paying for food or, paying for medication. They will go without heat because they cannot afford to buy fuel. The source of this issue is Social Security. Although this re- tired benefits program has benefitted millions of citizens, it needs to be changed. Social Security often does not change with inflation, or does not change enough to account for increased prices. As the cost of living rises, Social Secu- rity is not keeping up. This leaves seniors to make difficult choices regarding spending. Every year, Social Security should be reassessed in accordance to the rate of inflation. To pay for this, we would need to raise the Social Security tax percentage to seven per- cent. This would allow America to ade- quately address our elders’ needs.

This nation is nowhere near perfect. We have many issues we must address, domestic and foreign. We cannot expect to properly address issues overseas, until we fix the home we live in. We must fix America from within. Once we do this, we will truly be able to call ourselves the greatest nation in the world.

VIVIAN HUANG, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL (SECOND PLACE)

The year of 2015 has been historic for the United States of America. We have signed a landmark climate change act on marriage equality, and become eco- nomically sound—marking greater economic growth rates than predicted and reaching a five percent growth rate rate. Social Security enter the year of 2016 with two pressing issues remaining on the global and the na- tional scale: terrorism and healthcare. As we tackle these issues, we must remind our- selves that the United States of America is truly one nation, indivisible, with each cit- izen carrying responsibilities to support our nation as one another.

First, following recent acts of terror around the world, it is top-priority for the United States to defeat the threat of ISIS. Enough is enough. Rest assured that rather than sending our troops to combat zones in Iraq and Syria, we will take an active role in helping our European allies lead the battle. America must provide rigorous train-and-as- sist programs for Kurdish forces, exert a tight grip on ISIS-controlled territory, cut off supply lines, and implore the Gulf States to assist. Furthermore, previous experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have re- vealed that merely destroying one source of terrorism will not ultimately solve the problem. To ultimately solve the terror crisis, we must prevent terrorism and military action unnecessary in Iraq and Syria, we plan on developing political, economic, and edu- cational programs that will effectively re- spond to complex sectarian and ethnic divi- sions in the region.

Let’s make it clear that the United States is not declaring a war against religion, but rather against the violence of extremism. As human beings, it is our responsibility to help the innocent Syrian families fleeing ISIS and Assad’s regime. Now is not the time to turn our backs, but to provide hu- manitarian aid and shelter, even though it requires extreme vigilance. Additionally, every American must confront the problem of bigotry, which only becomes exploited by ISIS for its own recruitment. We all have the duty to stand up against discriminatory rhetoric and hostile actions. We all have the duty to uphold the country’s values by sup- porting each other—our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow community mem- bers—without prejudice.

Second, an important issue on the domes- tic front continues to be healthcare. Phys- ical and mental wellness is a fundamental need for all people. Over the past year, the Affordable Care Act has improved access to this basic human right for the un- insured. However, there is more to accom- plish in 2016. Until completely comprehen- sive universal healthcare—namely, a single- payer system—is set into place, Medicaid must be expanded in all states and go beyond, self- community health clinics must be placed in underserved locations.

The Department of Health and Human Services has identified four chief drivers of healthcare costs; hospital expenditures, phy- sician and clinical services, and sky- rocking drug prices escalate the national healthcare costs; hospital expenditures, hosa- pits and pharmaceutical companies will not be able to overcharge patients and run exorbitant monopolies on essential medi- cations.

Indeed, American citizens’ rugged bravery, wise judgment, and drive for excellence have made this country great. But we can always progress forward, as long we stand united. Therefore, we will tackle the urgent issues of terrorism and healthcare not only with con- fidence, but also with the ambition to re- main one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RYAN RACICOT, MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL (THIRD PLACE)

The most pressing and immediate danger of today is the changing cli- mate. The scientific community agrees virtually unanimously, that climate change is a very real and imminent concern. Continu- ation down the current path at this pace will eventually result in the ultimate demise of the human race.

This is not the United States’ to tackle alone. In order to fully reverse the ef- fects of climate change, it will take a world- wide collaborative effort unlike anything the world has ever faced before. The United States’ role going forward is to set an exam- ple, for other first world countries. The United Nations’ conference this year in Paris was a step in the right direction. But the United States needs to agree to a binding commitment to reduce emissions. Without a whole-hearted promise to abide to these re- ductions, the United States will not be taken seriously on this issue.

The United States government cannot ex- pect corporations to make eco-friendly movements unprofitable. It is simply not worth the financial burden. The federal gov- ernment needs to incentivize eco-friendly waste management for businesses, by mak- ing it easier for them to be more profitable than environmentally irresponsible business. As it stands now, no company has motiva- tion to protect the environment. Doing so is often less competitive. To reverse this trend, the fed- eral government needs to enforce pre-exist- ing environmental laws and spend more on environmental saving measures.

To convert all factories to updated stand- ards for emissions, a large amount of money will be needed initially, but over time, a sys- tem in which clean energy is valued more than profit will result in a much more sus- tainable economy. Companies who destroy the environment and experience greater profit as a result will be forced to pay for their own pollution management systems. Greatly increasing taxes on environmentally irresponsible corporations will make clean energy and environmentally friendly means to do so creates jobs and income, which boosts the U.S. econ- omy, all without destroying the environ- ment.

Unlike many other issues troubling the state of Vermont, the nation, and the world, climate change affects every single person. Regardless of race, color, gender, socio- economic status, religion, education or polit- ical affiliation, climate change affects all, especially the most disadvantaged. Because of this, it is every person’s respon- sibility to do their part in saving the planet. One cannot stand idle and expect other peo- ple to do all of the dirty work. Helping to save the earth is not about how you can benefit, it is about how you can help the greater cause. We can no longer allow large corpora- tions to prioritize making a profit over re- sponsible waste management. The short- term profits for the rich are vastly out- weighed by the long-term environmental consequences felt by all.●

TRIBUTE TO TERESA THOMPSON

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Teresa Thompson, an intern with my staff, working all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota over the past few months.

Teresa is a graduate of Sturgis High School in Sturgis, SD. Currently, she is attending Black Hills State University where she is majoring in history. She is a hard worker who has been dedicated to getting the most out of her experience while also raising her two chil- dren, Ben and Rachel.

I extend my sincere thanks and appre- ciation to Teresa Thompson for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT OF THE VETO OF S.J. RES. 22, PROVIDING FOR CON- GRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF ‘WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES’ UNDER THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT, RECEIVED ON JANUARY 19, 2016—PM 37

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid be- fore the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to be printed in the Record, sent to the committees, and read upon the journal, and held at the desk.

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Envi- ronmental Protection Agency and the
Department of the Army to clarify the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act. The rule, which is a product of extensive public involvement and years of work, is critical to our efforts to protect the Nation’s waters and keep them clean; is responsive to calls for rule-making from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders; and is consistent with decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

We must protect the waters that are vital for the health of our communities and the protection of their water resources, agriculture, and energy development. As I have noted before, too many of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development. Clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act helps to protect these resources and safeguard public health. Because this resolution seeks to block the progress represented by this rule and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty and clarity needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water, I cannot support it. I am therefore vetoing this resolution.

BARACK OBAMA,

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following joint resolution was read the first time:

S.J. Res. 29. Joint resolution to authorize
the use of United States Armed Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Le
vant and its associated forces.

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–4129. A communication from the Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grants” (RIN0575–AD02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4130. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting proposed legislation entitled “Military Justice Act of 2016”; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4131. A communication from the Assistant Director, Senior Executive Management Office, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Energy, Installations, and Environment), Department of Defense, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4192. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Removal of Transferred OTS Regulations Regarding Management Official Interlocks and Amendments to FDIC’s Rules and Regulations Implementing the Office of Management and Budget’s Circular No. A–12, August 13, 2010” (RIN0383–AD01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 12, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4132. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Members of Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation’s Board of Directors” (RIN0999–AA39) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 13, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4134. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Suspension of Community Eligibility” ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2015–0001) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4135. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of Frankenia johnstonii (Johnston’s Frankenia) From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants” (RIN1018–BA29) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4136. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Adding Eleven Declared Extinct Species” (RIN1018–BA30) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 14, 2016; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.


EC–4138. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure: Update of CC: International No-Rule Revenue Procedure 2015–7” (Rev. Proc. 2016–7) (RIN0009–AD02)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4139. A communication from the Chief of the Office of the Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2015–6” (Rev. Proc. 2016–6) (RIN0009–AD02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4140. A communication from the Chief of the Office of the Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revenue Procedure 2015–5” (Rev. Proc. 2016–5) (RIN0009–AD02) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–4141. A communication from the Chief of the Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled “Revisions to the Employee Plans Determination Letter Program Regarding Cycle A Elections, Determination Letter Expiration Dates, and Extension of Deadlines for Certain Defined Contribution Pre-Approved Plans” (Notice 2016–63) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 15, 2016; to the Committee on Finance.