

narcotics—the revenue from these destroying drugs we have—and if the doctors don't understand it, here is the problem, as I have just said. We have top-notch pharmaceutical manufacturing companies doing many good things for us and improving our lives by producing a product, and we have, basically, the Federal Government—the DEA and the FDA—approving it and allowing it to get into the market. Then, we have the doctors, the most trusted people next to our family, saying: Take it; it will help you; it will be good for you. Then, we have a full-blown epidemic.

We are fighting Zika now. We have Ebola and all these other things. We are concerned about epidemics, and here we already have one that is full-blown and matured, and we are not doing anything. So I am hoping that common sense will prevail.

We found a pay-for—a lifeboat, basically. It is one penny. Opponents are saying it is going to be passed onto the consumer. Well, it can't be. The CDC basically controls the pricing. So they can't gouge the people. Trust me, it is as profitable as anything they make in the pharmaceutical arena. One penny on a milligram is not going to bankrupt anybody, and it is not going to keep any product off the market that is needed. Tell me how else we are going to get \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion every year to help people get off of this horrible epidemic.

I thank the Senator for helping.

I want to continue reading a letter from one of our constituents. My colleague gets them the same as I get them, and we talk about this all the time. I want to thank her for helping me fight this because together we are going to make a difference.

The letter goes like this:

I reach out to you in hopes of possibly making a future I've worked really hard for a little brighter. My name is Kayla, and I am a recovering addict. My sobriety date is February 13, 2013. I struggle with addiction to pain medication of all sorts. It started out as drinking and smoking when I was 13. That's basically all I ever did until I turned 17 and tried my first pill.

It blew me completely out of control from there. While in active addiction, I got in trouble with law enforcement for stealing and received a charge for grand larceny. This is when I was only 20, and that was the first and last time I've been in trouble with the law.

This was a nonviolent crime, basically, for stealing.

Continuing with her letter:

I've changed so much since the day I took the first pill. I completed rehabilitation at Crossroads Recovery Home in Gilbert, West Virginia, along with my dear friend Jessica Grubb who sadly lost her battle to this horrible disease.

My colleague and I have sponsored "Jessie's Law," and so we know about this tragedy.

Continuing with the letter:

It truly saved my life. When I completed treatment, I came home to start Drug Court in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. I completed that without any sanctions the whole course of the year I was in the program.

I recently moved to Washington State with my husband and children. I want more than anything to take my recovery and life a step further by starting college. Ever since I was a little girl my dream has been to become a veterinarian. That has never changed in my almost 26 years of life. Due to my felony, that dream more than likely can't come true. I would not be able to hold a license unless otherwise approved by the Board of Veterinary Medicine. It's not likely they would approve me.

I have worked so hard to be where I'm at today. My dream is to apply to Ohio State University in August of 2016 for the spring 2017 semester. I know I can be a vet. I want to prove to addicts everywhere that there is light at the end of that tunnel. The pain can be stopped. You can go from having to have a fix to get out of bed to having a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine.

I want to show everyone that this small town West Virginia opioid addict made it, and not only that she make it, but that she pushed the limits and reached the stars. The rumor is true. We do recover.

Now, let me tell my colleagues the rest of the story. Right now, unless we change the laws, unless we change our attitudes about how we treat addiction and look at it as an illness that needs to have treatment—unless we can do that and find the treatment—we will have people like this person, who got sober—she has been sober for over 6 years—and turned her life around and wants to be a doctor of veterinary medicine, which she doesn't think she can do now because she ruined her life at a very young age and for which she is now paying the consequences. But it was a nonviolent crime. It was a nonviolent crime.

What we have said, and what we are trying to forge into a piece of legislation, is that if you have a felony on your record from a drug addiction and it was not violent—you didn't do it with a violent crime of guns and weapons and harming people, it wasn't a horrible sexual crime, and none of those things happened; all you did was steal, which is a crime, and you have a felony on your record—and if you go through drug rehabilitation, if you become a mentor for at least another year—so that is a 2-year recovery—you then qualify to go before a review panel, which will probably be made up of your sentencing judge, the arresting officers, and the addiction treatment center personnel, who can say you deserve to have one chance in life to clear your record, to expunge your record and now to be a productive citizen, to be a doctor of veterinary medicine, or to be able to be anything you want.

Yes, you did screw up. You made a heck of a mistake. But now we are going to give you that second chance because you have fought forward and become clean. You are sober, and you are helping other people become clean and sober. If not, we are going to throw a whole generation of absolutely productive Americans out.

What I am asking for is consideration on both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans. Forget about being Democrats and Republicans, and let's be Americans. Let's reach out and help

people who want to be productive Americans and who want to contribute to society.

These are the things we have to do that are common sense. I am hoping all of us will come together, and I know we will.

(Mr. PERDUE assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, I thank the Chair for allowing me to speak on this subject. I do it every week. I am going to continue to do it until we make changes. This affects your beautiful State of Georgia the same as it affects West Virginia. This is one thing we all agree on. We must end this opioid drug addiction, this drug-infested addiction this country has. We are the most drug-infested Nation on Earth.

When you consider that 80 percent—80 percent—of all the opioids in the world that are produced are consumed in a country that has less than 5 percent of the world's population—in the United States of America—something is wrong. We are better than this. We are better than this.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2578, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2578) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby/Mikulski amendment No. 4685, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for McCain) amendment No. 4787 (to amendment No. 4685), to amend section 2709 of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that the Government may obtain a specified set of electronic communication transactional records under that section, and to make permanent the authority for individual terrorists to be treated as agents of foreign powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.

McConnell motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations for a period of 14 days.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.