

an amendment to S. 764, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Pat Roberts, Lamar Alexander, John Barrasso, Thad Cochran, Deb Fischer, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Thom Tillis, David Perdue, Jerry Moran, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4936 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4935

Mr. McCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 4936 to amendment No. 4935.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4937

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to refer the House message on S. 764 to the Committee on Agriculture with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 4937.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] moves to refer the House message on S. 764 to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 4937.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4938

Mr. McCONNELL. I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 4938 to the instructions of the motion to refer S. 764.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following:

This Act shall take effect 3 days after the date of enactment.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4939 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4938

Mr. McCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 4939 to amendment No. 4938.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike "3 days" and insert "4 days".

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 524, H.R. 5293.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 524, H.R. 5293, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 524, H.R. 5293, an act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, Tom Cotton, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Crapo, Thad Cochran, Jerry Moran, Richard C. Shelby, John Hoeven, Lamar Alexander, Orrin G. Hatch, Daniel Coats, Pat Roberts, John Barrasso, Bill Cassidy, John Thune, John Boozman, John Cornyn.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for these cloture motions be waived.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

FUNERAL OF FREDERICK CHARLES "BULLDOG" BECKER IV

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, last week I had the opportunity to pay tribute to a gentleman by the name of Fred Becker. We knew him lovingly

and affectionately as "Bulldog." He was a veteran and a veterans activist. He passed away on June 11.

This past Friday, Bulldog's remains were interred at Fort Richardson in Anchorage. He occupied a very special place in my heart, so it was important that I be there to attend those services. It was really quite a spectacle. Bulldog was a leader of several veterans motorcycle groups. So there were more than 100 of his fellow veterans—all on bikes—who accompanied the remains to the final resting place there at Fort Richardson Cemetery. But if that were not special enough, in and of itself, there were several hundred airmen and soldiers—some say 400—that were lined up once you went through the gates there on Fort Richardson. About every 10 feet, there was an airman or a soldier for almost 2 miles into where the ceremony was. These individuals were there to pay tribute to a man who every day—every day—worked to show respect to other veterans and worked to ensure that the service and the sacrifice of those veterans would never be forgotten.

So at every ceremony—whether it was Veterans Day or Memorial Day or a salute to the military or to the change of command and at every retirement—Bulldog was there. So it was so inspiring to be there and to see the tribute paid to this amazing man.

It was Col. Brian Bruckbauer, who is the commander of the 673rd Air Base Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, who organized this extraordinary tribute, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Colonel Bruckbauer, his fellow leaders at JBER, and the soldiers and airmen who came out on Friday afternoon.

CELEBRATING TALKEETNA'S CENTENNIAL

Mr. President, coming up this next week, on July 4, the historic community of Talkeetna, AK, which sits just at the base of Denali, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. Talkeetna sits at the confluence of three glacially fed rivers. Originally settled by the Dena'ina people, it was an important location for fishing and hunting. The name Talkeetna derives from a Dena'ina word which means "river of plenty."

The gold rush of 1896 brought prospectors to the area. In 1905, gold was discovered in the Yentna-Cache Creek mining district to the west of town. Sternwheeler riverboats traveling up the Susitna River docked at Talkeetna, establishing the town as a supply center for the local mining districts.

Then came the Alaska Railroad. In 1914, President Wilson signed a law enabling the construction of the railroad from Seward to Fairbanks. Talkeetna was then designated as the district headquarters for railroad construction, increasing its population by about 400 people at the outset. Then, that grew to 1,000 people at the peak of construction. In December of 1916, the Talkeetna Post Office was opened, which really established it.

By 1923, railroad construction was complete and the population of Talkeetna dropped to only a few dozen people. But the few dozen that stayed were determined to make a go of it. Talkeetna remained a mining supply hub. The railroad deposited a sufficient number of gold miners to support local mining supply businesses.

Fast forward to the 1960s. In 1963, astronomers declared Talkeetna the best place in the United States to see the total solar eclipse. That brought about 2,000 people into town. The visitors then boarded the train to see what was then called "Mt. McKinley."

In 1964, a spur road was constructed connecting Talkeetna to the newly built Parks Highway, which is the artery connecting Anchorage and Fairbanks to Denali National Park. Suddenly, Talkeetna was open to road access. The State of Alaska then sold land for market value to those who wanted to settle in the area. Those who settled in Talkeetna found a steadily growing visitor industry awaiting them. Talkeetna has become a destination for mountaineers from around the world. Today, 1,100 to 1,250 people attempt to climb the mountain each year.

The first stop for adventurers planning to climb is the National Park Service's Talkeetna ranger station. The ranger station is named for Walter Harper, who was an Athabascan Indian, and he was the first person to reach the summit of Denali—20,310 feet up. The second stop is one of the many air taxi services that call Talkeetna home for a ride up to the base camp.

While the climbing season may be short—basically late April to early July—the visitor season continues through Labor Day. Talkeetna is a popular stop for cruise tour and independent visitors traveling the Parks Highway en route to Denali National Park.

But Talkeetna is no "glitter gulch," as we in Alaska sometimes say. It is a thriving year-round community numbering some 876 people, with an active arts community, its own public radio station, and a quirkiness that is perhaps unique to Talkeetna. There are probably not too many towns that can actually boast that their mayor is a cat—a cat.

OK, Stubbs is the honorary mayor of Talkeetna. He is not really and truly the official mayor. He is the honorary mayor. He was elected back in 1997. Stubbs has had that position for all 19 years of his life. He is quite well-known and has quite the notoriety. Stubbs greets visitors at Nagley's Store. Nagley's was founded in 1921. It is one of Talkeetna's original businesses and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is part of a historic district that runs roughly 2 blocks by 3 blocks.

Visitors who choose to spend this Independence Day in Talkeetna will be treated to a rich hometown experience amidst the splendor of one of Alaska's

most picturesque and interesting places. I am told Talkeetna's centennial celebration will provide visitors an opportunity to enjoy the town as the locals do.

I was hoping to make it up to Talkeetna. I am probably not going to be able to do so. But I might be able to make the run from Wasilla, AK, to attend the moose-dropping event at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It is an annual tradition on the Fourth of July, where we take a collection of moose droppings, drop them, and bet on them. So we have an interesting mayor, and we have interesting festivals, but it is the heart of gold that comes from the people in this beautifully picturesque and, again, amazing place. It is a great honor to celebrate Talkeetna's Centennial today in the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I also want to congratulate the people of Talkeetna. I wish I could go myself to the moose-dropping thing, and I want to see that before I die.

Mr. President, I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for giving me this time.

COLLEGE WORLD SERIES

Mr. President, in 3 minutes, the final game of the championship round of the College World Series takes place. Coastal Carolina is playing the University of Arizona.

Coastal Carolina is a relatively small school in Myrtle Beach. Dustin Johnson is a graduate and won the U.S. Open. But if you have been watching the College World Series, this baseball team is inspiring. Arizona and Coastal Carolina have had two great games. Tonight is the rubber match, winner takes all. I don't know what is going to happen. If Coastal Carolina falls short, we have won in every way we could win. It has been the most exciting World Series I can remember: South Carolina won back-to-back world championships.

Coastal Carolina, I know everybody in South Carolina is very proud, all the fans are very excited, and the best pitchers are on the mound tonight. So go Chanticleers. I am going to go home and watch the baseball game.

I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for letting me say that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I was delighted to let Senator GRAHAM celebrate an achievement by his home State university. I was pleased to yield him the time.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, I am here, as the Presiding Officer knows, for the 142nd time to urge Congress to wake up to the threat of climate change. We are asleep at the wheel in Congress, heading toward climate catastrophe.

Of course, outside this Chamber there is broad support for responsible climate action from the American people and

from every major scientific society. Indeed, 31 of them just sent us a letter this week, reminding us to get off our duffs and pay attention to the science. Virtually every one of our home State universities, our National Laboratories, NASA, NOAA, and the military, national security, and intelligence leadership of our country—if they are all wrong, that is one heck of a hoax.

Frustratingly, Congress is still fogged in by a decades-long, purposeful campaign of deliberate misinformation from the fossil fuel industry and its allies. And since Citizens United, that misinformation campaign is backed up by unprecedented special interest political artillery.

Outside the fossil fuel industry, there is of course broad support for action on climate change across corporate America. Leading businesses and executives vocally supported President Obama on the Paris Agreement. Many are committed to getting onto a sustainable energy path. More than 150 major American firms signed the American Business Act on Climate Pledge. Many are pushing their commitment outside of their corporate walls through their supply chains, but against these Americans corporate efforts on climate stand two major forces that claim to represent American business: the Wall Street Journal editorial page and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Wall Street Journal editorial page claims to speak for the business community, small business owners, and industry titans alike, but it is way off base from the business community's commitment to addressing climate change. Its editorial page is constantly wrong about climate change, from misstating the science of climate change, to misstating the costs versus benefits of climate action, to misstating the law when carrying the industry's water to oppose civil investigations into whether the industry climate denial scheme amounts to fraud.

It is not new. The Journal has a well-worn playbook for defending polluting industries. Look at its commentaries over time on acid rain, on the ozone layer, and of course now on climate change. It is always wrong, and worse, there is a pattern, a formula: Deny the science, question the motives of those calling for change, exaggerate the costs of taking action, and, above all, protect the polluting industry.

I have said all of this before, but now there is a study that quantifies it. Climate Nexus's recent analysis of the Wall Street Journal's editorial page shows "a consistent pattern that overwhelmingly ignores the science, champions doubt and denial of both the science and effectiveness of action, and leaves readers misinformed about the consensus of science and of the risks of the threat." The analysis finds the opinion section has "done its readers a disservice by consistently ignoring or ridiculing the scientific consensus on the reality and urgency of climate change."

The editorial page's bias, which is out of sync with virtually every single major scientific body, "cannot help but hinder its readers' ability to make accurate assessments of the risk climate change poses to their businesses."

Specifically, Climate Nexus's analysis found that of 201 editorials relating to climate science or policy dating back to 1997, not one explicitly acknowledges that fossil fuels cause climate change. Of the 279 op-eds published since 1995, 40 reflect mainstream climate science, a paltry 14 percent. And of 122 columns published since 1997, just 4 accept as fact that fossil fuels cause climate change or endorse a policy to reduce emissions—out of 122 columns, 4. It is laughable.

Between April 2015 and May 2016, when global heat records were falling with regularity, the Journal published 100 climate-related op-eds, columns, and editorials. Only 4 op-eds provided information reflecting mainstream climate science, and 96 pieces in the Journal's opinion section failed to acknowledge the link between human activity and climate change. Even ExxonMobil and Charles Koch admit that link. Last January, for example, the page called recent extreme weather "business as usual," while clinging to the bogus "hiatus" argument that global temperature increases had halted.

The Climate Nexus report illuminates a series of advertisements that have been placed—where? On the Wall Street Journal editorial page, calling attention to this preposterous bias.

The first one reads: "Exxon's CEO Says Fossil Fuels Are Raising Temperatures and Sea Levels. Why won't the Wall Street Journal?" The copy below goes on to say ExxonMobil has called for a carbon price, and they have.

The CEOs of BP, Shell, Total, Statoil, BG Group and ENI call climate change "a critical challenge for our world" and have also called for a price on carbon.

It is time for the editorial board of the WSJ to become part of the solution on climate change.

The next one says: "Carbon Dioxide Traps Heat on Earth." It goes on to say:

This isn't controversial. The head of Exxon Mobil and most major oil companies agree, along with every scientific academy in the world.

Again, a fact.

The next one: "The Earth Has Warmed. And We Did It." It goes on to say:

[W]e've known for more than a century that adding more heat-trapping carbon dioxide to the atmosphere from fossil fuels would warm the planet.

And we have known that. We have known that since Abraham Lincoln was President.

So it's not surprising that the planet keeps getting warmer (although you may not have seen this fact on this page).

And, of course, "Despite what you may have heard, there has been no 'pause.'"

All of that is solid, clear science.

The next ad: "What Goes Up Doesn't Come Down. CO₂ Emissions Stay in the Atmosphere for Centuries." And they do one other thing that this advertisement mentions as well: The CO₂ emissions, when they are in the atmosphere above the oceans, react chemically with the oceans. This is a reaction that you can replicate in a high school chemistry lab. This is not debatable, negotiable science. This is known, established science. It says oceans are acidifying as a result, and they are. We measure that, and we are measuring the fastest increase in acidification in the ocean in 50 million years.

The one that follows: "Your Assets are at Risk. Beware the Carbon Bubble."

If you thought the housing bubble and crash of 2008 were bad, consider the carbon bubble: A ticking time-bomb for fossil fuel company investors.

This is why so many conservative economists want to put a "price" on carbon to speed the clean energy transition while allowing the markets to cushion and adjust.

Of course that is true. Every single conservative or Republican who has fought the climate change problem through to the solution has come to the same solution, which is a revenue-neutral price on carbon.

Here we go, the most recent ad: "The Free Market Solution to Climate Change."

The CEOs of oil giants Exxon, BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Statoil, Total, Eni, and BG Group have all called for carbon pricing. So have the leaders of [many countries around the world].

Wall Street Journal columnist Holman W. Jenkins calls a revenue-neutral carbon tax "our first-best policy, rewarding innovations by which humans would satisfy their energy needs while releasing less carbon into the atmosphere."

Those are the advertisements that have been put on the Wall Street Journal editorial page. Unfortunately, it takes people paying for space on the Wall Street Journal editorial page to get the truth about climate change told on the Wall Street Journal editorial page. These are straightforward, broadly accepted statements of the science of climate change.

So if the Wall Street Journal editorial page isn't acknowledging the views of credentialed experts, whom is it representing? Back to the Climate Nexus report, and I quote:

[T]he Wall Street Journal consistently highlights voices of those with vested interests in fossil fuels . . . presenting only the dismissive side of the climate discussion. . . . [T]hat undermines a reader's ability to effectively evaluate climate risk, objectively assess potential solutions, and balance the two.

The report calls the short shrift given to climate change "a failure of journalistic responsibility." Look at its commentary on acid rain, on the ozone layer, and on climate change—always the same, always wrong. You have to wonder what service the Wall Street Journal editorial page is providing to its readership, since its

record seems to rule out truth or balance or factuality. Maybe the short answer is that the service the Wall Street Journal editorial page is providing isn't a service to its readership.

Let's turn to the other miscreant. You might wonder as well what service the U.S. Chamber of Commerce provides to its members who have responsible climate change policies. The U.S. Chamber is the largest lobbying organization in the country, and its power in Congress is fully dedicated to stopping any serious climate legislation. Everybody here sees the Chamber's hostility to climate legislation everywhere.

My and Senator WARREN's offices recently took a look at the lobbying positions of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce compared with the positions of its own board members. With Senators BOXER, SANDERS, BROWN, MERKLEY, BLUMENTHAL, and MARKEY, we released a report on our findings. Not one of the 108 Chamber board members we contacted would endorse the U.S. Chamber's lobbying on climate change—not one. Our investigation found that roughly half of the companies represented on the Chamber's board actually have strong pro-climate action positions, which contrast sharply with the Chamber's lobbying activities.

We also found the Chamber's decisionmaking about these policies to be awfully murky. The Chamber describes its board as its "principal governing and policymaking body," but not one Chamber board member asserted that they were fully aware of and able to provide their input and views to the Chamber regarding its actions on climate. There was no sign of a board vote or any formal input. One company indicated it was "not advised of any campaigns" and was "not aware of any processes" to lobby against climate action by the Chamber of Commerce. Another company reported that "the issues raised . . . have not been discussed during the short time [it has] been a member of the organization."

The Chamber has aggressively lobbied for climate policies that are directly at odds with science, public health, public opinion, and—with the results of this recent research, it turns out—with most of its own board members. Again, the question comes, whom are they serving?

The Center for Responsive Politics—a nonprofit, nonpartisan research group that tracks money spent on elections and lobbying—found that in 2015 alone, the Chamber spent roughly \$85 million on lobbying efforts. That is more than twice the amount spent by the second highest lobbying spending organization.

Think for a moment of the progress we could make here if the Chamber's lobbying muscle actually aligned with the positions of the businesses the U.S. Chamber of Commerce purports to represent. We don't see that. Instead, we see the bullying menace of the fossil fuel industry holding sway in these

Halls. It appears to have captured the Chamber. It appears to control the Wall Street Journal editorial page.

On the other side, there is virtually zero corporate lobbying effort for a good bipartisan climate bill. The result here is not surprising. Indeed, it is quite predictable when all the artillery is on one side of a fight—all the artillery on the side of the fossil fuel industry. The result is that Members of Congress who know better are afraid to act.

Too many good companies are AWOL on climate change in Congress. Too many have farmed out their lobbying to groups like the Chamber of Commerce that actually oppose their corporate climate policies. Too many will not speak up or answer back when the Wall Street Journal editorial page purports to speak for them but emits only polluter nonsense.

Duty calls. Duty matters. It is time for private sector leaders to step up and tell Congress that those twin appendages of the fossil fuel industry do not represent corporate America on climate change. There is a change that could not come too soon.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise tonight to talk about an issue that is facing every single State represented in this Chamber and every community in America. Over the past week, we have talked about the potential Zika epidemic and the need for us to address that, and I agree, but there is another epidemic that is already here, and that is this issue of prescription drugs and heroin and the addiction that follows.

Far too many overdoses are occurring in our communities. There are people who are losing their lives. There are casualties beyond the overdose deaths. There are people who have seen their families broken apart because of the addiction, and because the drug becomes everything, they are unable to go to work.

We have seen the devastation in our communities in terms of the crime and violence connected with the drug trade, and we have seen, unfortunately, babies increasingly born with addiction. These babies are in every neonatal unit in America. I know these babies are in every one of the hospitals in my home State of Ohio. There has been a 750-percent increase in the number of these babies in the State of Ohio in the last dozen years.

It has gotten to the point where deaths from overdoses from heroin and prescription drugs, opioids, now exceed the deaths from auto accidents. It is

the No. 1 cause of accidental deaths in my home State of Ohio. Based on the latest data I have seen, I believe that is now true for our entire country. Ohio has been particularly hard hit. We are probably in the top five based on all the data I have seen. My State is probably No. 1 in the country in terms of a particular kind of overdose, a synthetic form of heroin called fentanyl. It is devastating. On average, 129 people die every day from these overdoses.

That is why this Senate, over the last 3 years, has worked hard to pull together legislation that addresses this issue. It specifically says: Let's figure out smarter and better ways to have better education, prevention, treatment, and recovery to help our law enforcement be able to deal with this problem.

We worked with 130 groups around the country, all of whom have now endorsed the legislation we spent 3 years putting together. We had five conferences here in Washington. We brought in experts from around the country. We didn't do it in a bipartisan way; we did it in a nonpartisan way. In other words, we didn't care who had the idea—Democrat, Republican, Independent. It didn't matter. What mattered was whether it was a good idea and whether it would help to address this growing epidemic we are facing in our States and around the country.

That legislation passed the U.S. Senate. It was on the floor for about 2½ weeks. There was a long debate, but at the end of that debate, after people became familiar with this issue—some of whom were already very familiar with this issue; some of whom, frankly, were not in this Chamber—many of them would go home and talk about this legislation. They learned more about it from their communities, their schools, and their firehouses. When they came back, after 2½ weeks of debate, the vote for this legislation called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, otherwise known as CARA, was not close; it was 94 to 1. That never happens around this place. It happened because we took our time, did it right, and focused on evidence-based treatment, recovery, and prevention—stuff that actually works to improve what we are doing and that was also responsible. This legislation also passed because it is such a big issue in every State and every community.

It has been 110 days since the Senate passed CARA. By the way, earlier I said that 129 people, on average, are dying every day of overdoses. That means that in those 110 days since the Senate passed the legislation, over 13,000 of our fellow Americans have succumbed and died from an overdose of opioids. Think about that. Think of those numbers.

Why isn't it done yet? It is not done yet because the House needed to move through its own process. I totally understand that. You should know that the House was part of the process for

the last 3 years. This was not just bipartisan; it was bicameral. In other words, both the House and Senate were involved. We had 130 cosponsors of the CARA legislation in the House, but the House wanted to go through their own process, and they did. They came up with 18 separate bills rather than 1 more comprehensive bill. We are now in the process of putting those together. We have 18 bills from the House and 1 from the Senate.

The conference committee has been named. Today I am happy to announce that the conference is actually going to meet on Wednesday of next week. They are going to vote on the final product. After having talked to a number of members of the conference committee today and over the past several weeks, I think it is going to be a very positive product. It will be very similar to the Senate bill in terms of being comprehensive, but it also picks up a number of good items that the House added. There is one that I particularly like. It would raise the cap on how many people can be treated with Suboxone, which is one of the ways to have medicated-assisted treatment, and in particular at the treatment center, which is a good change.

We do believe that the provisions we included in CARA over here are necessary because it is comprehensive and does include prevention and education. We think some of our prevention programs, which are not in the House, are necessary. We think that particularly on the treatment and recovery side—especially on the recovery side—there are some things that need to be added.

I get very good reports as to the progress of that conference, and I believe it will be something that I can not only support but enthusiastically support if they can stick to the blueprint they have worked on. Again, that bill will be next week. That is a positive sign.

This is the 11th time I have come to the floor of the Senate to urge them to act. We have been in session for 11 weeks since the bill passed. Every single week, I have come to the floor to talk about this, and I have the best report yet in the sense that we are moving forward.

This week I sent a letter, along with my colleagues, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and Senator AYOTTE. This letter went to the conference committee to insist that the legislation be, in fact, comprehensive, and I believe from what I am hearing that it will be—the prevention grants, the Opiate Awareness Campaign, the law enforcement task forces, the education grants to educate those who are behind bars. There were other great ideas that came from both sides of the aisle that should be included.

I must say tonight, though, that I am hearing some other troubling reports, and these have now become public, so I am going to talk about them.

The Senate passed this bill 94 to 1. It is an emergency and an epidemic in our

communities. There are 130 anti-drug groups from across the country who have endorsed this legislation. Everybody is together on this, and we worked hard to make it inclusive. Again, 13,000 Americans have died from overdoses since this legislation passed the Senate. Despite all of that, there are press reports that say the White House is encouraging us to delay. I hope that is not true, but here is the first report that I will tell you about.

National Public Radio talks about a White House meeting with some Democratic Members of Congress about potentially stalling CARA. One White House legislative aide is quoted as saying: "We need to slow down the conference enough so that the White House can bring it back to the American people. We need help in slowing it down." The piece went on to say that "Democratic members of Congress were asked to come to this meeting and they were eager to help slow it down."

Slow it down? Are you kidding? Slow it down? We should have sped it up, and we certainly can't stop now. The Senate is only in session for 2 more weeks, and then it goes out of session for the conventions and the August recess. We should have already done it. Let's not slow it down; let's speed it up.

I will tell you something else that I learned today, which I found amazing, and I hope the way I am looking at it or the way I am reading about it is not accurate. The drug czar for the United States of America is Michael Botticelli. He has testified in favor of this legislation and came to three of our five conferences and testified in favor of it. We took his ideas and input, which were very helpful. He came to the hearing in the Judiciary Committee and, in response to a question from Senator WHITEHOUSE, a leading Democrat on that committee and co-author of this legislation, said he thought this was a good bill and that it was important that it be comprehensive. He also went to New Hampshire for a hearing and said he supported the legislation in front of Senator SHAHEEN and Senator AYOTTE. He was supposed to come to Ohio but at the last minute decided he could not attend our hearing in Ohio.

I was told that yesterday he held a press briefing with Ohio reporters. I have been trying to reach him today unsuccessfully, but apparently he thought it was necessary to go to Ohio reporters to talk about this issue. Among those on the call, by the way, was at least one Democratic local official. Maybe there were a few. I am not sure because I wasn't told about the call to Ohio. I am from Ohio. I am the coauthor of the bill. In that call, he said things that led the reporters to believe that he thought CARA did not go far enough and that it wasn't the appropriate response to this epidemic.

Look, I understand there is an election every 2 years here in America, and that is fine, but I have known every

single drug czar since the first one, Bill Bennett. I have worked with every single one of them. Many of them have remained close friends. General McCaffrey was the drug czar for Bill Clinton when I authored a few pieces of legislation, such as the drug-free media campaign legislation, the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the Drug-Free Communities Support Program, which has generated over \$1.3 billion of Federal dollars—matching funds. It helps to bond more than 2,000 community coalitions, including a community coalition in my hometown that I founded over 20 years ago.

I have been at this for a long time in terms of addressing this issue of drug addiction and drug abuse, and I worked with every single one of the drug czars. I have never seen them be partisan, ever.

I am very disappointed to hear these press reports about the White House wanting to delay. I am now, of course, very disappointed to hear that the drug czar is out there saying negative things about the CARA legislation when he, in fact, was part of putting it together. He, in fact, testified in favor of it. I don't understand that. I don't get it.

Let's put politics aside and actually get something done. Perhaps some of the parents who come to me and tell me about having lost a son or a daughter need to talk to some other Members of the Congress and of the administration who think this is somehow a political game. This is about saving lives. It is about saving people from ruining their lives. It is about helping people to be able to achieve their God-given purpose.

Our legislation is incredibly important. I mentioned some of the specifics of it. It does have grant programs that we know work. It has evidence-based programs. It includes medication treatment that works better. We know there are a lot of relapses, and we are trying to get the money into things that actually work. But it is bigger than that. It is about changing our attitude about this issue here in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. I would think that anybody who follows this closely—certainly someone who is the head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy—would get that.

This legislation begins to treat addiction like a disease that needs to be treated just like other diseases. Even if we didn't have \$100 million of new funding in here, even if we didn't have all of these new specific grant programs and things we know work, like veterans courts and drug courts and all the recovery grant money that goes out, including to high school and colleges for recovery groups that work, it would be significant just because it establishes this new approach, saying that addiction is not a moral failure, addiction is a disease. Through this, we hope to wipe away the stigma so people do come forward and get treatment. It will help families who won't talk about the disease feel comfortable in saying:

You have a problem, and we are going to support you. We are going to get you into treatment so you can pull your life, your family, and communities back together. That is what this legislation is about.

This is an authorization bill. It is not a spending bill. Everybody who follows this process knows that. Apparently the concern that has been raised is, well, there is not enough additional appropriated money in here. Well, this is not an appropriations bill.

By the way, the Appropriations Committee, at the urging of those of us who coauthored this legislation, have increased the funding substantially this year, and they have made a commitment in the subcommittee and the full committee to have a 93-percent increase in funding for this next year.

As I said, this authorizes about \$100 million more every year going forward in our legislation as well, but frankly I think the appropriations ought to be greater than that. This is an emergency, but we are going down the right track there with these appropriations commitments that have been made. We need to be sure we have that commitment all the way to the final spending bills this year because we do need to have adequate funding, particularly to make sure everybody who wants treatment can get it.

I had a tele-townhall meeting this week, where 25,000 people were on the call at one time. It was a big group of people. As usual, people talked about terrorism, they talked about jobs and the economy, but three different people called in on this drug abuse issue. Two of them were recovering addicts, one was a parent. They talked about the worth of the legislation, the importance of treatment, the importance for us to deal with this issue. They talked about the fact that this knows no ZIP Code, it is not an inner city problem, it is not a suburban problem; it is everywhere.

I spoke to a woman named Leigh from Zanesville, OH. She told me she is now in recovery. She volunteers at prisons and told me that most of the prisoners there are also drug users. We talked about the CARA recovery provisions. They include critical resources to develop recovery and support services, individuals and families. We talked about the fact that in this legislation we have grants that can go to prisons to deal with this substance abuse issue in prison so when people get out, they have had the treatment to be able to get their lives back together and get out of that revolving door of the criminal justice system, where more than half of the people who get out are right back in again within a few years.

I talked to a man named John from Grove City. He told me he lost his son on June 1, just a few weeks ago, to an overdose of heroin laced with synthetic drugs. I expressed my condolences to him and his family, but I also thanked him for calling and for his willingness,

in front of 25,000 people, to talk about this issue. He was very plainspoken. He said: My son was addicted to heroin for 5 years. "It meant more to him than his family; it meant more to him than anything."

Unfortunately, there are fathers and mothers all over the State of Ohio who are experiencing what John had to experience with his son. He wants us to pass this legislation because he thinks it is going to help, and it will.

I think those who are addicted, those families who are being affected by this have been very patient. They are looking for more help from Washington, and they deserve it. Washington is not going to solve this problem. It is going to be solved in our communities, in our families, and in our hearts. But Washington can help and be a better partner, take the existing funds we are spending and spend them more wisely to actually affect the number of people who get addicted in the first place with better prevention and through better education, and then for those who are addicted, better treatment and recovery; help them get back on their feet.

Washington can help. That is what this legislation does. It is making Washington a better partner with State and local government and the nonprofits that are in the trenches doing the hard work every day.

I hope these reports I am hearing about delay and these tactics that are being used, unbelievably, by the administration to somehow make it appear as though this legislation isn't what they said it was back when they helped put it together and when they testified in favor of it—I hope that is just a distraction, and I hope people understand the significance of getting this done and getting it done now. It is already past time. We can't wait.

Again, people have been patient. It is now time for the U.S. Congress to face this issue, to address it through legislation that went through here with a 94-to-1 vote, to send it to the President for his signature and, more importantly, to send it to our communities around our country to begin to help turn the tide, save lives, and bring back hope.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

RUSSIA

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise to express my concern about troubling new developments in Russia. Russia's Parliament, the Federal Assembly, has just approved so-called antiterrorism legislation that actually criminalizes free speech and that attacks religious liberty. If President Putin signs this legislation into law in the coming weeks, it will be illegal for Christians to share their faith outside of the church building, as if faith is constrained by the four walls of a structure and belief by a single day of the week on the calendar.

In some ways, sadly, this isn't a surprise. There is a lot that is wrong with

Russia. We are witnessing a rising authoritarianism in a declining State—a rising authoritarianism in a declining State.

Moscow routinely tramples on the rights of the press, tramples on assembly, speech, on dissent, and on national sovereignty. Ask the families of murdered journalists. Ask the student groups facing intimidation. Ask the political dissidents who fear imprisonment. Ask the Ukrainian people who fear being fully overrun.

Why is this happening? Because Putin and his cronies think they can make Russia great again by hoarding wealth, by abusing power, and by crushing any and all dissent and opposition. They strike the pose of a strong man, but this is not real strength.

True strength is rooted in virtue: selflessness and sacrifice on behalf of the weak and the oppressed. Mr. Putin is driven by cheap imitation and intimidation, more akin to bullying; vice masquerading as virtue.

We know Russia's offenses are many and egregious. At the same time, Americans well understand it is not our national calling, nor is it within our power, to attempt to right every wrong in a broken world, but we should be clear about what is happening, as well as the fact that there is no easy fix. It is naive to hope Russia can be reformed with a reset button or with promises of future flexibility. Instead, we need to begin telling the truth about an increasingly aggressive actor on the global stage.

Again, let me be explicit. The United States does not have a solemn obligation to try to make the entire world free, but we absolutely do have an obligation to speak on behalf of those who are made speechless in the dark corners of this globe.

This Russian law would be an affront to free people everywhere, at home and abroad, who believe the rights of conscience—the rights of free speech and the freedom of religion and the freedom of assembly—are pre-political.

These freedoms do not ebb and flow with history. These freedoms do not rise and fall with the political fortunes of a despot. Governments do not give us these rights and governments cannot take these rights away. These rights of free speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly belong to every man, woman, and child because all of us are image-bearers of our Creator.

I am speaking tonight because this new Russian legislation is emblematic of a growing destructive nationalism and of a thirst for power that cannot be ignored. Putin has a desire to squeeze down on civil society, on other venues for discussion and debate, and on other institutions outside of politics where human dignity can and should be expressed. He does this and he desires this not because he is strong but because he is weak.

We in this body, without regard to political party and representing all 50

States, must be sober and clear-eyed about Russia. We must become more sober and clearer-eyed about its intimidations and about its hostilities and about its dangerous trajectory.

We have a duty to be telling the truth early about where this may be headed.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 473, 596, 601, 602, 603, 651, with no other executive business in order.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Daniel B. Maffei, of New York, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2017; Rebecca F. Dye, of North Carolina, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2020; Mary Beth Leonard, of Massachusetts, to be Representative of the United States of America to the African Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; Geeta Pasi, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Chad; Anne S. Casper, of Nevada, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Burundi; and Michael A. Khouri, of Kentucky, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2021.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. SASSE. I know of no further debate on the nominations and ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc.

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

There being no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Maffei, Dye, Leonard Pasi, Casper, and Khouri nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. SASSE. I ask unanimous consent that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate