

Mr. LANKFORD. I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

The motion was agreed to.

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

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 4887

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, the Federal Government awards more than \$600 billion in grant awards—\$600 billion. We actually do more in grant awards than we do in contracting. Our current system is riddled with outdated reporting mechanisms that burden grant recipients and inhibit oversight from Agencies in Congress.

The bill, H.R. 4887, which is called the GREAT Act—Grant Reporting Efficiency and Agreements Transparency Act—tries to put some sense into this process. This is a process that has worked with all of the grant requesting Agencies. Whether they be universities, whether they be entities for research, whether they have all gone through this for the past couple of years, actually. They have given a tremendous amount of input because they struggle in actually requesting the grants and in getting through all of the chaos of those grants.

The OMB and other entities are not getting the data information to the American people, so there is no transparency in that process. For the past couple of years, we have worked very hard to establish a good process of getting transparency and also of helping the grant-requesting entities get a more efficient process.

The GREAT Act would require, within 1 year, OMB and the leading grant Agency to establish a governmentwide data standard for information related to Federal awards. Within 2 years, guidance must be issued for grant-making Agencies on how to apply those standards and implement them into the existing reporting practices. Within 3 years, Agencies must ensure that all grants and cooperative agreements use the new data standard for future information requests. This is exceptionally important to get through the process so that we are not squandering \$600 billion in grants.

Let me tell you what this process has gone through.

In February, H.R. 4887 passed unanimously out of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Then it went to the House Calendar, and it passed unanimously on September 26. Every Democrat and every Republican in the House voted for this. Subsequently, Senator ENZI and I passed our amended Senate companion to H.R. 4887. It passed unanimously out of the

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in September.

The bill being considered today is reflective of bipartisan support from both the House and the Senate. This bill, H.R. 4887, cleared the Republican hotline weeks ago. Every single Republican has already cleared this. They want the transparency in the grant process and want a better grant process for all of the grant requesters. It is not yet clear on the Democratic side.

My simple request doesn't just come from me. This request comes from the Grant Professionals Association, the National Grants Management Association, the Association of Government Accountants, the American Library Association, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition. Leading universities around the country have just asked to improve this grant-making process. Every single Democrat in the House has affirmed this, and every Republican in the House and every Republican in the Senate has already cleared it. We are just asking for this bill to move forward and to be passed.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4887 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the Johnson substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, these are not Mick Mulvaney's decisions to make—or whatever job Mick Mulvaney happens to be in this week. These are not Alex Azar's decisions to make. Congress needs to do its job. On behalf of the minority leader, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I am a little confused when every grant-making and requesting organizations—all of the universities around the country—are requesting this. Every single Democrat in the House has already affirmed this. There does not seem to be a great fear of Mick Mulvaney at the OMB since, by the time this will be implemented, it will be 2022. So it is a little bit confusing to me why getting more transparency in grants and helping grant requesting organizations would be controversial.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to speak about some of our colleagues who are leaving the Senate. Be-

fore I do that, I want to address what happened late on the Friday night—I think 9 days before Christmas—when a Texas judge basically threw out the Affordable Care Act.

This latest decision comes more than 6 years after the Supreme Court, in an opinion written by Justice Roberts, already upheld the law's constitutionality. That opinion also found that parts of the law can be severed from the rest of the legislation. It comes after the administration has stated emphatically that it would not defend the law.

So, basically, instead of going in there and helping out to save healthcare for millions of Americans and protect them from being thrown off their insurance if they have pre-existing conditions—instead of going into that burning building—the administration has said to basically stand down and throw lighter fluid on the fire. That is exactly what has happened. If this ruling takes effect, the consequences will be devastating.

To start, protections for people with preexisting conditions would be gone. About half of all Americans have preexisting conditions. This isn't just about rare diseases. This is also about asthma and diabetes. The ability to keep your kids on your insurance plans until they are 26 years old will be gone. The work we have done to close the Medicare doughnut hole coverage gap, which makes it easier for our seniors to afford pharmaceuticals and to lower prescription drug prices, will be gone. The provisions that help people to buy insurance on the healthcare exchanges will be gone. Minnesotans will see a loss of \$364 million in premium tax credits, and, roughly, 272,000 people in my State will lose coverage.

We can't allow this to happen. The judge must issue a stay immediately until the appeals are completed so that these protections can stay in place and this decision can be overturned.

It is time to stop trying to start from scratch. The American people spoke in this last election across the country. Do they want improvements to the Affordable Care Act, like making pharmaceuticals less expensive and doing something about premiums? Yes, they do, but they don't want to start from scratch.

We have already seen what kind of healthcare proposals we get when we start from scratch—the ones that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have put forward. The legislation that we saw earlier this Congress would have hurt people by kicking millions off of Medicaid, by letting insurance companies charge people more when they get sick, and by jacking up healthcare costs. Every major group that you trust when it comes to your health—the largest groups of doctors, nurses, seniors, hospitals, people with cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and diabetes—has said it was the worst repeal bill yet. We cannot spend the next 2 years going backward and fighting

old fights. We need to focus on building on the work we have done and strengthening and improving the Affordable Care Act.

I have always said that the Affordable Care Act was the beginning and not an end, and we all have heard from those on the frontlines; doctors, patients, seniors, and those working to combat the opioid epidemic say that repeal is not the way forward. We should now be governing from opportunity and not from chaos.

It means passing reinsurance programs, like the bipartisan legislation, which I am proud to cosponsor, that Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY put forth, and using ideas that have worked in Minnesota and taking them out on a national basis.

It means doing something about skyrocketing pharmaceutical prices and passing my bill that has over 30 cosponsors to allow Medicare to negotiate for less expensive drugs under their Medicare part D—literally lifting the ban that says that the 41 million seniors of this country shouldn't be allowed to get a better deal.

It means passing my bill with Senator GRASSLEY, which we just improved upon today, to limit anti-competitive pay-for-delay deals, which delay more affordable generic drugs from getting out on the market.

It means allowing less expensive, safe drugs to come in from other countries so that we can have true competition. We could even put it to a trigger so that if there were not competition, then you could allow the safe drugs to be purchased from other countries, and I think that it would create a major incentive for drug prices to go down.

What we need to do is work together on the many bipartisan proposals that have been put forward to actually improve the Affordable Care Act, not throw it out and not throw people who have preexisting conditions off their insurance.

TRIBUTE TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I have already given speeches in this Chamber about my four friends, departing Democratic colleagues, Senators HEITKAMP, McCASKILL, NELSON, and DONNELLY. Now I rise to recognize my Republican colleagues who are leaving the Senate.

Let me start with ORRIN HATCH, who is truly one of a kind.

Out of 100 Senators, none of us can say that our great-grandfather founded the town of Vernal, UT, home of the Dinosaur Roundup Rodeo. None of us can say that we served as a Mormon bishop or that we started off working as a janitor to pay for school and then went on to become the most senior Republican in the U.S. Senate.

None of us can say that we moonlight as a singer, songwriter, and famed lyricist, whose catalogue includes the classics: "Heal Our Land," "Eight Days

of Hanukkah," and his ode to Manhattan, "Skatin' with My Baby." ORRIN HATCH's songs have been featured in the movies "Oceans 12" and "Stuart Little 2."

While Senator HATCH takes pride in all of his accomplishments, I know that he is proudest of his family: his wife, Elaine; their six children; 23 grandchildren; and 24 great-grandchildren.

Senator HATCH and I have worked together for a long period of time. He was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976, and I also got my start in elected life that year as the secretary-treasurer of my 10th grade high school class. Washingtonian Magazine once named us the two Senators least likely to get into a scandal, which I assume includes with each other.

We are both members of the Senate prayer group. One time I will never forget was when he was speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast and his phone started ringing and he had to improvise in front of the entire National Prayer Breakfast. He said that God was calling him with prayer advice as he answered the cell phone.

Most of all, we have teamed up on many issues that matter to the American people. We are cochairs of the Rare Disease Caucus.

We have helped to make our schools safer just this spring by adding \$1 million to improve school security. We led a bipartisan bill that was passed unanimously in this Chamber, and it was signed into law.

We worked together to restore the integrity to our patent system.

He also has been a supporter of comprehensive immigration reform, something we need more of in this Chamber.

I will always be grateful for the opportunity I have had to work with Senator HATCH, someone who has dedicated his life to serving his State and country for more than 40 years.

I also want to honor the service of my colleague from Arizona, Senator JEFF FLAKE, whom I have truly enjoyed working with during our time together in the Senate.

JEFF has never invited me to travel with him to a deserted island, as he did with Senator HEINRICH, but we did once stay with JEFF and his wife, Cheryl, at John and Cindy McCain's ranch, and let's just say it had a few more amenities than he had on the island with Senator HEINRICH.

During that memorable visit to Sedona, I saw firsthand how dedicated JEFF is to his family. I remember how early he got up one morning to travel to his son Tanner's track meet. That afternoon he actually sent me a photo of Tanner taken after he had won the event.

I also have seen how much he loves his home State. At heart, he is a fifth-generation Arizonan, one of 11 kids who grew up on a cattle ranch in the town of Snowflake. That land had first been owned by his great-great-grandfather, who had come to Arizona in

1878, and then it was passed down generation to generation.

I learned a lot about the Flake family history through JEFF's book, which I once read in its entirety on Christmas Day. What I most remember from that book was that growing up, JEFF's family had a card on the refrigerator, and this is what it said: "Assume the best. Look for the good."

It is that unshakeable sense of optimism and faith in the decency of other people that Senator FLAKE has brought to the U.S. Senate. He has been willing to work across the aisle to do what he thinks is right, even when it has sometimes meant breaking with his own party.

JEFF knows what is at stake, for instance, with immigration reform. He wrote in his book: "From a very young age in ranch country, you get to know immigrants intimately and honestly" and you know "how indispensable they are to making things work in America."

It is clear that those lessons have stayed with him. I have seen it as JEFF has worked to build bipartisan consensus on immigration issues, reaching across the aisle to find a solution to try to protect our Dreamers.

I have seen it when we joined together to introduce a resolution, the two of us, recognizing the contributions of Muslim Americans. That resolution passed the Senate because JEFF FLAKE was willing to cosponsor it with me.

I have seen these values as Senator FLAKE has worked with a bipartisan group of us to normalize relations with Cuba. This commitment dates back decades to his earlier experience in building democracy in Namibia. So when President Obama took up the cause of Cuba, JEFF did not hesitate to lend his support, and together Senator FLAKE and I led the bill to lift the embargo on Cuba, along with Senators ENZI, LEAHY, and many others.

JEFF's voice has been particularly needed lately in the face of grave threats to our democracy and the rule of law. He has been a strong advocate for this bipartisan legislation that the Senate Judiciary Committee passed to simply protect the work of the special counsel, and he has taken a stand to try to ensure that the bill gets a vote on the Senate floor.

As a daughter of a journalist, I also deeply appreciate Senator FLAKE's leadership on behalf of a free press, which is essential to our democracy.

At a time when journalists are under attack, when reporters are risking and losing their lives and the President is calling them "the enemy of the people," it has never been more important for us to speak out for the First Amendment. So when JEFF FLAKE took to the Senate floor in support of freedom of the press earlier this year, I was proud to speak after him.

While JEFF will be so missed in the Senate, I have no doubt that he will