

NIH maintains a strong pipeline of researchers so that the critical work toward scientific discovery can continue.

This is not a partisan issue. Health and disease research is a bipartisan issue, and so we need to come together to support this consistent and robust funding. Even now, NIH is engaged in developing a prevention tool against the disease that was the dominant conversation last summer—the Zika virus. They are going into their first trials on a vaccine. Zika has affected more than 1,000 people in my State of Florida alone and more than 30,000 people in Puerto Rico. We need a vaccine, but the process of FDA trials takes time.

Now, just to prove that it is not confined to Puerto Rico and Florida, just yesterday the State of Texas reported the first case of locally transmitted Zika virus, which now makes it the second State to officially have local transmission after the State of Florida.

The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Frieden, said that Zika could become endemic within our U.S. border, making it more important now than ever to have the Zika vaccine. That is just one other little example of what has been going on at NIH.

We are just about to consider a Cures bill, which has some more robust funding. The whole impetus for the Cures bill was NIH funding. A lot of other things had been attached. There is some controversy, but it would begin to authorize funding that would be stable over a 10-year period. If the United States is going to continue to be looked at as the leader of medical research around the world, we are going to have to provide for the funds for this great institution. We have already seen major breakthroughs in our lifetime, and this funding will help us to see some new incredible breakthroughs accomplished. You have heard of the Moonshot for cancer research. Look at the existing victories that have already been had in cancer research. We are now just on the cusp. What about diseases where we don't have a cure, such as ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis?

A big reason for my making this speech is for my friend Evan in Jacksonville. He is afflicted with this disease that affects the body's motor nerves. There is something that happens in the brain that does not send the signals all the way through the neurological system to the motor nerves. We first identified that in a famous baseball player, Lou Gehrig. There are 20,000 to 30,000 people in the country afflicted with this disease. We still don't know the reason for it nor have a cure, but yesterday I talked to three different physician scientists who have very promising leads for identifying a gene that has a direct connection to what happens in the brain when someone has ALS. They are trying to determine whether we could go in and clip out that gene so that our progeny would not have this concern.

We have seen what has happened in Alzheimer's. Did you see the 60 Minutes segment last Sunday in which there is this incredible space in Colombia, near Medellin, within a 100-mile diameter, where so many families get the onset of Alzheimer's during their forties, which is quite unusual. They have now identified a protein in the brain where, if you now know the gene that causes that protein, you could go ahead and alert people of the disease, and even though the effects of Alzheimer's has not come on, that person could start a therapy that would work against that protein in the brain. They are right on the cusp of these kinds of exciting discoveries that can help us to live healthier, longer lives.

I implore my colleagues in the Senate not to short-sheet the NIH and the funding that it so desperately needs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss legislation I introduced to eliminate the Electoral College and ensure that the candidate who wins the most votes will be elected President. Clearly, this has nothing to do with this past election. There are recounts going on, and we will see where that goes, but the bottom line is that this looks to the future.

The Presidency is the only office in America where the candidate who wins the most votes can still lose the election. There isn't any elected office in the Nation, be it county, city, State, or national level, where this is true. The person who gets more votes—one person, one vote—wins, but that is not true in the Presidential election.

I realized how little sense this made many years ago, but when I tried to explain it to my grandkids after this election, they said: Grandma, who won? Well, I told them, Donald Trump. Well, wait a minute, didn't Mrs. Clinton get more votes? Yes.

What if we did that in sports? I am a major basketball fan. What if the team that got the most points didn't win? What if that happened? What would people think? Well, why not? Well, because not everybody on the team touched the ball, therefore—even though they won by 40 points—they don't win.

This doesn't make sense. This is an outdated system that does not reflect democracy, and it violates the principle of one person, one vote. Every single American, regardless of what State they live in, should be guaranteed that their individual vote matters. Throughout our great history, we have had—this is the 45th President—five elections where the winner of the general election did not win the popular vote, but in our lifetime it has happened twice. We have had two in the last 16 years, and so it really needs to be addressed. This is more than an

anomaly. It looks like it could happen one way or the other. We don't know if a Republican or a Democrat gets seated.

Right now, Hillary Clinton's lead in the popular vote is 2.3 million votes. It is expected that she will win by probably more than 2.7 million votes. That would be more than the votes cast in Alaska, Delaware, Washington, DC, Hawaii, Vermont, and the Dakotas combined. We are not talking about a few votes; we are talking about 2.7 million votes—more than the votes cast in Alaska, Delaware, Washington, DC, Hawaii, Vermont, and the Dakotas combined. Clinton would have won the popular vote by a wider margin than not only Al Gore in 2000, but Richard Nixon in 1968 and John Kennedy in 1960.

In 2012 Donald Trump said, "The electoral college is a disaster for democracy." I couldn't agree more. I don't agree with too much of what Donald Trump says, but I sure agree with that. He said, "The electoral college is a disaster for democracy."

After the election, his views did not change:

"You know, I'm not going to change my mind just because I won. But I would rather see it where you went with simple votes."

These are all quotes of his.

"You know, you get 100 million votes and somebody else gets 90 million votes and you win."

After he said that, I think his advisers went a little nuts because by the next morning, he tweeted that the electoral college system was "actually genius." Then he also tweeted this, which was very interesting: "If the election were based on the total popular vote, I would have campaigned in New York, Florida, and California and won even bigger and more easily."

OK. Maybe that is true. Maybe that is true. His point is well-taken.

Presidential candidates should campaign in every single State. Actually, if we got rid of the electoral college, candidates would have to campaign in every State because the vote of every American would matter regardless of where they live. If you get all the popular vote in one State, you will add to your popular vote at the end.

According to nationalpopularvote.com, 94 percent of campaigning by the Presidential candidates in 2016 took place in 12 States—12 States. That was it. Two-thirds of these general election campaign events took place in six States.

In 2015 Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin said: "The nation as a whole is not going to elect the next president. Twelve states are." Just think about that. "The nation as a whole is not going to elect the next president."

He was right when he said that in 2015. He was right.

So what message does that send to the people who live in the populous States, like my State, where 39 million Americans live? What message does that send to the 27 million Americans who live in Texas? What message does

that send to the smaller States, like North Dakota and Rhode Island, where the candidates don't even bother to campaign for the votes because they are either blue or red? They are not purple, so they don't matter. No wonder voter turnout was just 58 percent in this election. Too many Americans don't believe their vote matters because they are told: Oh, you live in a red State. It is going to Trump. Even if you are for Trump, just stay home.

It is ridiculous. Maybe that person really wanted to vote, but they are convinced that if they live in a bright red State like Alabama, they don't have to vote because it is going for Trump, and if they are for Hillary Clinton and they live in a reliably blue State, they may think: Well, you know what, I am not interested. Why should I bother? My State is blue. What is the difference?

So we have a 58-percent voter turnout. It is altogether ridiculous. Political science experts agree that too many Americans feel their vote doesn't count. It just doesn't count.

Listen to Doug McAdam, professor of sociology at Stanford University, who asked, "What about all those citizens who live in noncompetitive states?"

He makes my point:

"Consider the loyal Republican who lives in California or the stalwart Mississippi Democrat? Every four years, voting for them is an exercise in political powerlessness, at least when it comes to the presidential race."

What is the difference? Hillary is going to win by so much. Don't worry about it.

But if we were using the popular vote, believe me, every Republican would get out and every Democrat would get out and every Independent would get out because their vote would count.

Every 4 years, a lot of people in different States feel their vote doesn't matter. They feel powerless when it comes to the Presidential race—the only race in the country where the winner doesn't win, maybe. The winner doesn't win. It is crazy. I looked all over to find another example where this is true; it is not true.

William Crotty, professor emeritus of political science at Northeastern University, said that the electoral college "has never worked well. The fact is that it is a terrible system that has no place in an age where democracy is ascendant. It continues to exist from sheer inertia and the protection of entrenched power. It has little to do with democracy."

Well, everybody knows I didn't run again for the Senate. I have a fabulous replacement coming. But I did drop this bill to do away with the electoral college because I am still a Senator, I am still here, and I will be darned if I am going to let this thing pass.

Listen to a professor of law at Fordham University, John Feerick:

"Not only have reasons for the Electoral College long since vanished but the institu-

tion has not fulfilled the design of the framers. Today it represents little more than an archaic and undemocratic counting device. There is no good reason for retaining such a formula of electing the president of the United States."

Well, I also saw a poll which shows that 62 percent of the people in this country, regardless of party, think we should do away with it and go to a system where the winner wins. How unique—the winner wins and the loser loses. That is the way it should be in the greatest democracy in the country.

Try explaining this to your kids and grandkids. I am telling you, if they are about 11 or 12, explain what happened.

I know changing the system won't be easy. I have been around a long time. I have spent more than half of my life in politics in elected office. So we understand that the legislation would need to be enacted by Congress and would only take effect after being ratified by three-quarters of the States within 7 years after its passage. This is very difficult. This is a constitutional amendment. So I am not naive, and I understand what we are talking about.

But there is another way to address this; it is called the National Popular Vote plan. It would guarantee that the Presidential candidate who wins the most votes would win the election and be the President, whether it is Donald Trump getting the most votes or Hillary Clinton getting the most votes, et cetera. All it requires is for enough States to act. It is an interstate compact where the States would agree to award their electoral votes to the Presidential candidate who wins the popular vote.

So in California, where we have a number of electoral votes, if Donald Trump wins, they go to Donald Trump regardless of how our State voted. In other words, the votes are counted and then the States give their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote—pretty simple. So you still have the electoral college, but the result is that the votes are given to the person who wins the national popular vote. The agreement takes effect only once the participating States together hold a majority of electoral votes; that is, 270 out of 538 electoral votes.

So far, the National Popular Vote bill has been enacted into law by 10 States and the District of Columbia, adding up to 165 electoral votes. The legislation has been introduced in every State in the country, and it has support on both sides of the aisle because electing the person who wins is the democratic way.

Trump supporter Newt Gingrich wrote a letter in 2014 endorsing the idea. He wrote:

"No one should become president of the United States without speaking to the needs and hopes of Americans in all 50 States. . . . America would be better served with a presidential election process that treated citizens across the country equally."

Former Republican Congressman Bob Barr said:

"Only when the election process is given back to all of the people of all the states will

we be able to choose a President based on what is best for all 50 states and not just a select few."

I will make a point that I don't agree with Newt Gingrich on pretty much anything except this. This is rare. Newt Gingrich said Medicare should wither on the vine. He called Democrats traitors. Believe me, I served with him, I know. And his ethical standards don't meet what I think the standards should be. But setting that aside, here we are on the same side.

"No one should become president of the United States without speaking to the needs and hopes of Americans in all 50 States. . . . America would be better served with a presidential election process that treats citizens across the country equally."

I urge my colleagues to take a close look at the legislation I have introduced, and I urge State legislators and Governors around the country to take a close look at the National Popular Vote bill.

Again, I am going to be honest, it is really hard to pass a constitutional amendment. I am not naive about it. But to pass a law in various States isn't that hard. That should be done. The American people can help. I ask them to call their Senators and Members of Congress about our bill. There is a bill in the House being introduced by CHARLIE RANGEL to do away with the electoral college—very simple—and just let the popular vote stand. Ask them to sign on to this bill, but don't stop there. Write and call your representatives in the State house and push for your State to sign on to the interstate compact.

A lot of people have come up to me after this election and said: You know, I don't feel my voice is heard, period.

This is one of the reasons. Well, make your voice heard on either getting rid of the electoral college or the State compact where the State would give its votes to the winner of the national popular vote.

Voting is the cornerstone of democracy. We have had men and women through the decades die for the right to vote. Many generations of Americans of every gender, race, religion, and ideology have marched and struggled and died to secure this fundamental freedom. Yet we have a system where the winner can lose.

We owe it to the American people who have given so much for the right to vote to make sure that every vote matters and every vote counts. We owe it to them to ensure that the vote of a citizen in my State is worth the same as a vote of someone in a swing State. We owe it to every Republican voter and every Democratic voter and every Independent voter, every Green Party voter—whatever the party—to have that vote count. One person, one vote is the cornerstone of democracy.

By making this critical change where the winner of the popular vote wins and every citizen's vote counts regardless of who they are, where they live, whether they are a Republican, Democrat, or a decline-to-state or Green or

whatever party they choose, we would then be engaging voters in every single State. We will lift voter turnouts. We will ensure that every Presidential candidate speaks to the needs of Americans in every State and every region. We will ensure equal representation for all.

You know, sometimes I come down here and I talk about issues that are very controversial. I must tell you, if you ask anyone on the street “Do you think the winner of the popular vote should win the Presidency?” I would say a very strong majority would say “Of course.” If you ask them “Do you know of any office in the land, whether it is Governor, mayor, supervisor, city council, sewer board, sanitation district, you name it, where the winner doesn’t win?” they will say “No, I can’t think of any.” You know what, there are none. So why not do the simple thing and the right thing and the just thing and make sure that the winner of the popular vote is sworn in as our President. I think this will be a huge boon for every single voter in this greatest of all countries.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I noticed the majority leader has given us all notice that, after consultation with the Democratic leader, he intends to bring up the Iran Sanctions Act, H.R. 6297. I point out that this legislation passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 419 to 1.

It is legislation that would extend the Iran Sanctions Act that was passed by this Congress that is set to expire at the end of this year. Let me repeat that. The Iran Sanctions Act, which was enacted originally in 1996—if no action is taken before the end of December, that sanction authorization legislation would expire.

This is our last opportunity to extend the Iran Sanctions Act before it is scheduled to expire at the end of December. It was passed in 1996 by a unanimous vote of this body. Its goal was to deny Iran the ability to be able to have financial support for its nuclear proliferation. Congress had passed several bills that provided sanction opportunities by the administration to impose sanctions in order to get Iran to change its behavior, its illegal activities in pursuing a nuclear weapon, which was against U.S. security interests, destabilizing for the entire region, threatened Israel, threatened the neighboring states. It was, I think, the unanimous view of our body that we had to take whatever steps were possible to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapon power.

The legislation we passed, including the Iran Sanctions Act, allowed the Obama administration to move forward with sanctions against Iran, and they rigorously enforced the sanctions they

imposed. I want to acknowledge the work done by the Obama administration in enforcing those sanctions that we gave our authorization to impose.

But the Obama administration went further than that. They then garnered international support to also impose and support the sanctions that we had imposed in the United States, which was strong enough to get Iran to recognize that they had to come to the negotiating table. Clearly, the sanctions were the motivating factor that allowed for the negotiations of the nuclear agreement that was agreed to 2 years ago.

This legislation is pretty simple. It extends for 10 years the Iran Sanctions Act that was used by the administration and in which we have a temporary—we have relief granted under that law as long as Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. The nuclear agreement, JCPOA, specifically provides for the snapback of sanctions in the event that Iran violates the provisions of the agreement.

In order to have snapbacks, you have to have the sanction regime in place. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to extend the sanction authorization. This does not impose any new sanctions on Iran. That it does not. It is not in violation of the JCPOA. It just allows us to have effective enforcement to make sure Iran complies with their commitments. I want to underscore that point. During the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, I had a chance to ask the administration’s witness, Secretary Lew, that specific question. I asked Secretary Lew—this question was asked July 23, 2015. I said to the witness:

The Iran Sanctions Act expires at the end of 2016. We will still be in the JCPOA a period of time where snapback of sanctions is a viable hedge against Iran’s cheating. Congress may well want to extend that law so that power is available immediately if Iran were to violate the agreement. Is that permitted under the JCPOA?

The answer from Secretary Lew:

I think that if it is on expiration, it is one thing. If it is well in advance, it is another. I think the idea of coming out of the box right now is very different from what you would do when it expires.

Well, we are doing exactly what the administration asked us to do. We have held off for over—now it has been over 15 months, 16 months that we have held off before we have taken action to extend the Iran Sanctions Act. If we don’t take action now, the authority given by Congress in the 1996 act, which would empower the snapbacks if needed, would not be available. So it is timely for us to act. It is totally consistent with the JCPOA and is not at all inconsistent with our responsibilities under that legislation.

I think, though, that we should have a little bit of a discussion as to what we do moving forward. I should point out that the Iran Sanctions Act, H.R. 6297, is identical to S. 3281, legislation I filed with 19 of my colleagues earlier this year. So I think this enjoys strong

bipartisan support, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Now, looking forward—I did not support the JCPOA. I did not support that agreement for various reasons, but it went into effect. I must tell my colleagues, I think it would be tragic if the United States unilaterally walked away from the Iran nuclear agreement. What that would do is give the ability to Iran to pursue a nuclear weapons program without inspectors on the ground to let us know what they were doing. They would be able to pursue that, knowing full well that the international community would not be unified in regard to sanctions against Iran. Yes, we would impose sanctions, but our allies around the world would no longer be obligated to follow that, since it was the United States pulling out of the agreement.

Many of those countries already have arrangements, and it would be very difficult to see that they would follow U.S. leadership. In fact, one of the adverse impacts of the United States walking away from the Iran agreement would be that we would lose our standing as an international leader, bringing the international community together to isolate Iran. Instead, we would be isolating the United States. That is not in our national security interest.

So what should we do? Well, as I said earlier, the first step is to pass H.R. 6297 so that we have all of the tools in place. Secondly, let us all join together to rigorously enforce the Iran agreement, the JCPOA. We need to do that. We need to make sure that every part of that agreement is adhered to, including making sure Iran never becomes a nuclear weapons state. We need to continue the use of sanctions on Iran’s nonnuclear nefarious activities.

They are still a sponsor of terrorism. We all know that. I was recently in the Middle East. I had a chance to talk to a lot of our strategic partners. They tell me about Iran’s activities in their region, how they are supporting efforts to destabilize other sovereign states in the Middle East. They are supporting terrorism.

We also know that they have expanded their ballistic program. That is in contravention to their international obligations. We can impose sanctions and continue to strengthen sanctions against Iran in regard to those activities. They are violating the human rights of the citizens of their own country. We can take actions there.

There are areas where we can continue to work with the international community to deal with Iran’s nefarious activities. We should do that. I would just call to my colleagues’ attention that several—actually in October of 2015, I introduced S. 2119, along with several of my colleagues, so that the Congress would be in a better position to carry out rigorous enforcement of the JCPOA and to take on Iran, working with our partners, in regard to their other activities.