

St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department for 24 years. He is survived by his wife and a son.

In Missouri, we also lost five firefighters and first responders in the line of duty last year.

Battalion Chief Chris Tindall of Raymore, MO, died shortly after responding to an emergency incident in January 2015. He was a 19-year veteran of the South Metro Fire Department.

Larry Lawhorn, a volunteer firefighter with the Orchard Farm Fire Protection District, suffered a fatal medical emergency in May of last year while driving a first responder vehicle en route to a structure fire. He had been a volunteer with the department for 20 years and had previously served 15 years with the St. Charles County Fire District.

In October 2015, two firefighters were killed in Kansas City in the line of duty. Larry Leggio, a 17-year veteran of the Kansas City Fire Department, and John Mesh, a 13-year veteran of the Kansas City Fire Department, were able to save two residents from a burning apartment complex before a wall collapsed on them after they had evacuated other people from the building.

EMS pilot Ronald Rector of Linn, MO, was killed during a flight operation in March 2015. He was inbound to pick up additional crew members at St. Louis University Hospital in a medical helicopter when his helicopter crashed.

Early this month, I introduced the Fallen Heroes Flag Act, which creates a program to provide a flag flown over the Capitol to the family of firefighters, law enforcement officers, members of rescue squads or ambulance crews, and public safety officers who lose their lives in the line of duty. I thank my colleagues for unanimously passing that bill last week. The House had already passed a similar measure introduced by Congressman PETER KING, and I hope to get a final bill on the President's desk in very short order.

Our Nation's first responders put themselves in harm's way to keep us safe, and we mourn the loss of all those who have given their lives in the line of duty. We can never in any way fully repay the debt we owe them and their families. These are people who go to work every day, with the greatest goal for their families being that they come home safely that day, and they have more reason to worry about that than most of us have. All we can offer instead is our gratitude. My hope is that each flag that is flown over the Capitol and provided to these families will be a lasting symbol of our appreciation and a fitting honor to those who embody the very best of what we stand for as a nation.

SILVER STAR SERVICE BANNER DAY

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, as I conclude, one other thing I want to mention is Silver Star Service Banner Day.

I thank my colleagues for unanimously passing a resolution I submitted with Senator MCCASKILL last week to designate May 1 as Silver Star Service Banner Day. It is a day we honor our Nation's servicemembers who have been injured or become ill while serving, and we also honor their families on that day.

I am grateful to work for this cause and for the work the Silver Star Families of America do. This is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Clever, MO. In 2004, that group began its work to remember, to honor, and to assist members of the Armed Forces from every branch of the military and from every war. This organization assists veterans who have suffered physical or emotional trauma from war and distributes Silver Star flags and care packages to wounded veterans and their families.

Our military men and women put their lives on the line to defend our Nation, and many have done so in ways that result in tremendous personal cost for them and their families—from loss of life, to injury, to trauma of all kinds. On Silver Star Service Banner Day, I hope all Americans will take a moment to reflect on the countless sacrifices and appreciate the blessings of freedom their service has provided.

We salute our former and current servicemembers and encourage all Americans to do the same with the presence of a Silver Star service banner in the window or a Silver Star flag flying in the front yard. Those who serve deserve and should receive the gratitude of the Nation, whether they serve in the military or as first responders, and in the last few days the Congress was able to step forward and recognize those who serve in unique ways.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, the talk of the debt in our Nation has been diminishing. Unfortunately, debt itself has not also diminished. While the deficit has been reduced significantly over the last several years, the debt continues to grow. It is now crossing well over \$19 trillion. It is my concern that we as a body continue to get distracted with other things and lose track of the looming debt issues we will still continue to face and we will be held to account for, and rightfully so.

The American people expect us to come here and solve a lot of issues—solve not only crisis issues such as Zika and other issues around the coun-

try, but also what we are going to do with national defense and security. There is an expectation that we will be able to do multiple things, but over all of that, there is an expectation that we will balance the Nation's checkbook and find a way to be able to solve these issues. I don't think that is an unreasonable request.

When we cross over \$19 trillion, at what point do we as a body decide that this is enough and that we need to work together to solve the issues we face? The Congressional Budget Office continues to challenge us and to tell us that this is an unsustainable pace, and the Nation as whole continues to push back. I think we should pay attention to it.

I thank Gene Dodaro and the good folks from the Government Accountability Office for putting out their latest report on what they define as opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, duplication, and achieve other financial benefits. It is the report that GAO puts out every year that we often call a duplication report—here are the problems, here are the unresolved issues.

Last year, I asked Gene Dodaro and GAO specifically to break it up and to make it very clear—not just to say where it is in government but whose responsibility it is, who can actually fix this. They broke it up this year into two different sections basically saying: This is the administration and the agencies. They already have the authority to fix this, and these are the issues they face.

He also identified 63 areas that specifically only Congress can fix. It is a to-do list for us of things that we need to either vote on and discuss or we need to disagree with GAO and be able to push back on, but we shouldn't just ignore it and say we are going to do nothing on it.

We have dealt with this every single year for the last several years. We all face the duplication. We all hear the stories about it. My challenge is, How do we actually bring this to the floor, vote on it, solve it, and move forward from here? It will leave some things actually addressed.

Part of the issue we face every year with duplication is that duplication is buried into the governmental system, and it takes a GAO report to pull it out.

I have proposed a bill for several years now. I did it in the House and brought it over to the Senate. It is called the Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act. The Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act already passed the House this year, and it has not yet cleared the Senate. The Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act is a very clear transparency piece. It says: Shouldn't we have a list of every program in the Federal Government, how much we spend on that program, how many staff are committed to it, what that program does, and, specifically, how it is evaluated? It is a very straightforward, transparent piece.

Everyone in this body continues to talk about duplication and says we should do something about it. GAO then highlights it for us, but the challenge is that you can't easily identify it until you do a very deep search on it. I think we should be able to have a level of transparency so we can see where the duplication is by comparing one program to another. That way we can all address it and talk about it.

Yesterday, at the Indian Affairs Committee hearing, we were doing a markup. The conversation in that markup was about several programs that seemed to be very good ideas to serve Indian Country. The problem is that many of them already exist in another agency, and they are not doing their job very well. The challenge is this: Can we get rid of it in another agency and not just start it in a second, third, or fourth agency?

We can't continue to say: It is not working over there. So let's just do it somewhere else. Every time I bring up the issue, they say: We don't know what agency it exists in. The Taxpayer's Right-to-Know Act provides a very simple list that should be searchable and public and that everyone would be able to see. It is currently being held up right now and going back and forth in this ongoing conversation about something as simple as: How many programs should we see?

OMB has pushed this issue back on us and said: We will have program transparency but only for the biggest programs.

We basically said: If you spend \$1 million on this program, you should have transparency.

They said: No, let's do a much higher number. Let's do \$10 million or more.

Yesterday, we asked Gene Dodaro: If we dropped this number from \$10 million to \$1 million, how many programs will suddenly go away?

He said: It is in the thousands. That just puts us in the same spot. We can't eliminate duplication we can't see. The famous philosopher Muhammad Ali said: "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee, the hands can't hit what the eyes can't see."

We, as a body, spend a lot of our time saying: I would love to get rid of duplication, but we can't see it. Let's actually expose it. Let's get it out there so everyone can see it and we can clear this issue. Let's just solve this very simple issue. Let's make it transparent, and then let's work together.

Senator TESTER and I had a great conversation after the Indian Affairs Committee hearing yesterday. We agreed that we would look for areas of duplication in Indian Country. We are not looking for more programs. We are looking for programs that actually work and accomplish what they should accomplish, and for things that don't work, we can eliminate them. We can take that money from one area and put it in another area where it actually does work. At the end of the day, we have to get back to balance. We can't

keep funding duplicative programs that don't work, and we should be able to accomplish this together.

Last year, I put out a report called "Federal Fumbles: 100 Ways the Government Dropped the Ball." Two-thirds of that book identified duplication and waste in the government. We have made progress on some of those already this year. We have so much more to do. The key to it is that we actually need to get busy working on it instead of just talking about it.

Yesterday, Gene Dodaro, who is with GAO, also mentioned a bill that BEN SASSE is working on called the new hire database bill. I think it is a very good bill, and I am glad to be supportive of what he is trying to accomplish there. Senator SASSE wants to do one thing, and that is to be able to say that when we actually do means-tested programs, we should be able to see the employment records. That should be a very open process for those who are in the means-tested program, but right now GAO and other groups do not have access to the new hires database. So there is no way to see those in the means-tested program.

There are people who self-report their income, and there is no way to be able to verify that. Shouldn't we be able to verify that?

It is a straightforward solution in a day and time when they continue to bring up obvious things year after year, such as having the same person being eligible for disability and unemployment insurance at the same time. That person will actually receive unemployment and disability benefits simultaneously. Disability benefits, by definition, means you cannot work anywhere in the economy, and that is why you get disability benefits. Unemployment benefits, by definition, means you can work in the economy, but you are not currently employed. Why should you be eligible for both? GAO has brought that up to us. That is not a partisan issue. That should be a solvable issue, and it is costing taxpayers billions of dollars. It is one of the things that we have to be able to work on together so we can actually solve this problem. This is not too hard for us, and the American people expect us to get it done.

My only challenge is this: Let's actually get it done.

With that, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

ZIKA VIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to address two different issues this morning, but I think both are timely and important.

The first issue I will address has to do with a telephone conversation I had a few minutes ago with Dr. Thomas Frieden. Dr. Frieden heads up the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA. Most Americans don't know much about the agency, but the

title speaks for itself. The CDC, as we call it, is America's first line of defense in a public health crisis. When we think that Americans—individuals and families—are in danger or vulnerable, we call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and ask them to analyze the challenge and then give us the right public health response to that challenge.

A few months ago, I went to their campus in Atlanta, GA. It is very impressive, not just for the buildings but also for the people who are there. We have some of the best health researchers in the world working for our Federal Government at CDC—most of them at financial sacrifice. They want to be part of solving problems and protecting America. Just as the folks in the Pentagon across the river believe in the protection of America, so do the people at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC is our first line of defense against public health attacks.

This morning I called Dr. Frieden to talk about the Zika virus. I have come to know him and have worked with him over the years. Most people have learned about it by now. We are learning more about it every single day. We have kind of traced its origin to South America, and now it is moving north. It is moving north into Puerto Rico in a big way, and Florida is likely to be the next State to witness the Zika virus being transmitted by mosquitoes. Then, frankly, the whole United States is vulnerable. Not only can this virus be transmitted to an individual if they are bit by a mosquito, but it can also be transmitted by the sexual contact of a person already infected by the virus. If you have the virus and a mosquito bites you and then bites your wife, you may have just transmitted the virus to her through that mosquito. We are learning.

The reason why this is more than just a mosquito bite and an irritation is that this virus can cause serious public health problems. We know that pregnant women with this virus run the risk of giving birth to babies with difficulties and serious problems, and so we are monitoring it very closely.

How many employees at CDC are working on the Zika virus threat to America? There are 1,000. When you think of all of the things that we need to worry about, they believe—and, I think, rightly so—that this is the imminent public health threat to our country. There are a lot of unanswered questions about the Zika virus, such as these: How long does it stay in an individual? How long can an individual who is infected with the virus transmit it to another person? For those who are carrying the virus, what impact does it have on their health? What impact does it have on a pregnant woman carrying this virus?

It turns out there are literally hundreds now in the United States who have been infected with the Zika virus. We expect some lull in the number of