difference this time around is that the Alabama Supreme Court is actually calling their bluff. The threat to IVF is no longer this hypothetical. In response to the ruling—and I believe it is an extreme ruling from this judge. But in response to this ruling, clinics—some clinics in Alabama—have halted IVF procedures. They have halted them.

I have seen heartbreaking stories of Alabama families who are being forced to put their dreams of starting a family on hold, and I am here to tell you: It will not stop with Alabama. The consequences of this ruling are that not only will it close some of those clinics in Alabama that we have heard about, but it will have a chilling impact nationally.

It is one thing to have the legislation that bans it outright, but the chilling impact is another barrier. And you don't have to be from a State like Nevada. It is a pro-choice State. Listen, if you are threatening women, if you are threatening their families, if you are threatening doctors who want to help these women, that has a chilling effect even in Nevada—even in Nevada.

These extreme GOP politicians are seeing this, quite frankly, and I am watching them, and they are suddenly stuck. They have to decide whether to agree with this judge's anti-choice decision or to concede that women should be allowed this basic right to choose if, when, and how to become a parent. Suddenly, they have to decide just how far they are willing to go in their crusade to control women.

Having a child through IVF is a wonderful thing. It is not a crime, and it should not be punished. Our anti-choice Republican colleagues, they know this. Yet they have once again refused to do the right thing for American families by supporting protections for accessing IVF.

And let me just finally say that their hypocrisy is on full display, and America is watching. You don't have to believe me. Just listen to the American public. Across this country, a major-

ity—a majority—and I don't care if it is women I hear from. It is their loved ones. It is men. I don't care what party you are. I don't care if you are Democrat, Republican, nonpartisan. A majority of Americans want women to have this right to choose. They want them to have this ability. They believe in having families. They believe in IVF. They believe in women's reproductive rights.

And, most importantly, what some of our Republican colleagues are doing is inhibiting and limiting women's access to 21st century healthcare. That is what this is about. Why should we deny women the right to access 21st century healthcare if it is going to save their lives, if it is going to help them have families? What is wrong with that at the end of the day?

So I have to thank Senator DUCKWORTH. And it is unfortunate that we had an objection to her legislation that is so needed, unfortunately, in this day and age, but it is. That is where we are today: fighting for women's rights, fighting across this country.

And, finally, my only other question to my colleagues is: I trust women to make this decision. Why don't they?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, thank you to my colleagues from Illinois, from Nevada, and other Senators who are out here to fight for the right for women to have basic healthcare services in this country.

You know, I have said before that Republican attacks on reproductive freedom would never stop with Roe. They would never stop with abortion. I have said before that IVF was at risk, and now it has been so heartbreaking to see that warning become a gut-wrenching reality for women in Alabama.

And it is absolutely infuriating to see some of the same Republicans who support so-called fetal personhood bills, who want to codify the very ideology in the Alabama Supreme Court decision that ripped away access to IVF care, suddenly acting surprised, suddenly acting like they had no idea this would happen, suddenly acting like this was totally unforeseen, when it is exactly what we have been warning about and exactly what the far right has been working toward for decades. This isn't some surprise. The Alabama Supreme Court decision is Republican ideology in action.

So spare me the empty statements, especially after the objection that we just saw here. Unless you are actually going to work with us to protect IVF, save your breath. There are women in Alabama who desperately want to start a family, women who have tried for years to get pregnant, women who have gone through the heartbreak of miscarriage, women who are battling cancer and other devastating diagnoses for whom IVF is the only way they will be able to have children. And now, after

everything they have been through—the hope, the disappointment, the thousands—the even tens of thousands of dollars it can cost to pursue IVF—after all that, these women have had their dreams shattered because Republicans believe a frozen embryo kept in storage at an IVF clinic is the same and should have the exact same rights as a living, breathing human person.

That is not hyperbole. That is not hypothetical. That is what is happening. You don't have to imagine how painful this is. You just have to listen to the women in Alabama who have had their worlds turned upside down now by this decision.

Meghan Cole has a rare blood disease that prevents her from carrying children. Her hopes of starting a family through IVF and a surrogate were dashed last week when her doctor called to cancel her Friday appointment. She asked about transferring the embryos out of the State. Even that door has been slammed shut to her.

Jasmine York turned to IVF after previous ectopic pregnancies left her with no other options to have a baby. Now Alabama has left her with no options at all. As she said, "It's completely just derailed a lot of hope."

Kayla Lee spent 9 years and \$80,000 trying to have a child. She has gone through several miscarriages, and she was days away—days away—from getting a viable embryo transferred. But instead of getting that embryo transplanted, she got the same heartbreaking phone call. Her hopes of a family were being put on hold. Years of trying, tens of thousands of dollars, and, at the last moment, Republicans pulled the rug out from under her.

Even families who already have gone through IVF are facing the fallout. Can they afford to pay and store unused embryos indefinitely? Can they be prosecuted if they don't? They don't know. Right now, no one knows.

The anger, the anguish, the stories of these women are heartbreaking.

As IVF patient Kelly Belmont put it, "We've already invested so much time and money and just physical and emotional anguish into this process, and to think that it could have all been for nothing and that we could be ending our journey to be able to have children—it's absolutely terrifying. I am just trying to hold myself together emotionally."

So powerful. I don't know how anyone can listen to these stories and still think politicians should be making women's healthcare decisions for them. I really don't.

Now, I said earlier that Republicans are acting surprised now by the result of the very policies they have pushed for. They can save their breath. That is because actions speak louder than words, and many of the same Republicans saying they care now about IVF are literally right now cosponsors of legislation that would enshrine fetal personhood into law and make IVF unavailable nationwide.

You cannot support IVF and support fetal personhood laws. They are fundamentally incompatible.

Instead of empty words, Democrats want to see action, and that is why we just tried to pass the Access to Family Building Act. It doesn't get any more straightforward than that, and yet, just now, Republicans blocked the bill and showed their true colors when it comes to IVF.

I am frustrated, but I am not done fighting because I know Americans are watching, and they will not forget who is standing with families in Alabama and across the country and who is standing in their way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, as part of what we are doing here today, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the scheduled votes: myself, Senator Kaine, Senator Warren, and Senator Wyden.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I have been really awed and humbled by the eloquence of the women Senators who have preceded me, and I hesitate to add to what they have stated so powerfully already. But, of course, I am a man, and this bill is about women's reproductive care and women's rights, but it is also about the rights of all of us. The name of the act is the Access to Family Building Act. It is about families. It is about men, like myself, whose most awesome moment in life was the time they held their newly born child.

Men have an equal stake in the issue that brings us here today. Men should be as scared and angry as women are about this trend, which is so destructive to basic rights and liberties. Women's rights are human rights. The rights at stake here are rights that are American. What could be more American than wanting to bring a child into the world?

And what could be more heart-breaking? We have all been through it, through friends, neighbors, maybe our own family. A man and woman in love, wanting to have a child, miscarriages, other obstacles that prevent it, and there is a hole in their hearts, a hole in their homes and their families, as they struggle with issues of fertility and childbirth. This measure very simply guarantees the right for women and families everywhere—in Alabama, in Connecticut, in every State in this country—to access the fertility care they need to bring children into the world.

You know, over 3 years ago, before Dobbs was decided—and we never could have imagined that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned—and the Republican Party eviscerated access to abortion care, I posed what I thought was a really easy question to a Supreme Court

nominee, Amy Coney Barrett. I asked: Is it constitutional to criminalize IVF treatment? She dodged. She dodged. She refused to answer. I thought it was self-evident. It is not constitutional to criminalize IVF treatment. That was before Dobbs. That was before the legal landscape was volcanically uprooted by this Supreme Court, which has been captured by a far-right fringe.

Some may have wondered why at that time I asked what seemed like a very far-fetched, obtuse, arcane question. A lot of people probably didn't even know what it meant, and they may have also wondered why Justice Barrett refused to answer such an obvious question with such a self-evident answer. Wasn't it settled that IVF treatment is not only legally protected but also a scientific miracle? Think of it for a moment, the science here that is now accessible to every American, everyone in the world. Wasn't IVF pro-family, having children, parents who wanted a child? And they may have wondered as well, wasn't IVF the last, best hope for so many people struggling with infertility, desperately seeking to experience the miracle of childbirth for themselves? Who could possibly object to that miracle in the lives of a family who would not only relish but raise a child to contribute to our great country?

What has become devastatingly and tragically clear is that the Republican Party's animosity toward women's health and women's rights doesn't stop at abortion. It is why I asked that IVF question in 2020, and it is why I didn't get a clear answer from a Republican nominee for the Supreme Court. The war on women and on reproductive choices by women and the war on families hasn't stopped at abortion or even IVF.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Senator, your time is up.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. So I conclude by thanking my colleagues who have brought this measure to the floor, particularly Senator Duckworth, and I regret that Republicans have blocked this measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Madam President, the first child born in vitro in the United States was Elizabeth Carr, and she was born in Norfolk, VA, in 1981. Elizabeth's parents were Massachusetts residents. They struggled with infertility, and their dream was to have a child. Yet it was not to be—until they heard about a husband-and-wife team, Howard and Georgeanna Jones, who had been reproductive physicians at Johns Hopkins and then went to England to train with the early pioneer of in vitro fertilization, and they came back to the United States wanting to open a clinic to help couples deal with fertility issues. It must have been a hard road for them to find a place that said yes because this seemed like science fiction at the time, but the Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk said: Open a fertility clinic here.

I was 23 years old then, and in my memory, there was something about it on the cover of *Newsweek*. I have gone back and realized, no, it was *Life* magazine. Because it seemed like science fiction. The science is so hard to even wrap your head around, and yet the Carrs read about this, and they started to travel—they were not people with much money—they started to travel to Norfolk and became patients of the two doctors, and their daughter Elizabeth was born in Virginia in 1981. She is 42 years old today. She is raising her own family today.

Elizabeth has been followed—wrap your head around this: What seemed like unimaginable science fiction in 1981, there are now, by best estimates, 12 million people walking this planet who were born by IVF, living their lives, being happy, raising families, contributing to their communities—12 million people. What could be more pro-life than in vitro fertilization? Twelve million people.

Elizabeth was interviewed 2 days ago by WBUR, a public radio and television station in Boston. Here is what she said. She talked about her life and what she is doing, and then she said this, very chillingly: "For the first time in my life, I feel like an endangered species."

"I feel like an endangered species."

I think many of us believed that the Dobbs decision—and we made predictions about it—was not fundamentally about pro-life; it was about control. It was about control of women's decisions with respect to abortion, with respect to contraception, and now with respect to deciding: If there is a path out of infertility, I can have a child. They want to control that too. That is what the Alabama Supreme Court has done, and that is what Dobbs was about, and that is why I am proud to sign on to the bill led by Senator Duckworth, the Access to Family Building Act. It is as simple a bill as can be. Healthcare providers have a right to provide fertility treatment, including in vitro services. Patients have a right to access fertility treatment, including in vitro fertilization services.

This is not a mandate. The enforcement provisions are provisions that allow a person or a healthcare provider to bring action against the State or governmental entity that tries to interfere with the right that they have. No State should interfere with this right—none.

This is a very simple bill that would enable the Elizabeth Carrs of the world to continue to be born and to continue to live happy and productive lives. I am so glad to be a cosponsor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. Warren. Madam President, just now, my friend and colleague Senator Tammy Duckworth, a longtime champion for IVF and a longtime champion for families, put forward an important bill that would ensure that families

have access to the services they need to have a baby, including IVF.

Since then, Republicans have blocked this bill to protect IVF. Now, remember that for all their talk about supporting IVF, when it came down to it right here in this Chamber, Republicans blocked IVF protection.

Republican opposition to IVF is terrifying. It makes me furious. But it should not surprise anyone. Donald Trump set the stage for the attacks on reproductive rights when he stacked the Supreme Court with ultraconservative Justices and overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Since then, Republicans have banned or severely restricted abortion in 24 States. They are trying to ban medication abortion nationwide. Now in Alabama, these extremists have virtually outlawed IVF, fertility care that gives people a chance to start a family.

This has always been about conservative politicians controlling women's bodies. This has been Donald Trump and the Republicans' plan all along. And the opposition to Senator DUCKWORTH's proposal today shows that Republicans are doubling down against reproductive freedom. They are coming for medication abortion, they are coming for birth control, and they are even coming for prenatal care. Make no mistake—we will fight them every step of the way.

I want to talk for just a minute about the people who are affected by these extremist policies: families in Alabama who have been wanting and praying that IVF can help them have a baby; women who have injected themselves with medication for weeks or months or even years; people who have spent their entire life savings trying to start a family, only now to see their hopes go down the drain; LGBTQ families who have spent years taking on every obstacle just for the chance to have a baby of their own, and for some, this was the last chance.

Now Republicans like Donald Trump and those in this Chamber might try to backtrack, might try to say that they are working to protect IVF, but it is all talk. Senate Republicans' actions today speak louder than any empty promises they make. Americans can tell when Republican politicians try to talk out of both sides of their mouths.

The American people want reproductive freedom. The American people support parents and those desperately trying to become parents.

So here is what comes next. Democrats have made clear that we stand with President Biden, with Vice President HARRIS, and with the millions of families affected by these heartless policies. We stand to protect reproductive rights for people all across this country. Together, we will fight for every person to have access to a safe abortion. We will fight for every family to have access to the services needed to have a baby. And we won't stop fighting until we secure the Congress that we need to protect reproductive freedom for everyone in this country.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of Senator DUCKWORTH's bill, and together we are going to get this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I want to say to my colleague from Illinois that I am so proud to be a supporter of your legislation that is going to provide the necessary protections for women in America to become mothers.

I think I mentioned this to my colleague at lunch a couple of days ago. Thirty years ago, Madame President, I wrote the Fertility Clinic Success Rate and Certification Act into law, and I would just say to my colleague, back then, we never thought—never thought—we would have to be standing today on the floor of the United States Senate debating this, as we are today. But we are here because a few days ago, Alabama's far-right Supreme Court handed down a first-of-its-kind ruling effectively making IVF impossible in Alabama.

We are seeing heartbreaking headlines about couples in that State being forced to rethink their plans to start a family through the IVF process that was just in effect 30 years ago. Some of these families have already spent tens of thousands of dollars and have undergone extensive medical treatment. Alabama's largest hospital system, the University of Alabama, has already paused its IVF services out of fear of prosecution.

The decision to conceive a child through IVF is rarely ever a parent's first choice. It is physically and emotionally painful, taxing and tedious, and it is expensive. But for countless couples dreaming of just one thing—just one thing—the chance to start a family, the legislation that my colleagues have been working on is absolutely essential.

The IVF journey, as we started talking about years ago, for so many parents is grueling, filled with countless doctor's appointments, agonizing waits for test results, and too often—too often—disappointment. The process is very delicate. Embryos can expire at any time during the process entirely by accident.

Under Alabama's new ruling, a doctor or a woman undergoing treatment could be charged with wrongful death if an embryo expires during the IVF transfer or implementation process. That means women who are already undergoing this incredibly painful process could also be handed a wrongful death lawsuit on top of everything else. That, in my view, Madame President and colleagues, is nothing short of criminalizing people who try to become parents.

Unfortunately, while this ruling is a shocking one, it is not all that surprising if you have been paying attention to the ongoing war that the far right is waging on women and families in America. For years, Republicans

laughed off the concerns about the vulnerability of abortion protections under *Roe*. Then they gutted it at the first opportunity.

Since the Dobbs decision, these same Republicans have tried again to convince the American people that there is no threat of a national abortion law and no threat to any other facet of reproductive freedom, like contraception—in short, no domino effect. Instead, the repeal of *Roe* has laid the groundwork for an onslaught of court rulings just like this one in Alabama, which explicitly references the Dobbs case. The gaslighting would be laughable if it weren't so terrifying. We have all become familiar with the adage: When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

At every opportunity, Republicans have moved mountains in order to restrict the constitutional rights and freedoms of women, making it impossible for them to live their lives free from government intrusion. It is pretty clear to me they are not going to rest until there is a politician in every bedroom and exam room in America.

In the wake of last week's ruling, I saw a lot of my Republican colleagues attempt to distance themselves from the decision, claiming that they unequivocally support IVF, but that is what they put in motion when they overturned *Roe v. Wade*. In fact, a year ago, Senate Democrats tried to pass Senator DUCKWORTH's bill. Senate Republicans blocked it. So now it is clear. If colleagues really do support IVF, as so many were spending the whole weekend claiming, then they are in luck. They are in luck because Senator DUCKWORTH is going to give them an opportunity to prove it by going on the record this evening and supporting this legislation.

As I say to my friend from Illinois, I was thinking of you when coming over here today because back 30 years ago, nobody ever thought we would have to be out here just trying to get started in making sure families had information. But what you are doing is so incredibly important, Senator DUCKWORTH, because with your legislation, in America, we will have the necessary protections for women to become mothers using IVF.

I urge my colleagues to strongly support the Duckworth legislation.

NOMINATION OF MELISSA DAMIAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm U.S. Magistrate Judge Melissa Damian to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

Judge Damian's deep ties to the Southern District of Florida and her experience in the courtroom, as a litigator and on the bench, have prepared her to serve as a U.S. District Judge.

A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Miami School of Law, Judge Damian clerked for the Hon. Ursula Ungaro on the Southern District before working in private practice. From 1999 to 2010, Judge Damian

was an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District, serving in the criminal division, civil division, and appellate division. In 2010, Judge Damian returned to private practice, representing plaintiffs in asbestos and tobacco product liability cases and later focusing on litigating complex business and commercial matters in State and Federal court, at both the trial and appellate levels. Over the course of her legal career, Judge Damian tried more than 30 cases to verdict. Since 2022, Judge Damian has served as a U.S. magistrate judge on the Southern District. She has presided over two trials that went to verdict or final judgment and has issued approximately 170 written opinions and substantive orders.

Judge Damian has the strong support from her home State Senators, Mr. RUBIO and Mr. SCOTT. In addition, she was unanimously rated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association. I urge my colleagues to support Judge Damian's nomination.

VOTE ON DAMIAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Damian nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 77, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 58 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Barrasso	Graham	Reed
Bennet	Grassley	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Brown	Hirono	Rubio
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Butler	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	Kelly	Schumer
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cardin	King	Shaheen
Carper	Lee	Stabenow
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Cassidy	Lummis	Tillis
Collins	Manchin	Van Hollen
Coons	Markey	Vance
Cornyn	McConnell	Warner
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warnock
Cotton	Merkley	Warren
Cramer	Moran	Welch
Cruz	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Murphy	Wicker
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Ernst	Ossoff	Young
Fetterman	Padilla	

NAYS—20

Blackburn	Fischer	Lankford
Braun	Hagerty	Marshall
Britt	Hawley	Mullin
Crapo	Hoeven	Paul
Daines	Johnson	

Risch	Scott (SC)	Thune
Schmitt	Sullivan	Tuberville

NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Sinema	Smith
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The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 514, Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Alex Padilla, John W. Hickenlooper, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher Murphy, Jack Reed, Margaret Wood Hassan, Thomas R. Carper, Michael F. Bennet, Maria Cantwell, Richard Blumenthal, Peter Welch, Sheldon Whitehouse, Chris Van Hollen.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury, 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 Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) would have voted "nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Cantwell	Coons
Bennet	Cardin	Cortez Masto
Blumenthal	Carper	Duckworth
Booker	Casey	Durbin
Brown	Cassidy	Fetterman
Butler	Collins	Gillibrand

Hassan	Murray	Stabenow
Heinrich	Ossoff	Tester
Hickenlooper	Padilla	Tillis
Hirono	Peters	Van Hollen
Kaine	Reed	Warner
Kelly	Romney	Warnock
King	Rosen	Warren
Lujan	Rounds	Welch
Markey	Schatz	Whitehouse
Menendez	Schumer	Wyden
Merkley	Shaheen	
Murphy	Sinema	

NAYS—42

Barrasso	Fischer	Mullin
Blackburn	Graham	Murkowski
Boozman	Grassley	Paul
Braun	Hagerty	Ricketts
Britt	Hawley	Risch
Budd	Hoeven	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Vance
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—6

Klobuchar	Marshall	Smith
Manchin	Sanders	Tuberville

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The yeas are 52, the nays are 42. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRIBUTE TO MARTINA MCLENNAN

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, Ann Bancroft, the first woman to reach both the North and South Poles, said:

It looks like I do these journeys alone, but it takes great support from people in the wings pushing you along these journeys and helping you.

The same can be said of us here in the U.S. Senate. It might look like Senators here in this Chamber lead and legislate alone; but, in fact, we are only able to do our work with support of the people in the wings—our dedicated and our tireless staff.

Tonight, I am here to bid farewell to one of the Senate's most dedicated staffers and one of the longest serving members of Team Merkley, my communications director Martina McLennan.

Martina, like Ann Bancroft, is a daughter of Minnesota. Martina, like Ann Bancroft, then connected with Oregon—Ann by attending the University of Oregon, and Martina, by serving the people of Oregon for the last 13 years.

She joined our communications team in 2011. Back then, President Obama and I were still in our first terms. Social media was still pretty new. Our world and our media landscape have, in fact, changed a lot since then.

Along the way, Martina has done every possible role in communications: writing speeches, drafting press releases, creating social media content,

crafting op-eds, jotting talking points, compiling newsletters, pitching reporters on both coasts, and reading and translating my handwriting, which may have been the most difficult task of all because I can't read it 5 minutes after the ink dries—all the while thoughtfully advising and gently guiding me.

She has been by my side through some of the biggest and most challenging moments of the time that I have been here in the Senate: helping secure more funding for the U.S. Forest Service to fight wildfires in 2012; supporting Janet Yellen, the first woman to chair the Federal Reserve; ensuring that regulators actually implemented our stronger Volcker rule in 2013; mourning with the citizens of Roseburg, OR, after the Umpqua Community College shooting in 2015; ensuring that we led the resistance at rallies and protests following President Trump's election in 2016; preparing and staffing me through the night during my 15-hour-and-27-minute marathon speech against Neil Gorsuch's Supreme Court nomination in 2017; traveling to the southern border with me in 2018 to show the world how the Trump administration was ripping immigrant children out of their parents' arms; writing, editing, and annotating our office's comprehensive 80-page report on the Trump administration's attacks on immigration and asylum in 2019; reorienting our entire communications operation to a virtual operation when the pandemic hit; supporting Oregon communities after the Labor Day wildfires in 2020; cleaning up my hideaway after it was ransacked by insurrectionists on January 6, 2021; and, through it all, finally, for filling in for long stretches when we were down a digital director or speechwriter or a deputy press secretary.

As one of our team members put it, "She's unstoppable."

And my staff talk about how Martina, in addition to her communication talents, is always the first to welcome and support a new member of our team, whether that member is in Washington, DC, or in Oregon.

In 2017, the first year of the Trump administration, the turnout of our townhalls was extraordinary, including one townhall where more than 3,000 people showed up. So Martina flew out from DC to support our new Oregon team with her years of experience, wisdom, and lightning-quick wit.

And every year, when Senate staff dress up their dogs in Halloween costumes for Senator TILLIS's annual "Bipawtisan" puppy parade through the atrium of the Hart Office Building, Martina goes down to take the pictures and share the joy with our team on both coasts.

As one of our former Oregon team members put it:

I looked forward to each Halloween because Martina would send [those] pictures, keeping stateside staff informed about the best day of the year in [Washington], DC.

I am not sure what it says about our work here when the best day is when there is a puppy parade.

She is also a brilliant writer. One of our team conservatively estimates that she has written millions of words for our office, putting dry policy language into punchy, plain English with stunning speed and navigating thorny political issues with eloquence and grace.

One of her longtime colleagues said:

I always liken her to a piano virtuoso taking their seat in a concert hall and banging out Mozart or Rachmaninoff and making it look effortless while I struggled just to keep up.

Her colleagues will line up to tell you that, working every day in the chaos of the Senate, Martina is "refreshingly calm," "thoughtful," "kind," and an "encyclopedic fountain of knowledge," who is "rarely seen without a smile or funny remark, even in the most stressful of times."

When she speaks in a meeting, people listen. I listen. She was one of the very first in our office to speak about the need for what has become our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee.

Generations of our staff have stories about her quiet gestures of kindness and support that have meant so much to so many over so many years. That is especially true of her communications team, past and present, some of whom have been able to join us tonight.

Even in the toughest moments, she is always there to laugh and commiserate while still delivering the most professional and effective communications operation in the Senate. Whether it has been struggling through late-night shutdown shenanigans while she and another colleague were battling the flu, to encouraging new staff members to offer creative ideas even if the office had never tried anything like that action before, she has always been there for her team.

As one said:

I'm still in major denial. I have never felt like I was more a part of a team than here, and a huge part of that is Martina.

Another said:

It's hard for me to put into words the difference Martina has made in my life as she has continued to mentor and guide me—always a text message or email away with invaluable insights.

Yet another colleague summed it up by saying:

I . . . feel constantly lucky to have worked with, for, and alongside Martina. I always admired and respected the way she approached her work—with humility, grace, and humor—and more than a little bit of sarcasm.

And I consider myself extraordinarily fortunate to have not only been able to call her a colleague but to be able to continue to call her a very dear friend.

I couldn't have said that better myself.

Next week, for the first time in 13 years, I will attend the State of the Union Address without Martina by my side. For more than a decade, we have elbowed our way through the television

cameras in crowded Statuary Hall, rushing from interview to interview late into the night. I am going to miss her next week.

Then there are those thousands of floor charts and hundreds of interviews that have occurred over more than two terms in the Senate.

Tonight, Martina is here, staffing me on the Senate floor for the last time.

At the beginning of my remarks, I quoted Ann Bancroft, who went on to say the following:

Stay curious, keep learning, and keep experiencing. Life is wild and wonderful, and it's good to challenge yourself now and then.

Ann went on to say:

I always say that my best advice is to "get lost"—because . . . that's when the good life stories are created, and you will always find your way back.

Well, soon, Martina will be following Ann Bancroft's advice as she sets off for Southern California and the start of the Pacific Crest Trail, which she will follow north, all the way to Canada, with Ann Bancroft's words in her ears, saying:

It's good to challenge yourself now and then.

And her best advice is to "get lost" as "that's when good life stories are created, and you will . . . find your way back."

Well, I look forward to her stopping on the Pacific Crest Trail in Oregon and saying hello.

For now, though, I will simply say it is with deep gratitude that Team Merkley and I thank Martina McLennan for her many years of service to the U.S. Senate and to the people of Oregon. We toast her tonight with an appropriate saying: "Happy trails."

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 516, Aprille Joy Ericsson, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Aprille Joy Ericsson, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. (New Position)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ericsson nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, with the exception of Col. Ralph J. Rizzo, Jr., and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Calendar Nos. 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, with the exception of Col. Ralph J. Rizzo, Jr., and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc, as follows:

NOMINATIONS [NEW REPORTS] IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be admiral

Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, Jr.

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Frank L. Bradfield, III
Brig. Gen. Howard T. Clark, III
Brig. Gen. Robert W. Claude
Brig. Gen. Melissa A. Coburn
Brig. Gen. William D. Murphy
Brig. Gen. Dana N. Nelson
Brig. Gen. David A. Piffarerio
Brig. Gen. Regina A. Sabric
Brig. Gen. Mark V. Slominski

IN THE ARMY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. James D. Burk
Col. Andrew L. Landers
Col. Bill A. Soliz
Col. Yolonda R. Summons

The following named Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Craig M. Hunter

The following named Army National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12211:

To be brigadier general

Col. Michael K. Moreni

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Vivek Kshetrapal

The following named officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Carlos E. Gorbea

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment to the grade indicated in the United States Marine Corps under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Nick I. Brown
Col. Shannon M. Brown
Col. Tamara L. Campbell
Col. James W. Lively
Col. Samuel L. Meyer
Col. Michael R. Nakonieczny
Col. Douglas C. Sanders
Col. Matthew W. Tracy

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1077 AIR FORCE nominations (56) beginning SHELLEY L. ALDRICH, and ending HEATH D. WRIGHT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 19, 2023.

PN1079 AIR FORCE nominations (15) beginning CARL P. BHEND, and ending CHRISTOPHER M. WOLBERT, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 19, 2023.

PN1139 AIR FORCE nomination of Mauricio De Castro Pretelt, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 6, 2023.

PN1271 AIR FORCE nominations (43) beginning JULIA M. BELL, and ending RYAN K. ZARNOWSKI, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1273 AIR FORCE nominations (303) beginning CHERYLENE S. ABALOS, and ending CHENG ZENG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1276 AIR FORCE nominations (30) beginning DAVID Y. AHN, and ending JOHN M. VANN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1277 AIR FORCE nominations (143) beginning ADAM H. ALTMAN, and ending JASON M. ZHAO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

PN1385 AIR FORCE nomination of Heidi L. Clark, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1386 AIR FORCE nomination of Christopher C. Lazidis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1418 AIR FORCE nomination of Agatha C. Graves, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1419 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning MARK D. JOHNSON, and ending JOHN PAUL F. MINTZ, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

IN THE ARMY

PN1387 ARMY nomination of Sara V. Turinsky, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 25, 2024.

PN1390 ARMY nominations (106) beginning ALAN L. ADKISSON, and ending 002668953, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1420 ARMY nomination Brandon D. Howard, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1421 ARMY nomination of Thomas P. Gallagher, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1422 ARMY nomination of Jeffrey A. Banks, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

PN1423 ARMY nomination of Jonathan C. Young, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1280 MARINE CORPS nominations (7) beginning SEAN P. DILLON, and ending JOSHUA B. SIMPSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 8, 2024.

IN THE NAVY

PN1303 MARINE CORPS nomination of Kenneth J. Schneider, Jr., which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 10, 2024.

IN THE NAVY

PN1393 NAVY nomination of Rockford D. Burton, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 25, 2024.

PN1424 NAVY nomination of Donny L. James, II, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 6, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO TOM SKILLING

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there are many things that Chicagoans disagree on: deep-dish or tavern style, Cubs or Sox, gardiniera or sweet peppers. But one thing that Chicagoans have in common? They get their weather from Tom Skilling. For 45 years, Tom has been the authoritative source on all things weather in Chicago. And after nearly five decades of forecasting snow, sleet, sun, and storms, today was his last day on air.

A native of Aurora, Tom began his career at the almost unbelievable age of 14. He held a series of radio and television jobs throughout Illinois and then studied meteorology and journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In August 1978, Tom joined WGN, and it is not hyperbole to say Chicago's weather forecasts have never been the same since.

As a meteorologist, Tom gave weather forecasts to his viewers. But he was

so much more than just a “weather-man.” Tom was a storm chaser—having famously chased and been chased by a tornado. He was an awestruck weather observer—being overcome by emotion while watching a total solar eclipse in Carbondale in August 2017. He was a comedian—bringing viewers belly laughs with his viral “Tom Freakin’ Skilling” skit. And perhaps most importantly, he was an educator—explaining to viewers the “why” behind the weather.

In fact, Tom’s focus on the science of climate change and weather patterns only grew as his career did. In addition to broadcasting his weather forecasts on WGN News, Tom also hosted nearly 40 years of severe weather seminars at Fermilab and penned a Chicago Tribune column answering weather-related questions. In both, Tom used his platform to educate his audience in a down to earth and understandable manner.

Tom’s legendary career has earned him a reputation for setting the gold standard in television weather, garnered him a cult-like following, and afforded him a permanent place in Chicagoans’ living rooms. Unsurprisingly, he has been showered with countless accolades for his work, winning multiple Emmy Awards from the Chicago/Midwest chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and receiving several honorary degrees. He deserves each and every one.

I had the privilege of sharing the stage with Tom in the summer of 2019 at a forum to discuss climate change with U.S. Representatives BILL FOSTER and SEAN CASTEN. I can tell you, not a single Member of Congress on that stage was under the illusion that they were the main attraction. People were there for Tom.

Tom, congratulations on a truly remarkable career. From choosing how many layers to wear in the morning to knowing when the break in the snow is coming so we can shovel our parking spots, I don’t quite know how we will weather the storm of life without your valuable insights. You are nothing short of a Chicago institution. And it is only fitting that you will live on in the weather world, in the form of a Chicago snowplow named “Skilling It” in your honor. Short of having you on air to warn us of snow, having a Tom Skilling snowplow keeping the streets safe is a close second.

But, luckily, even in your absence, we will not have to predict the weather for ourselves. Congratulations to your successor, Demetrius Ivory, on being named as WGN’s new chief meteorologist. Though Demetrius certainly has large shoes to fill, there are no better footsteps to follow in than yours. I wish him luck in his new role.

Tom, thank you for all the warmth you brought into our homes during even the coldest of Chicago winters. Wishing you sunny days during this next, well-deserved chapter of your life.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee’s intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION AGENCY, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-22, concerning the Army’s proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Germany for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$281 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCHE,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-22

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Germany.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:
Major Defense Equipment* \$0.
Other \$281 million.
Total \$281 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):
None.

Non-MDE: Included are AN/PRC-117 radios; AN/PRC-160 radios; spare and repair parts; support equipment; tools and test equipment; diagnostic equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (GY-B-XBU, GY-B-XBV, GY-B-XBW, GY-B-XBX).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: February 27, 2024.

* As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Germany—High-Frequency, Very-High Frequency, and Ultra-High Frequency Radios

The Government of Germany has requested to buy AN/PRC-117 radios; AN/PRC-160 radios; spare and repair parts; support equipment; tools and test equipment; diagnostic equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; U.S. Government and contractor technical assistance; technical and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$281 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the United States by improving the security of a NATO Ally that is an important force for political and economic stability in Europe.

The proposed sale will improve interoperability between Germany and other NATO military forces and will increase secure communications effectiveness to help combat current and future threats. Germany will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be L3Harris Global Communications, Inc., Rochester, NY. There are no known offset agreements in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Germany.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-22

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:
1. The AN/PRC-117 and AN/PRC-160 radios and their accessories are used to transmit and receive voice and data information using Type-1 encryption.

2. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

3. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures or equivalent systems which might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a system with similar or advanced capabilities.

4. A determination has been made that Germany can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

5. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to Germany.

SFRC MEETING MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Cardin.

From: Charlotte Oldham-Moore, Molly Barlow, Stephanie Oviedo.

Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

Re: Meeting with ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger.

Meeting Purpose: On Thursday, February 29 at 11:30AM in SH-509, YOU will have a meeting with Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Charlotte will staff. Ms. Spoljaric would like to discuss the ICRC’s operations in Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, and

Sudan as well as the prospects for passage of U.S. supplemental funding.

BLC OBJECTIVES

Express your commitment to upholding international humanitarian law and addressing global humanitarian crises, including by passing the supplemental funding.

[Israel/Gaza point to be provided by Team MENA]

BLC MESSAGE & SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Israel and Gaza:
[questions and talking points to follow from Team MENA]

Kidnapped Ukrainian Children: I know that the ICRC has a unique perspective as one of the few interlocutors that talks to both sides and with the ability to operate in occupied territories in Ukraine as well as within the Russian Federation.

How do you engage with the Russian government on questions of kidnapped children? Have you found more success engaging with certain Russian agencies than others?

How does the ICC arrest warrant for Putin and his Commissioner for Children's Rights influence the Russian response to engagement on kidnapped children? Is there additional leverage that the international community could bring to bear to help you succeed in your mission of reuniting families?

War Crimes and Atrocities in Ukraine:

Can you discuss the nature of war crimes and atrocities being committed in occupied territories now? Is there additional engagement or resources from the international community necessary to help support victims and prevent future such atrocities and war crimes?

Sudan: There has been bipartisan and bicameral support for increasing U.S. leadership to resolve the horrific crisis in Sudan. I was pleased to see the Administration name a Special Envoy for Sudan, which I expect to put us in a much better position to exert diplomatic pressure to bring about a ceasefire. In addition to increasing our diplomatic efforts, we need greater resources to address the humanitarian catastrophe.

Where can the U.S. do more to support the work of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations in Sudan?

What is your impression of the effectiveness of U.S. mediation efforts?

Armenia: USAID has committed more than \$4 million in additional humanitarian assistance to people displaced by Azerbaijan's military operation in Nagorno Karabakh. But with over 74,000 refugees, I know that the needs are great.

Has the international response been sufficient to support the vulnerable population from Karabakh forced to leave their entire lives behind?

Humanitarian Funding: As you know, the Senate's bill for supplemental funding, which includes more than \$9 billion for humanitarian assistance, is still under consideration in the House. This funding is critical to addressing the massive shortfall between available assistance and growing needs.

Given the growing humanitarian needs, how can Congress more effectively assist the ICRC and push other countries—including partners that have traditionally not provided substantial foreign assistance—to step up to the plate?

BACKGROUND

Gaza: In response to the, October 7 attacks, the ICRC scaled up its humanitarian response in Israel and Gaza. As part of this effort, the ICRC has actively advocated for the release of all hostages immediately and unconditionally. Concurrently, the ICRC has asked to visit the hostages, to check on their conditions, to deliver medical care, and to facilitate communication with their families.

When political agreements allowed hostages to be released, the ICRC played the role of neutral intermediary to facilitate the release, transfer, and return of 109 hostages from Gaza to their families. ICRC also facilitated the release, transfer and return of 154 Palestinian detainees from Israeli places of detention to their families. The ICRC works closely with its partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and continues to work closely with local service-providers, communities and other partners on the ground.

Ukraine: With over 800 staff working in eight locations, Ukraine is the ICRC's largest operation in 2024. Working alongside partners from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the ICRC has provided humanitarian assistance to over 11.6 million people since February 2022. ICRC staff have visited almost 2,400 prisoners of war on both sides, sharing news and updates directly with thousands of families. The ICRC continues to push for access to all prisoners of war through bilateral dialogue and to advocate for the reunification of kidnapped Ukrainian children with their families.

Sudan: The ICRC's work in Sudan, in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS), includes promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), supporting hospitals and health facilities with equipment and supplies, working with local water authorities on improving people's access to clean water and supporting the authorities in providing rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. The ICRC is helping families separated by conflict or displacement to keep in touch with their loved ones, and has facilitated the release of detainees upon request of the parties. Since the beginning of the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023, the ICRC has acted as a neutral intermediary between parties to the conflict and conducted various activities to protect and assist those affected by the consequences of the crisis.

ICRC Funding: The ICRC is appealing for \$2.34 billion in 2024, a 13% cut from the previous year's appeal. One quarter of the ICRC's total funding comes from the United States. The Senate-passed supplemental included \$3.5 billion in the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account, which includes funding for the ICRC.

Biography: Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger has been ICRC President since October 2022. From 2018 to 2022, she served as the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Program (UNDP), and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS. Prior to joining the UN, Ms. Spoljaric had many years of distinguished service with the Swiss Diplomatic Corps, where she served as Ambassador and Head of the United Nations and International Organizations Division, and as Counsellor and Head of the Political Team at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN. From 2010–2012, Ms. Spoljaric was seconded to the Office of the Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as Senior Advisor covering organizational development, management reforms, and external relations. Ms. Spoljaric studied Philosophy, Economics and International Law at the Universities of Basel and Geneva and holds a master's degree.

REMEMBERING PATSY MINK

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, next month, the U.S. Mint will launch a

quarter featuring the late-Congresswoman Patsy Takemoto Mink as part of its American Women Quarters Program, which celebrates women who have made significant contributions to our country.

Congresswoman Mink, who represented Hawaii from 1965 to 1977 and 1990 to 2002, was a tireless advocate for gender and racial equality, and I am proud to have sent the letter recommending her inclusion in this program. Mrs. Mink's quarter will soon be in circulation alongside Edith Kanakaole's, another noteworthy woman from Hawaii who was honored by the American Women Quarters Program last year.

Mrs. Mink can be defined by her incredible resiliency and drive in the face of injustice. Born on December 6, 1927, in Paia, Maui, she attended Maui High School and received a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. After being denied admission to medical school because of her gender, Mrs. Mink chose to pursue a law degree and devoted her life to fighting for civil rights.

Over the following decades, her life was marked by an impressive series of firsts: She was the first Japanese American woman to practice law in Hawaii; the first woman elected to Hawaii's territorial legislature; and the first woman of color and first Asian American woman to serve in Congress.

At each stage in her career, Mrs. Mink fought against prejudice and advocated for greater opportunities for women. While in Congress, she coauthored the Title IX amendment of the Higher Education Act of 1972 (Title IX). This landmark law, comprised of only 37 words, ensured that no person would be denied access to any federally funded education program on the basis of sex. Title IX, coupled with Mrs. Mink's Women's Educational Equity Act of 1974, gave women and girls unprecedented access to educational and athletic opportunities.

Mrs. Mink also advocated for early childhood education, pushed for greater government transparency, and cocreated the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus—CAPAC—to promote the well-being of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community.

After Mrs. Mink's passing on September 28, 2002, Mrs. Mink was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame and awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our Nation's highest civilian award. Today, Mrs. Mink's legacy continues on through the Patsy Takemoto Mink Foundation, led by Mrs. Mink's daughter Dr. Gwendolyn Mink, which supports educational access for low-income women and children. In 2022, 50 years after the passage of Title IX, we also honored Mrs. Mink's work by hanging her portrait in the U.S. Capitol, where it is now displayed directly across from the portrait of Shirley Chisholm, another trailblazer in her own right.

Congress has also renamed the Title IX amendment of the Higher Education

Act as the “Pasty T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act.” This is a fitting tribute to Mrs. Mink, whose work continues to benefit women, girls, and LGBTQ students today. I, like many other women, stand on the shoulders of Mrs. Mink, and I am lucky to have considered her a dear friend.

Thank you, Congresswoman Mink, for all your contributions to our State and this Nation.

TRIBUTE TO ADDISON HATLEY

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Addison for her hard work as an intern in the Senate Republican conference. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Addison is a native of Virginia. She is currently a junior at the Madeira School in McLean, VA. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Addison for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Stringer, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT EXPANDS THE SCOPE OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13873 OF MAY 15, 2019 (SECURING THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES SUPPLY CHAIN), AND FURTHER ADDRESSED WITH ADDITIONAL MEASURES IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 14034 OF JUNE 9, 2021 (PROTECTING AMERICANS' SENSITIVE DATA FROM FOREIGN ADVERSARIES) PM—39

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message

from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and further addressed with additional measures in Executive Order 14034 of June 9, 2021 (Protecting Americans' Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries).

The continuing effort of certain countries of concern to access Americans' sensitive personal data and United States Government-related data constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Access to Americans' bulk sensitive personal data or United States Government-related data increases the ability of countries of concern to engage in a wide range of malicious activities, including espionage, influence, kinetic, or cyber operations, or to identify other potential strategic advantages over the United States.

To address this threat and to take further steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873, the order authorizes the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to issue, subject to public notice and comment, regulations to prohibit or otherwise restrict the large-scale transfer of Americans' personal data to countries of concern and to provide safeguards around other activities that can give those countries access to sensitive data. Section 2(b) of the order authorizes the Attorney General, in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA, as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of the order.

In addition, section 2(d) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, in coordination with the Attorney General and in consultation with the heads of relevant agencies, to propose, seek public comment on, and publish security requirements that address the unacceptable risk posed by restricted transactions, as identified by the Attorney General. Section 2(e) of the order authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General,

to take such actions, including promulgating rules, regulations, standards, and requirements; issuing interpretive guidance; and employing all other powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes described in section 2(d) of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 28, 2024.

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-3613. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “National Bank Community Development Investments” (RIN1557-AF19) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3614. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold” (RIN1557-AF23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3615. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Rules of Practice and Procedure” (RIN1557-AE33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3616. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Inflation Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties” received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 2, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3617. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Removals from the Unverified List” (RIN0694-AJ52) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3618. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Additions of Entities to the Entity List” (RIN0694-AJ51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3619. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Implementation of Additional Sanctions Against Russia and Belarus Under the Export Administration Regulations and Refinements to Existing Controls” (RIN0694-AJ48) received in the

Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3620. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Community Reinvestment Act” (RIN1557-AF15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3621. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval and Operating Permit Program Approval; Connecticut; Revision to Definitions” (FRL No. 11161-02-R1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3622. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “New Source Performance Standards Review for Steel Plants: Electric Arc Furnaces and Argon-Oxygen Decarburization Vessels: Corrections” (FRL No. 8150.1-03-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3623. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Fees for the Administration of the Toxic Substances Control Act” (FRL No. 7911-05-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3624. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Air Plan Approval; California; California Air Resources Board; Volatile Organic Compounds” (FRL No. 11425-03-R9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3625. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Reconsideration of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter” (FRL No. 8635-02-OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2024; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3626. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Fiscal Year 2020 Report to Congress on Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Activities—Community Economic Development and Rural Community Development Programs”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3627. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Grant Program”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3628. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2020”; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3629. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records” (RIN0945-AA16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 8, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3630. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing Benefits” received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3631. A communication from the Director, Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, Secretary of Labor’s response to the Office of the Ombudsman’s 2022 Annual Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3632. A communication from the Regulatory Policy Analyst, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Food Additives Permitted in Feed and Drinking Water of Animals; Chromium Propionate” (Docket No. FDA-2023-F-5500) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3633. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Older Americans Act: Grants to State and Community Programs on Aging; Grants to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Grantees for Supportive, Nutrition, and Caregiver Services; Grants for Supportive and Nutritional Services to Older Hawaiian Natives; and Alotments for Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities” (RIN0985-AA17) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 5, 2024; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3634. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-380, “Reverse Mortgage Insurance and Tax Payment Program Second Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3635. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-381, “Fairness in Renting Notice Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3636. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-382, “Home Purchase Assistance Program Protection Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3637. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-395, “Certificate of Assurance Moratorium Second Extension Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3638. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Colum-

bia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-396, “Medical Cannabis Program Enforcement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3639. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-397, “School Improvement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3640. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-398, “Protecting Adjacent and Adjoining Property Owners from Construction Damage Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3641. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-399, “Housing in Downtown Tax Abatement Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3642. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 25-400, “Protecting Consumers from Unjust Debt Collection Practices Technical Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2024”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3643. A communication from the Comptroller General of the United States, Government Accountability Office, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Office’s audit of the United States government’s fiscal years 2023 and 2022 consolidated financial statements; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3644. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “Statistical Programs of the United States Government: Fiscal Years 2021/2022”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3645. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled “2020–2021–2022 Report to Congress on the Benefits and Costs of Federal Regulations and Agency Compliance with the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act”; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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 Mr. CASEY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 3819. A bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to issue regulations to establish shrinkflation as an unfair or deceptive act or practice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 3820. A bill to modernize diplomatic security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 3821. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the payment method for oxygen and oxygen related equipment, supplies, and services, to increase beneficiary access to oxygen and oxygen related equipment, supplies, and services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 3822. A bill to designate the medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in West Palm Beach, Florida, as the "Thomas H. Corey VA Medical Center"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 3823. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat spaceports like airports for purposes of exempt facility bond rules; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 3824. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to establish online and delivery standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. ROMNEY:

S. 3825. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to establish a State innovation demonstration authority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. SINEMA):

S. 3826. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to revise the treatment of certain resilience actions and natural disasters, to limit the issuance of new standards for criteria pollutants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 3827. A bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to require the Assistant Secretary for Aging to award grants to States, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to create or implement Multisector Plans for Aging and Aging with a Disability, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KING, and Mr. REED):

S. 3828. A bill to prohibit the export of liquefied natural gas and petroleum products to certain countries; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 3829. A bill to address actions for applications to export liquefied natural gas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 3830. A bill to authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 3831. A bill to increase duties imposed with respect to autos imported into the United States that originate in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. REED, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KING, Mr.

WARNER, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KELLY):

S. Res. 567. A resolution recognizing the seriousness of widespread health care worker burnout in the United States and the need to strengthen health workforce well-being, and expressing support for the designation of March 18, 2024, as the inaugural "Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KING, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. BRAUN):

S. Res. 568. A resolution designating the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as "Public Schools Week"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 448

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 448, a bill to codify the existing Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 547

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 547, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 683

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 683, a bill to modify the boundary of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument to include certain Federal land in Lake County, California, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual report on suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1172

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1172, a bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished to veterans in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1442

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1442, a bill to amend the Community Development Banking and

Financial Institutions Act of 1994 to adjust for inflation the maximum amount of assistance provided by the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1462

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1462, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 and provisions relating to the carrying of concealed weapons by law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 1558

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1558, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the brave women who served in World War II as members of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and U.S. Navy Nurse Corps.

S. 1925

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1925, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to improve the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental health issues among public safety officers, and for other purposes.

S. 2079

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2079, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require the label of a drug intended for human use to identify each ingredient in such drug that is, or is derived directly or indirectly from, a major food allergen or a gluten-containing grain, and for other purposes.

S. 2242

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2242, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to make available for sale renewable fuel credits, and for other purposes.

S. 2307

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to support and strengthen the fighter aircraft capabilities of the Air Force, and for other purposes.

S. 2462

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 2462, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the 7-year recovery period for motorsports entertainment complexes.

S. 2477

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2477, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide pharmacy payment of certain services.

S. 2581

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2581, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 2786

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2786, a bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to include the provision of tree nuts under the seniors farmers' market nutrition program, and for other purposes.

S. 2801

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2801, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 2860

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2860, a bill to create protections for financial institutions that provide financial services to State-sanctioned marijuana businesses and service providers for such businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 2861

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2861, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Billie Jean King, an American icon, in recognition of a remarkable life devoted to championing equal rights for all, in sports and in society.

S. 3047

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3047, a bill to award payments to employees of Air America who provided support to the United States from 1950 to 1976, and for other purposes.

S. 3068

At the request of Mr. BRAUN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) were added as cosponsors of S. 3068, a bill to require each enterprise to include on the Uniform Residential Loan Application a disclaimer to increase

awareness of the direct and guaranteed home loan programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3331

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3331, a bill to establish an intermodal transportation infrastructure pilot program, and for other purposes.

S. 3488

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3488, a bill to amend title 51, United States Code, to provide for a NASA public-private talent program, and for other purposes.

S. 3606

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3606, a bill to reauthorize the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, and for other purposes.

S. 3612

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3612, a bill to prohibit the limitation of access to assisted reproductive technology, and all medical care surrounding such technology.

S. 3627

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 3627, a bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to require a certain efficiency level for certain distribution transformers, and for other purposes.

S. 3636

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3636, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish a pilot program to identify and refer veterans for potential employment with Federal land management agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 3679

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 3679, a bill to reauthorize the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3694

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. BUTLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3694, a bill to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit the taking, importation, exportation, and breeding of certain cetaceans for public display, and for other purposes.

S. 3775

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr.

MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3775, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act, and for other purposes.

S. 3801

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3801, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit the Federal Reserve banks from offering certain products or services directly to an individual, to prohibit the use of central bank digital currency for monetary policy, and for other purposes.

S. 3804

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3804, a bill to designate the area of Sumner Row between 16th Street Northwest and L Street Northwest in Washington, District of Columbia, as "Alexi Navalny Way".

S. 3812

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3812, a bill to provide firearm licenses an opportunity to correct statutory and regulatory violations, and for other purposes.

S. 3816

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3816, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for lifelong learning accounts, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 566

At the request of Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 566, a resolution designating September 2024 as "National Cholesterol Education Month" and September 30, 2024, as "LDL-C Awareness Day".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 3830. A bill to authorize the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act or LIHWAP Establishment Act. This legislation would establish the first-ever permanent, national water assistance program to help low-income households pay their water bills.

In 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress provided \$1.1 billion of critical assistance through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and American Rescue Plan of 2021 to low-income households struggling to pay water and sewer bills. Since then,

LIHWAP has helped 1.4 million households across the country maintain or restore access to water service. However, LIHWAP was created as an emergency program and expired at the end of fiscal year 2023.

Recognizing the importance of Federal water assistance, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act, which directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, to create a Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program and report to Congress on the results of the pilot.

The LIHWAP Establishment Act would provide the necessary congressional authorization for a permanent LIHWAP beyond the COVID-19 emergency.

The LIHWAP Establishment Act would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Administrator of the EPA, to establish a permanent low-income water assistance program. Just as the program did during the pandemic, LIHWAP would award grants to States, territories, and Tribes to assist low-income households in paying for drinking water or wastewater services.

The bill would also empower nonprofit organizations to assist small, rural, underserved, and Tribal water systems apply for and access LIHWAP funding, as well as direct HHS to provide technical assistance to help agencies and water systems set up data sharing agreements to streamline eligibility requirements for low-income households.

In addition, the bill would transfer authority for the program from HHS to the EPA upon completion of the EPA's Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program.

Safeguarding water affordability for all Americans remains critical as household water and sewer bills rise faster than electric bills and inflation. Families continue to struggle to pay their water bills on time, and low-income communities suffer from disproportionate vulnerabilities affecting their access to clean, affordable water services.

Like heat and nutrition, which already have established Federal assistance programs, water is a vital and fundamental resource for public health and economic prosperity in all communities across the country. A permanent LIHWAP ensures we can continue to provide the necessary water assistance to low-income households at risk of losing access.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the LIHWAP Establishment Act as quickly as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 567—RECOGNIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF WIDESPREAD HEALTH CARE WORKER BURNOUT IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 18, 2024, AS THE INAUGURAL ‘HEALTH WORKFORCE WELL-BEING DAY OF AWARENESS’

Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. REED, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. KING, Mr. WARNER, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. KELLY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 567

Whereas the capacity and well-being of the United States health workforce has been burdened for decades by an epidemic of burnout, and this trend has been exacerbated in recent years;

Whereas burnout can have wide-ranging consequences for individual health care workers, including occupational injury, risk of depression and suicide, lower morale and productivity, absenteeism, and possible deleterious impact on patient care;

Whereas 50 percent of health care workers reported burnout in 2020;

Whereas, in 2020, 44 percent of nurses experienced physical violence and 68 percent experienced verbal abuse;

Whereas, in 2020, 69 percent of physicians experienced colloquial depression, 20 percent experienced clinical depression, and 13 percent had thoughts of suicide;

Whereas physicians, particularly female physicians, are more likely than the general population to die by suicide, and United States physicians are more likely to die by suicide than physicians in other nations;

Whereas rates of burnout have serious consequences for the capacity of the United States health system, particularly in regard to employee retention and recruitment;

Whereas, in 2023, job quitting among health care and social assistance workers was 9.2 percent higher than in February 2020;

Whereas approximately 40 percent of United States health care workers plan to leave their current role within the next 5 years;

Whereas the average operating margin for hospitals in the United States was reduced by 130 percent between 2019 and 2020, driven in part by persistent labor shortages;

Whereas staffing shortages and impacts of burnout on the mental health and productivity of health care workers raise serious concerns about quality of care and patient safety;

Whereas the decreased capacity of the United States health system constitutes both a serious public health concern and a challenge to economic security;

Whereas, in 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health launched the Health Worker Mental Health Initiative, which aims to raise awareness of health workers' mental health issues and improve trainings and resources to address the mental health of health workers;

Whereas, in 2022, Congress enacted the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (42 U.S.C. 294s et seq.), which estab-

lished grants and required other activities to improve mental and behavioral health among health care providers;

Whereas, in 2022, the Office of the Surgeon General published an Advisory on Addressing Health Worker Burnout to call attention to the health worker burnout crisis and to the urgent need to support the well-being of the health workforce of the United States;

Whereas, in 2022, the National Academy of Medicine released the National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being, delineating necessary actions to safeguard the United States health workforce; and

Whereas a more robust national focus on protecting the well-being and mental health of health care workers will improve outcomes for workers and patients, strengthen the United States health system, and support population health: Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of March 18, 2024, as the inaugural ‘Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness’;

(2) recognizes the seriousness of widespread health care worker burnout in the United States and the need to strengthen health workforce well-being; and

(3) supports the goals and ideals of the Health Workforce Well-Being Day of Awareness, which include—

(A) raising public awareness about the importance of protecting the well-being of physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals to sustain the capacity of the United States health system and ensure the quality of patient care;

(B) mobilizing action to support the well-being of physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals across multiple sectors, including Federal, State, and local governments, health systems, insurers and payers, health information technology companies, educational, training, and accreditation organizations, private and nonprofit organizations, media and communications companies, and organizations that employ health care workers;

(C) creating and sustaining positive work and learning environments and culture;

(D) investing in measurement, assessment, strategies, and research;

(E) supporting mental and behavioral health, including removing barriers to accessing care and treatment, and reducing stigma;

(F) engaging effective tools and technology that reduce administrative burdens on physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals;

(G) establishing well-being as a long-term value in health organizations; and

(H) recruiting and retaining a diverse and inclusive health workforce.

SENATE RESOLUTION 568—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26 THROUGH MARCH 1, 2024, AS ‘PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK’

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. REED, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KING, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. BRAUN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 568

Whereas public education is a significant institution in a 21st-century democracy;

Whereas public schools in the United States educate students about the values and beliefs that hold the individuals of the United States together as a nation;

Whereas public schools prepare young individuals of the United States to contribute to the society, economy, and citizenry of the country;

Whereas 90 percent of children in the United States attend public schools;

Whereas Federal, State, and local lawmakers should—

(1) prioritize support for strengthening the public schools of the United States;

(2) empower superintendents, principals, and other school leaders to implement, manage, and lead school districts and schools in partnership with educators, parents, and other local education stakeholders; and

(3) support services and programs that are critical to helping students engage in learning, including counseling, extracurricular activities, and mental health support;

Whereas public schools should foster inclusive, safe, and high-quality environments in which children can learn to think critically, problem solve, and build relationships;

Whereas public schools should provide environments in which all students have the opportunity to succeed beginning in their earliest years, regardless of who a student is or where a student lives;

Whereas Congress should support—

(1) efforts to advance equal opportunity and excellence in public education;

(2) efforts to implement evidence-based practices in public education; and

(3) continuous improvements to public education;

Whereas every child should—

(1) receive an education that helps the child reach the full potential of the child; and

(2) attend a school that offers a high-quality educational experience;

Whereas Federal funding, in addition to State and local funds, supports the access of students to inviting classrooms, well-prepared educators, and services to support healthy students, including nutrition and afterschool programs;

Whereas teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals should provide students with a well-rounded education and strive to create joy in learning;

Whereas superintendents, principals, other school leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents make public schools vital components of communities and are working hard to improve educational outcomes for children across the country; and

Whereas the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, is an appropriate period to designate as “Public Schools Week”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as “Public Schools Week”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have 12 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 AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to

meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

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, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 3:00 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Jacob Walker, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges until March 1, 2024.

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

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following interns on Senator KELLY’s staff for today: Maya Rezende-Tsao, Gabe Levine, Gannon Tulumello, and Leila Pearson.

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

PUBLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 568, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 568) designating the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as “Public Schools Week”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 568) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 29; 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, and morning business be closed; further, that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Rollinson nomination postcloture; that all time be considered expired at 11:30 a.m.; and that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action; further, that following disposition of the Rollinson nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and execute the order of January 31, 2024, with respect to the veto message on S.J.

Res. 38 and the Senate immediately vote on passage of the joint resolution, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding; further, that following disposition of the veto message, the Senate resume executive session to proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 518, Ronald Keohane to be Assistant Secretary of Defense.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK, the Senator from Georgia.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

PEACE

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I rise tonight in anguish and in sorrow over the heinous and horrific attack by Hamas on the people of Israel on October 7 and also in response to the catastrophic humanitarian nightmare unfolding on the ground in Gaza right now, leaving over 100 Israeli hostages and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffering and tens of thousands—including many women and children—already dead, with no end in sight.

While much can be said about the geopolitics, perhaps because I am a pastor, I see first and foremost the people. On all sides of this awful and ugly, deadly conflict, I see the children of God. All of us are children of God. I especially see the children.

The haunting and penetrating witness of that ancient woman of the Jewish Scripture speaks to me in this moment. A voice is heard in Ramah, the sound of mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, and she refuses to be comforted, for they are no more.

I hear Jewish mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers weeping for their children, and the question is, What would we do if we truly believed that all of the children are truly our children? What would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those children's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own?

When we come to see that the safety of other people's children is inextricably connected to the safety of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that all children are safe. When we come to see that the health of other people's children is inexorably related to the health of our own, we will do so much more to ensure that every child can eat. When we come to see that the

future of all children is tied to our children's future, we will ensure that every child can learn, play, imagine, and grow. We will hasten toward that path that leads to peace.

In that spirit, I rise tonight to explain why I think we have reached an inflection point in this conflict, one that demands all involved redouble our efforts to get a cease-fire and ultimately a just and sustainable peace.

I do not mean to suggest that any of this is simple. Indeed, if it were simple, it would have been resolved a long time ago. The issues of the Middle East are complicated. They are age-old and seemingly intractable. We live in a dangerous world, rife with conflict and replete with enemies who do not want to see peace.

October 7 was a tragic reminder. Hamas, a brutal terrorist organization that has the total destruction of Israel etched in its charter documents and ensconced in its mission, perpetrated the most devastating attack we have seen on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Some 787 civilians were killed, more than 1,100 if you count security personnel. Unbridled brutality and cruelty were visited upon seniors and women and children. Among those taken as hostages were young people simply enjoying a concert. Rape and sexual assaults were used as a weapon of war. Such depraved and immoral acts are rightly condemned by all who believe in human dignity and freedom.

Our ally Israel lives in a dangerous neighborhood, and it has a right to defend itself. That is why I was proud to support the national security supplemental in the Senate. It needs to pass in the House. It provides \$5.2 billion for missile defenses like the Iron Dome, but it also provides \$9 billion in humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza and in other places.

Moreover, it supplies urgently needed aid to Ukraine—a sovereign, democratic state viciously attacked by Putin's Russia. We stand with Ukraine. Their vital national security interests are tied to our own.

Putin, the old KGB agent with fond memories of the old Soviet Union, will not stop his murderous march with Ukraine. He will threaten other NATO allies. Because of NATO's article 5 protection, which states that an attack on one is an attack on all, that could well draw us in.

Last week, I participated in the Munich Security Conference. While we rightly urged our allies to put more skin in the game, as they should, to increase their own commitment to their own security—and to be sure, some of them are stepping up—the truth is, there is no replacement for American leadership in the world.

We, alongside our allies, must stand with Ukraine. In a broken and dangerous world like ours, evil has to be constrained, tyranny rejected sometimes by force. I would rather send military support to Ukrainian soldiers in their valiant defense of their home-

land and of Europe today than send American soldiers to that fight tomorrow. It is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do for our own national security interest.

If we are speaking of Ukraine or Israel, ultimately the aim must always be peace—a sustainable peace, a just peace, the kind of peace that must be rigorously pursued with both a tough mind and a tender heart.

I pray for peace for the people of Ukraine, for the suffering people of Sudan, for Israeli children and Palestinian children. They are all children of God.

I think of the story of 13-year-old Ariel Zohar, an Israeli teenager who lost both of his parents and his two older sisters when Hamas attacked Kibbutz Nahal Oz just 2 months before his bar mitzvah. Ariel just happened to be out for a run, and he sought shelter with a kibbutz security guard. That is the only reason—the only reason—young Ariel survived. May God bless the memory of Ariel's family and the security guard, who also died at the hands of Hamas. He survived, but a 13-year-old child must now live with this trauma. It is a trauma that I know Jewish people in Georgia and around the world are living with every day.

The tragic irony is that in the wake of October 7, anti-Semitism has actually gone up. In this country, anti-Semitism has gone up. All of this is now witnessed through the prism of a people who have never truly felt safe in the world, people who carry the burden of history—centuries of it—in their bones.

I got a sense of it in recent weeks as I sat with the families of hostages being held by Hamas. I sat with those families, who were stunned by the nightmare of their reality, people who have no idea when or how their family members might return.

I recall meeting with one father who was lamenting what had happened on October 7 to his daughter and his son-in-law when they were attacked by Hamas. Beyond his grief, here is what he wanted to know. He wanted to know: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they get it? Can they see what we see, hear what we hear, feel what we feel?

And as he said that with such pain and pathos in his voice, he was speaking about his own family, but he just as well could have been speaking for the family of 13-year-old Donia Abu Mohsen, a Palestinian girl who lost her parents and two brothers in an Israeli missile strike in south Gaza and had to have her leg amputated. And while she was recovering in the hospital, she was tragically killed by another Israeli airstrike while in the hospital.

May God bless the memory of Donia and her family. Donia is one of more than 12,000 children and tens of thousands of defenseless Palestinians who reportedly have been killed since Israel has been prosecuting its war against Hamas.

There is an acronym used in Gaza: WCNSF, wounded child with no surviving family. According to media reports, an estimated 17,000 Palestinian children fall under that category: wounded child with no surviving family. And another 2 million Palestinians have been displaced by the effort to rid the world of Hamas.

When I meet with my Palestinian and Muslim constituents in Georgia, members of our human family, I also hear them wonder: Does anybody other than us understand? Do they see what we see? Do they hear what we hear? Can they feel what we feel? Does anybody care?

The staggering loss of Palestinian lives should deeply trouble all of us, but equally concerning is the serious humanitarian catastrophe that is unfolding in Gaza before our very eyes. Earlier this week, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said during a briefing that about one quarter of the population in Gaza—576,000 people—are “one step away from famine” and facing a “grave situation.” Diseases like hepatitis A and digestive illnesses are spreading rapidly in overcrowded, makeshift camps, and this is made worse by a lack of access to clean water or sanitation systems.

Families right now are huddled in makeshift tents and other shelters, exposed to the winter elements, with everything they can carry on their backs. The medical system in Gaza has collapsed, with only a handful of hospitals still partially functioning.

On average, reportedly, more than 10 children have lost one or both of their legs every day since October 7, with many of those amputations performed without anesthesia. Pregnant women in Gaza have experienced a 300-percent increase in miscarriages.

And, most recently, the Netanyahu administration has once again ordered displaced Palestinians—women, children, seniors, regular civilians already pushed out of their homes by war—to evacuate territory they were told would be safe after fleeing previous offensives by the IDF in northern Gaza.

If Mr. Netanyahu advances military operations into Rafah, the question is: Where are these people supposed to go? What will be the human consequences?

World-class epidemiologists tell us that with an escalation of the war into Rafah, as many as 85,000 Palestinians could die from injuries and disease over the next 6 months—85,000 on top of the already mounting death toll. I submit that such a move would be unconscionable and morally indefensible.

But what do we do about Hamas, a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction? Let me be clear: Israel would be better off, the Palestinian people would be better off, the world would be better off without Hamas. But Hamas is more than a terrorist organization. It is an ideology. It is a mindset. It is a way of thinking that sits in a place deeper than the tunnels beneath Gaza. And if the legacy of

Hamas's violence on October 7 becomes continuing and escalating indiscriminate violence in turn, then the destructive ideology of Hamas will have won the day.

We must not let them win. We must be careful not to create, through indiscriminate killing, that which we seek to destroy. We must find a more excellent way. With a tough mind and a tender heart, we must find that way that leads to peace.

We are at an inflection point, a place where two ways meet, and time is running out. I call upon Israel and Hamas to come to a negotiated cease-fire, with the immediate release of hostages and opening of humanitarian corridors so that food, medicine, water, and other supplies can be delivered to the people of Gaza with the fierce urgency that the situation demands. I am heartened by the quiet, steady work of the Biden administration and our regional partners in this effort, and I urge that it continue in earnest.

Furthermore, we must reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a two-state solution. The people of Israel deserve to live in peace and security alongside their neighbors. I agree with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said that “Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable. The whole world,” he said, “must see that Israel must exist and has the right to exist.”

The dignity of self-determination is among the values he was seeking to uphold. Israelis deserve it. So do Palestinians. Two peoples, two states, living alongside one another in freedom and in peace—that must remain our North Star.

And if we would be true to our values, we must call to task any politician who would reject that right to self-determination, especially if that rejection comes while, at the same time, one is engaged in massive and indiscriminate bombing of the very same people.

From the ugly and dangerous specter of it all, the world cannot and must not turn away. With the Muslim holy days of Ramadan around the corner and the Jewish Passover shortly thereafter, we are at an inflection point, a place where two traumatized peoples meet. As a Black man who stands in Dr. King's pulpit, I know a little something about trauma. I know that while our trauma informs us, it must never define us. We are more than what has happened to us. We have within our capacity the strength to write a new story.

We must pursue peace, seek justice, embrace mercy, and struggle for human dignity with all of our might. The children on each side and all of our children are counting on us to do no less. I would wonder what we would actually do if we truly believed that all of the children are our children. As a parent with small children, I wonder what would each side do if they could look into the eyes of the children on the other side and see in those chil-

dren's eyes what they see when they look into the eyes of their own.

Perhaps this is what the prophet Isaiah was getting at when he put forth his extraordinary vision, and I lift it up.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

Honestly, I never quite understood what Isaiah meant. It seems too idyllic and other-worldly even for the preacher. But perhaps the prophet is saying something much more practical than we think.

To be sure, peacemaking is not easy work at all, by any stretch of the imagination. But perhaps when we allow our children and our love for our children, our concern for their future, and our children's inextricable connection to all other children to lead us—when we allow the children to lead us—we will find ourselves on the path that leads to peace.

So, tonight, I pray for a world where Israeli mothers and fathers and Palestinian mothers and fathers can put their children to bed in peace, say their bedtime prayers, and awaken to a world where they are finally safe.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:08 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. TODD D. MILLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. DAVID W. KELLEY

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. RONNIE D. ANDERSON, JR.

COL. BRYAN L. BABICH

COL. JEREMY A. BARTEL

COL. JAMES T. BLEJSKI, JR.

COL. W. M. BOCHAT

COL. ROBERT G. BORN

COL. KIRK E. BRINKER

COL. ROBERT S. BROWN

COL. KEVIN S. CHANEY

COL. KENNETH C. COLE

COL. KEVIN L. COTMAN

COL. JOHNATON L. DAWBER

COL. DAVID P. ELSER

COL. JOSEPH M. EWERS

COL. EUGENE J. FERRIS

COL. RONALD L. FRANKLIN, JR.

COL. ROGELIO J. GARCIA

COL. PETER C. GLASS

COL. JOSEPH C. GOETZ II

COL. PHILLIP J. KINIERY III

COL. PAUL T. KRATTIGER
COL. JOHN P. KUNSTBECK
COL. MATTHEW J. LENNOX
COL. ROBERT J. MIKESH, JR.
COL. ZACHARY L. MILLER
COL. JIN H. PAK
COL. WILLIAM M. PARKER
COL. ALLEN J. PEPPER
COL. BRENDAN C. RAYMOND
COL. ADAM D. SMITH
COL. TERRY R. TILLIS
COL. GEORGE C. TURNER, JR.
COL. SHANE M. UPTON
COL. ERIC J. VANDENBOSCH
COL. JASON T. WILLIAMS
COL. KEVIN J. WILLIAMS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. CHARLES M. CAUSEY
COL. RODERICK F. LAUGHMAN
COL. URBI N. LEWIS

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate February 28, 2024:

THE JUDICIARY

MELISSA DAMIAN, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.
JULIE SIMONE SNEED, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

APRILLE JOY ERICSSON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be admiral

ADM. SAMUEL J. PAPARO, JR.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. FRANK L. BRADFIELD III
BRIG. GEN. HOWARD T. CLARK III
BRIG. GEN. ROBERT W. CLAUDE
BRIG. GEN. MELISSA A. COBURN
BRIG. GEN. WILLIAM D. MURPHY
BRIG. GEN. DANA N. NELSON

BRIG. GEN. DAVID A. PIFFARERIO
BRIG. GEN. REGINA A. SABRIC
BRIG. GEN. MARK V. SLOMINSKI

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. JAMES D. BURK
COL. ANDREW L. LANDERS
COL. BILL A. SOLIZ
COL. YOLONDA R. SUMMONS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. CRAIG M. HUNTER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be brigadier general

COL. MICHAEL K. MORENI

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. VIVEK KSHETRAPAL

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. CARLOS E. GORBEA

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. NICK I. BROWN
COL. SHANNON M. BROWN
COL. TAMARA L. CAMPBELL
COL. JAMES W. LIVELY
COL. SAMUEL L. MEYER
COL. MICHAEL R. NAKONIECZNY
COL. DOUGLAS C. SANDERS
COL. MATTHEW W. TRACY

IN THE AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SHELLEY L. ALDRICH AND ENDING WITH HEATH D. WRIGHT, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON OCTOBER 19, 2023.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CARL P. BHEND AND ENDING WITH CHRISTOPHER M. WOLBERT,

WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON OCTOBER 19, 2023.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF MAURICIO DE CASTRO PRETELT, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JULIA M. BELL AND ENDING WITH RYAN K. ZARNOWSKI, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH CHERYLENE S. ABALOS AND ENDING WITH CHENG ZENG, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID Y. AHN AND ENDING WITH JOHN M. VANN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ADAM H. ALTMAN AND ENDING WITH JASON M. ZHAO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF HEIDI L. CLARK, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER C. LAZIDIS, TO BE COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF AGATHA C. GRAVES, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MARK D. JOHNSON AND ENDING WITH JOHN PAUL F. MINTZ, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF SARA V. TURINSKY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ALAN L. ADKISSON AND ENDING WITH 002668953, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 25, 2024.

ARMY NOMINATION OF BRANDON D. HOWARD, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF THOMAS P. GALLAGHER, JR., TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JEFFREY A. BANKS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JONATHAN C. YOUNG, TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH SEAN P. DILLON AND ENDING WITH JOSHUA B. SIMPSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 8, 2024.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF KENNETH J. SCHNEIDER, JR., TO BE MAJOR.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF ROCKFORD D. BURTON, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF DONNY L. JAMES II, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RAUL PERDOMO AND HIS LIFETIME OF SERVICE

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Raul Perdomo, a longtime resident of Southeast Michigan and a veteran of the Vietnam War, and to grieve his passing. His service to our country, both in the military and afterward, is worthy of commendation.

Born on September 28, 1944, in Caracas, Venezuela, Raul moved to Dearborn, Michigan, at the age of 16. Following his graduation from Dearborn High, he became a naturalized citizen and answered our nation's highest calling when he joined the United States Navy to serve in the Vietnam War. This set the stage for a lifetime of service to his community and to his country. After his military service, Raul returned to Ann Arbor, Michigan, and enrolled at the University of Michigan where he studied anthropology before studying business at Eastern Michigan University.

As a graduate of the University of Michigan, Raul was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Wolverines. His hearty "Go Blue!" and love for the Maize and Blue was known by anyone who met him, whether through his 40 years of work for the University of Michigan Athletics Department, as President of the U-M Club of Tampa Bay, the Central Café and Beer Depot in Ann Arbor, or during his time helping run the Ann Arbor Community Recreation and Education Center. Public service remained at the forefront of Raul's life, and even after retiring from the military, he remained just as committed to serving his community, which included 20 years of research and tenure on the Institutional Review Board at the Ann Arbor VA Hospital, and as a patient advocate at the University of Michigan Frankel Cardiovascular Center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the life of Raul to our nation. A naturalized citizen answering his country's highest calling, he served his country with bravery and honor in the Vietnam War before continuing to serve his local communities after leaving the military, bringing joy, enthusiasm, and love to everyone he met along the way.

RECOGNIZING MADISON MARSH

HON. LAUREN BOEBERT

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Madison Marsh, a distinguished second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and the first active-duty service member to be crowned Miss America. Madison graduated from the Air Force Academy with a degree in physics and

represents the epitome of dedication, intelligence, service, and class. She entered the world of pageantry motivated by a desire to serve and inspire others, and she has redefined what is possible for women across America.

From a young age, Madison had a love of science and a dream to be a pilot and astronaut. Her parents encouraged her dreams, sending her to Space Camp when she was 13 years old where she met astronauts and fighter pilots.

Around that time, she learned about the United States Air Force Academy and at 15 years old, started flying lessons. She earned her pilot's license two years later and then began to work towards her goal of becoming a cadet. Upon graduation from the and commissioning into the Air Force, she received a coveted pilot slot and is currently determining the career opportunities and personal projects she wants to pursue.

Madison's accomplishments reach far beyond the Air Force and pageantry. She founded the Whitney Marsh Foundation to raise awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer research in memory of her mother.

Madison is an exceptional role model for women and girls across our great country, teaching them that even the sky is not the limit. She is currently studying public policy as a graduate student at the Harvard Kennedy School, working to earn her master's degree. She is a two-time National Astronaut Scholar, National Rhodes Finalist, certified private pilot, black belt in tae kwon do, and U.S. Air Force Academy Superintendent's List NASA Intern.

Mr. Speaker, Madison is an inspiration to women across America and a shining role model for all. I urge all Americans to join me in congratulating Madison on being crowned Miss America. Madison's journey reminds us of what we can accomplish when we work towards something greater than ourselves. I thank Madison for showing America what it means to be a Coloradan.

HONORING SERGEANT RANDY ARMSTRONG AS VETERAN OF THE MONTH FOR MICHIGAN'S 9TH DISTRICT

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the remarkable valor and contributions of Randy Armstrong, our esteemed Veteran of the Month from Michigan's 9th Congressional District. It is with great honor that I highlight the exemplary service and dedication of this true American hero, whose courage and commitment have certainly left a mark on our Nation's history.

Randy Armstrong, born and raised in Brown City, dedicated his entire childhood to the community that shaped him. His passion for

baseball and humble beginnings, including his initial employment at the Brown City Bank, illustrate a profound—and proud—connection to his roots. In 1966, answering the call of duty, he enlisted for a three-year term alongside his brother at Fort Knox.

Following his graduation from ordnance supply school, Randy's journey took him to Fort Lee, Virginia, and later to Scott Air Force Base, where he served with distinction in the Air Defense Command. His expertise as a radar operator led to his promotion to the rank of E4. In 1967, orders arrived for deployment to Vietnam, and before 1968, Randy found himself across the world. By January 1969, he had attained the rank of Sergeant E5.

Completing his tour of duty, Randy returned to the United States, making his way to Fort Snelling in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was there, in acknowledgment of his honorable service, that he was discharged from the Army, marking the conclusion of a chapter defined by profound dedication to his country.

In honoring Randy Armstrong, we pay tribute to a man whose journey from Brown City to the heart of Vietnam embodies the sacrifices and resilience of our armed forces. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this American patriot.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM K. (BUDDY) WHEELER

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a special man, William K. (Buddy) Wheeler of Lexington, Kentucky. He passed away on February 8, 2024.

Mr. Wheeler was born in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. He met his future wife Lucy Clay in grade school. He graduated in 1952 from Mt. Sterling High School. He went on to the University of Kentucky, where he graduated from the College of Pharmacy in 1956. He opened Wheeler Pharmacy in 1958 in the Chevy Chase neighborhood, which was on the outskirts of Lexington at that time. Wheeler Pharmacy is a Lexington landmark, enjoyed by many regular patrons including myself. In addition to the pharmacy, customers enjoy the soda fountain, serving breakfast and lunch and providing a warm neighborhood atmosphere.

Mr. Wheeler was an innovator, implementing a computerized dispensing system, compounding service, and a medication management program and much more. He welcomed pharmacy students for their rotations and served as a mentor to them. Mr. Wheeler sold the pharmacy to his daughter in 2020 but remained an active presence. He was known for his unwavering dedication to his profession and for his kindness to all.

Mr. Wheeler is survived by his wife Lucy. They had been married for nearly 70 years.

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

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

He also leaves 4 children and their spouses: William Kendall (Tammy) Wheeler, Jr., Stuart (Karen) Wheeler, Margaret (Kevin) Meredith, and Claire (Darrell) Lewis. They are all involved in the family business. He also leaves nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Buddy Wheeler will long be remembered as a kind and caring person, and he will be greatly missed. It was my honor to know him and call him my friend. I am grateful for the opportunity to lift up the life of Buddy Wheeler before the United States Congress.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DONALD MAGUDA

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of Mr. Donald "Don" J. Maguda of Rockville, Connecticut. Aged 90, Donald passed peacefully on December 9, 2023, surrounded by family. Donald was a leader in his community and embraced a love for helping others that he held dear throughout his life.

Born July 11, 1933, to Joseph Maguda and Stella Taylor in New Britain, Connecticut. Donald purposed his life toward protecting his community and leading with compassion. He graduated from Rockville High School, immediately after which he began a long and rewarding career as a fireman. Donald began his service with the Snipsic Hook and Ladder Company. Here, Donald was identified as a born leader and rose through the ranks of the Rockville Fire Department. In 1967, Donald's attention to detail and devotion to his work was rewarded when he became Chief of the department.

As Chief, Donald used his leadership to coordinate and oversee the consolidation of the Rockville Fire Department and Vernon Fire District into the Town of Vernon Fire Department. After the merger, Donald served as Fire Chief of the newly formed Vernon Fire Department in 1980, still leaving time for his other passion, running his business, Maguda's Woodworking Shop. After decades of leadership with the fire department, in 1986 Donald transitioned to the role of Town of Vernon Fire Marshal until his retirement in 2002, concluding a remarkable nearly 50-year career during which he never lost a firefighter in the line of duty.

Equipped with extensive knowledge in his field and a desire to share that knowledge with anyone who needed it, it is no surprise that Donald was a member of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association and the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association. Donald presented to numerous groups and individuals for better fire education and community involvement.

Donald's work ethic and dedication to his community rubbed off on his son David, who followed in his footsteps to serve as a firefighter for 42 years—most of which he spent serving under his father.

In addition to this incredible work as a firefighter, Donald spent innumerable hours giving back to his community in other ways as well. In the 1960s, he was integral in starting "Toys

for Tots" in Vernon, assisting children and families during the holidays and "Christmas in April." Mr. Speaker, as a citizen of the town of Vernon who held elective office over the years, I had the privilege to know Don and see up close his intelligence, kindness, and unstinting devotion to duty. Our town was so blessed to know Don and to have his positive, critical contribution that saved lives and protected property.

In his free time, Donald spent time with his family, those most important to him. They enjoyed taking vacations and cruises. Donald could also be found landscaping, wood-working, playing golf, and playing cards with friends and family.

Though we mourn this incredible loss, we can find solace in knowing that Donald's memory and legacy will live on through his family and the countless number of individuals who knew him. Donald is survived by his beloved wife of 64 years, Gabrielle, his son David and his wife Michelle, his daughter Donna and her husband Jeffrey, and countless nieces and nephews. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to know and represent constituents as purposeful in their work as Donald. As we memorialize Donald's faithful service, I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Donald Maguda.

HONORING THE CAREER AND IMPACT OF COACH LANNY BOOHER

HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the remarkable legacy of Anaheim High School Football Coach Lanny Booher. For two decades, Coach Booher has been a beacon of inspiration and mentorship in our Anaheim community, leaving a significant mark on the hearts of his players and community.

Stepping down after 20 years of dedication to our shared alma mater, Anaheim High School, Coach Booher leaves a legacy of transformation and triumph. In 2004, he took charge of a struggling football team—but through his leadership and mentorship, Coach Booher was able to change the trajectory of the program and his players. Over the next two decades, Coach Booher led the Anaheim football team to success on the field, including accomplishing eleven playoff appearances and securing three Orange League championships.

Coach Lanny Booher's commitment and love for the game and his community has been evident in every milestone and achievement. More importantly, his passion for his players has made his two decades of impact a cornerstone of our community. His impact extends far beyond the football field, shaping the lives of young athletes off the field by teaching them the value of teamwork and perseverance.

Throughout his coaching career, Lanny Booher accumulated an impressive 100 wins at Anaheim High, making him the coach with the second-most wins in Orange County. One of his most notable achievements, a 22–10 victory in the Orange County All-Star Football Classic in 2007, is a moment that will surely live forever in local memory.

By honoring the legacy of Coach Booher, we celebrate more than just victories on the

field—we celebrate the profound impact he's had on every student who has played for him. There is no doubt that his legacy while at Anaheim High School will continue to inspire generations of young athletes to give back to their community and put their all into the game.

I thank Coach Booher for his two decades of dedication. Go Colonists.

HONORING RAYMOND FLORES

HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honor of Mr. Raymond Flores, a World War II veteran and native of San Antonio, Texas who recently celebrated his 102nd birthday at San Antonio's Boss Ross Senior Center. Born February 28, 1922, to Mauro Flores and Dorothea Martinez, Mr. Flores has spent his life dedicated to public service.

Following his graduation from Luther Burbank High School in 1941, Mr. Flores spent the greater part of a year working for the Civilian Conservation Corps in Dallas Texas, helping the country recover from the Great Depression. In December of that year, Mr. Flores answered the Nation's call and enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps to help defend freedoms overseas. Mr. Flores completed a tour of duty in the Southern and Western Pacific where he served as Air Freight Master in Papua New Guinea and as First Cook in Australia. Mr. Flores then returned stateside, where he served as First Cook at Camp Kearns in Salt Lake City, Utah, before being transferred back home to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. It was there on September 30, 1945, that Mr. Flores received his honorable discharge along with other accommodations for his time in service.

After his return to civilian life, Mr. Flores attended San Antonio College. In early spring 1948, Mr. Flores met Margarita Gomez and they were married later that year on June 27, 1948, at San Fernando Cathedral. Over the following three decades, Mr. Flores continued his tradition of service, working for the United States Postal Service until he retired, with commendation from President Jimmy Carter, in December 1980.

Mr. Flores is currently living in a VA assisted living care facility where he brings life and joy to those around him. Before his beloved wife Margarita passed in 2019, she and Mr. Flores celebrated seventy-one years of marriage together. When asked what he is proudest of, Mr. Flores cites his fifty-two years of volunteer service to the St. Vincent De Paul Society, where he was an officer from 1952 to 2004 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower. When asked what lesson he wishes to pass onto the next generation, Mr. Flores asked that we all pray and keep the Lord in our lives.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing the long life and honorable achievements of Mr. Raymond Flores. His story is a testament to his character and his status as the pride of San Antonio. May God bless him and his family for all their years to come.

RECOGNIZING ROB ZERJAV

HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. GALLAGHER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Mr. Rob Zerjav for being named the 2023 Baseball America (BA) Minor League Baseball Executive of the Year.

A native of Green Bay, Rob began his career in 1997 as an unpaid intern with the team. During this time, his work ethic and love for the team became clear, and in the years following, Rob joined the full-time staff as a group sales representative. After two years in this position, Rob was promoted to Director of Baseball Operations and then to Vice President of Operations. Following the 2002 season, Rob was named Team President and General Manager, and in 2020, Rob purchased the team and stadium with partners Craig Dickman and Brad Raaths. This purchase made Appleton baseball club history as it became the first-ever private ownership group.

Throughout his years with the Timber Rattlers, Rob has remained focused on the organization's success and lived the organization's mission of "creating the best entertainment experience in Wisconsin so that every guest walks away with a smile and the desire to return." I applaud Rob for his dedication and thank him for his years of service to the organization and community.

It is clear that Rob's leadership and skills have played a critical role in the success of the Timber Rattlers. Since Rob assumed the role of General Manager, the Timber Rattlers have been recognized for many different achievements. In 2012, the team received the Larry MacPhail Award, Minor League Baseball's highest award in promotional excellence. The team was also recognized for its success in 2005, 2018, and 2019 when it received the Midwest League President's Award. As Rob marks his 28th year in Minor League Baseball, I wish him many more successful seasons and thank him for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Rob Zerjav for being named the 2023 Baseball America Minor League Baseball Executive of the Year. Rob's unwavering service and commitment to the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers and Northeast Wisconsin deserves the highest degree of recognition.

CELEBRATING WILLA HARTER'S
101ST BIRTHDAY**HON. ZACHARY NUNN**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish Ms. Willa Harter of Bloomfield, Iowa a very happy 101st birthday.

Ms. Harter was born in Colorado on February 27, 1923. A survivor of scarlet fever at just four years old and left with only half her hearing, she learned to read lips at an early age. Ms. Harter's family moved to Iowa in December of 1933, and she graduated from Bloomfield High School in 1940. Two years later, she married her husband Marion Harter

and together they raised four children: Nancy, Betty, Tom Harter, and Mary Jo.

During her life she wore many different hats. She taught school, worked as a telephone operator at the Drakesville switchboard, and spent 27 years working at the Davis County Hospital. Willa's love and care was shown through her dedication at the hospital and at home with her children. Ms. Harter also has extensive experience crocheting afghans for every one of her children, her twelve grandchildren, twenty great grandchildren, and ten great-great grandchildren.

In addition to a full life at home in Iowa, Ms. Harter has seen her fair share of adventures, traveling to all 50 states, as well as Asia, Europe, South America, and Australia. Now, her daily adventure is enjoying retirement by doing puzzles and reading books in her Bloomfield home.

I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Willa Harter's life and achievements as we wish her a very happy 101st birthday. I extend my congratulations and best wishes to her and her family.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST 1136 IN WYANDOTTE, MICHIGAN

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1136 in Wyandotte, Michigan on the 100th anniversary of their founding. The support and care that they have shown to our veterans and our community over the last century is worthy of commendation.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States dates back to September 29, 1899, when it was founded in Columbus, Ohio following the return of Americans from the campaign in the Spanish-American war. Founded by a small group of veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars was founded to build upon them a spirit of comradeship only known to those who faced the dangers of war fighting side-by-side.

Post 1136 has a long and notable history of service. Throughout World War II, the Post sent gifts and home newspapers to the men and women serving all over the United States and the world. They continued serving the veterans as they returned home, creating a special Ritual Team to escort the returning bodies of their fallen comrades and to conduct military funerals. Although the Ritual Team was disbanded, in the late fifties, the Service Officer Burial Detail was formed and became known as the "Wyandotte Honor Guard." They still serve their fallen comrades even today. Post 1136 grew to over 1,000 members on March 25, 1970, at the height of the Vietnam War. Throughout war time, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1136 has been steadfast in its commitment to supporting our troops at home and abroad. With financial struggles and lower membership following the Vietnam War, Post 1136 gained strength once again as the United States liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Renewed efforts by the post allowed for continued campaigns of support for our

troops abroad, with Post 1136 donating food, toiletries, cigarettes, and other items in short supply to those on the battlefield.

Over the decades since its founding, Post 1136 in Wyandotte, Michigan has continued to give back to its community by hosting an annual 4th of July parade that it first started in 1939, memorial services for those lost in the September 11th attacks, charity fundraisers, and the construction of memorials for the brave heroes who lost their lives in the Vietnam War along the main boulevard that features inscriptions and poems written by community members. Committed to the cause of helping our service members, Post 1136 admirably helps veterans with health issues gain access to a variety of medical and social benefits and become comfortable at home following their return from combat.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1136 in Wyandotte, Michigan. For the last century, their members have continued serving their community well after being out of uniform. We thank them for their service, both at home and abroad, and are excited to see what they can accomplish over the next 100 years.

RECOGNIZING ALEX FERREIRA'S X GAMES SUPERPIPE VICTORY

HON. LAUREN BOEBERT

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor Alex Ferreira, an exceptional athlete hailing from Aspen, Colorado, who has once again earned a gold medal in the men's Ski SuperPipe at the Winter X Games. This is the third time Alex has won the X Games for the United States. He is an inspiration to us all, and he has shown the world what it means to be an American and a Coloradan.

The X Games invite athletes from across the world to compete in extreme sports, including skateboarding, BMX, motocross, snowboarding, and skiing. The SuperPipe event stands out among the events as a monumental challenge, allowing athletes to utilize towering walls to showcase breathtaking aerial tricks. The Winter X Games take athletes to the heart of Aspen to show off their skills to the world. Alex did not have to go far to remind us all, once again, that he had what it takes to win the X Games for a third time.

Alex's journey reminds us of what we can accomplish when we embrace difficulties and continue to push on. Time and time again, Alex kept going after setbacks that would have caused many people to give up. Last year's competition left him with two hard falls, a disappointing finish, and critics calling for his retirement. But Alex never gave up. At this year's X Games, he won not only for himself but for every young athlete across America who looks up to him.

Mr. Speaker, Alex Ferreira is a true inspiration to athletes across our nation, and I am incredibly proud to honor him today. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Alex for his spectacular win at the X Games and for redefining what it means to be a Coloradan. Alex is the best that Colorado's Third Congressional District has to offer, and his story pushes us all to strive for greatness.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT
KEVIN JOHNSON SENIOR'S LIFE-
TIME OF SERVICE

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Master Sergeant Kevin Johnson, Sr.

Originally of Philadelphia, MSG Johnson enlisted in the Army in 1984, marking the beginning of his lifelong career in service to his country. After completing basic training at Ft. Jackson in South Carolina, MSG Johnson went on to Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Gordon, Georgia and later participated in the Home Town Recruiting Assistance Program where he helped to recruit 10 soldiers and prepare them for entry into the Army by assisting them to pass their ASVAB tests and improve their physical fitness.

MSG Johnson would go on to serve in several different posts including as a Station Technical Controller in Germany with the 581st Signal Company and as a member of the White House Communications Agency where he supported the critical Direct Communication Link between the White House and the Kremlin during an era of heightened diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and United States.

Later in his career, MSG Johnson transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve, proudly serving with the 80th division for 25 years during which he dedicated himself to training new soldiers, first as a Drill Sergeant and then as a Senior Drill Sergeant with B Company in Suffolk, VA. Deploying with the 80th during Operation Iraqi Freedom, he served as a Platoon Sergeant for the 3rd Iraqi Army Division Basic Combat Training.

Holder of multiple professional certifications in IT and Telecommunications, MSG Johnson has spent his career preparing generations of soldiers for the tasks they face during deployment and building upon his own education to ensure his instruction is of the highest quality possible. Throughout his service, MSG Johnson received a number of awards including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, and the Army Achievement Medal.

The proud father to Kevin Jr., Yasmeen, Courtney, and Kazmir I and husband to Tiniko Johnson, MSG Johnson is a shining example of dedication to service and patriotism. I extend my most sincere thank you to MSG Johnson and his family for their sacrifice and commend him for a career of selflessness.

RECOGNIZING AARON WILLIAMS

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to congratulate Aaron Williams as the recipient of Inspire Life's Impact Award. Aaron and the Asbury Park Tennis Initiative were recognized at Inspire Life's 2024 Black Excellence Sneaker Ball on February 24, 2024.

Founded by Aaron in 2021, the Asbury Park Tennis Initiative aims to introduce tennis to

local children while instilling the values of discipline, self-confidence, sportsmanship, and leadership. Playing tennis throughout his life, Aaron knows firsthand the benefits of the sport. Recognizing the lack of access to the sport, Aaron established the Asbury Park Tennis Initiative to create opportunities for Asbury Park's students to experience tennis and the life skills it helps develop. He has partnered with local schools, churches, and community organizations to connect with the city's youth, providing not only tennis lessons but also mentoring and community involvement. Aaron's commitment to the success of the program is evident and his dedication is admirable.

Aaron's work with the Asbury Park Tennis Initiative is indicative of his commitment to public service and as United States Marine Corps veteran and an LGBTQ advocate, he has dedicated his life to serving his community and Nation. His passion to help others and improve our communities is commendable and he exemplifies honor, integrity, and professionalism in each endeavor he undertakes.

Mr. Speaker, I join Inspire Life in recognizing Aaron Williams and the Asbury Park Tennis Initiative for their impact on Asbury Park's youth. I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in thanking Aaron for his service to our Nation and local communities.

RECOGNIZING ANGELA LOPICCOLO
FOR HER YEARS OF EXCEL-
LENCE EDUCATING HER COMMU-
NITY

HON. LISA C. McCLAIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional dedication and contributions of Ms. Angela LoPiccolo, better known as "Ms. LoPo" by her students from Dakota High School in Michigan's 9th Congressional District. It is with great honor that I highlight the exemplary service and educational leadership of a truly remarkable educator, whose passion and commitment have profoundly impacted the academic and personal lives of countless students.

Beginning her career as a student teacher at Chippewa Valley Schools, Ms. LoPiccolo has devoted her life to teaching Advanced Placement United States History, global history, and comparative government courses. After a brief tenure at Fitzgerald High School, she returned to Dakota High School, where she has remained a pillar of knowledge and guidance for the last 18 years.

Ms. LoPiccolo's dedication to the field of political science, government, and United States history was inspired by the influential instructors and mentors in her own life. She has become a beloved figure at Dakota High School, known for her ability to identify and nurture her students' academic strengths, and for her commitment to building meaningful relationships with each of them. Her role extends beyond teaching; she serves as the advisor to the Dakota High School Chapter of Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor Society and has previously advised the National Honor Society and Senior Class Council.

Her accolades, including being named the 2022 High School Teacher of the Year at

Chippewa Valley Schools and receiving the Excellence in Education Award in 2016 from the Michigan Lottery, are testaments to her exceptional service and dedication to education. Currently, she teaches advanced placement courses in United States history and micro and macroeconomics, continuing to inspire and shape the minds of future generations.

Ms. LoPiccolo holds an MAT from Marygrove College in Detroit and a BA in history and political science from Oakland University. Her educational background, combined with her passion and dedication, has made her an invaluable asset to Dakota High School and the community at large.

Ms. Angela LoPiccolo's life and career represents the values of educational excellence, dedication, and commitment that are so crucial in academics. Her service as an educator during a pivotal time in our nation's history reminds us of the profound impact that one individual can have on shaping the minds and futures of our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this wonderful leader for her commitment to education and enabling future generations to uphold the values of knowledge, democracy, and civic engagement that have defined our nation.

HONORING PAUL ELMSTRAND,
MATTHEW RUGE, AND ADAM
FINSETH

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I joined thousands of people in Minnesota who gathered for the public funeral for Burnsville Police Officers Paul Elmstrand and Matthew Ruge, and Firefighter-Paramedic Adam Finseth who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

On Sunday, February 18, 2024, these courageous public servants answered a call to protect a family and our community, and were gunned down in a horrific act of violence. This heartbreaking incident occurs amid a crisis of gun violence and domestic abuse, and our first responders are on the front lines every day.

Officers Elmstrand and Ruge dedicated their lives to protecting our community. Firefighter-Paramedic Finseth was committed to saving lives, as he was attempting to do that day. He also served our Nation proudly in the U.S. Army, twice deploying on tours of duty in Iraq. Their deaths in the line of duty are a devastating tragedy that touches their families, their fellow first responders, the Burnsville community, the state of Minnesota, and our Nation.

I extend my deepest condolences to their families and friends who loved them. Their heroic sacrifice will always be remembered and honored.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MR. ALAN NISHIO

HON. JIMMY GOMEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. GOMEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the life and legacy of a community leader and advocate, Mr. Alan Nishio.

Mr. Nishio was an activist, educator, and tireless organizer. Born in the Manzanar incarceration camp in 1945, Mr. Nishio spent his life uplifting the Japanese American community in his many roles, including as the longest-tenured Board President for the Little Tokyo Service Center. Mr. Nishio was also the founder of UCLA's Asian American Studies program in 1968.

Mr. Nishio advocated for the Japanese community in Little Tokyo and beyond. As founder and co-chair of the National Coalition of Redress/Reparations, Mr. Nishio worked tirelessly to provide rightful compensation to Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II.

Mr. Nishio was not only a mover and a changemaker, but a genuinely kind individual. Mr. Nishio always focused on the bigger picture, emphasizing the importance of building strong relationships between the Japanese American community and other communities throughout Los Angeles.

Mr. Nishio's legacy will live on in the Japanese American community in Little Tokyo, and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Mr. Alan Nishio.

RECOGNIZING OFFICER BRYAN SZOSTAK'S SERVICE TO THE CITY OF CANTON

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Officer Bryan Szostak on the occasion of his retirement from the Canton Police Department after 25 years of service to the city of Canton, Michigan. His decades of service to our community is worthy of commendation.

Officer Szostak joined the Canton Police Department in 1999 and has served as a midnight shift officer ever since. For the past 24 years, he has been a member of the department's Honor Guard as one of the founding members and leader, with which he has participated in Posting of the Colors for ceremonies across the state and funeral services for fallen officers. Officer Szostak also served the community's youth as a veteran advisor for the Explorer Unit, a program for teenagers interested in law enforcement. In these roles, Officer Szostak has showed his emphatic commitment to the units he has been involved in.

Most notably, Officer Szostak has been a committed Canine Officer for the past 20 years. His loyalty and passion for this program has been exemplified in his love for his current canine partner Ragnar, who is retiring alongside Officer Szostak, as well as his two pre-

vious canine partners, Poncho and Hoss. In this role, Officer Szostak has set new standards for training and policing, which will not soon be forgotten. Over the course of his extensive career, Officer Szostak earned many department awards, in addition to citizen recognitions for his service and commitment to improving the city.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Officer Bryan Szostak for his remarkable 25 years of service. His commitment to the canine program, Canton Police Department, and the City of Canton has been dedicated to the safety and improvement of the community. I join Officer Szostak's family, friends, and colleagues in extending my best wishes to him in retirement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MARK SMAIL

HON. GUY RESCIENTHALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life and legacy of Mark Smail, who sadly passed away at the age of 62 on February 17, 2024.

A graduate of Hempfield Area High School and the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown, Mark joined the family business at Smail Auto Group and spent the next 40 years establishing the company as an institutional pillar of the Westmoreland County business community. Mark replaced his father as General Manager in 2018 and became the third generation of the Smail family to lead the business.

Mark distinguished himself through his leadership, business acumen, and dedication to the community. The Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce named Smail Auto Group the 2021 Business of the Year, largely due to the company's ability to keep all 500 employees on staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mark's continuous participation in industry and community associations also earned widespread praise. In recognition of his commitment to civic engagement, the Pennsylvania Automotive Association awarded Mark the 2021 Bud Smail Political Advocacy Award. The award pays homage to Mark's late father, who inspired him to work hard and give back to his community.

Mark shared his father's determination to give back to the community and strived to make southwestern Pennsylvania a better place to live. As a philanthropist, Mark raised millions of dollars for local nonprofits. He contributed to and volunteered with many organizations, including the Pittsburgh Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, the Magee-Women's Research Institute and Foundation, the Troops First Foundation, the Westmoreland Cultural Trust, and the Westmoreland Food Bank.

As a devoted husband and father, Mark cherished his friends and family. Mark will be remembered by his wife of 35 years, Kelly, and their children, Taylor and Marcus. His memory will undoubtedly serve as an example of love, devotion to one's family, and selfless service.

Mr. Speaker, Mark Smail dedicated his life to the people of Westmoreland County and southwestern Pennsylvania. His legacy is the

epitome of a life well-lived. On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District, I wish his family healing during this difficult time.

HONORING REV. DR. KEITH G. TYLER, SR.

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a special man, Reverend Dr. Keith G. Tyler, Sr. from Lexington, Kentucky. His church, Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, is celebrating Reverend Tyler's 25th anniversary as their pastor.

Reverend Tyler professed a hope in Christ as a child and was baptized at the age of eight by the late Rev. A.D. Jones in Louisville, KY. He was called to preach the Gospel in 1985 and went on to be licensed and ordained. Reverend Tyler accepted the call to serve as pastor at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in 1998. Under his leadership, membership has more than tripled. He encourages the delivery of God's word in a variety of methods, including a feed-the-homeless effort, a neighborhood bazaar and community festival, a Women's Conference, and Children's Church. He launched a live radio broadcast in 2022. He is a motivating speaker, an inspiring preacher, and an innovative leader. He enjoys traveling across the nation evangelizing.

Reverend Tyler is an active leader in the community. He serves many organizations, including the Speigel Hill Community Center, the Black Faith Leaders of Lexington and Vicinity, and the Central KY Council for Peace and Justice. In addition, he is a trustee of Simmons College of Kentucky, and he serves on the Community Police Chaplain "Response Team." He is the proud father and grandfather of four children and three grandchildren.

Reverend Tyler is to be commended for his ministry over 25 years at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. I congratulate him and all the members of the congregation and wish them many more years of serving our Lord. I am honored to recognize Reverend Dr. Keith Tyler before the United States Congress.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JOB CORPS

HON. JARED F. GOLDEN

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. GOLDEN of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Job Corps program on 60 years of dedicated support in changing the lives of young Americans. 2024 marks six decades of ambition and hope for our young Mainers at the centers in Limestone and Bangor, and throughout the United States of America. Maine's Job Corps programs are vital for preparing young people in the Great State of Maine for high demand industry sector employment as well as furthering educational opportunities.

I join my congressional colleagues in honoring and supporting their mission to better the

lives of Mainers through technical and academic training. Since the first class of students in 1997, the Loring Job Corps Center in Limestone has helped students from Maine and across the Nation earn high school diplomas, construct long-term careers, and obtain great jobs. The Penobscot Job Corps has maintained the same mission for the past 45 years.

Education and community service alike are two of the cornerstones of both Job Corps Centers in Maine, resulting in the students not only changing their lives but the lives of those around them. The program's outreach and development with workforce partners has only enhanced its ability to reach out and enrich the lives of young Mainers. The Job Corps program encourages the vital education and creativity of bright young students throughout our country.

It is with great pride and appreciation that I congratulate our two Maine Centers and Job Corps for 60 years of critical work.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CAPTAIN BENJAMIN MOULTON

HON. RUSS FULCHER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor five of our precious fallen Marines, including Captain Benjamin Moulton, who were killed in a helicopter crash last week in California.

At 27 years old, Captain Moulton was known for his leadership and determination. Benjamin grew up with family roots in Emmett, Idaho, and received an ROTC scholarship to the University of Washington. Once commissioned into the Marines in 2019, Benjamin continued to strive for excellence and was promoted to Captain in August of last year.

Captain Moulton was a decorated pilot who flew with precision and skill, navigating through challenges with grace and determination. His love for aviation and his commitment to excellence inspired all who had the privilege to serve alongside him.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Moulton family and friends as they mourn the loss of this remarkable Marine. We are inspired by Benjamin's bravery and his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING NEW HAMPSHIRE'S POLL WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work of New Hampshire's poll workers and volunteers, who oversaw a safe, secure election in the first-in-the-nation primary that took place on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

For more than 100 years, New Hampshire has been proud to host our country's first presidential primary, an honor our state takes very seriously. This primary would not be possible without New Hampshire's dedicated poll

workers and volunteers. This year, like every time before, our poll workers demonstrated the power of our democracy and the importance of civic responsibility by dutifully and earnestly conducting this year's election.

I want to thank these citizens for stepping up for our democracy. New Hampshire's poll workers continue to set an example for the nation in their tireless efforts to count every vote and ensure that the voices of all Granite Staters are heard at the ballot box. These poll workers prove that despite ongoing efforts to polarize or politicize our elections, our American democracy is strong. Granite Stater poll workers help inspire increased voter confidence and turnout and ensure a smoother process for our state's elections. It is critical that all communities throughout our state are able to have their voices heard in our democracy.

Poll workers, local town officials, and volunteers are instrumental to our electoral process, preserving the right to vote for all Americans by remaining impartial and fair throughout the process, from overseeing voter registration to processing ballots. All Americans deserve to have their voices represented.

Mr. Speaker, I say thank you again to all of the poll workers and volunteers who stepped up to serve their communities and our democracy.

CELEBRATING ORANGE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ABIGAIL DAVIS SPANBERGER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Orange County Chamber of Commerce and to congratulate them on a century of unwavering dedication to the prosperity and success of businesses in Orange County, Virginia.

Over the last 100 years, Orange County's businesses and entrepreneurs have benefitted from the network and expertise provided by the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. A cornerstone of Orange County, the staff and members of the Chamber have been a vital force—driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and championing the spirit of entrepreneurship across Orange County.

Notably, the Orange County Chamber of Commerce has encouraged collaboration through their signature events—the Orange Street Festival and the Orange Uncorked Wine Festival. These events have not only helped nurture countless businesses and forged valuable relationships within the community, but they have also provided families across Orange with memorable experiences and fun activities.

Today, the Chamber boasts a membership of more than 280 Virginians. Each member, alongside Chamber staff, leadership, and volunteers, has contributed to the success and longevity of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce. As their Representative, I wish to extend my greatest appreciation for the work the Orange County Chamber of Commerce does to support the local economy and improve the lives of residents in and around Orange County.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the Orange County Chamber of Commerce on 100 years of service to Orange County, and in celebrating their growth, resilience, and commitment to excellence. I look forward to all they will accomplish in years to come.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BENJAMIN "BEN" COOPER

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the inspiring life and noble career of a lifelong Connecticut resident and patriot, Mr. Benjamin "Ben" Cooper. A member of America's "Greatest Generation" who honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II, Mr. Cooper witnessed the unspeakable horror of mass casualties and genocide that occurred in the European theater. Rather than suppressing this experience, he made it a mission to share the unspeakable tragedies he witnessed on the frontlines of the War. He transformed his experience into lessons for high school students and taught kindness and empathy for others. His service and lessons have inspired many generations of American citizens to care for each other with the same sincerity and dedication seen in Mr. Cooper himself.

Born in 1921 to Max and Fannie Cooper, Ben is a lifelong resident of West Hartford, Connecticut. Ben attended Hall High School and graduated in 1940. After attending George Washington University for one year, he returned to Connecticut in 1941 and worked at Colt Arms Factory in Hartford. Despite not having officially joined the military yet, Ben contributed to the war effort through his testing of guns for the Colt Company. Come 1942, Ben had been drafted into the U.S. Army as a combat medic in the 45th Infantry Division. Soon after his drafting, Ben met his wife of 65 years, Dorothy, and they married on July 14, 1944, in a Maine synagogue shortly before he was deployed to serve in the European theater. Ben's selfless nature manifested through his becoming a medic, starting a long legacy of sacrifice and consummate service to those in need. Through his service, Ben served as a shining beacon in an all-enveloping sea of darkness. His service safeguarded the life and liberty of his fellow citizens and the peoples across Europe.

Unforgettably, the U.S. Army 45th Infantry helped liberate Dachau concentration camp in 1945. Alongside his fellow soldiers, Ben bore witness to the deplorable condition of the victims of the concentration camp. Darkness and inhumanity enveloped Dachau. The scent of incinerated flesh hung heavily on the camp's air, and its prisoners stood in front of their liberators emaciated, so weak that any attempt at nourishment was rejected by their broken bodies. The extent of these crimes against humanity and decency left Ben speechless and traumatized. He would not speak of the camp or war experiences for decades to come.

In 1990, Ben began to share his wartime experiences. Through an interview with a Torrington High School history teacher, Ben was able to open up about his personal history. This interview served as the genesis of

Ben's new mission: to teach America's future generations of the impact of prejudice and bigotry, and to promote kindness and compassion. He spoke at many high schools, including Simsbury and Hall, about his wartime experiences. His lessons always included advocacy for kindness. He brought historical events from textbooks to life through his lived memories. Ben hoped that teaching this part of history would ensure that it would never be repeated.

In 2010, Ben met Henny Simon, a liberated victim of the Nazi concentration camps. Until her death in 2017, the two visited high schools in Connecticut and taught classes on WWII. Students across Connecticut gained valuable insight on how precious a thing our liberties and rights are, and how fiercely they need to be defended. The pair were offered to include their experiences in a documentary titled "In Times of War." Fortunately, their stories have been immortalized through their lessons and the documentary and countless news articles.

Mr. Speaker, even in the darkest hour of our civilization, courageous truth tellers like Ben Cooper refuse to be silenced by fear or indifference. Ben's impact on our nation's citizens is immeasurable, and scores of young citizens will remember his stories and examples. Regrettably understanding the savagery of Nazi barbarism is of critical importance in the world we live in today. Our country should honor Ben's gentle kindness and conviction that touched thousands of fellow Americans. I ask that my colleagues join me in immortalizing Ben's story.

RECOGNIZING THE MARITIME SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL'S PLAN TO MODERNIZE THE USMMA CAMPUS

HON. ANDREW R. GARBARINO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. GARBARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Congressional Board of Visitors to thank the experts of the Maritime Security Infrastructure Council.

Recognizing the vital role of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in our national security and concerned about outdated and deteriorating conditions across campus, they assembled a straightforward, multi-year plan to bring the campus up to a standard commensurate with its crucial function. I am pleased to include in the RECORD a summary of their plan to modernize the Academy's 80-year-old infrastructure as well as a link to the Full Speed Ahead Plan in its entirety, which can be found at <https://wearetheusmma.com/fullspeedahead/>.

Graduates of the USMMA, one of our Nation's five federal service academies, make up more than 80 percent of the U.S. Navy Strategic Sealift Officer Force. Without these service-committed mariners, the Nation would have no assured source of trained, licensed officers to crew the vessels which move materiel, fuel and supplies to foreign shores in wartime. Without a comprehensive capital improvement plan and its timely execution, conditions on the USMMA's Kings Point, New York campus will continue to worsen, ad-

versely impacting mission-critical training and hindering recruitment of dedicated service-obligated midshipmen.

For far too long, Congress has ignored the infrastructure required to provide USMMA midshipmen the specialized education and training they need to fulfill their mission. It is now time to make the institution worthy of their commitment to serve our Nation.

Maritime Security Infrastructure Council

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY FULL SPEED AHEAD PLAN

FULL SPEED AHEAD: A PLAN TO ADDRESS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AT THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Background: In January 2021, the Maritime Security Infrastructure Council (MSIC), a group with expertise in major construction project management and concerned about the deterioration of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) infrastructure, developed a comprehensive plan to bring the campus up to the standards necessary to prepare USMMA Midshipmen to lead our Nation's maritime mission in the 21st century.

The Full Speed Ahead Plan is an intensive 8-year program to execute a decades overdue, comprehensive modernization: new academic buildings, physical readiness/training facilities, midshipmen morale and welfare spaces, parking structures, faculty and senior staff housing, utilities, IT, and campus security upgrades, and renovations of many existing buildings. This plan is adaptable, e.g., it can be adjusted for longer construction timelines and funding schedules, and—importantly—it is intended to be executed while keeping USMMA fully operational throughout construction.

Previous cost estimates were \$611M in January 2021 and \$820M in March 2022. The estimated cost when adjusted for inflation has now risen to \$1.02B; additional delay will only further increase the cost of this urgently needed modernization.

The need: With over 80 years in service to our nation, a comprehensive modernization is long overdue if USMMA is to continue producing world-class, service-committed merchant marine officers who are the backbone of the U.S. Navy's Strategic Sealift Officer Force and a crucial element of defense readiness.

Congress has rightly recognized the necessity of and supported funding modernization projects at the other federal service academies, especially West Point and Annapolis. Long-term low funding levels have left the campus under-resourced, and the result is a deteriorating campus that makes attracting a diverse applicant pool and providing state-of-the-art mission critical training even more difficult. Many of the facilities date back to the Academy's founding in the 1940s and are simply not conducive to the immersive training and demanding coursework expected from our Nation's five service academies.

Modern IT is nearly nonexistent in several buildings; what is available cannot accommodate even the most basic digital needs of Midshipmen, let alone support the increasingly high-tech vessel systems that they must master.

Aside from minor Midshipmen Barracks repairs in the 2000s, there have been no renovations or upgrades since 1988. Nearly every building on campus has exceeded its life expectancy and now requires replacement or major renovation.

This is particularly true of the Academy's physical training, leadership readiness, and athletic facilities. Although USMMA was the first federal service academy to admit women in 1974, no additional athletic or training spaces have been provided for fe-

male teams in the ensuing 50 years, clearly contrary to the requirements of Title IX. Overall, these limited and outdated facilities are inadequate for Midshipmen to maintain physical readiness standards of the U.S. Navy and other services and adversely impact the recruitment of future Midshipmen. Midshipmen need a purpose-built pool, featuring a separate wave pool with high dive/jump capabilities in order to accommodate their specific mandatory training needs for rescue and survival at sea.

The Fix: Our working group of maritime executives, engineers, architects, and construction industry professionals—some USMMA graduates—propose the authorization and funding of a multi-year program of infrastructure replacement and improvement projects.

The Budget and Timeline Snapshot: We suggest directed funding for foundational design work that will serve as the blueprint for an aggressive eight-year construction and project management program. However, the plan can be readily adapted to meet longer construction timelines and funding schedules, along with any potential project modifications. As of January 2024, the current cost of the plan is \$1.02B over eight years.

The Plan: For decades, concerned stakeholders have unsuccessfully sought to upgrade USMMA's physical plant; this plan reflects much of the quality thinking and hard work that went into earlier plans, which regrettably never came to fruition. This document specifically builds on the input of those earlier planning initiatives.

This plan details the facilities necessary for the USMMA to preserve its position as the preeminent leader in maritime education in the Nation, today and into the future. It reflects a long overdue acknowledgment that the campus has fallen woefully behind the other four federal service academies and other peer top-tier institutions.

The plan meets the long-term objectives of the Academy through facilities that will promote modern educational best practices, including globally connected research facilities; engineering powerplant laboratories; 21st century IT-enabled classrooms.

Support mission critical proficiencies: Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) applications laboratories; Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) training pool; Conference and license exam space.

Promote readiness: Accessible modernized fitness facilities sufficient to enable all Midshipmen to maintain physical readiness standards required of USN Reserve officers; NCAA-standard facilities for all athletes; Health and wellness center.

Facilitate leadership development: Weapons range; enhanced waterfront facilities; band facility.

Attract a diverse pool of applicants to ensure USMMA enrolls the best and the brightest.

Provide continuing education and industry engagement facilities: Maritime Center of Excellence for research, innovation, and policy development; MSCE accreditation required post-graduate continuing education opportunities; Maritime industry leadership conference capability.

Maintain a secure facility and a safe environment: secure campus at a level necessary to protect a federal facility; centralized security/access control at main gate and academy facilities; fencing and monitoring of campus boundaries; cyber-secure, modernized IT network.

Master Planning Process and Principles: The 82-acre campus is a unique, historically significant property. Our plan is designed to modernize the campus without expanding its current footprint.

The Education District includes the original 1943 academic buildings, barracks, and

administrative offices that form the hub of the campus.

The Waterfront District includes Eldridge Pool, the Memorial Arbors, the Chapel, Yocum Sailing Center, the USCG Station, Samuels Hall and Crowninshield/Cressy Pier.

The Physical Training and Athletics District includes all the Academy's athletic facilities.

The Community District encompasses all of the McNulty Campus, including faculty housing and the museum. A second community district south of the Education District includes senior staff housing, the Patten Health Clinic, and the Midshipmen Activities Center.

Program Cost Summary:

Construction: Academic Center \$116M; Activity Center \$42.2M; Aquatic Readiness Center \$65.6M; Leadership Development and Readiness Center \$133.1M; Parking Structures \$50.7M; Federal Maritime Center of Excellence \$49.1M; Senior Staff/Faculty Housing \$12.2M; Crowninshield Pier Replacement \$31.7M; Waterfront Sailing Center \$19.2M. New construction subtotal: \$519.8M.

Facility Renovation & Upgrades: Samuels Hall Renovation Completion \$8.8M; Campus Security and Waterfront Improvements \$28.3M; GIS and Upgrade Academy Utilities \$95.4M; Main Gate and Campus Security Upgrade \$53.9M; Bowditch Hall and Steamboat Road Improvements \$76.4M; Existing Building Renovations \$94.8M. Facility Renovation/Upgrades Subtotal: \$357.6M.

Design: \$91.1M.

Program Management: \$51.3M.

Total Program Cost: \$1019.8M.

Maritime Security Infrastructure Council Members:

John D. Cameron, Jr., P.E. Managing Partner, Cameron Engineering & Associates, LLP: Mr. Cameron oversees the firm's consulting engineering services, which specializes in public and private sector engineering such as site development, energy management; water quality management planning, waterfront protection and resilience; roadway, drainage, utilities and infrastructure improvement; planning; building systems; building department services, and construction management. The firm's work has included major mixed use, residential, commercial and industrial projects as well as brownfields and waterfront projects. He is a frequent spokesperson on regional planning, sustainability, economic development issues for Long Island and beyond.

LTG Bill Grisoli (Ret.) Distinguished Chair of Civil Engineering and Chair of the Civil Engineering Advisory Board, USMA: LTG Bill Grisoli is currently serving as the Distinguished Chair of Civil Engineering and Chair of the Civil Engineering Advisory Board at USMA. He spent 39 years on active duty and retired in 2015 as the Director of the Army Staff. Prior to his retirement, LTG Grisoli held a wide variety of engineer command assignments at the Company, Battalion, Brigade, and Army Corps of Engineers Division level. His staff assignments include Director of the Army's Business Transformation Office and Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation Office, G-8. LTG Grisoli was born in NYC and graduated from USMA in 1976.

Lloyd C. Caldwell, P.E. SES, US Army Corps of Engineers (Ret.): Mr. Caldwell served until 2020 as the national Director of Military Programs responsible for the policy and technical functions of the Corps' worldwide program for engineering, design, construction, real estate and environmental activities. He was responsible for military construction and installation support at the USMA and the USAFA. From 2005 to 2010, he was the Director of Programs for the N. Atlantic Division responsible for military and

civil works and the Director of Programs for the Gulf Region Division in Iraq. He is a Distinguished Military Graduate with a Bachelor of Building Construction degree from Auburn and holds MS in Civil Engineering and MPW degrees from the University of Pittsburgh.

Capt. Eileen Roberson, USN (Ret.) SES, DOT/US Navy (Ret.): Eileen Roberson is a retired United States Navy Reserve Officer. As a long-time member of the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service, Roberson has served as Director of Total Force Management for the US Navy's Military Sealift Command, Assistant for Administration to the Under Secretary of the Navy, Associate Administrator at the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, and Deputy Program Executive Officer (PEO) for Navy Information Technology. Roberson holds a Master of Science degree in Management Information Systems from Bowie State University in Bowie, MD and a BS degree in Engineering from the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

John O. Arntzen, President, ACTA Maritime Development Corporation: Recently retired as a Senior Program Manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Atlantic Division at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, New York, he helped oversee a \$2.4 billion Military Construction program on U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force bases in Europe. Prior to this, Arntzen was Special Missions Ships Project Officer for the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command. From 2015 to 2019, Arntzen was Chairman of the USMMA Alumni Association and Foundation (AAF). Arntzen holds a M.S. in Transportation Management from SUNY and a B.S., with Honors, in Marine Engineering from USMMA.

RECOGNIZING ONA MARIE JUDGE STAINES

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ona Marie Judge Staines, a New Hampshire woman born in Virginia, who was enslaved by George and Martha Washington, and taken by them to Philadelphia during Washington's second term as United States president. Ona Judge self-emancipated from their household, as the Washingtons were preparing to return to Mount Vernon in their semi-annual effort to avoid the Pennsylvania law that enabled enslaved people to sue for their freedom if they remained in the state for more than six months. Recounting her story in 1845 she remarked on her escape, "Whilst they were packing up to go to Virginia, I was packing to go, I didn't know where; for I knew that if I went back to Virginia, I should never get my liberty . . ."

During her time in the city, Ona Judge had become acquainted with members of Philadelphia's large free Black community who provided her contact with a ship captain who would take her north. On May 21, 1796, she boarded the ship *Nancy*, bound for Portsmouth, New Hampshire in search of freedom.

The Washingtons relentlessly pursued her, but Ona Judge found a home among Portsmouth's Black community. Washington learned of her whereabouts and sent one of his wife's relatives to convince her to return. She refused, saying "I am free now, and choose to remain so." Rebuffed, the man determined to

take her and her child back to Virginia by force and admitted his intentions to Senator John Langdon. Whether it was Langdon who alerted her to the impending capture, or his trusted free Black servant Cyrus Bruce, we do not know for sure. But Ona was determined to remain free and fled eight miles from Portsmouth into Greenland, New Hampshire, where she lived with her daughters and friends John and Phillis Jacks and their family until her death in 1848.

Several years before her death, Ona Judge Staines told her story to two abolitionist newspapers. The interviewer for the *Granite State Freeman* asked her if she ever regretted her decision, and she replied "No, I am free, and have, I trust, been made a child of God by the means." Her journey exemplifies the power of determination in the search for liberty, embodying our state motto "Live Free or Die." On behalf of the constituents of New Hampshire's First Congressional District, I commend the bravery of Ona Judge Staines to assert her right to freedom at any cost. May her story never be forgotten.

RECOGNIZING ROBERT LAMBE'S SERVICE TO THE GREAT LAKES

HON. DEBBIE DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert Lambe on the occasion of his retirement from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. His significant service to the Great Lakes and surrounding communities during his lengthy career is worthy of commendation.

Bob Lambe has been focused on serving and protecting our environment throughout his career. He holds a Master of Business Administration from the University of Western Ontario and is an Electronic Engineering Technology graduate from the Cabot Institute of Applied Arts and Technology. Bob had a 35-year career within the Public Service of Canada. For 6 years, Bob served as the Regional Director General for the Central and Arctic regions. Bob was also appointed as the first Executive Director for the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, which focuses on research, mitigation and response planning, and rehabilitation efforts to combat invasive species that hurt Canada's ecosystems. In these roles, Bob has exhibited a wealth of knowledge and experience when it comes to natural resource management, and his true passion and dedication for protecting and conserving our aquatic ecosystems is clear.

Most notably, in 2013 Bob Lambe joined the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, a binational organization based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Here he served as executive secretary for over a decade, as well as commissioner and chair of the Commission. Bob's work was invaluable, and focused on appropriations, infrastructure, and strengthening relationships with other organizations. Bob was also a board member for the North American Invasive Species Network, and the Canadian Aquatic Invasive Species Network. In all these positions, Bob worked tirelessly to serve the organizations and their ability to serve the Great Lakes. He emphasized the importance of protecting and sustaining fisheries in the Great

Lakes Basin and applying the wealth of knowledge he gained from his career to improve the commission. During his time with the commission, Bob received high accolades and praise, including a Distinguished Service Award from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University, for his dedication to conservation and facilitation of effective cooperative fisheries management.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Bob Lambe for his lifetime of public service. His commitment to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission has made a lasting change to the conservation efforts of this organization and will not soon be forgotten. Throughout his career, Bob has remained reliable and genuine in his work to protect our environment. I join Bob Lambe's family, friends, and colleagues in extending my best wishes to him in retirement.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 29, 2024 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 6

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to resume consideration of S. 3664, to require executive branch employees to report certain royalties, S. 3626, to clarify task and delivery order solicitation and contract requirements, S. 3635, to improve the President's Cup Cybersecurity Competitions, S. 3613, to require Facility Security Committees to respond to security recommendations issued by the Federal Protective Service relating to facility security, S. 3558, to prohibit contracting with certain biotechnology providers, S. 1524, to ensure that whis-

teblowers, including contractors, are protected from retaliation when a Federal employee orders a reprisal, S. 3654, to amend the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 to require the timely appointment of agency transition officials, to ensure adequate performance and oversight of required transition-related preparation, to require new guidance for agencies and possible transition teams, S. 3648, to amend the Post-Katrina Management Reform Act of 2006 to repeal certain obsolete requirements, S. 3139, to ensure that Federal contractors comply with child labor laws, S. 2367, to improve border security through regular assessments and evaluations of the Checkpoint Program Management Office and effective training of U.S. Border Patrol agents regarding drug seizures, S. 3594, to require Governmentwide source code sharing, S. 3015, to amend title 5, United States Code, to address telework for Federal employees, S. 2143, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 320 South 2nd Avenue in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as the "Staff Sergeant Robb Lura Rolfing Post Office Building", S. 2274, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 Wyoming Street in Shoshoni, Wyoming, as the "Dessie A. Bebout Post Office", S. 2717, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 231 North Franklin Street in Greensburg, Indiana, as the "Brigadier General John T. Wilder Post Office", S. 3267, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 410 Dakota Avenue South in Huron, South Dakota, as the "First Lieutenant Thomas Michael Martin Post Office Building", S. 3357, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5120 Derry Street in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as the "Hettie Simmons Love Post Office Building", S. 3419, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1765 Camp Hill Bypass in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, as the "John Charles Traub Post Office", S. 3639, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2075 West Stadium Boulevard in Ann Arbor, Michigan, as the "Robert Hayden Post Office", S. 3640, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 155 South Main Street in Mount Clemens, Michigan, as the "Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Jefferson Post Office", H.R. 292, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 24355 Creekside Road in Santa Clarita, California, as the "William L. Reynolds Post Office Building", H.R. 996, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3901 MacArthur Blvd., in New Orleans, Louisiana, as the "Dr. Rudy Lombard Post Office", H.R. 2379, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 616 East Main Street in

St. Charles, Illinois, as the "Veterans of the Vietnam War Memorial Post Office", H.R. 3944, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 120 West Church Street in Mount Vernon, Georgia, as the "Second Lieutenant Patrick Palmer Calhoun Post Office", and the nominations of Adrienne Jennings Noti, Tanya Monique Jones Bosier, Danny Lam Hoan Nguyen, Kenechukwu Onyemaechi Okocha, Katherine E. Oler, Judith E. Pipe, and Charles J. Willoughby, Jr., each to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine how primary care improves health care efficiency.

SD-608

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the National Transportation Safety Board Investigations Report.

SR-253

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine extended producer responsibility policies for consumer packaging.

SD-406

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine global food security.

SD-419

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SD-226

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and multiple veterans service organizations: PVA, WWP, NASDVA, MRC, BSF, IAVA, BVA, SWAN, SVA, and AMVETS.

SD-G50

MARCH 7

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of Disabled American Veterans.

SD-G50

MARCH 13

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion and multiple veterans service organizations: JWV, TAPS, NCHV, MOAA, NACVSO, NCAI, VVA, NGAUS, and FRA.

390-CHOB

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1019–S1050

Measures Introduced: Thirteen bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 3819–3831, and S. Res. 567–568. **Pages S1043–44**

Measures Passed:

Public Schools Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 568, designating the week of February 26 through March 1, 2024, as “Public Schools Week”. **Page S1047**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and further addressed with additional measures in Executive Order 14034 of June 9, 2021 (Protecting Americans’ Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries); which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (PM–39) **Page S1042**

Rollinson Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury. **Pages S1037–38**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 52 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. EX. 59), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1037**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, February 29, 2024; that all time be considered expired at 11:30 a.m.; that following disposition of the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, Senate execute the order of January 31, 2024, with respect to the veto message on S.J. Res. 38, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United

States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Highway Administration relating to “Waiver of Buy America Requirements for Electric Vehicle Chargers”, and Senate immediately vote on passage of the joint resolution, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding; and that following disposition of the veto message on S.J. Res. 38, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. **Pages S1047–48**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 54 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. EX. 56), Julie Simone Sneed, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida. **Pages S1019–31, S1050**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 54 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. EX. 55), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1024**

By 77 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. EX. 58), Melissa Damian, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida. **Pages S1031–37, S1050**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 77 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. EX. 57), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1031**

Aprille Joy Ericsson, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

9 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

8 Army nominations in the rank of general.

8 Marine Corps nominations in the rank of general.

1 Navy nomination in the rank of admiral.

Routine lists in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. **Pages S1038–39, S1050**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

2 Air Force nominations in the rank of general.

39 Army nominations in the rank of general. **Page S1049**

Executive Communications:

Pages S1042–43

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S1044–45

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:
Pages S1045–47

Additional Statements:

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Page S1047

Privileges of the Floor: Page S1047

Record Votes: Five record votes were taken today.
(Total—59) Pages S1024, S1031, S1037

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:08 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 29, 2024. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on pages S1047–48.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Agriculture, after receiving testimony from Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture.

EVOLVING WORKFORCE

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine evolving workforce dynamics and the challenges for defense acquisition and defense industrial base personnel, after receiving testimony from Johnny C. Taylor, SHRM; Julie A. Lockwood, Institute for Defense Analyses; and Simon Johnson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Shaping the Future of Work Initiative.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AND BLAST EXPOSURE CARE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Personnel concluded a hearing to examine traumatic brain injury and blast exposure care, after receiving testimony from Lester Martinez-Lopez, Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Kathy M. Lee, Director, Warfighter Brain Health Policy, both of the Department of Defense; Carlos D. Williams, USN, National Intrepid Center of Excellence; Samantha McBirney, Pardee RAND Graduate School, Ross D. Zafonte, Home Base, and Frank J. Larkin, Lead of National Warrior Call Day Initiative.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reproductive health care, after receiving testimony from Caitlin Myers, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont; Leilah Zahedi Spung, Physicians for Reproductive Health, Denver, Colo-

rado; Leslie Ford, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.; Tamra Call, Obria Medical Clinic of Ames, Ames, Iowa; and Allie Phillips, Clarksville, Tennessee.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Daniel B. Maffei, of New York, and Rebecca F. Dye, of North Carolina, both to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

GEOLOGIC HYDROGEN

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the opportunities and challenges associated with developing geologic hydrogen in the United States, after receiving testimony from Evelyn Wang, Director, Advanced Research Projects Agency—Energy, Department of Energy; Geoffrey S. Ellis, Energy Resources Program Lead for Geologic Hydrogen, Geological Survey, Department of the Interior; and Peter Johnson, Koloma, Denver, Colorado.

WRDA

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Water Resources Development Act, focusing on USACE water infrastructure projects, programs and priorities, after receiving testimony from Michael L. Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and Lieutenant General Scott A. Spellmon, Chief of Engineers, Army Corps of Engineers, both of the Department of Defense.

TEHRAN'S SHADOW ARMY

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Tehran's shadow army, focusing on addressing Iran's proxy network in the Middle East, after receiving testimony from Suzanne Maloney, The Brookings Institution, and Brian Hook, former Special Representative for Iran and Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State, both of Washington, D.C.

RETIREMENT CRISIS IN AMERICA

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the retirement crisis in America, focusing on expanding defined benefit pension plans for workers, after receiving testimony from Sara Chambers, UAW Local 182, Livonia, Michigan; Teresa Ghilarducci, The New School for Social Research, New York, New York; Dan Doonan, National Institute on Retirement Security, and Rachel U. Greszler, The Heritage

Foundation, both of Washington, D.C.; and Eric Stevenson, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio.

FEDERAL PRISONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine preventing deaths of incarcerated individuals in Federal prisons, after receiving testimony from Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, and Colette S. Peters, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, both of the Department of Justice.

CORRECTIONAL STAFFING CRISIS

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Criminal Justice and Counterterrorism concluded a hearing to examine the nation's correctional staffing crisis, focusing on assessing the toll on correctional officers and incarcerated persons, after receiving testimony from John Wetzel, Keystone Restituere Justice Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Santia Nance, Sistas in Prison Reform, Richmond, Virginia; Brandy Moore White, Council of Prison Locals 33, Forest City, Arkansas; Stephen Walker, One Voice United, Sac-

ramento, California; and Rafael A. Mangual, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, New York, New York.

VA CEMETERIES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine honoring America's veterans and their families at VA cemeteries, after receiving testimony from Matthew Quinn, Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs; Kelly Ackerman, Montana Department of Military Affairs Veterans Affairs Division Administrator, Helena; William Turner, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Office Director, Manhattan; and Michael Figlioli, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Washington, D.C.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 13 public bills, H.R. 7463–7475; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 1033, were introduced. **Pages H737–38**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H738–40**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Miller-Meeks to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H699**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:29 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H702**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:05 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. **Page H703**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Atomic Energy Advancement Act: H.R. 6544, amended, to advance the benefits of nuclear energy by enabling efficient, timely, and predictable licensing, regulation, and deployment of nuclear energy technologies, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yea-and-nay vote of 365 yeas to 36 nays with one answering “present”, Roll No. 55; **Pages H703–15, H730–31**

D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act: H.R. 4984, amended, to amend the District of Columbia Stadium Act of 1957 to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the Administrator of General Services and the leasing of the Campus to the District of Columbia for purposes which include commercial and residential development, by a $\frac{2}{3}$ yea-and-nay vote of 348 yeas to 55 nays, Roll No. 56; **Pages H715–19, H732–33**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To direct the Secretary of the Interior to transfer administrative jurisdiction over the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus to the District of Columbia so that the District of Columbia may use the Campus for purposes including residential and commercial development, and for other purposes.”;

Pages H732–33

Service-Disabled Veteran Opportunities in Small Business Act: H.R. 3511, to amend the Small Business Act to require training on increasing contract awards to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans; **Pages H719–21**

DOE and SBA Research Act: H.R. 4669, amended, to provide for Department of Energy, National

Laboratories, and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities;

Pages H721–22

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: “To provide for Department of Energy and Small Business Administration joint research and development activities, and for other purposes.”;

Pages H721–22

WOSB Certification and Opportunity Expansion Act: H.R. 7105, amended, to establish requirements relating to certification of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes;

Pages H722–23

Small Business Administration Rural Performance Report Act: H.R. 5265, amended, to amend the Small Business Act to require a report on the performance of the Office of Rural Affairs, to require a report on the memorandum of understanding between the Small Business Administration and the Department of Agriculture entered into on April 4, 2018; and

Pages H724–25

Encouraging Success Act: H.R. 6591, amended, to amend section 8(a) of the Small Business Act to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to regularly reassess the asset and net worth thresholds for qualifying as an economically disadvantaged individual.

Pages H725–26

Recess: The House recessed at 6:03 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m.

Page H730

Oath of Office—Third Congressional District of New York: Representative-elect Thomas R. Suozzi presented himself in the well of the House and was administered the Oath of Office by the Speaker. Earlier, the Clerk of the House transmitted a copy of a letter received from Ms. Kristen Zebrowski Stavisky and Mr. Raymond J. Riley, III, Co-Executive Directors, New York State Board of Elections, indicating that, according to the unofficial results for the Special Election held February 13, 2024, the Honorable Thomas R. Suozzi was elected for Representative to Congress for the Third Congressional District of New York.

Page H737

Whole Number of the House: The Speaker announced to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentleman from New York, the whole number of the House is 432.

Page H732

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Requiring the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to provide a link to resources for submitting reports on suspected fraud relating to certain COVID–19 loans: H.R. 5426, to require

the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to provide a link to resources for submitting reports on suspected fraud relating to certain COVID–19 loans;

Pages H726–27

WOSB Integrity Act of 2024: H.R. 7128, to establish requirements relating to size standard compliance of small business concerns owned and controlled by women for certain purposes; and

Pages H727–28

Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act: H.R. 7102, to establish an Office of Native American Affairs within the Small Business Administration.

Pages H728–30

Authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust: The House agreed to discharge from committee and agree to H. Con. Res. 89, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

Page H734

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President transmitting an Executive Order that expands the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13873 of May 15, 2019 (Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and further addressed with additional measures on Executive Order 14034 of June 9, 2021 (Protecting Americans’ Sensitive Data from Foreign Adversaries)—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 118–109).

Page H730

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H731 and H733.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States Strategic Command and United States

Space Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2025 and the Future Years Defense Program; to be immediately followed by a closed session in SVC-217, 9:30 a.m., SH-216.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider the nominations of Ann Marie McLiff Allen, to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah, Susan M. Bazis, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nebraska, Ernest Gonzalez, and Leon Schydlower, both to be a United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas, Kelly Harrison Rankin, to be United States District Judge for the District of Wyoming, Robin Michelle Meriweather, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, Almo J. Carter, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the United States Parole Commission, Amir H. Ali, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, Melissa R. DuBose, to be United States District Judge for the District of Rhode Island, Sunil R. Harjani, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, Robert J. White, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, Jasmine Hyejung Yoon, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Virginia, and Joshua S. Levy, to be United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, Rebecca C. Lutzko, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, and Roy W. Minter, Jr., to be United States Marshal for the Southern District of Georgia, all of the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD-G50.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine empowering people with disabilities to thrive in careers and the workplace, 10 a.m., SD-106.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled “A Review of Defense Secretary Austin’s Unannounced Absence”, 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Legislative Proposals to Support Patients with Rare Diseases”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 6864, the “HUD Accountability Act of 2023”; H.R. 7280, the “HUD Transparency Act of 2024”; H.R. 5535, the “Insurance Data Protection Act”; H.R. 802, the “Respect State Housing Laws Act”; H.R. 7156, the “Combating Money Laundering in Cyber Crime Act of 2024”; H.R. 7437, the “Fostering the Use of Technology to Uphold Regulatory Effectiveness in Supervision (FUTURES) Act”; H.J. Res. 109, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Securities and Exchange Commission relating to “Staff Accounting Bulletin No. 121”; H.R. 7440, the “Financial Services Inno-

vation Act of 2024”; H.R. 7428, the “Earned Wage Access Consumer Protection Act”; H.R. 7462, the “Wildfire Insurance Coverage Study Act of 2023”; H.R. 4206, the “Bank Safety Act of 2023”; and H.R. 4116, the “Systemic Risk Authority Transparency Act”, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security, hearing entitled “Port Cybersecurity: The Insidious Threat to U.S. Maritime Ports”, 10 a.m., 310 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence, markup on H.R. 7443, to authorize a dedicated transnational repression office within the Department of Homeland Security’s Homeland Security Investigations to analyze and monitor transnational repression and related terrorism threats and require Homeland Security Investigations to take actions to prevent transnational repression; H.R. 7433, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a transnational repression hotline and conduct a transnational repression public service announcement campaign, and for other purposes; and H.R. 7439, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize strengthening of State and local law enforcement capabilities to combat transnational repression and related terrorism threats, and for other purposes, 2 p.m., 310 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on Ratification of Subcommittee Assignments; H.R. 4848, the “Censorship Accountability Act”; H.R. 2595, the “Forfeiture Funds Expenditure Transparency Act”; H.R. 7335, the “Transparency in National Security Threats Act”; H.R. 7343, the “Detain and Deport Illegal Aliens Who Assault Cops Act”; H.R. 7334, the “Detain and Deport Illegal Aliens Who Commit Robbery Act”; and H.R. 661, “Sarah’s Law”, 9:30 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation, hearing entitled “Made in China: Is GSA Complying with Purchasing Restrictions?”, 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Investigation and Oversight, hearing entitled “Examining the Risk: The Dangers of EV Fires for First Responders”, 10:30 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Full Committee, markup on the Fiscal Year 2025 Views and Estimates of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; H. Con. Res. 83, authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition; and General Services Administration Capital Investment and Leasing Program Resolutions, 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, February 29

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Marjorie A. Rollinson, of Virginia, to be Chief Counsel for the Internal Revenue Service and an Assistant General Counsel in the Department of the Treasury, post-cloture, and vote on confirmation of the nomination at 11:30 a.m.

Following disposition of the nomination, Senate will vote on passage of S.J. Res. 38, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Federal Highway Administration relating to “Waiver of Buy America

Requirements for Electric Vehicle Chargers”, the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding.

Following disposition of the veto message, Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Ronald T. Keohane, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Additional roll call votes are expected during Thursday’s session.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, February 29

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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