

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last night, the Senate Judiciary Committee announced that there would be an additional public hearing to address the allegations of misconduct that had been made against Judge Brett Kavanaugh, who has been nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court. So far, all we have is an accusation—one that, frankly, has a lot of holes in it as far as the time and circumstances under which this alleged event occurred. Nonetheless, it is a very serious allegation about misconduct that one claims happened about 36 years ago when she, Judge Kavanaugh, and others were involved as teenagers.

Judge Kavanaugh and the other individual allegedly involved have said that this incident did not happen. They unequivocally deny the claim, and, thus far, no other individuals have corroborated the accuser's statement.

The reason we find ourselves in this very unusual situation, where we have actually had the confirmation hearing of the nominee and we find it necessary to have a supplemental or additional hearing is that our Democratic colleagues failed to raise this accusation so that it could be handled in a bipartisan, regular manner in which the Judiciary Committee handles background investigations, understanding that when somebody goes through a background investigation, sometimes information comes up that is particularly sensitive, sometimes embarrassing; maybe it is about financial matters or other personal matters. So the practice of the Judiciary Committee is to have those background investigations handled with great care by specially cleared individuals. Then, following the hearing, the open hearing, that information will be shared with members of the committee, and they can then ask any questions they may want to ask in a closed session.

We did not have that opportunity because the ranking member did not even alert members of her own party about the existence of this accusation that she had had for some 6 weeks. So we weren't able to do the sort of due diligence that has come to be the practice of the Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan basis. The ranking member, who was forwarded the allegation, did not even attend the closed session where we considered the background investigation that had been done on Judge Kavanaugh, and, as I said, she didn't do anything with the allegation for almost 2 months.

What is clear is that this allegation has been handled—or I should say egregiously mishandled—up until now. But that is no excuse for us to continue to do the same. We need to return this process to its ordinary rules and procedures. We will take these accusations with the seriousness they deserve, and that is in a way that is fair to both the alleged victim and the judge himself.

Because of our friends on the other side's fondness for gotcha moments and political theater throughout the confirmation process, so far that fairness has mostly been lost. It has been denied the victim, who said that she wanted privacy, and it has been denied Judge Kavanaugh, who has flatly disavowed the claims. He had no opportunity during his confirmation hearing, either in open or in closed session, to answer questions about these allegations. This has really been a drive-by attack on the character of this judge.

Again, it is a serious accusation that we will take—and have taken—seriously, but, unfortunately, this process has gotten away from being about getting to the truth and has been more about gamesmanship and delay. The timing and the way in which this allegation was sprung attest to that. That is why, initially, I was somewhat skeptical about rewarding this bad behavior by calling for another public hearing. I had confidence in the committee's usual process for dealing with situations like this, which would ensure that both sides would be heard and that sensitive matters would be handled with the sensitivity they deserve.

When I spoke to him yesterday, Judge Kavanaugh's commitment to transparency and eagerness to address these false allegations head-on was clear.

When members of the committee met yesterday to discuss a possible path forward, we agreed that a supplemental hearing was in order. I went along with that consensus point of view.

I want to commend Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership, and I certainly support his decision to hold an additional hearing next Monday. As he said yesterday, anyone who comes forward under circumstances like this deserves to be heard in an "appropriate, precedented and respectful manner." How our colleagues across the aisle conduct themselves will prove whether they are actually interested in getting to the truth of these allegations or whether this is just an exercise in character assassination.

OPIOID CRISIS RESPONSE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, on another matter, last night we voted on a very important piece of legislation called the Opioid Crisis Response Act, which came to us from the HELP Committee; that is, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Thanks to Chairman ALEXANDER, the chairman of the HELP Committee, and as a result of his hard work and the

contributions of 70 Senators and 5 standing committees, we were able to come up with a package that had overwhelming support. I believe it was 99 to 1, if I am not mistaken.

The House has already passed its version of this legislation, so it was important that we do the same and get the bill to the President soon. I am happy to report that we have now done that.

Included in this Opioid Crisis Response Act was something called the STOP Act, which is a bipartisan piece of legislation that imposes new requirements on the U.S. Postal Service and Customs and Border Protection. It will close loopholes that are currently being exploited by drug traffickers to evade detection when shipping synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, because so few of those postal packages are actually inspected to find out whether they include drugs like fentanyl.

The package we voted on also includes a bill I sponsored with the senior Senator from California called the Substance Abuse Prevention Act, believing that we need to do something, not only about the supply side of the problem but the demand side as well. This piece of legislation is important because it will reauthorize the Office of National Drug Control Policy. We need a strategy, and we need an Office of National Drug Control Policy, not only to articulate but also to help execute that strategy.

This bill will also seek to reduce demand for illegal drugs in a variety of ways: education for medical providers, expanding drug awareness campaigns, and funding drug courts and nonprofits that provide interventions to people struggling with addiction.

I have seen drug courts in action, and they actually work. People who commit offenses involving illegal drugs can actually be monitored and given wrap-around care and support not only to help them deal with their addiction but also to help them reenter a productive society.

Unfortunately, Texas is no stranger when it comes to illegal drugs. In fact, one in three Texans responded to a recent poll saying that they knew somebody addicted to painkillers. One in three said they knew somebody addicted to painkillers. Last year, close to 3,000 Texans died from drug overdoses. That is nearly triple the number in 2000. That is simply unacceptable. Eighteen years have passed, and the number is three times higher.

Experts have said it is estimated to rise again by 6 percent this year. Those numbers are about real human beings and are a tragedy. Clearly, something is not working.

That suspicion is confirmed by the researchers who are saying that overdoses are now the leading cause of maternal deaths in my State. In Texas, emergency room personnel have said that they are seeing younger and younger children gaining access to these addictive opioids, and patients