

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) would have voted "yea."

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 27 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Gardner	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heitkamp	Risch
Cassidy	Heller	Roberts
Cochran	Hoeben	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
Flake	Moran	

NAYS—42

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

NOT VOTING—2

Capito
McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Arkansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. 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.

The Senator from Arkansas.

(The remarks of Mr. BOOZMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2364 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BOOZMAN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STOP ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I want to talk about the opioid epidemic that has gripped our country and my State of Ohio and talk a little about a report we issued last week with regard to synthetic opioids coming in through the U.S. mail system.

This tragedy has hit Ohio hard. We are not alone, though. Opioids affect every American regardless of age, area code, class, or color. Every State represented here in this body has experienced this—broken families, devastated communities, higher crime rates, friends lost, and, of course, lives taken through opioid overdoses.

The Centers for Disease Control recently reported that more than 63,600 Americans died in 2016 from drug overdoses. That is the last year for which they have statistics, but we all believe it was worse in 2017. With 63,600 Americans dying of overdoses, that means, on average, more than 174 Americans die every single day. That is up from approximately 143 Americans who died, on average, every day from drug overdoses a year earlier in 2015 and 105 Americans who died every day in 2010.

The problem is getting worse, not better. Drug overdoses, in fact, are now the No. 1 cause of death—not just accidental deaths but the No. 1 cause of death—in America for Americans under the age of 50. The reason for this increase in overdose deaths is the spread of heroin, prescription drugs, and now the synthetic opioids—fentanyl and carfentanil. Opioids were involved in more than 42,000—about two-thirds—of the overall deaths in 2016. Opioid deaths were five times higher in 2016 than they were just a few years ago.

This is a national epidemic. It has unfolded in three different waves.

The first wave was the prescription drug epidemic—pain pills—15 to 20 years ago. That started to increase dramatically.

Next, heroin deaths spiked. Heroin was turned to as a less expensive and more accessible way for people who were addicted to pain pills to continue to receive the high—in this case, from heroin coming mostly from Mexico.

Now synthetic forms of heroin are overtaking the illegal opioid market, and the results have been even more deadly. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin, has become the new scourge of the epidemic. Fentanyl is so deadly that 2 milligrams of it—as little as two flakes of it—can be lethal. It is cheap, easily accessible, and can be added to make any number of illegal drugs more potent—cocaine, heroin, pills.

In Ohio, fentanyl and its variations, such as carfentanil, were responsible for 60 percent of our State's more than 4,000 overdose deaths in 2016—the most recent year for which we have statistics. That 60 percent is a huge increase from just the previous year, 2015, when fentanyl was responsible for about 37 percent of the deaths. We have had more deaths from overdoses and a lot more deaths linked to fentanyl.

Sadly, again, this situation is getting worse, not better. Just last week in Ottawa County, OH, outside of Toledo, we had five overdoses in 1 single day. We had three people die of overdoses in 1 week. The suspected cause, of course, is fentanyl.

Earlier this month in Akron, a 57-year-old man—a board member of the Akron Public Schools system—was found unconscious in his car from a drug overdose. First responders were thankfully able to revive the man with Narcan—a miracle drug that reverses the effects of overdoses—and treat him at a local hospital. Again, fentanyl caused that overdose.

In July of last year, a 12-year-old Columbus boy encountered fentanyl while he was at his cousin's for a sleepover. He was rushed to the hospital but died days later from a lack of oxygen to his brain as a result of fentanyl.

These synthetic drugs have invaded communities across Ohio and across the country. Unbelievably, this deadly poison is primarily shipped into America from China through our U.S. Postal Service. The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair along with ranking member Senator TOM CARPER, recently held a hearing on this issue. It came on the heels of our year-long bipartisan investigation that resulted in a 100-page investigative report that examined how these drug traffickers in China exploit vulnerabilities in our international mail system to ship these deadly synthetic drugs into our communities.

I encourage people to look at that report on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations website. The results of the report were shocking. We found that it was incredibly easy to buy fentanyl online. By simply searching "fentanyl for sale" on Google, our staff identified hundreds of websites, many affiliated with Chinese labs, all openly advertising this deadly drug. Online sellers were quick to respond, unafraid of being caught, and ready to make a deal. They even offered discounts for bulk purchases and tried to upsell us to carfentanil—fentanyl's even more powerful and deadly cousin.

This is an email from Chinese traffickers offering "a hot sale" for one fentanyl analogue before it is discontinued. Their preferred shipping method is the U.S. Postal Service because, as they told us, the chances of the drugs being seized were so insignificant that delivery was essentially guaranteed.

This chart shows a carfentanil advertisement and the online traffickers