

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Post-Hanoi: Status of the North Korean Denuclearization effort."

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Vaccines save lives: What is driving preventable disease outbreaks?"

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Joseph V. Cuffari, of Arizona, to be Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Sean D. Jordan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Texas, and Mark T. Pittman, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMPETITION POLICY AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

The Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Does America have a monopoly problem: Examining concentration and competition in United States economy."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 05, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "States roles in protecting air quality."

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1112

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1112) to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to strengthen

the background check procedures to be followed before a Federal firearms licensee may transfer a firearm to a person who is not such a licensee.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARCH 2, 2019, AS "GOLD STAR FAMILIES REMEMBRANCE DAY"

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 93, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 93) expressing support for the designation of March 2, 2019, as "Gold Star Families Remembrance Day."

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 93) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, March 6; 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, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Reader nomination under the previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam 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 PORTMAN and Senator BROWN.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I have come to the floor of the Senate today to talk about the opioid crisis, to talk about what is happening out there in our communities and how some of our Federal legislation is working, and to talk about some good news, which is that there is some improvement in terms of the overdose deaths we have seen in this country, but also a warning that although we are finally making progress on the opioid crisis, we are also seeing other drugs, such as pure crystal meth, coming from Mexico and other drugs beginning to take hold in our communities.

So let me start, if I could, by talking a little about what the opioid crisis has been and what we are doing to address it.

You recall that the last data we had, which is for 2017—over 70,000 Americans lost their lives to overdoses. The No. 1 drug, the No. 1 killer, has been fentanyl, which is a synthetic opioid that, about 4 or 5 years ago, hit our communities hard. Year after year, for 7 or 8 years now, we have seen increases every single year in the number of people who die from overdoses, which is one way to measure it. Another way to measure it is just the number of people addicted. That is a harder figure to find, but that has also increased year to year.

It is devastating communities. The No. 1 cause of death in my home State of Ohio is opioid overdoses. Among Americans under 50, it is now the No. 1 cause of death in America.

It also has had many impacts on our health system and on our criminal justice system. Go to the emergency rooms. Look at our jails that are filled with people whose crimes somehow relate to opioids. Often, these are property crimes—people doing something to get the money to pay for their drugs.

Look at the impact it has had on our families. The foster care system is overwhelmed. I was with some juvenile court judges today from Ohio who were telling me that they can't find sponsors, that they can't find foster parents because the system is overrun with kids whose parents are addicted to opioids, and they cannot go home, but they need a loving family.

It has impacted our economy because so many people are now out of work altogether, aren't even looking for work, and don't even show up in the unemployment numbers. If you look at the labor force participation rate being so low—in other words, the number of people working—the unemployment rate today would not be 4 percent; it would be more like 8 percent if you just went back to a normal level. And a lot of that, based on studies done by the Department of Labor and Brookings and others, shows that the opioid crisis is driving that.

It has impacted us in so many ways. Here is the exciting news: After 7 or 8 years of increases every year in the number of people whose hopes are lost,