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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we lift our hearts to You. You are the source of our strength. You are our hope for tomorrow. Continue to show our lawmakers the path where they should walk, leading them to Your desired destination. Lord, inspire them to continuously put their hope in You. As they remember Your unfailing love and compassion, remind them that nothing is impossible to those who believe.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2311, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 294, S. 2311, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

If no one yields time, then time will be charged equally.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the odds are quite good that when this Republican-controlled Congress closes up shop in December, time spent attacking the healthcare of women is going to be right up at the top of how this Congress spent their day. They are back at it again, and this latest attack that we will be discussing this week goes after women's essential healthcare decisions.

In my view—and I want to be very clear about this point—this is another key part of the Trump agenda of healthcare discrimination. This time, it is going after women. This entire agenda is what the Republicans are doing their best to blast through the Congress into law. It is not just a one-off, either.

So I am going to spend a few minutes now to put this particular health proposal that discriminates against women in the appropriate kind of context. To do that, I think it is important to describe what has happened on healthcare since day one of the Trump administration.

The administration and Republicans in Congress came right out of the gate with legislation that would have deprived hundreds of thousands of women of the right to see the doctor of their choosing. There was another attack on Planned Parenthood that completely ignored the fact that the Congress already regulates what these trusted healthcare providers can and cannot spend public funds on. What Planned Parenthood does use public funding for are vital healthcare services that have absolutely nothing to do with abortion. Let me just make sure people understand what I am talking about. We are talking about cancer screenings, prenatal care, preventive services, routine physicals, and more.

I have townhall meetings in every county in our State. I have had more than 860 of them. The vast amount of terrain in Oregon is rural. When I go to those small communities and the least populated areas of our State, that is what people tell me they go to Planned Parenthood for—to get those basic essentials, ranging from cancer screenings to routine physicals. That is what women would lose with this Trump agenda of healthcare discrimination.

Next up, given the way the year and a little bit longer has evolved, is the ongoing attempt by the Trump administration to deny women guaranteed no-cost access to contraception. This is one of the most popular healthcare policies in recent memory. There are a lot of reasons why this is smart, not just because it is a matter of fairness for all women to have access to birth control. When women have access to contraception, it means healthier pregnancies and healthier newborns. It also reduces the risk of cancer among women.

You can also look at it in terms of dollars and cents. When you take away no-cost contraception, you are essentially taxing women based on their gender. You are driving up the cost of their routine healthcare. It flies in the face of everything my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say about the problems of healthcare costs in America.

So those are strikes one and two: denying women the right to see the doctor of their choosing and making it harder for them to access contraception. Now the Senate is debating

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

whether to throw a matter of settled law out the window with a hyperpartisan ban on abortion after 20 weeks.

My view on abortion throughout my time in public service is it ought to be safe, it ought to be legal, and it ought to be rare. I have supported a whole host of policies that bring both sides of the aisle together.

The Presiding Officer is fairly new to the Senate Finance Committee and is looking to be involved in a host of issues. My guess is, he will be very interested in the adoption tax credit concept which I and others have championed for some time, something that brings both sides together.

So my view is, abortion, safe, legal, and rare; find ways to bring both sides together; and respect that the Federal Government ought to leave women alone on these most intimate decisions that involve women, their spouses, and their healthcare providers.

The proposal the Senate is now debating is all about telling women what they can and cannot do. It criminalizes healthcare services that ought to stay between women and their doctors—healthcare services often necessitated by potentially life-threatening complications.

I just, for the life of me, don't see the wisdom of a lawmaker or a bureaucrat in Washington, DC, or a State capital telling a woman how severe the danger to her life has to become before she is legally allowed to make this variably gut-wrenching decision to choose an abortion.

This issue has been settled law in America for 45 years. The debate should be over, but here it is again, along with these other policies I have just described, as part of the Trump administration's healthcare discrimination agenda which is particularly punitive against women.

Let me also recognize the biggest victims under this discriminatory agenda are women who walk an economic tightrope every single day. If their local Planned Parenthood clinic is forced to close its doors, they may not have the ability to take time off work and travel long distances to see another provider for routine healthcare. They already balance every day the food against the rent, the rent against electricity, electricity against gas. Take away these choices, like no-cost contraception, and make their struggle to get ahead that much harder—especially when the rate of unintended pregnancy is five times higher among women living in poverty—folks who may not be able to afford a plane ticket or even a bus ticket to somewhere where they can find the essential healthcare services they believe are necessary.

There are serious, genuine healthcare challenges that face the country. Millions of Americans get clobbered every single time they walk up to a pharmacy window and get pounded by the cost of prescription drugs. That is the kind of bipartisan debate looking for solutions.

Another example is the opioid epidemic raging from one end of the country to the other. More than half a million lives lost in the last two decades, countless families and entire communities torn apart. The Congress and the Trump administration haven't done nearly enough to fight the crisis and, frankly, not anywhere near close to what was promised in the fall of 2016.

Instead of taking on these challenges, the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are just full steam ahead with this agenda of healthcare discrimination; this week, an attack on women and their healthcare choices. Passing this bill is going to make it harder for women to be in a position to make the healthcare choices they believe are important—maybe essential—for their lives.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise to urge each of my colleagues to support the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This critical legislation would prohibit a child from being aborted at 5 months of development.

For those we have watching today, I would like you to focus a little bit on these photos, and I will return to them in a moment.

Again, I am urging my colleagues to support the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. By any measure, at 5 months of development, an unborn child is a child. At 5 months, babies have grown nails on their fingers and on their toes; hair has just begun to grow on their heads; and an ultrasound can tell an expectant mother or father whether their baby is a boy or a girl. These babies can detect light, hear sounds, they can swallow, and even experience taste as their taste buds grow and develop. These unborn babies in all ways are babies.

There is also significant scientific evidence that at 5 months of development these babies can feel pain. By 5 months, babies begin to respond to painful stimulus with distinctive pain response behaviors that are exhibited by older babies. They will scrunch their eyes, they will clench their hands, they pull back their limbs in response to pain, just like any other child experiencing pain.

There is also a great deal of evidence that stress hormone levels rise substantially when babies at this age are exposed to pain. In 2015, a Cambridge University Press medical textbook acknowledged that a ''fetus . . . becomes capable of experiencing pain between 20 and 30 weeks of gestation.'' In fact, fetal surgeons routinely administer pain medications for babies after only 4 months of development. Doctors are giving babies pain medication after 4 months of development.

As modern medicine has recognized, these babies are humans capable of experiencing pain. Yet there is no Federal law protecting these vulnerable humans from abortions. As a result, every year in our country the lives of thousands of babies end painfully through abortion. This is unacceptable. The majority of men and women across the Nation agree with this premise. According to a recent Marist poll, 6 out of 10 Americans surveyed support a law prohibiting abortion after 5 months of pregnancy.

Additionally, multiple States, including my home State of Iowa, have passed legislation that would prohibit abortions after 5 months of development because these babies are babies. There is no way to deny the humanity of these children when you consider stories like that of Micah Pickering.

Micah is from Newton, IA. He is a very young friend of mine. He is 5 years old. Just a few weeks ago on the floor of the Senate I was able to share Micah's story. As you may recall, Micah was born at just 20 weeks postfertilization—the very point at which the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act would begin to protect these young lives. Today, Micah is a very happy, very energetic little 5-year-old. Now, I would like to go back to these pictures.

When I first met Micah, he was about 3 years old. He and his parents visited my office for the annual March for Life. I had this poster made of these pictures, and they were in my office because I was going to speak on the Senate floor in support of March for Life. Micah is pictured on the right side of the poster board. Micah, a happy, energetic little boy saw this poster board in my office, and he ran up to it—imagine, this beautiful 3-year-old boy—and he pointed not at the picture of himself as he was at 3 years old, but he pointed to this picture, and he said: Baby. I said: Yes, Micah, that is a baby.

This is Micah when he was born. Micah at 3 years old understood that this was a baby. He didn't understand that was him when he was born, but he understood that was a baby.

If you look at the picture, you will see Micah is grasping his mama and daddy's hands with five perfectly formed little fingers on each hand. It is a baby, folks. Micah knew that. While he might not have known that was him when he was born, he knew that was a baby—5 months of gestation.

Today, Micah is a happy, extraordinarily healthy young boy. I got to see him again this last year. Again, he was running around my office, just full of energy and life.

Yes, Micah, this is a baby. I agree.

Micah's story is not an isolated incident. Extraordinary stories of babies who are surviving after just 5 months of development can be found all around the world.

A little over a year ago, Dakota Harris was born in Ohio at 19 weeks of development—even younger than Micah. Last May, she left the hospital with her family as a healthy 7-pound baby.

In 2016, baby Aharon was born at 20 weeks of development, becoming the youngest premature baby to survive in Israel. After 5 months of care at a hospital in Tel Aviv, he was able to go home, again, as a healthy baby.

In 2010, Frieda Mangold, who was born in Germany at just under 20 weeks of development, became Europe's youngest premature baby to survive. After receiving intensive care, she too was able to go home with her family as a happy 7-pound baby.

Babies have been on record as surviving birth after just 5 months of development for three decades now—three decades. What greater evidence do you need that at 5 months of development, an unborn child in every way is a child?

Despite the clear evidence of the humanity of these children, the United States is one of only seven countries in the world to allow abortions after 5 months of development. That means that while an overwhelming majority of the world recognizes and protects the humanity of these vulnerable children, the United States keeps the company of countries like China and North Korea. They deny unborn children the most basic of protections. This is not who we are as a nation.

It is time we listen to the scientific evidence, the men and women across America, and a majority of the rest of the world. There should be no disagreement when it comes to protecting the life of an unborn child who can feel pain and, as the inspiring stories of Micah Pickering and others show, survive outside of the womb. It is up to us to ensure these children have the chance to grow up and lead the happy, healthy lives that God has granted them.

As a mother and a grandmother, I am urging my colleagues to support the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which recognizes these unborn babies as the children they are and provides them the same protection from pain and suffering that all of our children deserve.

For my dear little friend Micah, I would say: Yes, Micah, this is a baby, and we are glad to have you here.

God bless him.

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.

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

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

If no one yields time, the time shall be charged equally.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am here to talk about a vote we will be considering later this afternoon on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

I thank Senator GRAHAM and my fellow cosponsors on the bill. I think it is a very important bill. I think it is a balanced bill as it is a bill that has the support of the vast majority of the American citizens and would make us consistent with all but only seven other nations in terms of restricting abortions to a limited number of exceptions after 20 weeks. Those exceptions would be a threat to the life of the mother, someone who may have been raped, or someone who may have been the victim of incest.

This is a balanced bill, and it is a policy that most of the world population agrees should be in place. I think it is our job to make sure this restriction is put into place, with medical science today suggesting that after 20 weeks an unborn child can experience pain, while still allowing for the choice of the mother. We could discuss different opinions about that in the earlier terms but certainly after 20 weeks. I think this is balanced policy and is something I hope my colleagues will support and ultimately send to the President's desk.

I was speaker of the house in North Carolina for 4 years. We worked on commonsense changes to protect the lives of the unborn, changes that also received the support of the majority of North Carolinians. This is just another example of where we at the Federal level can enact a law that I think can help us to demonstrate that the life of the unborn is a precious life. We as Members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Congress are tasked with making sure we protect all lives in America. This is just a very important, precious, helpless part of the population. I, for one, think this is a great, modest step forward, and I encourage all of the Members to support it.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last week marked the 45th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, but many of us were not celebrating because last week gave us another opportunity to consider the real damage caused by the Supreme Court decision, which even liberal scholars have now said is flawed in the type of damage it has done to the social fabric of our Nation over the last four and a half decades.

During this period of time, more than 50 million unborn children in America have been denied the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—50 million. In other parts of the world, unborn children have been killed by the sheer fact that they happen to be girls instead of boys or because one has a disability like Down syndrome.

For me, Roe v. Wade hits close to home because I come from the State where the lead plaintiff was living at the time of that now famous lawsuit. Her name is Norma McCorvey, or Jane Roe in the case. She was from Dallas, TX. What is unknown, generally, but interesting, is what is left out of this story when you hear about Jane Roe in Roe v. Wade. Mrs. McCorvey, actually, never went forward with the abortion. She gave birth instead, and her child was adopted. She later became an influential pro-life advocate.

Her story should give us cause for hope that change is possible—change of the human heart, change in the direction of the country—when it comes to unborn children, as should events like the March for Life that happened earlier this month here in Washington, where more than 100,000 pro-life men and women, young and old, descended on our Nation's Capital.

I want to applaud President Trump for becoming our Nation's first sitting President to address the march.

Hope is increasingly being provided by advances in science that have dispelled some of the mythology associated with abortion. Advancing technology is making it easier for many to see the humanity of a growing child and to realize that it does have moral status.

One physician at Northwestern University recounted recently:

> The more advanced in my field of neonatology, the more it just became the logical choice to recognize the developing fetus for what it is. . . . It just became so obvious that these were just developing humans.

Testimony like that lends credence to the bill that we are voting on today. It is called the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. I don't doubt that some of our colleagues would just prefer to remain silent and to hope this vote passes without many people paying much attention, but I hope that doesn't happen. It is an entirely appropriate occasion for us to talk about abortion and its role in our society and how it is increasingly out of step with modern science and people's recognition that these are indeed unborn human beings.

This legislation protects unborn children at 20 weeks, or 5 months. Who among us thinks that it is appropriate to have an elective abortion after 5 months in the womb? That is what we are talking about. We are specifically talking about the child's ability to feel pain at this stage of development. It doesn't apply in cases where the mother's life is at risk or in cases of rape or incest. It does have those exceptions.

Advances in modern medicine help babies born at 21 and 22 weeks to survive. In other words, we are talking about unborn children who could survive outside the womb, who are still subject to elective abortion in this country. So babies roughly the same age are clearly alive and need our protection before they are born as well, and this bill will help provide that protection.

Incredibly, the United States is only one of seven countries that allow elective abortions past 20 weeks. It is not exactly an honor to be in the same category as North Korea, Vietnam, and China when it comes to allowing elective abortions after 5 months.

I am glad that the pain-capable bill has passed in 20 States, including my

home State of Texas. It has been estimated that the law we are voting on today will save approximately 12,000 to 18,000 babies annually. That is 12,000 to 18,000 lives saved were this bill to pass. That is hopeful news.

Polls have shown that a majority of Americans support a prohibition on abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy. This is one thing that brings people who consider themselves to be pro-life and people who consider themselves to be pro-choice together, common ground recognizing that at some point you are talking about a human being capable of living outside the womb.

As my colleague from Oklahoma, the junior Senator, told us on the floor recently, people all across the country are waking up. They are beginning to say, as he put it:

> Wait a minute, that child has 10 fingers and 10 toes, unique DNA that is different from his or her mom and dad, [and] the child feels pain in the womb and has a beating heart. . . . That sounds like a child.

He is absolutely right. It sounds like a child because it is one.

I wish to close by quoting Winston Churchill, who I realize is perhaps an unlikely figure to bring up at a time like this. That great leader once said that ''a nation that has forgotten its past has no future.''

Here in the United States, we have forgotten our past when it comes to abortion. We have forgotten, for example, that some of the original advocates of abortion had ties to the eugenics movement. They believed that you could eliminate people who had disabilities or who were frowned upon for one reason or another by virtue of their gender or other characteristics they had no control over. They often promoted forced sterilization because some people, in their view, simply shouldn't be allowed to reproduce. One example is Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, who is known to have spoken with the Ku Klux Klan and other disreputable organizations about her views.

We have forgotten, as well, the activists advocating on behalf of racial minorities in the 1960s and 1970s who once emphasized abortion's civil rights connection—that protecting the unborn represented an effort to protect the weak and the disenfranchised.

Respectfully, I call on all of our colleagues to remember these connections and to see how far we have come—and not in a positive way. These colleagues of mine often describe themselves as pro-choice, but they actually are not unique in that regard. We all attach value to choices. As others have said before, we all know that choices have consequences and that some are better than others.

Each of us represents the sum of his or her choices, too. As a society, we should choose to offer pregnant mothers who are worried, financially insecure, or alone options other than abortion. We not only should do this, but we must.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting the pain-capable legislation we will be voting on in just a couple of hours.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am prepared to deliver remarks, but I see that the majority leader is on the floor, and I do not want to intrude on his desire to take the floor if he wishes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my good friend from Rhode Island. I will not occupy the Senate floor for very long.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MARSHALL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the community of Benton, KY, is continuing to pick up the pieces after last week's harrowing shooting.

I wish, once again, to thank our law enforcement and first responders for their heroism, and I would also like to recognize Marshall County Judge-Executive Kevin Neal for his leadership when his community needed it the most.

For most of us, this tragedy is barely even conceivable, but to the parents of Bailey Holt and Preston Cope, it is now a painful reality. Bailey Holt was 15 years old, and her mother said that she had a ''perfect, sweet soul.'' She has been described as compassionate, confident, and comfortable being herself. When she wasn't busy cheering for the University of Louisville Cardinals, Bailey was always ready with a kind word or a friendly gesture for those who needed it.

On social media, her family and friends are using the expression ''Be Like Bailey,'' encouraging everyone who sees it to act with charity.

Preston Cope, who was also 15, was known for being kind, soft-spoken, and a quick learner. He loved reading about history and playing baseball for Marshall County High School and the Calvert City Sluggers. Preston's friends remember his ability to inspire them and to make them laugh.

One of Bailey and Preston's classmates called them ''the nicest people I ever met. They never had anything negative to say. They always had a smile on their face.''

This weekend, friends and family gathered at the high school gym by the hundreds to remember Bailey and Preston and to comfort one another.

As the other injured students fight to recover and the entire Marshall County community continues to grieve and heal, they will have Bailey and Preston's example to draw on and they will have the prayers of their fellow Kentuckians, of us here in the Senate, and of the entire country.

WORK OF THE SENATE

Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, a great deal of work remains in the Senate in the coming days. Bipartisan discussions continue on a variety of important issues, including immigration, border security, disaster relief, healthcare, and funding for our Armed Forces. With our February 8 deadline fast approaching, it is vital that we continue these serious and constructive talks.

Last week, the administration provided its framework for immigration legislation. As I noted, it builds upon the four pillars for reform that the President has consistently put forth and indicates what is necessary for him to sign a bill into law. As discussions continue in the Senate on the subject of immigration, Members on both sides of the aisle should look to this framework as they work toward an agreement.

The President's proposal has received praise as a serious effort to solve some of the problems with our broken immigration system. Not surprisingly with a subject this complicated, it has also received criticism from both the right and the left. Constructive critiques are one thing, but the type of irresponsible racial invective used yet again on this subject by the Democratic leader of the House is decidedly unhelpful.

These comments are precisely the kind of divisive partisanship that dim the prospects that a bipartisan compromise could become law. The American people elected us to legislate, not to trade insults. To resolve President Obama's unlawfully established DACA Program and other important issues in immigration, I would urge my Democratic colleagues to put serious, good-faith discussions ahead of cheap, partisan point scoring.

NOMINATION OF DAVID STRAS

Mr. President, now on another matter. These negotiations aren't the only important business before us this week. We will also consider another of President Trump's well-qualified judicial nominees, David Stras, of Minnesota, to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Judge Stras serves as an associate justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. Three of his former colleagues on that court, now retired, praised him in an open letter last year for his sterling academic record, his considerable experience, and his ability to hear cases ''with objectivity and an open mind.''

Their testimony confirmed Judge Stras's well-known reputation for thoughtfulness, fairness, and intellectual excellence. I look forward to voting to advance his nomination and to send this capable jurist to the Federal bench.

Mr. President, the Senate will vote to take up a measure to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are granted the protection they deserve under law. The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act reflects a growing mainstream consensus—mainstream consensus—that unborn children should not be subjected to elective abortion after 20 weeks.

There are only seven countries left in the world that permit this, including,

unfortunately, the United States, along with China and North Korea. It is long past time that we heeded both science and commonsense morality and remove ourselves from this very undistinguished list.

Some refer to this legislation as Micah's Law in honor of a little boy who was born premature at just 22 weeks. Today, Micah Pickering is a healthy 5-year-old boy. He shows what can happen when we give life a chance.

This afternoon, every one of us will go on record on this issue. On the commonsense side of this issue are 63 percent of Americans, according to a recent survey, and every other country in the world, save seven. There is no reason why this should be a partisan issue. I hope our Democratic colleagues will not obstruct the Senate from taking up this bill.

I urge every one of my colleagues to join me in voting to advance it this afternoon.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. President, now, on a final matter, the President delivers his first State of the Union Address tomorrow. I am especially looking forward to his remarks on tax reform and the state of our economy. Already hundreds of businesses have announced significant bonuses, pay increases, new jobs, and expanded benefits. Just last week, we learned that Verst Logistics, which is based in Walton, KY, and employs nearly 1,600, has distributed bonuses to full-time employees. The company's CEO told workers: ''I want to be sure that you and your families share in the benefits of your accomplishments and the new tax reform legislation.''

When I hear my Democratic colleagues denigrate tax reform bonuses as ''crumbs,'' I think about workers like these. I think about the Verst worker who came to her boss with tears in her eyes when she received word of her bonus. It was Christmas. She and her husband had recently had their fifth child. Money was tight. Mom and dad had enough saved up to buy gifts for the kids but were planning to skip presents for each other, but tax reform changed that. Thanks to the tax reform bonus she earned, this employee and her husband could go out to a nice dinner and buy each other Christmas gifts after all. The CEO says he has never been hugged so hard in his life.

It is a shame that none of my Democratic colleagues voted for tax reform—not a single one of them—and it is jarring to hear some of them now denigrate the pay increases and the benefits that only wealthy people could deem insignificant. Maybe in San Francisco or New York an extra $500 or $1,000 is no big deal, but try telling that to families in North Dakota, Missouri, and Montana. Try telling that to that mother of five. I suspect you would get an earful.

Tomorrow evening when the President describes tax reform's impact for middle-class Americans, every one of us should stand and applaud.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

EPA ADMINISTRATOR SCOTT PRUITT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, tomorrow the Environment and Public Works Committee will have an opportunity to question Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt at an oversight hearing. Oversight of the executive branch is one of the Senate's great responsibilities. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership of this body has shown little interest in holding the Trump administration accountable, despite the fact that this administration is more ethically challenged, more riven by conflicts of interest, more captured by special interests, more defined by cronyism than any other.

After a year of Pruitt at the helm of EPA—a tenure that has been marked by mass staff departures, a slowdown in enforcement actions, questionable travel and other personal spending, rolling back critical clean air and clean water protections, a purge of scientists, an influx of industry insiders, a smorgasbord of meetings with industry bigwigs, many of whom coincidentally also bankrolled his political career back in Oklahoma, an obsession with secrecy, and heaps and heaps and heaps of climate denial—Pruitt will finally be appearing before our committee. I urge my Republican colleagues on EPW to bring some good questions to tomorrow's hearing.

Judging by Pruitt's first year, he is running dangerously amok. He has turned EPA into perhaps the swampiest Agency in a very swampy administration. Pruitt's record at EPA demands the sort of oversight this body used to exercise. If you don't believe this about Pruitt's record, just take a look at what some distinguished Republicans have to say. William Ruckelshaus, who under both Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan ran the EPA, has criticized Pruitt's penchant for secrecy in this Washington Post op-ed contrasting it with his own more transparent management style. He said:

> We release[d] my full schedule and the publication of written communications on a daily basis . . . Scott Pruitt is taking the absolute opposite approach. Pruitt operates in secrecy.

In an interview with HuffPost, former New Jersey Governor and chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Tom Kean, is also troubled by Pruitt's fixation with secrecy. I think this New York Times op-ed makes his opinion clear. He writes:

> [T]o satisfy his penchant for secrecy, [Pruitt] is installing—at a cost of nearly $25,000 to taxpayers—a secure phone booth in his Washington office to keep people, including staff members, in the dark.

Imagine that. While demanding massive cuts to EPA's budget, Pruitt is spending thousands of dollars to build himself, like Maxwell Smart, a cone of silence. He doesn't run the CIA. He doesn't run the FBI. He doesn't even run the State Department. What possible purpose could this very expensive, secure phone booth have at the Environmental Protection Agency?

Governor Kean believes Pruitt is doing this to keep his own staff members in the dark, which begs the question: What does Pruitt have to hide from his own staff? It sounds like a question my Republican colleagues on EPW should ask him tomorrow.

Pruitt's wasteful spending isn't just limited to his cone of silence. As Governor Kean points out, Pruitt has used private jets costing taxpayers another $58,000. His princely habits have even prompted questions from Senator GRASSLEY. So I ask my EPW Republican colleagues: If Senator GRASSLEY is troubled by Pruitt's wasteful spending of taxpayers' money on personal luxuries, shouldn't you ask him about it at tomorrow's hearing?

Pruitt's penchant for secrecy goes well beyond the expensive cone of silence that was designed to keep his own staff in the dark. It also extends to his schedule, where he tries to keep the American people in the dark. Unlike Ruckelshaus and previous EPA Administrators, Pruitt will not even disclose whom he is meeting or when he is traveling. As Governor Kean notes, our only idea of the folks he is meeting comes from the Freedom of Information Act. Once EPA finally released the first few months of Pruitt's calendars in response to a FOIA request, that is when we learned he was meeting with scores of industry fat cats and almost no environmental groups.

As for his travels, we only find out about them after the fact, which of course prevents the press from covering Pruitt, say, when he jets off to Morocco to lobby for American natural gas producers. One of my Republican colleagues on EPW might want to ask Pruitt why he is jetting around the world playing Commerce Secretary for the fossil fuel industry when he should be working here at home in America to protect people's health and their environment.

What does Governor Kean have to say about Pruitt's industry ties? ''He has elevated cronyism to new heights.'' Those are Governor's Kean's words, not mine.

In an interview with HuffPost just this past Friday, Mr. Ruckelshaus echoed this concern that Pruitt cares more about his political ties than protecting the environment. ''He's just like Trump,'' Ruckelshaus said. ''He's got an ideological approach to it, an approach that affects the large contributors in his party in Oklahoma.''

Here again, Republican colleagues on EPW might want to ask Pruitt about his close ties with industry and whether he is working for the fossil fuel interests that donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to his political activities back in Oklahoma or working for the American people. Governor Kean goes on to say that Pruitt ''built his

political career by attacking clean-air and clean-water rules'' and that he is ''blocking scientific input,'' which brings us to science.

Science, of course, gives society its headlights to look ahead and see oncoming hazards. Without science, if we ignore it or block it, as Governor Kean says Pruitt is doing, the decisions we make are simply uninformed and irrational, and Governor Kean and I aren't the only ones who think this.

Yet another high-profile Republican, the former New Jersey Governor and George W. Bush EPA Administrator, Christine Todd Whitman, agrees. Pruitt claims he will pursue so-called ''red team/blue team'' exercises instead of the long-established gold standard peer review process for rigorously evaluating science. Governor Whitman sees right through that.

> [D]ecisions must be based on reliable science. The red team begins with his politically preferred conclusion that climate change isn't a problem, and it will seek evidence to justify that position. That's the opposite of how science works.

Pruitt doesn't want to follow the scientific method, at least not when it comes to climate science or any other science, for that matter, that his industry backers object to. He wants to fabricate a case for his industry backers' politically preferred hypothesis. This isn't science. This is a counterfeit of science. As Governor Whitman writes, ''True science follows the evidence. . . . Government bases policy on those results. This applies to liberals and conservatives alike,'' or at least that is the way it used to be before Scott Pruitt turned the keys over to polluting industries.

So, EPW Republicans, there is another question for you to ask Pruitt tomorrow: How does he justify throwing out the real scientists and the real science in order to arrive so predictably at the fossil fuel industry's preferred conclusions?

Governor Whitman calls Pruitt's climate denial scheming ''a waste of the government's time, energy, and resources, and a slap in the face to fiscal responsibility and responsible governance.'' It is, in her words, ''shameful,'' ''unjustifiable,'' and a ''wild goose chase.'' It sounds like more great questions for EPW Republicans to ask Pruitt tomorrow: How does he justify spending taxpayers' money on his backers' climate denial schemes.

This question is particularly relevant in light of Pruitt's campaign to radically cut EPA's budget and staff. Under his tenure, EPA staff has been reduced to the lowest level in more than 30 years. EPW Republicans, take note because here is another question you can ask Pruitt tomorrow: How can he justify spending taxpayer money on frivolities like his Maxwell Smart cone of silence or personal luxuries like exorbitant private travel or crazy climate denial schemes all while demanding drastic cuts to the people who do the real work of protecting the public at his Agency?

In an interview, Governor Whitman said she ''would like to see [EPA's] budget have enough in it to ensure we are enforcing the regulations we have in place,'' a fairly conservative notion. As she notes, EPA enforcement actions are slowing down ''in some instances fairly dramatically because they've cut the budget for the number of enforcement agents.'' You can't do cleanups or police polluters without money and people, both of which Pruitt is looking to cut. Simply put, Pruitt's so-called back-to-basics campaign is a smokescreen to hide his attempts to gut the Agency he is supposed to lead because it will make his industry backers happy.

Once again, I ask my EPW Republican colleagues: Will you confront Pruitt about his sham promises to get back to basics while he is really just cutting staff and resources and reducing enforcement?

Governor Kean speaks for many Americans when he writes, ''For the sake of our children's health, it's time for Scott Pruitt to go.'' When you are hearing that from the Republican side, it is worth listening.

Pruitt's tenure at the EPA has been an unmitigated disaster for public health, for the environment, and for the future of the planet we call home. Its only value is if you have some peculiar connoisseur interest in government corruption to watch all the many ways in which industry can work its will within its supposed regulator.

Tomorrow, those of us who sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee have an important opportunity to put the Senate's oversight authority to good use and expose how badly Pruitt is in the pocket of the polluters he is supposed to police. I sincerely hope that my Republican colleagues on EPW will seize the opportunity. You can be sure that my Democratic colleagues and I will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today in communities across our country, young people are asking whether they will be able to stay in the only country they have ever called home. Struggling patients and veterans are wondering whether their local community health center will be able to stay open and provide the care that they can't otherwise afford. Workers and business owners are wondering—again—whether the government will even be open in a week or two.

Instead of addressing the serious and pressing challenges that people are facing, Republican leaders today are debating whether to trust women to make their own healthcare choices. That is right. While this country is waiting for us to come together and solve problems, Republicans are wasting precious time with a politically motivated, partisan bill that is engineered to drive us apart and hurt women.

I have come here today to oppose, in the strongest terms, the extreme, ideological abortion ban that Republican leaders have brought to the floor today. It goes against the Constitution, against medical experts, and against the rights of women across the country. However, I don't merely oppose this partisan bill. I oppose the very fact Republicans are once again bringing this bill—which they know is a nonstarter—to the floor.

I oppose the very idea that in the 21st century, we are going to waste time on a question that has already been answered and shouldn't even be up for debate. I oppose the fact that we are still voting on whether women and doctors are best equipped to make healthcare decisions—or politicians here in Washington, DC. We are still voting on whether we should criminalize doctors for making sound medical decisions. We are still voting on whether we should turn back the clock and put women's lives at risk.

Roe v. Wade was decided 45 years ago. We celebrated the anniversary of that historic decision last week. I would like to think that after almost half a century, we could move on from debating this settled issue. Yet here we are.

In 2015, the Republican leaders stated quite flatly that a vote to defund Planned Parenthood would be an exercise in futility because there was no way it was going to pass. The same is true of this extreme, harmful legislation. Yet here we are.

Bringing this bill to the floor is an exercise in futility, and passing it would be an exercise in cruelty. Just look at the story from a Washington State mother, Judy Nicastro. A few years ago, she wrote an op-ed in the New York Times, and she courageously shared a story that is every expecting woman's worst nightmare. Judy shared her experience of learning that one of the twins she was carrying had a lung condition. One lung chamber had not formed at all, and the other was only 20 percent complete. She wrote:

> My world stopped. I loved being pregnant with twins. . . . The thought of losing one child was unbearable.

She went on to say:

> The MRI at Seattle Children's Hospital confirmed our fears: the organs were pushed up into our boy's chest and not developing properly. We were in the 22nd week.

I am grateful her doctors were able to give her sound medical advice. I am grateful that she and her husband were able to make the decision they felt was best for their own family. And I am so grateful to Judy for sharing her story, which represents the incredibly painful decision she and so many other women have faced.

My colleagues might recognize that story. I have shared it before, just as Republicans have introduced this deeply harmful legislation before. I hope this time the Republicans listen. I hope they will stop trying to pretend they are in any way qualified to interfere with decisions that a woman has the

constitutional right to make on her own. I hope they will stop trying to criminalize a doctor's ability to provide sound medical advice and protect the lives of patients. I hope they will stop wasting our time with bills that are so out of date, extremely out of touch, and obviously unconstitutional.

But if Republicans will not stop this exercise in futility and their attacks on women's rights, they should know that I will not stop standing up and making clear exactly why they are wrong. They should know I am going to keep fighting for Judy and so many other women and their families, and I will keep urging them to work with Democrats on the serious challenges that face our Nation—none of which, by the way, have to do with trusting women or controlling their healthcare choices.

I do want to thank the many Democrats who will be joining me here on the floor to stand up for women and deliver this same message to our Republican colleagues. Again, I hope they listen because Democrats would like to get to work.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to thank the senior Senator from Washington for her leadership on this important issue and for gathering women to come to the floor today to talk about the Republican bill that has been proposed and that we will be voting on soon.

When I was a girl growing up in Oklahoma, women got abortions. Make no mistake, abortions were illegal back then, but women got them. Desperate women turned to back-alley butchers, and some even tried the procedure on their own, using coat hangers or drinking turpentine. Some were lucky, but some weren't. Some women bled to death. Some died of infection. Some were poisoned. And they all went through hell.

In 1973, the Supreme Court stepped in. Forty-five years after Roe v. Wade, abortions are safer than getting your tonsils out. A lot of women are alive today because of Roe. Nearly 70 percent of Americans agree, Roe v. Wade is worth celebrating.

I wish I were here today to acknowledge the impact of Roe. Instead, I am here to defend it from attack.

Last week President Trump marked the anniversary of Roe v. Wade by calling for a ban on a rare category of abortions—ones that take place after 20 weeks of pregnancy. So today, the Senate is voting on a bill to do exactly that.

Let's be honest about why this vote is happening now. Today's vote is happening because politicians who have never been pregnant, who have never had an abortion, who have never had to make a wrenching decision after learning that the child they are carrying will not survive childbirth—those politicians want to score political points at the expense of women and their families.

We are having this vote today because President Trump asked for it. If it passes, this unconstitutional bill would put women's lives and women's health at risk. Government officials who seek to insert themselves between women and their doctors ought to listen to the women whose lives are on the line and the doctors who care for them. If they were listening right now, we wouldn't be holding this vote.

Only 1 percent of abortions take place at 21 weeks or later, and the reasons are heartbreaking. I have heard from people across Massachusetts who shared their devastating stories. The Senate should hear these stories.

One woman who wrote to me explained that she was ecstatic to have a second child but learned late in her pregnancy that her daughter's brain was severely malformed. She said:

> Being a grown woman with a husband and daughter, I never imagined that I would need to [get an abortion]. But when I learned that the baby I was carrying suffered from a set of severe brain malformations, I faced a binary choice for her: peace or life. . . . I am deeply grateful that I was able to give her the gift of peace.

She and her husband did what they thought was best for their baby girl. They got an abortion in the third trimester.

Another couple chose to get an abortion at 22 weeks, after learning that their son's heart would never fully develop. The husband wrote to me:

> His pulmonary veins did not connect to his heart in the right place. He had ventricular septal defect, an atrial septal defect . . . and the left side of his heart was smaller than his right. . . . We hoped to be eligible for in-utero heart surgery, but our fetal cardiologists told us that our son's heart could not be fixed. Our little boy—our miracle—wasn't going to make it.

He described their choice as an act of mercy. He said:

> My wife and I are both pro-life, and we would never encourage an abortion. [But] there isn't a day that I regret what we did because we both believe our child is watching over us from a safer place. There also isn't a day I wonder who else could possibly understand what we went through. No law can save my child from his complex congenital heart disease, or save my wife from her suffering.

But the bill we are voting on today says that the government should have been part of that decision—no, not just part of that decision. It would have allowed the government to make that decision, instead of leaving the choice to these brokenhearted parents.

The bill we are considering today would ban all abortions after 20 weeks, with only limited exceptions. It would force women to carry an unviable fetus to term. It would force women with severe health complications to stay pregnant until their lives were on the line. Whatever you believe about abortion generally, this legislation is dangerous and cruel.

Devastating fetal abnormalities aren't the only reason women get abortions after 20 weeks. Some women face so many delays when seeking an abortion, like finding a provider, raising money for the procedure, and paying for travel costs—so many delays that a procedure they wanted earlier in pregnancy gets pushed later and later. These logistical hurdles fall hardest on young people, on women of color, and on low-income communities.

What is behind some of these delays? State-level abortion restrictions pushed through by Republican legislatures that close down clinics and make it harder for women to get access to the care they need. You heard that right. Republican-sponsored abortion restrictions push women to have abortions later and later, and today, Republicans in the Senate push a bill to ban late abortions. It is all connected.

This bill is only one part of a broad and sustained assault by Republican politicians on women's rights to make decisions about their own bodies. Through repeated efforts to limit birth control access, to defund Planned Parenthood, and to restrict abortions, Republicans are chipping away at women's health, women's safety, and women's economic independence.

If MITCH MCCONNELL or PAUL RYAN or Donald Trump actually wanted to reduce abortions, they could embrace policies that would lessen the economic pressures of pregnancy and of motherhood. They could act to help pregnant women and their babies access healthcare early and often. They could help young women avoid unwanted pregnancies in the first place.

Instead, they have spent the last year doing exactly the opposite. They have held vote after vote to try to gut the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid, when we should be expanding those programs. Affordable healthcare, accessible contraceptives, and other programs that support working women and families are all under attack. And today, Republican politicians want to distract from their hypocrisy with an unconstitutional 20-week abortion ban—one that will not pass, that ignores the actual experiences of women, and would cause enormous harm if it were signed into law.

Today's vote, which we all know will fail, isn't about policy; it is about political theater. But women don't get abortions to prove a political point. Reproductive rights are about health. They are about safety. And this particular vote about banning abortions at 20 weeks is about a bunch of politicians intruding on one of the most wrenching decisions that a woman will ever make.

It has been 45 years since Roe v. Wade; 45 years since women gained the constitutional right to a safe, legal abortion; 45 years since the days of illegal abortions. I have lived in that America. I have lived in the world of back-alley butchers and wrecked lives. And we are not going back—not now, not ever.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I would like to thank my friend Senator MURRAY for organizing this block of time for us—you have just heard from Senator WARREN—and for all the work Senator MURRAY has done to fight for women all across the country.

Today's debate is the latest battle in the continuing assault on a women's constitutionally protected right to an abortion. As decided by the Supreme Court in Roe and reaffirmed in Casey, the right to an abortion is rooted fundamentally in a women's right to privacy, but the Supreme Court's recognition of this constitutionally protected right has not prevented continuous efforts to limit that right.

I ask my Republican colleagues who are on a mission to limit a woman's constitutional right to choose: What is more private than a person's right to her own body—not just to control her body but to literally own her body? What could be more private than that? That is what is at stake as we debate the bill before us today.

My home State of Hawaii was the first State in the country to legalize abortion, and it continues to be at the forefront of protecting, expanding, and preserving this constitutional right. But for every law we fought to pass, we have had to fight just as hard to beat back a wide range of anti-choice legislation.

Republican-controlled State legislatures have enacted hundreds of limitations on choice. These efforts have not abated in the States or even in Congress. Courts have deemed many of these laws unconstitutional. That is why Donald Trump and the entire conservative movement have prioritized selecting, appointing, and confirming judges who are ideologically sympathetic to their views on choice.

The Trump administration is also eroding this right through Executive action. In one prominent example last year, a senior official at the Department of Health and Human Services went to court to impose his own ideological views to prevent a young woman in his care from obtaining an abortion after forcing her to undergo anti-abortion counseling. Fortunately, the DC Circuit Court stopped this official from forcing this young woman to be pregnant against her will.

The Republican Congress is complicit as well. Over the past 7 years of Republican control, the House and Senate voted to defund Planned Parenthood more than 20 times.

I understand that this is an emotionally charged issue and that each of us has strongly held and sincere positions, but it really shouldn't be too much to ask for my colleagues to stay out of my private life and the private lives of women all across the country. That is called respecting each other's views. Why should we institutionally force other people who do not share your views to basically have to live with your version of the choices that we all ought to be able to make in our lives?

The bill we are debating today would jeopardize the health and safety of women by establishing a nationwide ban on abortion care after 20 weeks. This bill is arbitrary, and it is not meaningfully different from the Arizona law deemed unconstitutional by the Ninth Circuit in 2014, a case that the Supreme Court let stand.

This bill fails to account for the reasons why a woman might seek an abortion after 20 weeks, and it restricts the ability of women to make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

This bill includes no exception allowing for abortion in the case where the pregnancy is a risk to the woman's health. Instead, a doctor would only be able to provide care after establishing that a woman would die—would die—or suffer life-threatening injuries without an abortion. How cruel can this bill be that the only exception is when a woman is about to die before she can get the care she needs?

To make matters worse, this bill places additional burdens on women who survive the horrors of sexual assault. Under this bill, a sexual assault survivor must provide written proof she had obtained counseling or medical treatment to receive an abortion. However, a woman's own OB/GYN could not provide this counseling if he or she provides abortion services or, even worse, has a practice that provides them.

Adult women who are able to qualify under these outrageous conditions would still have to wait 48 hours before they could receive abortion care.

If the survivor is a minor, the law establishes an additional burden to prove she reported the crime to the authorities. According to the Department of Justice, only 35 percent of women who are raped and sexually assaulted report the crime to the police.

Victims of incest who are over 18 would also not be specifically permitted an exception under this bill.

This legislation would even threaten doctors with fines and/or imprisonment for providing abortion services to women who do not meet the bill's narrow exceptions after 20 weeks.

But the outrage doesn't end there. This bill does not contain an exception for cases where a woman's fetus is not developing properly and has no chance at living after birth. Many of the women in these circumstances desperately wanted the pregnancies they are choosing to terminate.

Last year, I read a moving account from Meredith Isaksen, an English instructor at Berkeley City College, who shared her personal and heartbreaking story in an essay in the New York Times.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of her essay be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Oct. 20, 2016]

LATE-TERM ABORTION WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME

(By Meredith Isaksen)

BERKELEY, CA.—I was 21 weeks pregnant when a doctor told my husband and me that our second little boy was missing half his heart. It had stopped growing correctly around five weeks gestation, but the abnormality was not detectable until the 20-week anatomy scan. It was very unlikely that our baby would survive delivery, and if he did, he would ultimately need a heart transplant.

In the days that followed, after the poking and prodding, after the meetings with pediatric cardiologists, cardiothoracic surgeons and geneticists, my husband and I decided to terminate our pregnancy. I was 22 weeks pregnant when they wheeled me into the operating room, two weeks shy of viability in the state of California.

For us, the decision was about compassion for our unborn baby, who would face overwhelming and horribly painful obstacles. Compassion for our 2-year-old son, who would contend with hours upon hours in a hospital, missing out on invaluable time spent with his parents, and the death of a very real sibling. It was about compassion for our marriage. Perhaps most important, it was about our belief that parenthood sometimes means we sacrifice our own dreams so our children don't have to suffer.

As the day of my termination approached and I felt my baby's kicks and wiggles, I simultaneously wanted to crawl out of my skin and suspend us together in time. I wanted him to know how important he was to me, that the well of my grief and love for him would stretch deeper and deeper into the vastness of our family's small yet limitless life. He may have moved inside me for only five months, but he had touched and shaped me in ways I could never have imagined.

To Donald J. Trump and politicians like him, a late-term abortion is the stuff of '80s slasher films. ''You can take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb of the mother,'' Mr. Trump said during Wednesday night's debate, a description void of consideration for women, medical professionals or the truth. Such politicians would have you believe that women like me shouldn't get to make the choice I made. That our baby, despite his tiny misshapen heart and nonexistent aorta, should have a chance ''to live,'' even though that life might have lasted mere minutes. Even though that life would have been excruciatingly painful. These politicians are ignorant of the sacrifices and blessings that come with carrying a pregnancy (let alone a nonviable pregnancy). They do not understand that a majority of women who have late-term abortions are terminating desperately wanted pregnancies.

I am fortunate to live in a state that allows abortions after 20 weeks. At least 13 states restrict such procedures; 15 more have moved to defund Planned Parenthood, where many low-income women go for reproductive care.

Many women have made the kind of difficult decision I had to make. When it happens to you, they come out of the woodwork. Friends, neighbors, colleagues. A friend of my mother-in-law said to me early on, ''You will always carry this loss, but someday, it won't define you.''

As the two-year anniversary of my abortion approaches, I can say without a shadow of a doubt that we made the right decision for our family—and that our government has absolutely no place in the anguish which accompanies a late-term abortion, except to ensure that women and their families have the right to make their choice safely and privately.

Saying goodbye to our boy was the single most difficult and profound experience of my life, and the truth is, it has come to define me. Today I am a better mother because of him. I am a better wife, daughter and friend. He made me more compassionate and more patient. He taught me to love with reckless abandon, despite the knowledge that I could lose it all.

We named him Lev, the Hebrew word for heart.

Ms. HIRONO. Meredith was 21 weeks pregnant when she learned that her second baby boy was missing half of his heart. It had stopped growing properly at around 5 weeks, but it wasn't detectable until her 20-week anatomy scan. Meredith's decision to terminate her pregnancy was an agonizing one, but as she weighed her options, she reflected on the meaning of compassion, and she said:

For us, the decision was about compassion for our unborn baby, who would face overwhelming and horribly painful obstacles. Compassion for our 2-year-old son, who would contend with hours upon hours in a hospital, missing out on invaluable time spent with his parents, and the death of a very real sibling. It was about compassion for our marriage. Perhaps most important, it was about our belief that parenthood sometimes means we sacrifice our own dreams so our children don't have to suffer.

Meredith asserted—and I agree—that our government has no place in the anguish that accompanied her decision to have an abortion.

Meredith closed her essay with a very poignant reflection on her own experience 2 years later. She wrote:

Saying goodbye to our boy was the single most difficult and profound experience of my life, and the truth is, it has come to define me. Today I am a better mother because of him. I am a better wife, daughter and friend. He made me more compassionate and more patient. He taught me to love with reckless abandon, despite the knowledge that I could lose it all.

Meredith and her husband named him Lev, the Hebrew word for ''heart.''

Meredith was fortunate in that she lived in a State that permitted abortions past 20 weeks. Thirteen States have established a 20-week abortion ban, and the women living in those States have suffered as a result. Think about all the Merediths in those 13 States and many others.

Recently, I heard from Dr. Ghazaleh Moayedi, an OB/GYN who has practiced medicine in Texas, which has a 20-week abortion ban, and in Hawaii, a State that has strong protections for women seeking to exercise their constitutional right to an abortion. Her experience clarifies why it is so urgent that we defeat this bill.

Dr. Moayedi shared a story of a young woman in her town who sought medical treatment at a medical provider after her water broke at 22 weeks. This was in Texas. Although she desperately wanted her pregnancy, her fetus was not viable outside the womb. Because of the Texas law, this patient's doctors were unable to counsel her on all medically appropriate options, such as immediate delivery. As she became increasingly ill, the patient requested an abortion to prevent her condition from getting worse. The doctors on her case refused. After spending 2 weeks in a hospital intensive care unit, this woman was transferred to Dr. Moayedi's care, where she ultimately had to have both her hands and feet amputated due to severe infection. She also lost her baby.

Dr. Moayedi recently moved from Texas to Hawaii, where she now provides lifesaving abortion care to women at all stages of pregnancy.

Recently, Dr. Moayedi had a patient with a desired pregnancy who was flown in from a neighbor island for management of her pre-viable labor. Despite the expert, specialist care she received, the patient's water broke at 22 weeks. At that point, there was nothing Dr. Moayedi could do to prevent labor. Because abortion is legal after 20 weeks in Hawaii, Dr. Moayedi was able to provide lifesaving abortion care for her patient and prevent her from developing a massive infection.

Dr. Moayedi put it plainly in her note: ''Restrictions on abortion care endanger the lives of my patients.''

''Restrictions on abortion care endanger the lives of my patients.'' And that is exactly what this bill will do. It will endanger the lives of millions of women in this country who do not—who do not—make the decision to have an abortion after 20 weeks lightly. As my colleague from Massachusetts said, most abortions take place before 20 weeks.

We are passing a cruel, unconscionable, and indeed unconstitutional law. Why are we doing that? Why these continuing attacks on a woman's health, her economic well-being, and her ability to control her own body?

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this unconscionable bill.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I join my colleagues on the floor today to speak in opposition to the pending legislation to outlaw abortion procedures after 20 weeks.

This is yet another extreme effort to allow the government to interfere in the healthcare decisions that should be strictly between a woman and her family and her physician. This latest attempt is particularly dangerous. It would impose prison sentences of up to 5 years on physicians who don't fulfill the law's deliberately burdensome requirements for documentation and reporting, and it would even impose a prison sentence of up to 5 years on doctors who fail to inform a law enforcement agency about another doctor who fails to meet the law's requirements. Viewed more broadly, this bill is part of a continuing campaign to take away women's constitutional right to privacy—a right that protects profoundly personal decisions concerning our bodies and our families.

I remember very well the days prior to 1973, when abortion was outlawed in most States. An estimated 1.2 million women each year resorted to illegal abortions, typically performed in unsanitary conditions by unlicensed practitioners and often resulting in infection, hemorrhage, and even death. Well, I think women remember those days, and we are not going back.

As Governor of New Hampshire in 1997, I signed into law a bill that repealed our State's archaic law that dated back to 1848 and made abortion a felony. Like that 1848 law, the legislation now before the Senate would also threaten physicians with criminal charges and imprisonment.

Abortion later in pregnancy is extremely rare. Indeed, almost 99 percent of abortions occur before 21 weeks. When an abortion is needed later in pregnancy, it typically involves very complex, life-threatening, and heartbreaking circumstances—for example, the discovery of a severe and likely fatal abnormality, as described by Senator HIRONO. In these difficult circumstances, a woman consults with her doctor and with other people she trusts. A woman needs the freedom to consider every medical option, including serious risks to her own life.

The extremely narrow exceptions in the bill before us—exceptions if the pregnancy results from rape or incest—are deliberately designed to impose burdens, complications, and shame on women who have chosen to terminate a pregnancy. The victim must provide written verification that she has obtained counseling or medical treatment from a very specific list of ''medical providers'' who do not provide abortions and who are often strongly anti-abortion. This requirement is a completely unnecessary burden on a woman who is already dealing with a crisis. It is also insulting and condescending to all women. We are not children who need guidance from an adult. We can consult those we choose to consult, and we can make our own decisions. To impose this requirement in this crude manner is something right out of a handmaid's tale.

Then, if the rape victim is a minor, she is allowed access to an abortion only if she can provide proof that she reported the crime to law enforcement. Again, this is completely out of touch with the real world. Only a small percentage of sexual assaults and rapes are reported to police. Nearly 80 percent of rape and sexual assault victims know their offender.

So let's say this plainly. The reporting requirements in this bill are an outrageous attempt to judge and shame women and girls who have been victims of a violent crime.

I heard from Rachel, who is a registered, board-certified nurse in New Hampshire. She told me that bills to impose blanket rules and arbitrary limitations—bills like the one before the Senate today—are out of touch with the reality she sees in her practice every day. Rachel said:

While procedures at 20 weeks and beyond certainly comprised a small portion of the

care we provided, it was absolutely critical for those that needed it. Many pregnancies are not surveyed with ultrasound until 19–20 weeks, at which time previously unforeseen complications can be detected. Then, there are often further procedures needed to finalize a diagnosis and a prognosis. For people who receive devastating news about a pregnancy after 20 weeks, abortion may be the best option, and they deserve access to that care.

The American Medical Association opposes this bill. The AMA says: We ''strongly condemn any interference by the government or other third parties that causes a physician to compromise his or her medical judgment as to what information or treatment is in the best interest of the patient.''

I urge my colleagues to respect the women of this country and their right to make their own healthcare decisions without the unwelcome involvement of politicians and law enforcement agencies. Let's reject this partisan, extreme, and, frankly, unnecessary legislation today. Then, let's focus our bipartisan attention on the urgent business of passing a budget, funding our military, combating the opioid crisis, and the other needs that this country faces.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, today is a proud day but also a painful one for me. I am proud because I am honored and proud to join my distinguished colleague from New Hampshire, Senator SHAHEEN, and others on the floor. I was proud to join Connecticut organizations and advocates this morning in Hartford for a rally that involved Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut, the Women's March of Connecticut, AIDS Connecticut, and the Center for Medicare Advocacy. These groups are proud and steadfast and have strong activists who joined me to support a woman's right to determine her medical future, the right of privacy, and the constitutional right to be left alone, as one of the Supreme Court Justices once called it.

It was a proud moment for me also because it reminded me of my days as a law clerk for Justice Harry Blackmun, who was the author of Roe v. Wade and who taught me the constitutional principle that underlies a woman's right to determine her own healthcare decisions.

Harry Blackmun was a Republican appointee. He was a Republican before he became a jurist. But there was nothing partisan for him—and there should be nothing partisan for us—about this decision. I am tempted to call this 20-week abortion ban a Republican proposal, but when I think about the Republicans I know—and especially Justice Harry Blackmun, whom I revered—there is nothing Republican about this proposal. There is nothing partisan about a proposal that seeks to interfere in this fundamental right of privacy. It is an extremist, rightwing proposal that happens to have been brought here by 46 of our Republican colleagues—all of them men, except two—who are essentially trying to tell the women of America what to do with their own bodies, when to have children or not. That is fundamentally unconstitutional. It flies in the face of Roe v. Wade and all of its progeny. It is a restriction that has been struck down when adopted at the State level in at least two courts, and the others that have adopted similar proposals will be struck down, in my view, as well.

The consensus of the medical community, the legal community, and ordinary citizens, particularly women, is that women have reproductive rights that would be violated, dramatically and directly, by this proposal. It violates those rights for totally baseless reasons—policies founded on falsehoods. It is another excuse for right-wing dogma and ideology, out of touch with America, to seek to put opponents at a political disadvantage. It is transparently a political ploy.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists—the doctors who are most qualified to present scientific, evidence-based facts—disagree with the assertions and falsehoods that fetuses can feel pain at 20 weeks. In fact, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists wrote—and I am quoting directly from medical experts on fetal health:

> Sound health policy is best based on scientific fact and evidence-based medicine. The best healthcare is provided free of governmental interference in the patient-physician relationship. Personal decision-making by women and their doctors should not be replaced by political ideology.

Worse than the fabrications behind this bill are the very real consequences that will come if it is passed. This nationwide abortion ban would provide virtually no adequate exception when a woman's health is at risk, when there are fetal anomalies or when there are dangers to the health and well-being of a mother who is sick; or if her life is threatened, this bill fails to guarantee that she has access to the healthcare that she needs. If there is a fetal anomaly and a woman learns that her child will be born with significant impairments or, worse yet, a short life filled with pain, it would force her to carry that child to term. If a woman is advised that her child will not survive pregnancy at all, the most personal medical decisions of her life would be usurped by a cruel, heartless, unconscionable, unconstitutional law. She would be deprived of the right to make those decisions with her family, her clergy, her doctors.

The American public disagrees strongly with this potential law, as does the medical community, and individual doctors who have real-life experiences disagree strongly with it as well. One doctor who practices in Connecticut told me that for patients who are treated in that office who choose to get an abortion after 20 weeks, it is oftentimes ''an agonizing decision, an unexpected one, and too often a lonely one—a decision that is deeply personal and altering.''

For many women, he told me, medical tests show a devastating issue with a future child. ''A joyous event becomes a tragic one, as they learn of a lethal condition, or a syndrome that will lead to a brief life of suffering.''

I could quote other doctors. I could quote women who have been through this experience. But without exaggerating, it is one of the most deeply difficult, personal decisions that women have a right to make, without the interference of a politician, an insurance bureaucrat, or anyone else in positions of authority. It is their decision.

Congress must keep its hands off women's healthcare. To my colleagues, keep your hands off of women's healthcare. It is their lives and their well-being and their personal privacy that are at stake.

I am going to continue to fight this ban, painfully, because its consequences would be so cruel, but also because it is certainly not the Republican Party that I know that would advocate for it. It certainly should not be partisan in any way, and it certainly should not even be before us in this great Chamber, which has such respect and such a profound role in our Constitution. To consider violating the Constitution so dramatically is a disservice to this great body.

I yield the floor.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I join many of my colleagues in voicing my strong opposition to S. 2311, the 20-week abortion ban bill. This legislation puts political ideology ahead of women's health and tramples on women's constitutional rights.

First, the 20-week abortion ban intrudes on private healthcare decisions. Reproductive health choices are highly personal and individualized and should be left squarely in the hands of women in consultation with their physician, healthcare team, and loved ones. S. 2311 violates this principle by subjecting private healthcare choices to an arbitrary and unscientific blanket ban.

Second, the 20-week abortion ban violates the longstanding constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy. In 1973, a 7–2 majority of the U.S. Supreme Court held in Roe v. Wade that the constitutional right to privacy includes the right to terminate a pregnancy. Since then, the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly rejected bans on abortions before viability, which generally occurs well after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Today, 7 in 10 Americans support upholding Roe v. Wade.

A diverse coalition of Americans—including physicians, civil rights advocates, and faith organizations—has come out against this legislation for a number of reasons. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American College of

Nurse-Midwives, for instance, have said that the legislation ''. . . would dictate how physicians should care for their patients based on inaccurate and unscientific claims.'' The American Civil Liberties Union has said this legislation ''. . . directly contradicts longstanding precedent holding that a woman should 'be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion' when deciding whether to continue or terminate a pre-viability pregnancy.'' And Three dozen faith-based organizations have written in opposition to this legislation, saying, ''The proper role of government in the United States is not to privilege one set of religious views over others but to protect each person's right and ability to make decisions according to their own beliefs and values.''

We should be working to open up access to reproductive healthcare for more women and families, not fewer. Effective family planning services, including birth control, have a proven record of boosting health and economic mobility while reducing unwanted pregnancies.

The U.S. Senate has urgent priorities to address. We should not be wasting time on another misguided attempt to take away women's healthcare and constitutional rights. I strongly oppose S. 2311.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to express my opposition to the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This blatant attempt to ban later abortion undermines decades of legal precedent and directly challenges the landmark Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. The Supreme Court made clear that women in this country have a constitutional right to autonomy over their individual health and well-being. If passed, this bill would impose burdensome and medically unnecessary limitations on women, particularly those in low-income, medically underserved areas.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that nearly 99 percent of abortions are performed before 21 weeks of pregnancy. Many of the abortions that are performed after 20 weeks are medically necessary because the mother's health is at risk or because of a fetal anomaly. This bill has no exception to protect a woman's health and no exception for cases where there is a fetal anomaly.

This bill harms women who are victims of sexual assault and minors who are the victims of incest. It requires rape victims to provide written proof that the victim obtained counseling or medical treatment from a specified list of locations, and it requires the minor to provide written proof that she reported the crime to law enforcement or a government agency.

These provisions are designed to perpetuate a culture of not believing women and trying to discredit the victims of sexual assault.

To make matters even worse, this bill punishes doctors by threatening them with 5 years of jail time for violating the ban. This bill, if passed, will take women back to the days of back-alley abortions, where doctors were in fear of providing lifesaving, medically necessary procedures to women and where women were forced to take drastic and dangerous measures in order to have the procedure performed.

Many of my Republican colleagues talk about keeping Big Government out of people's lives, but when it comes to one of the hardest and most intimate decisions a woman can make—a decision that she wishes to make between herself, her family, and her doctor—these same colleagues believe that the government, and not the woman, knows better. They believe that the government, and not the woman, should dictate what a woman should do with her body. They believe that the government should have the power to force a woman to forgo a medically necessary procedure. They believe that a woman should be stripped of that power, stripped of the choice of what is best for herself.

Empowering women is one of the most important things we can do for the future of our country. Core to women's constitutional liberties is autonomy over their own health and well-being. In order to truly support women, we need to safeguard and improve, not limit, access to comprehensive healthcare, including abortion.

For all of these reasons, I will be opposing S. 2311.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, as we vote this evening on the Pain-Capable Child Protection Act, I speak to the bill as a doctor who practiced in a hospital for the uninsured for decades. I mention working in a hospital for the uninsured because the uninsured are vulnerable, but if the uninsured are vulnerable, among those, the uninsured pregnant woman is particularly vulnerable. If we are to say she is particularly vulnerable, then we can say her unborn child is most vulnerable of all. So I speak to these folks with that background.

Our country has struggled to find a balance between those of us who are pro-life and those who are pro-choice. As a pro-life doctor, I think the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act strikes a balance. Again, as a physician, let me say it is an obligation—our society's obligation—to care for the woman who is pregnant. Again, she is among the most vulnerable. Her child is the future of our society.

We all agree to this. You can see we agree because our social programs provide a safety net both for her and her unborn child. Example: Society pays for well-baby visits through Medicaid or through special programs for women if they are uninsured. If that child is born healthy, then he or she is more likely to be a healthy person, to contribute to society, to have life, liberty, and be able to pursue happiness.

Those of us who are pro-life and pro-choice can differ when the child within the womb deserves protection as a distinct human, but society has agreed at some point that protection is allowed. Again, I am pro-life. I think the protection should be when the child is conceived, but right now the law is divided.

If a pregnant woman and her child were killed by a reckless driver, there are two counts of manslaughter filed against that reckless driver—one way society acknowledges the life within the womb.

On one hand, let's be clear, a woman has the right to terminate that pregnancy at another point in the pregnancy. On the other hand, partial-birth abortion says that child's life cannot be terminated when she is coming through the birth canal. I think the rationale for this is that as a child comes through the birth canal, we recognize that child can live independently, if allowed to proceed. If you will, the criteria is: Does the child have the ability to live independently from the mother? Again, I think that is the rationale for the partial-birth abortion ban.

As it turns out, a child who is 5 months old within the womb has the ability to live independently. Again, I speak as a physician. When you see a baby in the womb at 5 months, it is incredible.

A friend of mine who works for me—actually, he and his wife are expecting now, and they are excited. They went and got the ultrasound, and they saw the child sucking on his thumb or her thumb—they don't know or they don't want to know. Nonetheless, it is marvelous what they see inside—the child. You can see him yawning, stretching. At 18 weeks, you can find out if it is a boy or a girl—and, thanks to modern medicine and the amazing neonatal intensive care doctors and nurses we have in this country, babies delivered as early as 20 to 22 weeks can survive and live healthy lives, perhaps one day to become the Presiding Officer in the Senate of the United States.

In recent years, medical research has shown that unborn children can feel pain as early as 20 weeks after they are conceived. As a doctor, I have to look at the scientific evidence we have when it comes to the beginning of life. At 20 weeks, studies have provided strong evidence that babies can feel pain despite the fact that the nerve connections between the different parts of the brain are still developing. That is why fetal anesthesia is routinely administered when unborn children require surgery in the womb.

By the way, doctors know this. I just got a letter from the Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians. One of their folks, Dr. Gravois, called me last night. Here is a statement from their letter:

Representing more than 1,900 physicians, including active practicing physicians, residents in training and medical student members, as well as the patients in Louisiana, the Louisiana Academy of Family physicians

is the voice of family medicine in Louisiana. As advocates for our patients, in August of 2015, the LAFP Congress of Delegates passed the following resolution on Late Term Abortions:

Resolved, that the LAFP is against performing elective abortions 20 weeks and after, and further be it Resolved . . . .

It goes on, but that is the take-home point. Family physicians take care of both the mother and her child, the totality of it.

By the way, I will say this bill includes explicit—explicit—exceptions when a mother's life is at risk or in cases of rape and incest, again, attempting to strike society's balance between those of us who are pro-life and those who are pro-choice.

Versions of this law have already been passed in 20 States, including my State of Louisiana, but all babies who feel pain deserve the same protection. Most Americans agree, even some who believe abortion should be legal. Polls show that majorities of women, Independents, and Democrats support this protection. So I hope my colleagues will join in supporting this commonsense, humane legislation.

It is estimated this bill will protect 12,000 to 18,000 babies per year. Protecting unborn babies who can feel pain is the right thing to do. Protecting their right to life is the right thing to do.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this important legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, I am grateful for the comments the Senator from Louisiana just shared. He is a physician. I am not a physician. I am a chemical engineer, and I believe it is important, as the Senator from Louisiana believes, that we look at science when we have this debate about abortion.

Our Nation loses anywhere between 13,000 and 18,000 children a year to late-term abortion. The numbers of children aborted overall are well over 600,000. The focus on the debate today and on the vote coming up this evening is on late-term abortion.

I remember a few months ago having a discussion with a young man, a father of several children, about abortion. We were just two guys chatting, having a snack in the kitchen. He brought up a question—he didn't come from a pro-life perspective—and he asked my views.

He said: Let me ask you a question. At what point should an abortion be legal? We took it out to the very end of gestation. If the baby is literally ready to be delivered, should an abortion be allowed at that moment? He said: Of course not.

OK. Well, let's back it up a day. What about if you are 8 months and 28 days, should abortion be allowed in that situation? Well, of course not. That is way too close to the actual date of giving birth.

So we kind of moved upstream toward conception. So where do you draw the line?

I believe that life begins at conception because that is that magical moment when a life begins, when unique DNA is created, but I realize it is a very contentious issue in our Nation. So one line we can draw is at 20 weeks, and I will talk about why I think 20 weeks is a place we can start to get bipartisan support to stop late-term abortions.

In fact, this young man I was chatting with teared up, and he said: STEVE, you realize that when we were pregnant with one of our daughters—they have five children—at about 10 or 12 weeks they had a test run because it looked like there may be an abnormality in the baby and the doctor recommended an abortion.

He said: What is the alternative? We can wait a few more weeks, when we have a better idea of what is going on there with that little baby, but it puts the mother at perhaps a greater risk.

They decided to wait a few more weeks. A few weeks later when they came back with the test, the baby came back clear, and they now have a healthy, beautiful young girl who is 5 years old. With tears in his eyes, he said: I am so glad we chose not to abort; that we chose life.

At 20 weeks, babies have 10 fingers and 10 toes. They can suck their thumb. They can yawn. They can stretch. They can make faces. Science also shows these babies are capable of feeling pain.

I became a first-time dad 28 years ago. I still remember taking David to his first well-baby appointment, when Cindy and I would go to the pediatrician and get those well-baby checks. When they would give them shots—I think the hardest part as a parent is to see that nurse or doctor give a shot to your little one. Those cries of pain were excruciating for Cindy and for me. He doesn't remember it. We remember it. It may indeed hurt us more than it hurt him at the time, but he felt pain.

My heart breaks for those thousands of babies who are able to feel pain as they are losing their life to abortion. Our ears may be deaf to their cries physically, but we don't have to live in ignorance, not when research, not when the science, not when common sense shows that these unborn children can feel pain.

There is a reason unborn babies are given anesthesia with fetal surgery. That is why we must pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. It is unconscionable as a nation we are allowing unborn children as old as 20 weeks—5 months—well beyond halfway of the 9-month gestation period—that we allow them to be killed today in this country.

In fact, do a Google search for ''20 weeks.'' You don't have to type in ''baby.'' Just type in ''20 weeks.'' If you are watching this and have a smartphone, a computer, type in ''20 weeks'' in the Google search bar there and hit search or enter. Then, take a look at the pictures that come up that match the simple term ''20 weeks.'' This is one of the pictures you will see when you Google that.

I believe there is a principle that people believe what they discover for themselves. What is happening right now is—because of technology, because of the precision and the clarity of ultrasounds today, what we can see now in the womb is incredible. It is no wonder the attitudes of millennials—those ages 18 to 24—in the last 6 years are becoming increasingly more pro-life, in fact up 9 points, from 44 percent to 53 percent. I think part of the reason is in the hands of their smartphone. When you take a look at the images, how can you say that is not a baby? That is a 20-week baby. We are on a horrible list of just seven countries that allow elective abortions after 20 weeks. China and North Korea join the United States on that list.

Before I got involved in politics and public service, I worked in the private sector for 28 years. One of the companies I worked for was Proctor & Gamble. While at Proctor & Gamble, I was asked to go to China to help launch operations there to produce and sell products, Americans brands, to the Chinese consumer.

I had a large operation. One day, one of my managers—a young man, Chinese, wonderful, very bright, very capable, one of our future stars. He and his wife were both P&G employees, both Chinese.

He said: STEVE, I need to go to the police station this afternoon. I said: Well, is there something wrong? He goes: Well, no. It is going to be OK. Then he kind of looked away.

I said: But you are asking for time off of work to go to the police station. Is there something I can help you with or is there something wrong?

He said: Well, my wife and I did not have permission from the police to get pregnant—with the one-child policy then.

He said: We just discovered that she is pregnant.

I said: Well, do you want to keep the baby?

He said: Oh, we want to keep that baby. We are very excited about it. But we won't be allowed to keep that baby.

I said: What can I do?

At this moment, we were focused on saving that baby.

He said to me: What might help is a case of shampoo.

We were there producing brands like Pantene, Vidal Sassoon, Crest toothpaste, Tide detergent. I arranged to get a case of shampoo and gave it to him.

He came back the next day, with a smile on his face, and said: We got the problem resolved.

They became parents of a beautiful little girl who today is an amazing young woman.

As an American citizen, I believe in our founding principle that all men and

women are endowed by their Creator—with a capital ''C''—with certain unalienable rights, and among those are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As a person of faith, I believe—and those who are people of faith—we are called to help the most vulnerable in our society. As a Senator, it is my honor to support this legislation, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

I thank my colleague Senator JAMES LANKFORD of Oklahoma for his leadership on this issue. I urge the rest of my colleagues to join us in standing up and protecting those who do not have a voice on the floor of the U.S. Senate this afternoon and join us in protecting human life.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Madam President, as we consider this legislation to protect 20-week-old babies who feel pain, I want to ask my friends in this body to put aside whip counts and score cards, politics and reelection, and let's talk today simply about beauty and about science.

We love beauty. Beauty calls us. Beauty inspires us. Beauty captivates us. It is part of what makes us human. It is not surprising that there is almost nothing more universal on this Earth, almost nothing more beautiful, than our natural impulse to care for a little baby.

We all start in the same place—vulnerable and dependent in every way. We all ''ooh'' and ''aah'' over sonogram pictures of our children, our grandchildren, our nieces, our nephews, even sonogram pictures from a stranger on a bus or a plane. We all ''ooh'' and ''aah'' in the same way. When we look at those pictures, we love. We love. You don't have to be taught this. You don't have to be conditioned to love. You don't have to be conditioned to know that we should help the vulnerable. This isn't because of economics. This isn't because of politics. We love because they are babies. You don't need anyone to explain this to you. Every one of us has experienced this when we have seen the sonogram pictures. We should note that this love is not just a feeling; it is also built on and backed up by facts.

As we consider whether these unborn babies—having been carried by their mamas for almost 5 months—deserve legal protection, whether they deserve our protection, we should think, too, about the science and what is becoming clearer year by year and month by month.

I want to associate myself with the comments of the Senator from Montana who preceded me. A huge part of why the millennials are becoming more pro-life than the two generations older than they are is because they are seeing these sonogram images, and it is changing them year by year and month by month.

I have been on the floor for about 45 minutes today, and I have heard many claims about polling and facts that just aren't true. I am not here to argue this case and argue how we should vote on this legislation because of polls; I am here because we should all love babies. That is why we should be doing this. But just at the level of polling, there have been claims on the floor today that are absolutely not true.

Younger people are becoming more pro-life, as the Senator from Montana said, year over year right now, and it is because of the prevalence and the pervasiveness of sonogram technology. This movement, the pro-life movement, is ascendant, and it is because people are grappling with science, grappling with images, and grappling with the reality of that intrinsic feeling we have to love.

We can and we should appeal to ethics. We can and we should discuss human dignity. We should reaffirm intrinsic value. For now, for this conversation today, we can limit ourselves to just scientific facts. As we consider those facts, I want to respectfully ask my colleagues in this Chamber today, where will we draw the line? No one seriously disputes that the little girl in that image is alive. No one seriously disputes that that little girl is a human being—no one. There is no one in this Chamber and there is no one outside this Chamber who has ever looked at that sonogram image who will come to the floor and say: Do you know the debate I want to have? I want to say that baby is not alive and she is not a human.

Somebody who is going to vote no on the legislation today should come to the floor and make that case, say that is not a life and that is not a human, because it is not true, and no one believes it.

The science is clear. We all know and understand that little baby in that sonogram image is a unique and separate being. We know she has unique DNA from her mother, and she has DNA that is unique from her father. The baby apps are now telling new moms and dads-to-be when that baby is the size of a sesame seed, then a blueberry, and then an apple. With the help of the sonograms, we are now catching pictures of her sucking her thumb, flexing her arms and legs, yawning, stretching, making faces. Here is what is really new the last couple of years: We are catching pictures and images of her responding to voices—familiar voices of other human beings that she is already in community with, people who are called to love her.

As early as 20 weeks postfertilization, which is about halfway through the pregnancy, scientists and our doctors now tell us that this unborn baby can feel pain. In fact, it has become routine procedure of late for us to give unborn and premature infants anesthesia for their fetal surgeries. Why? This is new. We didn't used to do this. Why do we do it? It is because we have new scientific evidence that they feel pain. It turns out that babies who are 20 weeks along in gestation are pain-capable inside mom's uterus.

As Dr. Kanwaljeet Anand testified before the Congress, ''The human fetus possesses the ability to experience pain from 20 weeks gestation, if not earlier, and the pain perceived by the fetus is possibly more intense than that perceived by term newborns.''

Not only can she feel pain, not only do the images show us that she recoils from being poked or prodded, advances in modern medicine are now helping babies who are born at 22 weeks, at 21 weeks, and at 20 weeks postfertilization survive outside the womb. The pain that those babies feel outside the womb is supporting the evidence that those babies also feel pain inside the womb, which leads me to ask my friends: Have our hearts grown cold to truth? Have we become indifferent to questioning our previously held convictions? Are we indifferent to what the science is clearly showing us?

This body, captive to abortion zealot-activists, might be ignoring the sonograms. That might be what is happening in this body today, but the American people are actually listening to the science and the sonograms. Contrary to those bizarre claims that were made on the floor a couple of times over the last hour, a hefty majority—it is not close—of Americans support this legislation, including a supermajority of women, including most young people, including most Independents, and now ticking up just shy of half of all Democrats. This should not be a partisan issue, and in the future, it will not be because more and more people are looking at these images. It is not going to be a partisan issue; it is going to be a bipartisan issue. But you have to tell the truth—that those pictures are pictures of babies, and they are alive, and they deserve our protection. But have our hearts in this body grown cold to the truth?

We should also not forget the mothers because the pro-life message is about being both pro-baby and pro-mother. Late-term abortions are actually not safe, even for the mother. Women seeking abortion after 20 weeks are 35 times more likely to die from an abortion than when done in the first trimester—35 times more likely.

The United States is one of only seven countries on Earth that allow elective abortion after 20 weeks, and we are actually tied with only three other countries as having the most permissive abortion regime on Earth. Do you know who our peers are? North Korea and China. That is who our peers are. If our rhetoric about human rights should mean anything, it should mean we don't want to be on a ''human rights worst'' list with North Korea and China. That is where we are today.

There are many reasonable people who are going to argue against this legislation. They are reasonable in other ways in life, and they want to make an argument about the very complicated issues about abortion in the

first trimester. There are many reasonable people who can have a reasonable debate about that. But when you listen to the arguments being made today, they are not actually grappling with today's legislation; they are talking about abortion in general. But nobody is telling us why we are tied with only China and North Korea as having the most permissive abortion regime on Earth.

My friends, beauty and compassion can stir our hearts, and science and facts should still confirm the truth. This legislation—the actual legislation we are voting on today—is pro-baby, it is pro-mom, and it is pro-science. These little babies, who are capable of feeling pain, deserve legal protection. They deserve our protection. I invite—I beg my colleagues to join in that conviction and to vote yes on this legislation today.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to join so many of my colleagues to speak in support of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. I thank Senator GRAHAM for his continued leadership on this issue. I supported this bill when Senator GRAHAM introduced it last Congress, and I am pleased Leader MCCONNELL has brought this to a vote.

Regulating abortion after 20 weeks of conception—when a child can feel pain—is a prudent measure that reflects the basic decency of our humanity and brings us in line with most of the Western world.

Science demonstrates that human life begins at conception, and our understanding of neonatal development is increasing by the day.

As a member of the Labor-HHS subcommittee on Appropriations, I have championed funding for the National Institute of Health. At the NIH, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has advanced our knowledge of pregnancy and development in the womb. Under this institute, the Neonatal Research Network has pioneered research that has led to techniques that save the lives of children in their earliest stages, when these children are at their most vulnerable.

Such research tells us children who are 20 weeks old—those this bill will protect—experience what a newborn will: reacting to noise, sucking their thumbs, and, as this bill's title indicates, feeling pain. The research has led to advancements in medical care for premature babies, and 23 percent of those delivered 20 weeks after fertilization can now survive long term outside of the womb. This percentage will surely increase as advances in neonatal care continue.

Despite what we know, the United States is one of only seven countries in the world, among nations such as China and Vietnam, that permits elective abortion after 20 weeks. As a result, the Congressional Budget Office estimates more than 10,000 babies are aborted each year after 20 weeks of conception.

What we can't lose sight of as a society is that, when we are talking about abortion, we are talking about the end of the most defenseless of human lives. This is true at all stages of pregnancy, regardless of whether it is early in the pregnancy or in the late stages, when children are more developed and more capable of surviving outside of the womb.

So often we turn to scientific evidence and research to support the need for new policies. In this case, the research shows that these children have a chance to survive, a chance to grow. They can feel; they can move. We cannot ignore these reactions and feelings, which are indicative of human life and with them comes the need for legal protections—protections we would not hesitate to provide for those living outside the womb.

Indeed, we have laws that treat animals more humanely than unborn children. This vote gives the Senate an opportunity to send a message showing who we are as leaders and as a society as a whole, one that protects the weak and the voiceless, instead of one that permits their destruction.

One in five children who are born at this 20-week stage are capable of surviving with suitable care. Rather than be discarded, they are to be given every opportunity to fight for the life that we protect for them. It is what we instinctively do as parents and as human beings.

We recoil when we hear of children who are harmed in any manner; yet the ability to terminate an unborn child's life when it is viable outside of the womb is something that is not only tolerated, but passionately defended. If there was anything else claiming the lives of 10,000 children each year, all 100 of us in the Senate would be standing up demanding action to address the matter.

The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act is a sensible measure that protects the lives of women and children in accord with judicial rulings. It has been passed by the House of Representatives, it has the support of a majority of Americans—men and women alike—and I call on my colleagues to support passage of this life-affirming legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF DAVID STRAS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I rise today to strongly support an important nomination and also to tell you my position on the legislation before the U.S. Senate right now, the one Senator SASSE has just spoken eloquently about.

First, I strongly support the nomination of Minnesota's Supreme Court Justice David Stras to serve as a circuit judge on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. Second, I strongly support the passage of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. I will briefly address both of these issues.

Over the next couple of days, the Senate will vote on whether to invoke cloture and then confirm the nomination of Justice David Stras to serve on the Eighth Circuit. Justice Stras is eminently qualified and exceptionally bright. He has received praise and support from the legal profession and across the political spectrum.

Justice Stras is the grandson of a Holocaust survivor. He graduated No. 1 in his class from Kansas School of Law in 1999. He served as a law clerk to two Federal circuit judges and to a Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Stras has served on the Minnesota Supreme Court since his appointment in 2010. In 2012, he ran for a full 6-year term. He handedly defeated his opponent, winning 56 percent of the vote.

Justice Stras has received wide bipartisan support from the Minnesota legal community. He has taught law for many years at the University of Minnesota. He also teaches law at the University of Iowa, which is in my home State. Many of the faculty, including even liberal professors, such as Professor Shelly Kurtz, strongly endorse Justice Stras's nomination. His time in the private sector was spent at two highly regarded law firms.

During his service on the Minnesota Supreme Court, Justice Stras has participated in over 750 cases. As my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR noted, Justice Stras's judicial record demonstrates that he is impartial and apolitical in his writings. Justice Stras has sided with the Minnesota Supreme Court majority 94 percent of the time. Justice Stras has dissented one-third of the time with then-Justice Alan Page, who was the first African-American justice in Minnesota and has a record of being very liberal. Former Justice Page strongly endorses Justice Stras's nomination to the Eighth Circuit, and four former justices from all political stripes also endorsed Justice Stras's nomination. This shows me that Justice Stras will not be a rubberstamp for any political ideology. I am convinced Justice Stras will rule fairly and impartially, finding and applying the law as written, not legislating from the bench.

Justice Stras is a very accomplished and impressive nominee. He has a long judicial record of impartiality. I strongly support his nomination, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Madam President, I also come to the floor to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This commonsense bill recognizes that the government has an interest in protecting our children from the excruciating pain they are capable of experiencing during late-term abortions. This is a bill many Americans, including a majority of women, broadly support, and it is time we get this bill passed.

As the Judiciary Committee chairman, I convened a hearing on this bill in 2016. Three witnesses, including a

Northwestern professor of pediatrics, a woman who survived a botched abortion as a baby, and a former abortion provider, offered compelling evidence in support of this very important legislation.

There is also the history of an Iowa boy, Micah Pickering, who is living proof that we need to do more to protect unborn babies at this stage of development. Micah and his parents visited me in Washington last September. They told me that when Micah was born at 20 weeks postfertilization, he received intensive care, including medication to minimize his pain and discomfort. Babies like Micah, born in the fifth month of pregnancy, are capable of feeling such pain. That is why it has now become routine procedure to give premature infants anesthesia for fetal surgeries.

How could anyone think these unborn babies would not experience the same excruciating pain from abortions when premature babies like Micah, from Iowa, are being born at the same stage of development and are surviving late term?

Once again, I call upon my colleagues to support the passage of this bill, entitled the ''Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act,'' and to embrace at the same time the sanctity of an innocent human life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I join Senator GRASSLEY and my colleagues in supporting the bill before us today.

As we debate this issue, it always seems to be such a defining issue in terms of who we are and whom we hope to be. No country in Europe allows a pregnancy to be ended this late in the pregnancy. No country in Africa allows a pregnancy to be ended this late in the pregnancy. Only six other countries in the world allow pregnancies to be ended at any time. As I have listened to the debate today, the debate about 20 weeks, it sounds to me like it wouldn't matter to the opponents of the bill if it were at 30 weeks, certainly, or at 21 weeks or at 20. There is no week one can pass here.

The other bill we should vote on, which the House has passed, is the born-alive bill. There are people in the country today who actually oppose the born-alive bill. When a baby during an abortion process is born alive, my understanding is, you can't step in and take the life of that living child, but you can all step back from the table, on which that baby lies in front of you, and let the baby die.

Obviously, there is a point at which we are not going to be able to talk to each other in a way that apparently will persuade anybody. Maybe hearts will not change, and maybe minds will not change in the Senate today, but as many of my colleagues have pointed out, they are changing in the country. People realize there is a time when that child has every opportunity, with a little help, to live independently. That, surely, would be too late to end that life in the minds of most people. In the minds of younger people? It is more of the view of older people that life should be saved, but 63 percent of all Americans say we shouldn't continue to allow this to happen.

Senator GRASSLEY just said and others have said a majority of women, a majority of Democrats, a majority of Republicans, a majority of young people all believe this is not an acceptable place for us to be. Why would we want to be one of seven countries in the world that would allow abortion at any time? Why would we want to be one of four countries in the world that would allow abortions at a time when it is widely accepted that the child being aborted—the life being taken—is a child who can feel pain?

As we come to this point today—and while a majority of Senators, I think, will vote for this, though not a big enough majority to put it on the President's desk—I think, once again, we have to ask ourselves: At what point do our friends on the other side, who clearly disagree with us on this issue, feel a life is clearly a life that should be saved? Would you vote for the born-alive bill? Would you vote for this bill if it were at 25 weeks? Would you vote for this bill if it were at 28 weeks? I don't hear any of that in the debate. It is just: This is not the government's business. At some point, it is the government's business. Protecting life is at some point the government's business.

When the Presiding Officer and at least one other person and I served in the House, we changed the law. It was Laci and Conner's Law. When a homicide is committed and the woman is pregnant and the child is lost also, that is considered in law as a double homicide—two lives having been taken at that point, two lives at 20 weeks or at 12 weeks or at 15 weeks. I am not sure where that threshold begins, but I do know we have decided this is not just one crime; that it is two crimes when that happens.

We have an opportunity today to define something that is pretty clearly and significantly defining as to who we are as a nation. Otherwise, virtually every country in the world wouldn't have stopped doing this, if it ever had allowed it to happen in the first place.

I urge my colleagues to join in passing this bill—in standing up for those who cannot defend themselves—and to understand that harm is done, and when harm is done in this way, our society is harmed by that harm.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the Senator from Nebraska has generously allowed me to intrude on her time for a half a minute to say that I strongly support this legislation—the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

Science is on our side in supporting this legislation, and public opinion is on our side in supporting this legislation. There are 60 percent of women, 64 percent of Independents, and 56 percent of Democrats who support ending late-term abortions, which is what we are trying to do. Medical practice is on our side in this legislation, and world opinion and world practice are on our side.

Let me simply reiterate that we in America are among a grim group of seven countries who permit abortions after 20 weeks—Canada and the Netherlands in the West and then China, North Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam. We are in a grim group that includes North Korea and China. We may not have the votes this time, but we are advancing the issue, and we are going to continue to fight for the unborn, particularly those who are capable of feeling pain after 20 weeks.

I thank the Senate for its time, and I particularly thank the Senator from Nebraska for indulging me for a moment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, over my time in public service, I have been committed to supporting common-sense, pro-life measures that offer empathy for women and for unborn children. Too often, women experience despair and pain and judgment from others during unplanned pregnancies. We should offer compassion for these expectant mothers, and they need to know we will continue to support them in the challenging years ahead. We should also be willing to protect the most innocent among us, the unborn, who can feel pain and have the chance at viability.

I rise to discuss the bill that the Senate will consider shortly—the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

This is a reasonable bill that has the support of 47 Senators. This kind of legislation has passed in many States, including in my own. My State of Nebraska has a proud tradition of being pro-life. We were the first State in the country to pass a 20-week abortion ban. The bill before us today would enact the same policy at the Federal level, and doing so makes sense.

As a State senator, I was a strong supporter and cosponsor of that legislation. It passed in Nebraska because we focused on areas of agreement, and like the bill we are debating today, the legislation provided exceptions for rare and dangerous circumstances. This bill passed overwhelmingly in Nebraska by a vote of 44 to 5, and it had the support from pro-choice and pro-life senators from both parties—Republicans and Democrats.

The enduring support for this kind of legislation across the country and the world is pretty easy to understand, in that it is a righteous cause that is based on science. It states that abortions during the sixth month of pregnancy should only be allowed in moments of extreme danger and with exceptions.

Basic embryology shows that the human nervous system is developed within the first 6 weeks of pregnancy. Our sensory receptors for pain are developed around the mouth as early as 10 weeks and are present in the skin and mucosal surfaces 20 weeks into gestation. The connections between the spinal cord and the thalamus—the part of the human body that deals with pain perception—is present at 20-weeks' gestation as well. None of this is debatable. It is a fact.

We also know babies have been born and have survived and thrived before the current 24-week limit. In March of 2017, the academic journal Pediatrics discussed a girl in Dallas who, in 2014, was born at 21-weeks' gestation. Today, she is a typical, happy 3-year-old who is living her life to the fullest and has a bright future ahead of her.

Over time, views on this divisive issue have evolved toward the side of pro-life policies because, as we gain more knowledge about pregnancy and gestation, we understand the humanity of the unborn. We recognize them as the people they are—and this movement is on the rise. Nearly two-thirds of Americans support legislation prohibiting abortion into the sixth month of pregnancy. This includes almost 80 percent of the millennial generation—those most likely to be affected by such restrictions. It is gaining momentum because it is a movement backed by science. It is a movement of truth, and it is a movement of love.

We have an opportunity to join together and support the basic truth that all life is sacred. We should protect the child in the womb, especially when he or she can feel pain. We can make a statement that every person is deserving of life and deserving of love.

I believe that life is a gift from God—a gift to be lovingly cherished. I ask my colleagues to support this reasonable piece of legislation.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in the last few years, I have watched attempt after attempt to restrict a woman's right to choose. This legislation bans a woman's access to abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy, regardless of the risk to her health, and it weakens the protections for women who are victims of rape and incest. It would also allow for criminal prosecution of doctors and nurses who provide healthcare to a woman in these most difficult circumstances.

For years we have seen politicians at the Federal and State levels push to limit a woman's access to reproductive healthcare. The goal is to completely eviscerate this right. From 2010 to 2016, States adopted 334 restrictions on women's access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare. These include laws that require mandatory waiting periods which have no medical basis, force doctors to give patients inaccurate medical information, and restrict access to contraceptives.

In just 1 year, the Trump administration has attempted to restrict women's access to birth control, attempted to defund Planned Parenthood, supported legislation to dismantle the Affordable Care Act and its protections for women's health, created new government offices to undermine women's healthcare, and nominated judges who openly oppose women's privacy rights under Roe v. Wade.

This bill is yet another attempt to harm women by criminalizing their healthcare, even threatening the doctors who care for them with years in prison.

Think of a pregnant woman who is planning for her family's future, and then something goes terribly wrong. She is experiencing a miscarriage. This happens to women every day. It is not just scary medically, it is extremely painful and emotional. Under this bill, a woman's health is put at risk, and her doctor could be threatened with criminal prosecution. If a woman's miscarriage hasn't completed, her health could rapidly deteriorate from fever and infection. If this bill passes and a woman goes to the hospital, no doctor could help her. Because under this legislation, there is no exception to protect a woman's health. None.

Only if a doctor can be certain that a woman is close to death could they legally intervene, and that I think is unconscionable.

I have heard from women in California who were thrilled to be pregnant, only to receive the devastating news that their babies had fatal anomalies and would not survive. Let me give you an example. Rosalie, from Northern California, wrote to me and stated:

> Our baby's heart was severely deformed. He was missing parts of his brain, and his lungs likely would not have supported him breathing on his own, ever.
>
> We found all of this out at 19.5 weeks. . . . If we were a few days late under this bill, we would have been forced to carry our baby to term only to have him suffer for a few minutes, days, weeks, and then die.

Families dealing with situations like Rosalie's deserve compassion and support for this heart-wrenching situation. But instead, this legislation leaves them with no options.

Last Congress, at a Judiciary Committee hearing, we heard from Christy Zink, who learned late in her pregnancy that her baby was missing the central connecting structure of the two parts of his brain. She told us in public testimony:

> At no point in this decision and the resulting medical care would the sort of political interference under consideration have helped me or my family.
>
> What happened to me during pregnancy can happen to any woman.

This bill is not only harmful to women like Rosalie and Christy, but it is unconstitutional, and it violates Roe v. Wade. Look at the challenges to two States that enacted 20-week bans—Arizona and Idaho. Both were struck down at the circuit court level as unconstitutional.

Let me read that again. Two States, Arizona and Idaho, with this legislation—it was struck down at the circuit court level as unconstitutional. The Supreme Court refused to review Arizona's case. Idaho didn't appeal.

It is also important to point out that this bill weakens protections for women who have been victims of rape or incest. Rape victims would no longer be able to access healthcare unless they could show proof that they received medical treatment or counseling for the rape or reported the assault to law enforcement. I find this shocking.

Think of a young girl who is a victim of sex trafficking. She is beaten, imprisoned, and raped by multiple men each night. She gets pregnant. This law would require this rape victim to go to law enforcement or a government official to access medical care. These girls don't have control over their own bodies. They have no freedom. To deny medical care to rape and incest victims because they don't have the right paperwork or have not reported their assault to police is unworkable and, I believe, cruel.

It is deeply troubling that we are using valuable floor time for this dangerous bill. The current funding bill expires in 10 days, and we still don't have a legislative solution for Dreamers. That is what we should be taking up right now. Instead, Republicans have chosen to spend the Senate's time trying to turn back the clock, debating on legislation that would drive us back to pre-Roe v. Wade.

I remember those days. I know what it was like. We knew then and we still know today that banning abortion does not end it; it just means that women undergo unsafe procedures, and lives are lost.

It is 2018. Women are more than half the population of this country. We run Fortune 500 companies. We are leaders in government. We are the heads of households. The Constitution of the United States guarantees our right to privacy and our right to access to reproductive healthcare. I, for one, will not see these rights stripped away.

Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr.President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to thank all of my colleagues on this side of the aisle who have joined in this debate and are having their voices heard. You are on the right side of history. You are where America will be. It is just a matter of time until we get there.

To my colleagues on the other side, I appreciate your passion, but I think you are on the wrong side of history.

What we are trying to do here today is to proceed to a bill. It is called a motion to proceed. But I think what we are trying to do is proceed to a better America. We are one of seven nations on the entire planet to allow abortion on demand after 20 weeks; that is, the fifth month of pregnancy.

What do we know about unborn children at that stage of development? We know that for a doctor to operate on that unborn child, they provide anesthesia because it hurts the child, and no doctor wants to hurt the child in an effort to save the child's life. Listen to what I said. Medical practice dictates that if you are going to operate on a 20-week-old, unborn child, you provide anesthesia because science tells us that the baby can feel pain.

Can you only imagine the pain it will feel from abortion? There is a reason that there are only seven countries in the world that allow this. The question for America is, Do we want to stay in this club or do we want to get out? I want out.

Twenty States have a version of this bill, and more are taking it up as I speak. When informed of what we are trying to do, the majority of pro-choice people support this. Abortion is a divisive issue, and it is an emotional issue, but in the fifth month of pregnancy, I think most Americans are going to side with what we are trying to do—stopping abortion on demand in the fifth month.

Does it make us a better nation? I would say it does not.

So we are trying to proceed to make sure that America will be a better place and that we become part of the mainstream of the world when it comes to protecting unborn children after the fifth month of pregnancy.

If you look at a medical encyclopedia and read about the birthing process, parents are encouraged in the fifth month to sing to a child because the child will begin to associate your voice with you. Read it. There is literature of all kinds stating what you should do in the fifth month to enhance the relationship between you and your unborn child.

We do allow exceptions to save the life of the mother. It is a terrible situation when we have to pick between the mother and child, and there is an exception for that situation. The result of rape or incest if the child was a minor—when it comes to a pregnancy caused by a rape, we require that the law enforcement authorities be notified of the rape before the abortion, not at the time it occurred, and I think most Americans would want people to come forward and report rape.

It is a difficult situation, but we have commonsense exceptions, and this is a commonsense bill designed to change America in a commonsense way. It is a motion to proceed to put us in better standing as a nation in the world at large, I believe. It is also a motion to withdraw—withdraw from the club of seven nations that allows abortion on demand at a time when doctors can save the baby's life, but to do so they have to provide anesthesia because that baby can feel so much pain.

Savannah Duke is a young lady in South Carolina. She is 17 years old. She goes to high school in Spartanburg, SC. She does all the things that a 17-year-old would do. She is an incredibly gifted young lady. At 20 weeks, it was discovered that she was missing a leg, and the doctors feared she would have severe birth defects. Her parents, Wendy and Scott, when deciding what to do, could see the baby move, and they decided not to opt for an abortion. She is in high school today.

There is Micah from Iowa, as you probably heard from Senator ERNST, who has been a stalwart on this issue. He was born at 20 weeks and is alive today to tell about it.

This is not about medical viability. Roe v. Wade says that there is a compelling State interest to protect the unborn at medical viability. I would argue that the difference between medical viability in 1973 and 2018 is enormous. What we are trying to do is provide a new theory to protect the unborn, and it goes something like this: Can a legislative body prohibit an abortion on demand at a time when science tells us that the baby feels excruciating pain, at a time when science tells us that parents should sing to their child, at a time when science tells us that a baby has well-connected tissues and can feel pain and, on occasion, can also survive? My answer is yes; it is OK for Congress and State legislators to pass laws saying that in the fifth month, we are going to disallow abortion on demand. There will be exceptions, but they will be rare. There are 10,000 cases every year that are protected by this law.

So what are we trying to do? We are trying to proceed forward to a better day in America. We are trying to get out of a club where there are only six other members. We are trying to reconcile the law with science.

To my friends on the other side who talk about science a lot, count me in. Science is very important. We should listen to our scientists. When it comes to climate change, I do. I am convinced that climate change is real.

You should listen to what doctors tell you about the unborn child in the fifth month. You should listen to what medical science is able to do to save the child's life. You should listen to the stories of people who actually make it at 20 weeks. You should understand that excruciating pain is felt by an unborn child in the fifth month, and America does not want to be in the club of seven countries that allow abortion on demand.

I don't know where the vote will turn out. It is probably going to be short of 60, but to those who believe in this issue, we will be back for another day. We are never going to give up until we get America in a better place. The better place, I think, would be having a country that recognizes that, in the fifth month of pregnancy, the law will be there for the child, because science is on the child's side, and we will reconcile our laws to science.

We know what science says about a baby in the fifth month. We know what the law says: They can be aborted on demand. I think there is a disconnect, not only between science and law but between what is right and where we are today. I just don't see how this makes us a better nation, to continue this practice of allowing babies to be aborted on demand in the fifth month of pregnancy when we know they feel a lot of pain. I just don't see how that makes us a better nation. We will get there, Mr. President, with your help and the help of others.

A majority of the American people are on our side when they understand what we are trying to do. There are 20 States who have some version of this, and it is just a matter of time until most States will.

As to this debate, I don't think it is a waste of time. I want to do two things. I want to get out of the club of seven nations that allow abortion on demand of babies that feel excruciating pain when they are operated on to save their lives, and I can work on behalf of the Dreamers, too. I can do two things at once. I can talk about getting America in a better spot when it comes to babies during the fifth month of pregnancy and finding a better life for Dreamers. I think it is kind of odd that somehow you can't do one without the other.

I want all of these Dream Act kids—young adults now—to stay in the country they know. They have no other place to go. On average, they were brought here at the age of 6 and, if you told them to go home, it wouldn't be some foreign country. It would be the home they were raised in and the life they know. So it makes perfect sense to me that we should be trying to find a solution to secure our border and fix a broken immigration system and deal compassionately with millions of young people who, through no fault of their own, have no place else to go but America.

It also makes sense to me that we can talk about this issue at the same time and that we as a nation will rise to the occasion and withdraw from a club where there are only six other nations on the planet that allow a baby to be aborted in the fifth month of pregnancy at a time when that child can feel excruciating pain and young parents are encouraged to sing to the child. If science urges you to sing to the child, I want the law to stop an abortion unless there is a darn good reason. Our time will come, for the Dreamers as well as the baby. Our time will come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak on leader time.

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

NOMINATION OF DAVID STRAS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know we have a vote coming up soon.

First, on the judge vote, today the Senate will vote on cloture on the nomination of David Stras for the Eighth Circuit in Minnesota. Senator Franken opposed this nomination and did not return his blue slip, but Senator GRASSLEY scheduled the confirmation hearing and a markup anyway. It is my understanding that the new Senator from Minnesota, Ms. SMITH, intends to vote against his nomination.

If Judge Stras is confirmed, it will mark the first time since 1982 that a circuit court nominee was confirmed without both home State Senators returning blue slips in support of a hearing. Democratic and Republican chairs have stuck to the blue slip rule, despite the tensions in this body. So this is a major step back—another way that the majority is slowly and inexorably gnawing away at the way this body works and making it more and more and more like the House of Representatives. It is not a legacy, if I were the leader or a Member of that party, that I would be proud of.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. President, tomorrow President Trump will address the Nation in his first State of the Union. We all look forward to hearing what the President has to say. One thing we can expect is for the President to link any good piece of economic news to the Republican tax bill, as the majority leader does most days and did again today. Of course, the reality of the Republican tax bill is much different than the image painted by the leader's cherry-picked examples.

One of the real impacts of the tax bill has been massive giveaways to wealthy investors and corporate executives. The very wealthiest and the most powerful got the overwhelming majority of the breaks. As for individuals, some got increases, some stayed the same, and some will get a little bit.

Companies have announced multibillion-dollar stock-buyback repurchasing programs, which benefit wealthy shareholders, not workers. According to Morgan Stanley, ''83% of analysts indicated that companies would put gains from lower taxes to use for share buybacks, dividends, and mergers and acquisitions.'' So we will have less competition because this tax bill has given the big corporations money so they can buy other corporations and reduce competition.

Even though Republicans sold it as a job creator, there have been a slew of layoffs in this country just after the tax bill passed. Walmart, which made a big to-do of what it was doing for its workers, is shuttering 63 Sam's Club warehouses and laying off 1,000 workers at their headquarters. Macy's will cut 5,000 jobs. Carrier, a company the President promised to save, is still bleeding jobs. Kimberly-Clark will cut up to 5,500 jobs, and their chief financial officer said the savings from the Republican tax bill gave them the ''flexibility''—his word—to make these reductions. So the tax bill is actually leading to a whole lot of layoffs. We don't hear that from President Trump or our Republican colleagues, but it is true.

Another one of the real impacts of the tax bill will be felt on tax day, when the Nation's highest income earners, the top 1 percent, will get an average tax cut of roughly $50,000, while more than 9 million middle-class families will face a tax increase, according to the JCT and the Tax Policy Center.

It is true that bipartisan, deficit-neutral tax reform could have delivered more jobs and better pay for the middle class, but President Trump and congressional leaders opted for a partisan bill that rewarded their wealthy donors, big corporations, and the superrich, and it increased the deficit that our children and grandchildren will have to pay by $1.5 trillion. I don't expect the President or the Republican leader to mention these facts. I certainly don't think the President will mention them in the State of the Union. But Democrats will highlight them in days to come.

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Now, Mr. President, when we passed the last extension of government funding, we gave ourselves a lengthy to-do list: Pass a budget, provide disaster aid, negotiate a healthcare package, and protect the Dreamers. We have been talking about these issues for months without resolution. Now is the time to start solving them. We have waited too long to fully fund our military. We have waited too long to dedicate more money to the opioid crisis, which is stealing 40,000 American lives a year. We have waited too long to improve veterans healthcare, which our veterans receive. Many are waiting in line still to get treatment. We waited too long to address failing pension plans, which are the safety net for so many teamsters, carpenters, miners, and people approaching retirement. We have waited too long to give the 800,000 Dreamers the peace of mind that they will not be deported by the only country they have known.

We need to address these issues soon—no more delay. We hope our moderate Senators will strive to find a narrow bill on DACA and border security that can actually pass. Expanding this beyond DACA and beyond border security, as the White House framework tries to do, will only delay a solution to this time-sensitive problem.

Now, my guest at tomorrow's State of the Union will highlight the urgency of a few issues I have just mentioned. Her name is Stephanie Keegan. She is from Putnam County, NY. Her son Daniel, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, died from an opioid overdose. At the time, Daniel was suffering from a severe case of PTSD. His nerves were shattered by war. He waited 16 months for treatment at the VA—16 months, after he served us so well. That is a shocking amount of time for a young man who bravely served his country to wait for his country to serve him. Daniel died 2 weeks before he was given his first appointment at the VA.

There are many things that can be done to change this situation, Mrs. Keegan told me. She is so right. We can provide better healthcare to our veterans. We can do more to fight the scourge of opioid addiction. We can fulfill the promise to hundreds of thousands of pensioners who need money. We can make sure Social Security works. We can make sure the kids waiting for college who have to pay for college can get there a little easier. So I hope Stephanie's presence at tomorrow's speech inspires an urgency to tackle these challenges.

FBI

Finally, Mr. President, I want to return to a topic I addressed at some length last Thursday—the ongoing scorched-earth campaign by the White House, rightwing media, and some Republicans in Congress to destroy the integrity of the FBI and the investigation into interference in the 2016 election. This ongoing scorched-earth campaign weakens law enforcement and weakens the FBI—one of our best agencies.

We recently learned that President Trump, at one point last summer, directed the firing of Special Counsel Mueller—what would have been a shocking and unambiguous obstruction of justice—only to be pulled back.

Today, we learned that the Deputy Director of the FBI, Andrew McCabe, will be stepping down immediately. He has been attacked by the White House relentlessly.

As soon as this evening, the House will vote to release the contents of a secret memo prepared by the Republican majority on the House Intelligence Committee that insinuates the FBI and Department of Justice's investigation into Russia's interference in our elections is politically biased.

According to the ranking member of that committee, Representative SCHIFF, this memo is full of innuendo and glaring omissions. It presents evidence without context and jumps to unfounded conclusions. We should call it what it truly is: a slanderous memo of GOP talking points.

This is not an erudite study. This is a bunch of talking points to discredit an agency that is doing a good job, that we all have supported and respected over the years.

If Republicans vote to release their memo of partisan talking points tonight, they should also vote to release the memo prepared by Ranking Member SCHIFF, and let everyone judge both on the merits. Let both memos go forward. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. It would be absolute hypocrisy for House Republicans to release their memo and not allow Representative SCHIFF to release his.

Everyone should keep in mind who is promoting this stuff. Who is promoting these rightwing talking points, defaming the FBI? None other than Russian-linked bots. They are using the hashtag ''Release the Memo'' 100 more times than any other hashtag by Kremlin-linked accounts. Putin and the Kremlin are trying at all times to undermine our democracy through the spread of false information.

What does it say about the Republican memo that the Kremlin is pushing it more than they are pushing anything else right now? At this point, every American should wonder whether the House Republicans are working harder for Putin or for the American people—at least those House Republicans who put together this memo.

This Republican talking points memo is part of a pattern of behavior from this White House and their Republican allies in Congress—not everyone, just some—and the hard-right media. They do not welcome the results of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, so they are trying to smear the investigation and the entire FBI before it concludes. We all know agents; we all know how hard they work and how decent they are.

The attacks on the credibility of the FBI are beyond the pale. They have fueled wild speculation and outright paranoia—talks of ''coups'' and ''deep states'' and ''secret societies.'' It brings shame on the folks propagating this nonsense, but more crucially, it diminishes our great country.

When prominent voices in one of our country's two major political parties are outright attacking the FBI and the Department of Justice—the pillars of American law enforcement—they are playing right into Mr. Putin's hands. They are unfairly and dishonestly clouding a crucial investigation into Russia's interference in our elections—a matter of most serious concern for every American. It is abhorrent. It must stop.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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 S. 2311, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, Jerry Moran, Marco Rubio, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Thom Tillis, John Hoeven, Tom Cotton, Joni Ernst, James M. Inhofe, Steve Daines, Mike Crapo, James Lankford, Roy Blunt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2311, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 25 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blunt	Flake	Perdue
Boozman	Gardner	Portman
Burr	Graham	Risch
Capito	Grassley	Roberts
Casey	Hatch	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Crapo	Kennedy	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Donnelly	Manchin	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	Young

NAYS—46

Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden
Harris	Murray	
Hassan	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Baldwin	McCain	Nelson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 46.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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 nomination of David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Pat Roberts, Roy Blunt, Tim Scott, Todd Young, Richard C. Shelby, Chuck Grassley, John Boozman, Marco Rubio, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, Jerry Moran, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 26 Ex.]

YEAS—57

Alexander	Flake	Moran
Barrasso	Gardner	Murkowski
Blunt	Graham	Paul
Boozman	Grassley	Perdue
Burr	Hatch	Portman
Capito	Heitkamp	Risch
Cassidy	Heller	Roberts
Cochran	Hoeven	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Corker	Isakson	Sasse
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott
Cotton	Jones	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Klobuchar	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Tillis
Donnelly	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	Manchin	Warner
Ernst	McCaskill	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reed
Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hassan	Schatz
Booker	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

McCain	Nelson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the United States is just one of seven countries in the entire world that currently allow elective abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, and we are not in good company on that list. Of the other six countries that allow elective abortions at that very late stage of the child's development, half of those countries have authoritarian governments—communist governments with horrible records when it comes to human rights.

Yes, our abortion laws are as extreme and inhumane as the abortion laws in Vietnam, China, and North Korea. It pains me—and it should pain all Americans—that the United States lags so very far behind the rest of the world in protecting the unborn, protecting human beings, simply because they have yet to take their first breath.

Twenty weeks is the fifth month of pregnancy. Think about what that means. At that stage, the unborn child is about 10 inches long from head to toe. He or she is roughly the size of a banana. A baby at this stage sleeps and wakes in the womb. She sucks her thumb, makes faces, and, in some cases, might even see light filtering in through the womb.

By 20 weeks, if not before, science suggests that the baby can also feel pain. Each year in this country, more than 10,000 abortions occur after this point in the baby's development. Today, we have a chance to stop this grave injustice.

Moments ago, this body voted on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, a bill that would prohibit abortions after the 20th week of pregnancy. This is a commonsense restriction that is supported by a majority of Americans. More than 6 in 10 Americans support a ban on abortion after 20 weeks, according to a Marist poll conducted earlier this month. Not only that, but a majority of Democrats—56 percent—said they would support an abortion ban at 20 weeks. Yes, this bill does, in fact, have widespread support, and it would bring America back into the mainstream of nations.

More importantly, this bill is just. It is humane. It is the right thing to do. It is the natural outcome of any question asked with a degree of moral probity: Is this right?

The reason we signed up for this job is to fight for what is right. And it is wrong—self-evidently wrong—that our country allows 5-month-old unborn babies to be killed. We, in this body, have a moral duty to protect those vulnerable human beings, but I have no illusions that this will be easy.

We have to overcome the misinformation of the abortion industry. This is a powerful special interest group that wants to keep abortion legal right up to the moment of birth. The abortion industry is attacking this bill by denying that there is any evidence that unborn babies can feel pain at 20 weeks. The linchpin of its argument is a 2005 study that claimed unborn babies could not feel pain until the 30th week of pregnancy. What the abortion industry never mentions, of course, is that this study was written by individuals with significant and, I would add, undisclosed ties to the abortion industry itself.

As reported by the Philadelphia Inquirer, the study's lead author, who was not a doctor but a medical student, previously worked for NARAL. Another of the study's authors actually performed abortions as the medical director of an abortion clinic.

How convenient that the abortion industry's denial of fetal pain rests on a study by its own employees. If I recall, the tobacco industry tried something similar when they denied that cigarettes cause cancer. As always, the antidote to misinformation is more information, and the antidote to bad science is good science.

I have three studies that address the topic of fetal pain specifically. They were all published after the abortion industry's favorite study—the one they prefer to acknowledge to the exclusion of all others. Unlike that study—the one they prefer to the exclusion of all others—none of these studies are compromised by a conflict of interest.

This one is by the International Association for the Study of Pain. It concludes: ''The available scientific evidence makes it possible, even probable, that fetal pain perception occurs well before late gestation.'' The study pinpoints fetal pain to the ''second trimester'' of pregnancy, ''well before the third trimester.''

Here is another study by the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists. It concludes that ''the basis for pain perception appear[s] at about 20 to 22 weeks from conception.''

Finally, here is a 2012 study published in the Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine. This paper states that there is evidence that unborn children can feel pain beginning at 20 weeks. The authors note that at this stage, unborn children have pain receptors in their skin, recoil in response to sharp objects like needles, and release stress hormones when they are harmed.

They conclude: ''We should suppose that the fetus can feel pain. . . . When the development of the fetus is equal to that of a premature baby.''

I could go on, but I think that is enough for now. The takeaway is this. The science at a minimum suggests that unborn children can feel pain around 20 weeks. It can feel the abortionists' instruments as they do their grisly work.

These children feel until they cannot. That possibility alone—the mere possibility—should be chilling to us, and that possibility alone should have us rushing to ban abortion at 20 weeks. I implore my colleagues who didn't vote for this to reconsider and, the next time they have an opportunity to support it, to vote yes on the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act.

A vote for this bill is a vote to protect some of the most vulnerable members of the human family. And yes, we are talking about members of the human family. The life form we are talking about is not a puppy; it is not some other form of animal. This is a human being we are talking about. This is something that instinctively calls out for us. We think about the needs of the most vulnerable among us, and we should be eager to protect them.

Together, we can move our country's laws away from those of North Korea and China and toward our most fundamental belief that all human beings are created equal and that they have an unalienable right to life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose dangerous legislation that would endanger the health of women by limiting their constitutional right to access a safe and legal abortion. We must recognize the capacity of every woman in our Nation to make her own healthcare decisions, control her own destiny, and ensure that all women have the full independence to do so.

Unfortunately, throughout the last year, the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress have repeatedly tried to roll back access to care and undermine the health of women. We have seen bill after bill targeting women's healthcare by restricting access to abortion, increasing the costs of maternity care, and allowing insurers to treat giving birth as a preexisting condition.

The Trump administration issued interim final rules, allowing employers to deny women access to the birth control coverage they need. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have confirmed Trump administration officials and judges to the bench who are vehemently opposed to a woman's right to make her own reproductive health decisions. Republicans have been relentless in their attempts to defund Planned Parenthood, which is an essential source of care for women in New Hampshire and provides key services like birth control and cancer screenings.

Here we are, once again, with Republican leadership bringing a bill to the floor that attempts to marginalize women and take away their rights to make their own decisions. This bill

would ban abortions after 20 weeks—an extremely rare procedure that is often the result of complex and difficult medical circumstances. The bill lacks adequate exceptions for survivors of rape or incest, and it gets in the way of a woman and the judgment of her doctor, threatening to jail physicians for providing patients the care they need.

In fact, a group of medical and public health organizations have written to Congress, saying: This bill places healthcare providers in an untenable situation. When they are facing a complex, urgent medical situation they must think about an unjust law instead of about how to protect the health and safety of their patients.

This bill is a direct challenge to the precedent set in Roe V. Wade. We are at a moment in our country when women are speaking out and fighting for basic dignity and respect at home, in the workplace, and in their daily lives. They also deserve that respect with regard to the most deeply personal health decisions they can make.

Passing this legislation would send a message to women across the country that politicians in Washington do not believe that women have the capacity to make their own healthcare decisions—as if women don't understand or are unable to grapple with the physical, emotional, economic, and spiritual issues that are involved in deciding when or if to have a family or how to handle critical health challenges.

Rather than marginalizing women, we should be doing everything we can to include them in the bipartisan work we need to do on priorities to move our Nation forward. Divisive and partisan bills like this one undermine women and undermine our strength as a country. I was proud to join many of my colleagues in voting against this bill, and I am glad that it has failed in the Senate today.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

TRIBUTE TO MARY KAY THATCHER

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to take a moment this evening to congratulate one of the most effective advocates for American agriculture in our Nation's Capital.

We are often helped by those who have lots of knowledge. In the coming days, Mary Kay Thatcher will be retiring from the American Farm Bureau, where she is widely recognized as one of the most knowledgeable experts on farm policy, conservation, crop insurance, ag data, and so many other issues that affect farmers and ranchers and rural America. Mary Kay represents the best of Washington, DC. She is smart, passionate, and authentic. Again, we often need help from those who have expertise to help us make the right decisions, and she is absolutely one of those people.

A great thing about Mary Kay Thatcher is that she hasn't forgotten her rural roots. It is evidenced by her clear convictions and steadfast support for American farmers and ranchers. Too many people come to the beltway and they forget why they are here—but not Mary Kay. Throughout her career of more than 30 years, she has never lost sight of what ought to be the mission of each of ours—to use our positions, our talents, and our abilities to help others. For Mary Kay Thatcher, her career has been all about helping America's farmers and ranchers, standing up for the food and fiber producers of our Nation. Let me tell you that she is one of the best at it.

Not only is Mary Kay one of the most articulate ag lobbyists I know, she is one of the most articulate people I know. Her ability to break down an issue and make it understandable for everyone—for Senators and our staffs, including those who don't have ag backgrounds—makes her one of the most effective advocates for agriculture. There are fewer and fewer people in the U.S. Senate and Congress who understand agriculture or who come from farming backgrounds, and that ability to connect with them is so important.

I have always appreciated the advice and counsel that Mary Kay has provided me when working on the farm bill or other pieces of ag legislation. I have also always noticed and appreciated how much time she has spent in educating staff, including those in my office. I believe a big part of Mary Kay's legacy will be the generations of young people who will be better prepared to continue the fight for American agriculture because Mary Kay has taken the time and made the effort to mentor and to teach them.

Her passion for agriculture comes naturally. She grew up on an Iowa farm and continues to own and manage that farm today, and that helps guide her work here in the Nation's Capital. She has worked at the American Farm Bureau for over 30 years, but in ag circles, it is not necessarily the number of years that people talk about but the number of farm bills. They refer to how many farm bills a person has survived. By my count, Mary Kay has been part of writing at least seven farm bills in addition to many other key pieces of ag legislation.

I know I am adding my voice to lots of others who will talk about how great of a person she is and what an advocate she is, but I do want to add my accolades because they are so well-deserved.

I thank Mary Kay Thatcher for all of her work on behalf of American agriculture, including the Kansas Farm Bureau and its members, and on behalf of all of agriculture in our State. Her efforts have benefited Kansas and improved our country. She will be missed at the American Farm Bureau, but I know she will find other ways to advocate for agriculture. I hope that for many years to come, we will remain friends and work together on behalf of American farmers and ranchers.

Congratulations and best wishes. Thank you—said with great respect and with gratitude.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, there are a lot of important things the Senate is taking up right now. Obviously, there is the issue of immigration, the budget, and disaster relief. There are a lot of pertinent issues that need to be resolved. One of those things that was in the middle of the conversation came up today. It is part of a conversation that, quite frankly, doesn't come up often in this body, but this seemed like a reasonable piece to be able to come up. It came up to the Senate to open debate on it, and it failed to get the 60 votes to support the beginning of what should be an easy conversation on a hard issue—this issue about children and life.

In 1973, when Roe v. Wade passed, the Supreme Court at that time determined that for children that were viable—and that is the definition they left out there—there is a governmental interest in being able to engage with those children. Well, viability in 1973 was very different than what it is now, decades later. In 1973 viable was a much older child. Now that we know a lot more, a lot more children survive. Children who are born at 22 weeks of gestation have between a 50-percent to 60-percent chance of survival now. That was not true in 1973.

The rest of the world has caught up with this technology, and their governments have acknowledged of this issue that a child who has 10 fingers and 10 toes and a beating heart—they suck their thumb in the womb, they yawn, they stretch, they move—is a child.

I understand there is wide argument about a child that is at 8 weeks of gestation, whom I believe is a child, but others look at it and say: It doesn't look like a child yet. But a child at 20, 22, 24 weeks of gestation even looks like a child when you look at the child in the ultrasound. It is hard to disagree, especially when children are born at that age prematurely and they survive, and many of us know kids that were born at 22 weeks. The bill that came up today on the Senate floor, which had bipartisan support and had a majority of support but not 60 Senators' support to be able to discuss this, was a very simple, straightforward bill. It asked just one question: Will we as Americans continue to allow elective abortions when the child is viable?

The Supreme Court said in 1973 that the government has a right to be able to step in and protect a viable child. There is no question that they are at that age of viability. There is no question, at that age of 20 weeks, that science shows us they experience pain in the womb, and that if surgery happens for a child in utero like that, that child is actually given anesthetic to be

able to calm their pain during that surgery because they have a developed nervous system and because they have a beating heart. This body refused to even take up the issue and debate it.

There is no question that I am very passionate about the issue of life and about children, and that we should as a culture protect children. But this one confuses me—for this body, more than any other issue. There are only seven nations in the world that allow elective abortions after 20 weeks. There are only four nations in the world that allow elective abortions after 24 weeks. We are in that elite club. We are in the elite club with three other nations that allow elective abortions that late—Vietnam, North Korea, and China—the worst human rights violators in the world. There sits the United States in that very elite club.

Why are we there? Because we can't even discuss the possibility that a child is a child, and anyone who has ever seen an ultrasound at 24 weeks cannot deny that is a child, and if that child was delivered prematurely, they would survive and grow and develop into a person. The only difference between that child at 20 weeks and an adult now is time.

This issue will continue to come up, and it should because we as a culture should promote a culture of life and of honoring people—people at their most vulnerable moment. There is no more vulnerable a moment than that for that child. We have to get out of this club of elective abortions and the only group that allows it—North Korea, China, and Vietnam. When will we wake up to the fact that the entire rest of the world—all of Europe, all of Africa, all of Central America, all of South America, every one of those countries—sees that plain? A child is a child, and we need to be able to guard its life.

So I am sad that today in a bipartisan vote with more than 50 votes to be able to get into it and pass it, we didn't have enough people even to want to discuss it and to be able to bring up the bill. We will bring it up again for the sake of those children and their futures. We will bring it up again, and we will keep bringing up the facts of the argument, not the emotion but the facts of the argument, and we will win people over.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 497.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gregory E. Maggs, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces for the term of fifteen years to expire on the date prescribed by law.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. LANKFORD. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Maggs nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO EARL SMITH

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the legacy and heroic service of Mr. Earl Smith. An Alabama native and unsung American hero, Smith's willingness to put himself in harm's way saved an untold number of lives.

More than 50 years ago, as a young officer in the U.S. Air Force, Smith was the on-call explosive ordnance disposal, EOD, technician at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsboro, NC. Nothing out of the ordinary had occurred throughout his shift on the evening of January 23, 1961, when the 24-year-old Smith received an alarming phone call. He was informed that two Mark 39 hydrogen bombs had broken loose from a B–52 bomber and landed in a field just outside of Goldsboro. He was told the general location of the bombs, but other details were unknown.

Upon arriving to the crash site, Smith and other EOD technicians found that one bomb had crashed at such a speed that it was buried underground, but the other was visible and appeared to be intact. Although the protocol was to alert the Atomic Energy Commission before inspecting the bomb, Smith's instinct was to act quickly. Dr. Ralph Lapp, a physicist involved in developing America's first nuclear bombs as part of the Manhattan Project, stated in his review of the Goldsboro incident that ''one simple, dynamo-technology low voltage switch stood between the United States and a major catastrophe.''

Smith graduated from the U.S. Navy's EOD school just 9 months prior to the incident. However, his training, combined with his immense bravery, allowed him and other EOD technicians to successfully disarm the bomb over several days of harrowing work. Experts estimate that, if detonated, the bombs were powerful enough to destroy everything within an 8.5 mile radius. When asked in a recent interview why the bomb did not go off, Smith replied, ''the Lord Jesus Christ only knows.''

Such incidents prove that the security we enjoy every day as Americans is because of courageous individuals like Earl Smith. Smith's willingness to risk his life, along with his ability to maintain the secrecy of this formerly classified event for half a century, serve as distinct and sobering reminders that there are American men and women serving tirelessly throughout the world to maintain the way of life we hold dear.

It is my honor to offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Earl Smith and the countless others like him who diligently, and often thanklessly, work to provide safety and security to all Americans. I hope that my colleagues in the Senate will join me in thanking them for their selfless service to this Nation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO PATTI MEALS

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Patti Meals on her retirement from CARE Chest of Sierra Nevada. For 26 years, Patti made an indelible impact on the people of northern Nevada as executive director of CARE Chest.

From serving 334 Nevadans in 1990, when the CARE Chest first opened, to more than 13,000 in 2017, Ms. Meals has helped provide over 139,000 services and distribute 220,000 pieces of medical equipment and supplies in her career.

With Ms. Meals' dedication and passion, CARE Chest of Sierra Nevada has made great strides in improving the health and well-being of countless northern Nevadans by providing free medical resources to those in need.

The group's programs are tailored to aid and support the area's underserved populations and include connecting local families to medical equipment, prescription assistance, diabetic supplies, medical nutrition, home and vehicle modifications, and wellness education.

As a result of Ms. Meals' work, CARE Chest today owns its 5,000-square-foot facility in Reno and is considered a cornerstone of the northern Nevada community. The nonprofit has helped thousands of vulnerable Nevadans in their path to recovery. It is worth noting that, in 2010, during Ms. Meals' tenure, CARE Chest of Sierra Nevada was

named Human Services Network's Agency of the Year.

Ms. Meals is also a founding member of Alliance for Nevada Nonprofits, ANN, a group that aims to be a leader and voice for Nevada's nonprofit sector; and the resource for sustainability, advocacy, and professionalism. Since 2009, Ms. Meals has held a board position and currently serves as the board treasurer. She is also an active and long-term member of the Sparks Rotary and has collaborated with countless community organizations over the years.

As Nevada's senior Senator, I want to thank Ms. Meals for her tireless efforts during the last quarter of a century. I offer her the very best during her retirement and my well wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

REMEMBERING GEORGE TWIGG III

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to pay tribute to George Twigg III, a long-time Granite Stater and former New Hampshire State representative, who passed away last month at the age of 85. Though he was raised in Massachusetts and retired to Maine, George was in many ways a quintessential Granite Stater, with a big personality, a great sense of humor, and a lifetime passion for politics and public engagement.

After graduating from Boston University, he served 2 years in the U.S. Navy and later worked as a marketing representative for General Electric and other Fortune 500 companies. In 1968, he left his corporate career behind and moved to Gilmanton, NH, where he became a proud jack-of-many-trades, working in real estate sales, auctioneering, and appraising. George also worked as a justice of the peace, officiating at hundreds of weddings. He once married the same couple twice, though he felt obliged to warn them that, if they divorced again and later decided to marry for a third time, they would have to find someone else to officiate at the wedding.

Throughout his adult life, George was active in politics and public service and gave generously of his time as a volunteer in many different capacities. A lifelong Republican, he shared many Granite Staters' fiscal conservatism and distaste for taxes. Indeed, in one campaign for election to the New Hampshire House of Representatives, he crisscrossed his district in a snowplow painted with the message ''No Tax Snow Jobs.'' While always true to his conservative convictions, George was a practitioner of the New Hampshire way in politics, always ready to reach across the aisle in order to advance the best interests of our State. In 1974, then-Governor Meldrim Thomson asked him to chair New Hampshire's eminent domain commission. He went on to serve 21 years on the board of tax and land appeals.

George was a man of exceptional generosity. In 2014, he sold more than 85 acres of scenic land in Gilmanton at a price below fair-market value on the condition that it be preserved as open space for future generations to enjoy. He was equally generous in giving his time and talents to a wide range of volunteer activities. For decades, he refereed high school and college basketball games. He served on numerous town and county committees and volunteered his considerable skills as an auctioneer for countless charity auctions, including fundraisers for New Hampshire's public television station.

The Granite State, and the Gilmanton community in particular, are grateful for his many gifts and acts of selfless service. Family and friends hope to gather for a memorial service later this year. I will be with them in spirit as they celebrate the life of this good and generous man.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:04 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 101. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803 (a)), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Mr. HUDSON of North Carolina; And, in addition: Mr. Steve Hart of Washington, DC, Ms. Kimberly Norman of Dallas, Texas, Mr. Michael Pitts, Jr., of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Mr. Marc Baer of Savage, Minnesota, and Mr. Jason Van Pelt, of Washington, DC.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 2349. A bill to direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to establish an interagency working group to study Federal efforts to collect data on sexual violence and to make recommendations on the harmonization of such efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2350. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a forest incentives program to keep forests intact and sequester carbon on private forest land of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2351. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide that an individual may remain eligible to participate in the teacher loan forgiveness program under title IV of such Act if the individual's period of consecutive years of employment as a full-time teacher is interrupted because the individual is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is relocated during the school year pursuant to military orders for a permanent change of duty station, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

S. 2352. A bill to cap the emissions of greenhouse gases through a requirement to purchase carbon permits, to distribute the proceeds of such purchases to eligible individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 2353. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COONS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, and Mr. WICKER):

S. Res. 384. A resolution congratulating the Republic of Korea for hosting the 2018 Winter Olympic Games and supporting the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TOOMEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. RUBIO, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. Res. 385. A resolution supporting the observation of ''National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month'' during the period beginning on January 1, 2018, and ending on February 1, 2018, to raise awareness of, and opposition to, human trafficking and modern slavery; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 243

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 243, a bill to provide for a permanent extension of the enforcement instruction on supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services in critical access and small rural hospitals.

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in

recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 337

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 337, a bill to provide paid family and medical leave benefits to certain individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 505

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an energy equivalent of a gallon of diesel in the case of liquefied natural gas for purposes of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund financing rate.

S. 818

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 818, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals with disabilities to save additional amounts in their ABLE accounts above the current annual maximum contribution if they work and earn income.

S. 836

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 836, a bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to exclude a loan secured by a non-owner occupied 1- to 4-family dwelling from the definition of a member business loan, and for other purposes.

S. 1344

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1344, a bill to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate use of assistance under sections 8 and 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 with public and private resources, to enable eligible families to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency, and for other purposes.

S. 1453

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1453, a bill to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to designate certain substance use disorder treatment facilities as eligible for National Health Service Corps service.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1678

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1678, a bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to improve access to grants and loans for evidence-based substance use disorder treatment services in rural areas, and for other purposes.

S. 2219

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2219, a bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underride crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes.

S. 2341

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2341, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing of veterans benefits by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to limit the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recover overpayments made by the Department and other amounts owed by veterans to the United States, to improve the due process accorded veterans with respect to such recovery, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 361

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 361, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States Government shall, both unilaterally and alongside the international community, consider all options for exerting maximum pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in order to denuclearize the DPRK, protect the lives of United States citizens and allies, and prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

S. RES. 368

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 368, a resolution supporting the right of all Iranian citizens to have their voices heard.

S. RES. 376

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 376, a resolution urging the Governments of Burma and Bangladesh to ensure the safe, dignified, voluntary, and sustainable return of the Rohingya refugees who have been displaced by the campaign of ethnic cleansing conducted by the Burmese military.

S. RES. 377

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 377, a resolution recognizing the importance of paying tribute to those individuals who have faithfully served and retired from the Armed Forces of the United States, designating April 18, 2018, as ''Military Retiree Appreciation Day'', and encouraging the people of the United States to honor the past and continued service of military retirees to their local communities and the United States.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2351. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide that an individual may remain eligible to participate in the teacher loan forgiveness program under title IV of such Act if the individual's period of consecutive years of employment as a full-time teacher is interrupted because the individual is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is relocated during the school year pursuant to military orders for a permanent change of duty station, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to bring the Senate's attention to the bipartisan Preserving Teacher Loan Forgiveness for Military Spouses Act of 2018, which I am introducing with the Senior Senator from Texas today. This legislation eliminates a barrier for teachers in military families to earn Federal student loan forgiveness for their years of public service.

The Department of Education's Teacher Loan Forgiveness program incentivizes teachers to commit to students in our lowest income school districts in exchange for up to $17,500 in Federal Student loan forgiveness. Teachers qualify for the program once they have taught full-time for at least 5 consecutive years at a low income school or educational service agency. Teachers who are forced to move in the middle of the school year to follow their spouse lose eligibility for the program and must restart their 5 years of service under current law.

Last summer, a Maryland constituent brought to my attention the barriers her daughter faced when seeking Federal student loan forgiveness despite her commitment to public service. Her daughter, a teacher married to a member of the military, was in the middle of her fifth consecutive year teaching at one of Maryland's lower income schools. As any military spouse knows, relocation or reassignment orders can come at any time, upending the lives of the service member and their family. Rather than being able to complete a 5th year of teaching in a Maryland school, this family had to relocate with 3 months left in the school year. Despite this family's double commitment to service for our military and our schoolchildren, this military spouse missed the opportunity to have a portion of her Federal student loans

forgiven. No military spouse should be punished for following his or her spouse's relocation or reassignment.

The legislation that the Senior Senator from Texas and I have introduced is a common sense proposal to allow military spouses to earn the benefits that they have dutifully worked towards and continue to incentivize individuals to teach our hardest to educate children. Our legislation provides a waiver from the Department of Education's Teacher Loan Forgiveness program's 5 consecutive years of service requirement for qualified military spouses if their spouse is relocated during the school year pursuant to military orders from the Armed Forces. This waiver will allow individuals to remain eligible for the Teacher Loan Forgiveness program should they resume teaching full-time at a qualifying low-income school district within one year of their relocation. In addition, this legislation requires the Department of Education to provide a report to Congress every two years on the number of military spouses who remained eligible for Teacher Loan Forgiveness due to this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to join in this effort to help families who are wholly committed to public service by supporting the Preserving Teacher Loan Forgiveness for Military Spouses Act. No family in service of our Nation should lose out on earned benefits due to a technicality.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2351

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Preserving Teacher Loan Forgiveness for Military Spouses Act of 2018''.

SEC. 2. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS OR LOAN CANCELLATION PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS WHOSE PERIOD OF CONSECUTIVE EMPLOYMENT IS INTERRUPTED BECAUSE OF MILITARY ORDERS REQUIRING SPOUSE TO RELOCATE TO NEW RESIDENCE.

(a) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY.—

(1) PART B LOANS.—Section 428J(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078–10(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN MILITARY SPOUSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (b), an individual who is employed in a full-time teaching position that meets the requirements of this section for a period that includes 5 complete but nonconsecutive years may be eligible for loan forgiveness pursuant to such subsection, if the individual was a qualified military spouse with respect to any year during such period for which the individual was not employed as a full-time teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of this section.

''(B) QUALIFIED MILITARY SPOUSE DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'qualified military spouse' means, with respect to a year, an individual who—

''(i) during the previous year, served as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) and met the requirements of subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(1);

''(ii) is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is relocated during the year pursuant to military orders for a permanent change of duty station;

''(iii) did not serve as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) during the year or any portion of the year because the individual accompanied the spouse to a new residence as a result of such military orders; and

''(iv) during the following year, resumed service as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) and met the requirements of subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(1).

''(C) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the end of the second academic year during which this paragraph is in effect, and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the number of individuals who, as a result of this paragraph, remained eligible for loan forgiveness pursuant to subsection (b) during the 2 most recent academic years.''.

(2) PART D LOANS.—Section 460(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087j(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(4) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN MILITARY SPOUSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subsection (b), an individual who is employed in a full-time teaching position that meets the requirements of this section for a period that includes 5 complete but nonconsecutive years may be eligible for loan cancellation pursuant to such subsection, if the individual was a qualified military spouse with respect to any year during such period for which the individual was not employed as a full-time teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of this section.

''(B) QUALIFIED MILITARY SPOUSE DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term 'qualified military spouse' means, with respect to a year, an individual who—

''(i) during the previous year, served as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) and met the requirements of subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(1);

''(ii) is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is relocated during the year pursuant to military orders for a permanent change of duty station;

''(iii) did not serve as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) during the year or any portion of the year because the individual accompanied the spouse to a new residence as a result of such military orders; and

''(iv) during the following year, resumed service as a teacher in a school or location meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) of subsection (b)(1) and met the requirements of subparagraph (B) of subsection (b)(1).

''(C) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the end of the second academic year during which this paragraph is in effect, and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the number of individuals who, as a result of this paragraph, remained eligible for loan cancellation pursuant to subsection (b) during the 2 most recent academic years.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to individuals who first become employed as full-time teachers on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN:

S. 2352. A bill to cap the emissions of greenhouse gases through a requirement to purchase carbon permits, to distribute the proceeds of such purchases to eligible individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, climate change is a clear and present danger, but we can confront that danger in a way that presents new economic opportunities. While the Trump Administration has abdicated American leadership on this critical issue, Congress must fight back, which is why today I am introducing the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act for the first time in the U.S. Senate.

Two of the most pressing challenges we face as a Nation are the need to address the economic costs and public health risks associated with climate change, and to strengthen the middle class. We do both in this bill. By capping carbon emissions, selling permits, and returning 100 percent of the revenue to everyone equally, this 'Cap and Dividend' approach achieves necessary greenhouse gas reductions while boosting the purchasing power of families across the country.

Mr. President, the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act is a simple, effective, and transparent way to combat climate change while supporting economic growth and a thriving middle class. The solution is market based, pro-growth, and is built to last.

The bill achieves reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while increasing incomes for Americans. It places a declining cap on carbon pollution each year to reach 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. A polluter pays principle is then applied by requiring the first sellers of carbon to buy permits for emissions within those caps. Finally, 100 percent of the revenue raised from the sale of those permits is returned straight to the American people through a Healthy Climate Dividend. On an economy-wide level, the price signal placed on carbon pollution will accelerate innovation and incentivize both greater energy efficiency as well as greater use of lower-carbon energy alternatives. And the bill's robust border adjustment protections ensure that U.S. companies are not disadvantaged against foreign competitors at home or abroad.

In sum, this legislation puts a price on carbon pollution and returns the proceeds directly to the American people at the same time it accelerates the growth of good paying jobs in clean technologies. It is a win-win-win, boosting middle class pocketbooks, growing good paying jobs, and reducing our carbon footprint.

Mr. President, I am pleased that Representative DON BEYER of Virginia, a strong advocate for the environment, is introducing a companion measure in the House. I want to thank Mike Tidwell of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, who has been helpful in developing this legislation. Other organizations such as the League of Conservation Voters and the Sierra Club are supportive of this approach. I look forward to working together to address the most pressing environmental problem of our time: climate change.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018

S. RES. 383

Whereas women constitute 50.4 percent of people in the United States;

Whereas women of different race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age experience many diseases and disorders differently than men experience diseases and disorders;

Whereas those different experiences are reflected in the incidence, prevalence, symptomology, and severity of the disease or disorder;

Whereas the risks and benefits of medical therapies vary based on the race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age of a woman;

Whereas women and men have fundamental biological differences;

Whereas, for many years, women of different race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age were underrepresented in biomedical and clinical research;

Whereas the improvement of the health of women relies on sex- and gender-based biomedical and clinical research;

Whereas the promise of individualized medicine cannot be realized without sex- and gender-based parity in research;

Whereas on January 25, 2016, the National Institutes of Health implemented a policy requiring federally funded investigators to consider sex as a biological variable in preclinical research; and

Whereas that policy ushered in a new era of inclusivity and parity in research relating to the health of women: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of a ''Women's Health Research Day''; and

(2) supports efforts to—

(A) recognize the importance of biomedical and clinical research to the health and well-being of women;

(B) increase awareness of the value of sex- and gender-based biomedical research; and

(C) encourage individuals, including researchers and patients, to advocate on behalf of sex- and gender-inclusive research for women of different race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 384—CONGRATULATING THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FOR HOSTING THE 2018 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES AND SUPPORTING THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COONS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, and Mr. WICKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 384

Whereas the 23rd Olympic Winter Games (referred to in this preamble as ''Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018'') will be held from February 9 to February 25, 2018, in PyeongChang, Gangwon Province in the Republic of Korea;

Whereas the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 represents the second Olympic Games hosted by the Republic of Korea;

Whereas the Republic of Korea hosted the Olympic Games for the first time in Seoul in the summer of 1988;

Whereas the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 will feature—

(1) 102 events across 15 disciplines; and

(2) the participation of 93 National Olympic Committee teams;

Whereas the United States Olympic Team is expected to comprise approximately 240 athletes competing across all 15 disciplines;

Whereas the United States Olympic Committee is headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado;

Whereas the Republic of Korea will also host in PyeongChang the 12th Paralympic Games from March 9 to March 18, 2018 that will feature—

(1) 80 events across 6 disciplines; and

(2) the participation of approximately 42 National Olympic Committee teams;

Whereas the theme of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 is ''Passion. Connected.'' and refers to the vision of the Republic of Korea of a world in which everyone is connected through a shared passion for winter sports;

Whereas on November 13, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution entitled ''Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal'';

Whereas that resolution expresses the expectation of the United Nations General Assembly that ''PyeongChang 2018 will be a meaningful opportunity to foster an atmosphere of peace, development, tolerance, and understanding on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia'';

Whereas on January 4, 2018, President Donald J. Trump and President Moon Jae-In of the Republic of Korea discussed recent developments on the Korean Peninsula and agreed that ''the United States and the Republic of Korea are committed to a safe and successful 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang'';

Whereas President Trump conveyed to President Moon that ''the United States will send a high-level delegation to the Olympics,'' which will be led by Vice President Michael R. Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence;

Whereas President Trump and President Moon further agreed to ''de-conflict the Olympics and our military exercises so that United States and Republic of Korea forces can focus on ensuring the security of the Games'';

Whereas the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (referred to in this preamble as ''DPRK'') recently reopened a telephone hotline ''to normalize the Panmunjom communications channel'' at the Joint Security Area located in the Demilitarized Zone;

Whereas on January 9, 2018, representatives of the Republic of Korea and the DPRK held the first official talks in more than 2 years with the aim of discussing cooperation during the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018;

Whereas the DPRK has indicated that it plans to participate in the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018;

Whereas the DPRK is currently in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013), 2094 (2013), 2270 (2016), 2321 (2016), 2371 (2017), 2375 (2017), and 2397 (2017) that—

(1) condemn the illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programs of the DPRK; and

(2) impose economic sanctions against the DPRK and entities that enable the DPRK; and

Whereas the DPRK engages in gross human rights abuses against the citizens of the DPRK and the citizens of other countries, including the United States and the Republic of Korea: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the strong and unwavering commitment of the United States to an ally, the Republic of Korea, to support, participate in, and help ensure the safety and security of the 23rd Olympic Winter Games (referred to in this resolving clause as ''Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018'');

(2) recognizes the importance of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 as a leading international sporting event of genuine sportsmanship and fair play that can contribute to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia, and around the world;

(3) reaffirms that the United States, the Republic of Korea, and other partners remain committed to pursuing the policy of ''maximum pressure and engagement'' toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (referred to in this resolving clause as ''DPRK''), including by fully abiding by the letter and spirit of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council;

(4) expresses hope that the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 will contribute to the decision by the DPRK to engage in negotiations that will result in complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; and

(5) wishes every success in preparing and hosting the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 to the government and people of the Republic of Korea and the PyeongChang Organizing Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

SENATE RESOLUTION 385—SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF ''NATIONAL TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY PREVENTION MONTH'' DURING THE PERIOD BEGINNING ON JANUARY 1, 2018, AND ENDING ON FEBRUARY 1, 2018, TO RAISE AWARENESS OF, AND OPPOSITION TO, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN SLAVERY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TOOMEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. RUBIO, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 385

Whereas the United States abolished the transatlantic slave trade in 1808 and abolished chattel slavery and prohibited involuntary servitude in 1865;

Whereas, because the people of the United States remain committed to protecting individual freedom, there is a national imperative to eliminate human trafficking and modern slavery, which is commonly considered to mean—

(1) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of an individual through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjecting that individual to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery; or

(2) the inducement of a commercial sex act by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the individual induced to perform that act is younger than 18 years of age;

Whereas the Department of Justice has reported that human trafficking and modern slavery has been reported and investigated in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia;

Whereas, to help businesses in the United States combat child labor and forced labor in global supply chains, the Department of Labor has identified 139 goods from 75 countries that are made by child labor and forced labor;

Whereas the Department of State has reported that the top 3 countries of origin of Federally identified trafficking victims in 2016 were the United States, Mexico, and the Philippines;

Whereas, to combat human trafficking and modern slavery in the United States and globally, the people of the United States, the Federal Government, and State and local governments must be—

(1) aware of the realities of human trafficking and modern slavery; and

(2) dedicated to stopping the horrific enterprise of human trafficking and modern slavery;

Whereas the United States should hold accountable all individuals, groups, organizations, and countries that support, advance, or commit acts of human trafficking and modern slavery;

Whereas, through education, the United States must also work to end human trafficking and modern slavery in all forms in the United States and around the world;

Whereas victims of human trafficking and modern slavery should receive the necessary resources and social services to escape, and recover from, the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual trauma associated with their victimization;

Whereas human traffickers use many physical and psychological techniques to control a victim, including—

(1) the use of violence or threats of violence against the victim or the family of the victim;

(2) isolation of the victim from the public;

(3) isolation of the victim from the family and religious or ethnic community of the victim;

(4) exploitation of language and cultural barriers;

(5) shame;

(6) control of the possessions of the victim;

(7) confiscation of the passport and other identification documents of the victim; and

(8) threats of arrest, deportation, or imprisonment if the victim attempts to reach out for assistance or to escape;

Whereas, although laws to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking and to assist and protect victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), title XII of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–4; 127 Stat. 136), the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4301 et seq.), the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Public Law 114–22; 129 Stat. 227), and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114–328; 130 Stat. 2000), have been enacted in the United States, it is essential to increase public awareness, particularly amongst individuals who are most likely to come into contact with victims of human trafficking and modern slavery, regarding conditions and dynamics of human trafficking and modern slavery precisely because traffickers use techniques that are designed to severely limit self-reporting and evade law enforcement;

Whereas January 1 is the anniversary of the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation;

Whereas February 1 is—

(1) the anniversary of the date on which President Abraham Lincoln signed the joint resolution sending the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States to the States for ratification to forever declare that ''Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction''; and

(2) a date that has long been celebrated as ''National Freedom Day'', as described in section 124 of title 36, United States Code; and

Whereas, under the authority of Congress to enforce the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States ''by appropriate legislation'', Congress, through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), updated the post-Civil War involuntary servitude and slavery statutes and adopted an approach of victim protection, vigorous prosecution, and prevention of human trafficking, commonly known as the ''3P approach'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate supports—

(1) observing ''National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month'' during the period beginning on January 1, 2018, and ending on February 1, 2018, to recognize the vital role that the people of the United States have in ending human trafficking and modern slavery;

(2) marking the observation of ''National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month'' with appropriate programs and activities, culminating in the observance on February 1, 2018, of ''National Freedom Day'', as described in section 124 of title 36, United States Code; and

(3) all other efforts to prevent, eradicate, and raise awareness of, and opposition to, human trafficking and modern slavery.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a resolution in observance of National Trafficking and Modern Slavery Prevention Month, to bring awareness to the terrible scourge of modern slavery and human trafficking around the world.

In 2016 alone, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received 26,727 calls to report incidents of human trafficking in the United States. From those calls, 7,793 victims were identified. These individuals were trafficked across various sectors, economies, and geographical regions under conditions of force, fraud, or coercion.

The United States must not turn a blind eye to this scourge. The State Department estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year. Amongst federally identified trafficking victims in 2016, the top three countries of origin include the United States.

Importantly, more than a quarter of the trafficking cases identified by the National Human Trafficking Hotline involved U.S. citizen victims. According to a recent study by Polaris, modern slavery and trafficking operates throughout a range of U.S. industries including our factories, our agricultural centers, as well as our hospitality and domestic work businesses.

We must all, as Americans, raise our awareness of this pernicious crime that often goes unnoticed and undetected in our communities.

Part of the reason it is undetected is that traffickers prey on vulnerable populations—like those in the juvenile justice system—and use numerous physical and psychological techniques to control their victims behind closed doors: isolating them from the public, exploiting language and cultural barriers, and threatening victims with violence.

These techniques are specifically designed to prevent victims from coming forward to authorities and they are extremely effective. This is why we must do better. We must do everything we can to raise public awareness so that we can all recognize the warning signs.

I have been heartened that in recent years, various private entities, such as hotels, the travel industry, and recently those in the convenience-store industry, have all come together to commit to training their employees to better detect human trafficking and modern slavery.

In addition to raising awareness, January is also a month to renew our commitment to enforce—and enact laws to help eradicate modern slavery and trafficking.

Back in 2000, Congress enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which marked a strong commitment to prosecute traffickers and better aid victims. This Congress, Judiciary Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY and I authored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017, which was complemented by the Cornyn-Klobuchar Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017, to update our trafficking laws to better aid victims.

These bills passed the Senate in November, and the House should adopt these measures quickly so they can be signed into law.

Finally, in introducing today's resolution, I would like to thank Senator GRASSLEY, Senator CORNYN, and Senator KLOBUCHAR for cosponsoring the resolution, and for all of their leadership in this area.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the Floor.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Abir Dhalimi, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges through August 31, 2018.

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

VETERAN PARTNERS' EFFORTS TO ENHANCE REINTEGRATION ACT

On Thursday, January 25, 2018, the Senate passed S. 1873, as amended, as follows:

S. 1873

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration Act'' or the ''Veteran PEER Act''.

SEC. 2. PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to establish not fewer than two peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the use and integration of services for mental health, substance use disorder, and behavior health in a primary care setting.

(b) TIMEFRAME FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall carry out the program at medical centers of the Department as follows:

(1) Not later than December 31, 2018, at not fewer than 25 medical centers of the Department.

(2) Not later than December 31, 2019, at not fewer than 50 medical centers of the Department.

(c) SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select medical centers for the program as follows:

(A) Not fewer than five shall be medical centers of the Department that are designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(B) Not fewer than ten shall be medical centers of the Department that are not designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting medical centers for the program under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting medical centers in the following areas:

(A) Rural areas and other areas that are underserved by the Department.

(B) Areas that are not in close proximity to an active duty military installation.

(C) Areas representing different geographic locations, such as census tracts established by the Bureau of the Census.

(d) GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.—In carrying out the program at each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) the needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed; and

(2) female peer specialists are made available to female veterans who are treated at each location.

(e) ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.—At each location selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall consider ways in which peer specialists can conduct outreach to health care providers in the community who are known to be serving veterans to engage with those providers and veterans served by those providers.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) PERIODIC REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than once every 180 days thereafter until the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the program.

(B) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subparagraph (A) shall, with respect to the 180-day period preceding the submittal of the report, include the following:

(i) The findings and conclusions of the Secretary with respect to the program.

(ii) An assessment of the benefits of the program to veterans and family members of veterans.

(iii) An assessment of the effectiveness of peer specialists in engaging under subsection (e) with health care providers in the community and veterans served by those providers.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the Secretary determines that the program is being carried out at the last location to be selected under subsection (c), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report detailing the recommendations of the Secretary as to the feasibility and advisability of expanding the program to additional locations.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 101, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 101) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 101) was agreed to.

AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF ESCORT COMMITTEE

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Presiding Officer of the Senate be authorized to appoint a committee on the part of the Senate to join with a like committee on the part of the House of Representatives to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber for the joint session to be held at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30, 2018.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the resolution of the Senate of January 24, 1901, the traditional reading of Washington's Farewell Address take place on Monday, February 26, following the prayer and pledge; further, that Senator PETERS be recognized to deliver the address.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Stras nomination at 2:15 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2018

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, January 30; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Stras nomination; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m., and that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Stras nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator CASEY.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, tonight I rise to speak about two matters. The first is the issue of community health centers, which, of course, is a major issue for States across the country.

Millions of Americans get their healthcare through community health centers. I will mention it more than once—800,000 of them are in the State of Pennsylvania. As we come closer to working out bipartisan agreements on a whole range of issues that are ahead of us literally in the next 2 to 3 weeks, I hope there will be a strong consensus to provide a funding plan and funding certainty to community health centers across the country.

These community health centers provide access to healthcare through education, rehabilitation, preventive services, and direct care. These centers focus on meeting the very basic healthcare needs in a community. They provide critical services, especially for people in both urban areas and rural areas, where there are often limited options for primary care and prevention clinics.

Despite the critical importance of these health centers, Congress failed to act to extend the majority of funding for community health centers before it ran out on September 30, 2017. After funds expired, the health centers were facing a funding reduction of between 60 percent and 70 percent of their funding.

Last December, Congress passed a continuing resolution that included $550 million in funding for community health centers. That is nowhere near what they need to get through even 1 year. While this funding patch will provide some short-term relief, the funds do not provide the long-term funding stability for health centers that they need and that the patients who depend upon them should have a right to expect.

It is time for Congress to end the delays and get a long-term funding plan in place for these community health centers by the next deadline for the continuing resolution for funding, which is, of course, February 8. Because there is a deadline, it does give us the chance to work toward that date, to get funding in place by the 8th.

Across the United States, health centers serve more than 25 million patients per year. That is about 1 in 13 Americans overall. Consider this: I live in a State where we have 67 counties, but 48 of the 67 are so-called rural counties. That is the way they are categorized. There are a lot of healthcare needs in those rural communities and rural counties. Health centers provide care to one in four rural Americans. If that ratio were applied to Pennsylvania—we have at least 3 million people who live in rural communities. You can see the numbers. Hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians in rural areas depend upon healthcare from these community health centers.

In terms of the centers themselves, in 2016, Pennsylvania had 264, and that meant there were thousands of people working in those health centers. There are close to 5,000—above 4,900 Pennsylvanians who work in these centers. These health centers provide quality care and vital services, as I said before, to a total of 800,000 Pennsylvanians—rural, urban, and otherwise.

To give you a sense of some of the testimony I received from people in our State, one story came from Emily, who works at the Family Practice and Counseling Network, a location I just visited today in Philadelphia. She wrote this letter to me a number of weeks ago. I won't read the whole excerpt, but this is what she said in pertinent part about the people who are served by these community health centers:

> They have lives filled with trauma and in turn suffer from social, physical, and behavioral issues that will go untreated if funding for [community health centers] goes away . . . our services are so needed.

The words I want people to remember are ''lives filled with trauma.'' That is, unfortunately, a good description of the lives led by a lot of Americans when healthcare—in this case, a community health care center—is not there for them or when healthcare itself is threatened. ''Lives filled with trauma.''

Another person who works at the same place and who has been the leader of this particular institution, the Family Practice and Counseling Network in Philadelphia, is the executive director, Donna Torrisi. I met her just today. She sent me a letter prior to today about her concerns. She is concerned about the funding cliff resulting in a barrier to care for people who need mental health services that are critically important. Donna said in pertinent part:

> The impact on our community will be devastating. Our health center provides behavioral health services that are already limited in Philadelphia. Without funding, we'll need to close a site and cut jobs, causing patients to go without the care they desperately need.

For purposes of this debate, I would consider that expert testimony on community health centers because I know that in Donna's case, she has worked in this field something on the order of 25 years. We appreciate her weighing in on this.

I know there is concern on both sides of the aisle on this issue. I hope that concern results in a bipartisan agreement to fund community health centers to at least—and I would like to do a lot more, but at least give some funding certainty for the next year, meaning from now until the end of the fiscal year. I hope we can get an agreement that would give funding certainty for 2 years or more. That would be ideal.

HONORING DEPUTY MARSHAL CHRISTOPHER DAVID HILL

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I want to spend a couple of moments tonight—I know the hour is late for the Senate and people working here, but I want to end the night with a message about a law enforcement official in Pennsylvania whose memorial service I attended on Friday. This individual was a deputy marshal. His name is Christopher David Hill. He lost his life on January 18. He was living at the time in York, PA. He was killed in the line of duty in Harrisburg—not far from York—while attempting to apprehend a fugitive.

I commend Deputy Marshal Hill for his service to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and his service to our Nation. He happened to be working in the Middle District of Pennsylvania, which meant he had responsibility for work through counties from the bottom of the State all the way up to Northeastern Pennsylvania, which is my home area.

I offer our deepest condolences to his family. Law enforcement officers like Christopher Hill accept the special duty of protecting the rest of us and keeping our communities safe. I have to say that we often don't think about that in the context of Federal marshals who do critically important work every day of the week and are often in horrifically dangerous circumstances.

In this case with Deputy Marshal Hill, the murderer was shooting from a higher position in a house. They didn't know this individual was in the house. He was shooting down at him. He had protective gear on. I won't give a full description because I am not qualified to do that, but the problem is the bullet came from a direction like this and entered his body from above and killed him even though he had protection on and all the proper protocols were followed. It was, in essence, a one-man ambush because they were trying to apprehend another individual on the floor below where the assailant was. That is the kind of danger Federal marshals face every day of the week, and sometimes we don't realize it.

Chris and his loving family made the ultimate sacrifice for the Nation and for the people in Pennsylvania. For his bravery and the contribution of his family, who supported him, we are eternally grateful for that commitment to law enforcement and the country.

Christopher David Hill was born in Sacramento, CA, but he was raised in Central Pennsylvania. He graduated from Warrior Run High School. He served his country as a Ranger in the U.S. Army, where he was assigned to the prestigious 3rd Battalion. While in the Army, Chris earned many awards, including the Army Commendation Medal.

For the last 11 years, he served as a deputy U.S. marshal. He was a member of the agency's Special Operations Group, so-called SOG.

At the memorial service, there were lots of references to that Special Operations Group because members of that group were there to not only pay tribute to him but to speak about his life, to speak about his service and to speak about his character and his bravery in very moving testimonials. The Special Operations Group is a specially trained and highly disciplined tactical unit.

In 2012, Chris served on a SOG assignment in Afghanistan, for which he was recognized with a Director's Distinguished Group Award.

In 2014, he was instrumental in the capture of notorious cop killer Eric Frein. Eric Frein was the individual who killed a State police officer and also injured another State police officer. In this case, Chris commanded U.S. marshals, FBI agents, and State troopers in one of the largest rural manhunts in recent American history.

Chris was known as a dedicated and extremely capable law enforcement officer, and his numerous awards are proof of that.

During his time at the Marshals Service, he received the FLETC Director's Leadership Award, a Special Act Award for Distinguished 300 Shooter, and a Special Act Award for achieving 95 percent weapons proficiency.

Christopher was described as the person you wanted to go through the door with, someone on whom you could completely rely. He was also known for his sense of humor and his positive outlook on life.

Outside of work, he enjoyed hunting and golfing with his friends and family, but most of all, Chris is known for his devotion to his family. Chris is survived by his devoted wife Sylvia, his loving son and daughter Travis and Ashlynn, his father John, his brother Joey, his sister-in-law Michala, and his sister Melinda. He was preceded in death by his mother Katherine.

As I mentioned before, on January 18, he was shot and killed in the line of duty. The U.S. Marshals Service apprehends approximately 100,000 fugitives every year—100,000 every year—including the worst of the worst, violent felons whose capture makes our communities safer.

Also shot in this altercation were Kyle Pitts, a New York City police officer, and a Harrisburg police officer who took a bullet to his ballistic vest but was not injured. We are praying for Kyle Pitts' full recovery.

Last week, I joined law enforcement officers from around the country for the memorial service, as I mentioned. You could tell how Chris was loved and respected by the testimonials from those law enforcement officials. You can't see it from a distance, but this is a program from the memorial service. It has a list of those who spoke—I will not read all of them—and then it has Chris's biography, with a picture of him on the back.

I could go through virtually every name of the ones who spoke in tribute to Chris—friends of his who worked with him. I am not sure I have ever been to a more emotional and moving ceremony in my life, where you had speak from the podium, one after another, these dedicated law enforcement professionals who are as tough and as determined as any man can be. Each person was very, very emotional, overcome with emotion in some cases. I am not sure I will ever be at a ceremony that is as moving.

On a night like tonight, when we have a lot of debates and a lot of arguments on a range of issues, these are times we can come together to express not only condolences, not only tribute and appreciation but express, I think, what is the solidarity of our State and the Nation in paying tribute to a fallen law enforcement official.

My colleague Senator TOOMEY and I were there together. There were also people from across the State who were there and Federal judges who serve in that district and Federal employees who worked with Christopher Hill. For so many reasons, we want to pay tribute to him tonight and express gratitude for his life of service and the commitment he made to the country, that he made to the Marshals Service, and that he made to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We want to express our condolences to his wife Sylvia, to his family, and his children because of the dedicated way they supported him through all his years as a Federal marshal and as a law enforcement official.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:56 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, January 30, 2018, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 29, 2018:

THE JUDICIARY

GREGORY E. MAGGS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE ARMED FORCES FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS TO EXPIRE ON THE DATE PRESCRIBED BY LAW.