

matter of minutes this morning if the majority leader would simply call to the floor this clean appropriations bill. I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., equally divided, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, since I see no other Members on the floor at this time, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

AMERICAN CURES ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 3 weeks ago, scientists at Boston's Northeastern University made an amazing discovery in a pile of dirt. They found a new antibiotic called teixobactin. This new antibiotic, the first that has been discovered in more than 25 years, holds the potential to kill off a wide variety of disease-causing bacteria. It offers hope for a cure to serious and growing antibiotic resistant diseases.

President Obama noted in his State of the Union Address that antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most pressing public health challenges. In the United States alone, it costs us at least \$20 billion a year and claims 23,000 lives.

A plastic storage crate filled with backyard dirt might seem like an unlikely source for a breakthrough, but that is exactly where these scientists—who were working under a grant from the National Institutes of Health—discovered this potentially lifesaving medical breakthrough.

Scientific breakthroughs are nothing new for the United States of America. In the last century we split the atom, defeated polio, conquered space, created the Internet, and mapped the human genome. All of those historic achievements had something in common with the discovery of teixobactin—they were backed by U.S. Government research funds.

I have people come up to me in Illinois and say: Name one thing this government has ever done. Well, aside from winning a few wars that were critical to the future of mankind, we have done amazing things when it comes to research.

For generations the United States was the unchallenged world leader in support of scientific research, but in recent years our lead has eroded. In 1965 the United States spent 25 percent of our nondefense discretionary budget on research and development—1965, 25 percent; today, 10 percent.

Meanwhile, other countries are stepping up. China has increased research and development funding by 20 percent a year every year from 1999 to 2009. If we stay on course, China will be investing more in research and development as a share of their overall economy than the United States in as soon as 5 years.

The erosion of U.S. funding is particularly troublesome and costly in the area of biomedical research. Thanks to budget cuts, and particularly the sequestration, the U.S. share of global biomedical research funding declined by 13 percent between 2004 and 2012. Lifesaving discoveries are being delayed and young scientists are finding fewer funding opportunities. A decade ago 30 percent of the qualified NIH grant proposals were funded, today it is just 18 percent.

In Illinois researchers regularly tell me how difficult it is to find government support for their medical research. They can spend as much time applying for grants and opening rejection letters as they do conducting experiments and analyzing data.

There are indications that young researchers are taking their talents to other industries and even other countries. In 1982 18 percent of NIH primary investigators were under the age of 36. In 2011 3 percent of NIH primary investigators were under the age of 36. The young researchers aren't going in to government-sponsored research. Meanwhile, our population is aging, medical conditions from cancer to Alzheimer's are touching more and more lives, and the need for medical breakthroughs has never been greater.

Back in Illinois I had the pleasure of visiting the lab of legendary researcher Dr. Janet Rowley at the University of Chicago. She was an inspiration. I wish I could have met her. Four decades ago, sitting at her dining room table in Hyde Park in Chicago, she had what she called an "oh wow" moment—a flash of insight that transformed the world's understanding of cancer. Until that moment it was generally assumed genetic abnormalities were the result of cancer. Dr. Rowley's work showed it was the other way around; that genetic mutations in fact caused cancer. That revolutionary insight led to targeted drug treatments for previously untreatable cancers. What family—what family on Earth—has not been touched by cancer?

Janet Rowley was working under a small grant from the National Institutes of Health when she made this historic finding. One of the parts of her story I love is when she and her family returned to Chicago in 1962. Janet told the University of Chicago she would like to come back to continue her research with a couple of conditions. She said: I am a mother of four boys. I can only work part time. Second, she wanted a microscope, a desk, and a salary. She asked for \$5,000 a year. To its everlasting credit, the University of Chicago said yes. Ten years later came her

"oh wow" moment that changed our understanding of cancer.

One of my deep concerns is this: How many other Janet Rowleys are being lost in America to medical research because they can't get the financial support for the grants they need to move forward? How many medical scientists have been forced to scale back or even abandon vital research because of ill-advised cuts to the National Institutes of Health?

If America is going to remain a world leader in research that does contribute to longer and healthier lives, Federal funding for medical research has to be a national priority. Last week I reintroduced a critical bill. The American Cures Act calls for \$150 billion in Federal research funding to support medical breakthroughs over the next 10 years.

I guarantee we will get more than \$150 billion in payback if we put that money in medical research. If we can delay the onset of Alzheimer's in this country just by weeks or months, and God willing cure it, think of how much we will save. Last year it cost our Federal Government over \$200 billion to treat Alzheimer's patients.

For researchers making long-term plans, it is not only the amount of funding but its reliability. That is why the American Cures Act would eliminate the year-to-year unpredictability of congressional budgets and politics and set a steady growth rate of 5 percent over 10 years.

Francis Collins, one of the most extraordinary doctors in America, heads up the NIH, and he said: This, Senator, will make a difference.

These funds would go to four institutions: the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Defense health programs, and the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research Program.

The American Cures Act will make funding for lifesaving medical research less political and more predictable.

I thank my colleagues, Senators SHERROD BROWN, AMY KLOBUCHAR, BARBARA BOXER, ED MARKEY, BEN CARDIN, AL FRANKEN, BOB CASEY, and CHUCK SCHUMER, as well as Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO for cosponsoring and sponsoring this legislation. People may have seen the old bumper sticker that said: If you think education is expensive, try ignorance. Well, if you think biomedical research is expensive, try illness.

Medical research is a great investment. Every \$1 we spend generates over \$2 in economic growth. We more than double our investment and that is before counting the value of diseases cured.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, a brilliant epidemiologist who heads the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said of the discovery of teixobactin: "That was a long shot—but it worked."

That was also true with the polio vaccine, discovered 60 years ago by Dr.