

where your money is going when you buy your prescription drugs.

I am eager to question these PBMs tomorrow and to hopefully begin to remove the shroud of secrecy surrounding these rebates and prescription drug prices. Finding out what has led to these rising prices is critical to ensuring that Americans are able to receive the drugs they need at prices they can afford.

TICE FAMILY

Madam President, on a final matter, several families were in Washington this last week to advocate for the release of their loved ones by two rogue regimes. One of the men being held captive in Syria is Austin Tice.

There are many ways you can describe Austin. He is a seventh-generation Texan, a decorated Marine Corps veteran, an Eagle Scout, and an award-winning journalist. Yet, to Austin's family, he is so much more than his impressive list of accomplishments. He is their beloved son, brother, and friend whom they have not seen or heard from for 6½ years.

In the summer of 2012, Austin was getting ready to enter his final year of law school at Georgetown University. Instead of spending the summer working at a law firm, he chose to do something few were brave enough to do at the time, which was to report on the Syrian civil war from the inside. Austin always had a passion for storytelling, and he was frustrated by the lack of reporting on the impact this vicious violence was having on the Syrian people.

In demonstrating his courage and tenacity gained during his time in the Marine Corps, Austin got on a plane that May to fly to Turkey. Over the summer, his photos and stories illuminated the human cost of this conflict until one day in August of 2012 his stories abruptly stopped. The following month, a shocking video surfaced that showed Austin's having been blindfolded, bound, and surrounded by unidentified, armed men. Austin was just a few days from returning to the United States when he was abducted, and to this day, we have no specific information about his captors or the conditions for his release.

Austin's family—particularly Marc and Debra, his parents—has worked tirelessly over these last 6½ years to locate Austin and to bring him home. I have had the privilege of meeting with them multiple times, and I can only imagine what an impact this has had on them and on their entire family. I have tremendous respect for Marc, Debra, and their family. I wonder if others could stand up under this pressure as well as they have, for these many years, during their steadfast advocacy for their son's safe return. Yet they do have a sort of serene confidence that comes across when you talk to them in that one day, Austin will return home.

Once again, I join the Tice family in calling on Austin's captors to release

him immediately. I also continue to call on the administration to make sure that Austin is kept in mind when there are any discussions with the Syrian Government and future decisions to remove U.S. forces from Syria. I assure Austin's family that our resolve has not weakened; it has only grown stronger. I will do everything possible to press for his release, and I will continue to urge the administration to do the same.

CITGO 6 FAMILIES

Madam President, sadly, Austin is not the only American being held captive by a rogue government regime today. In fact, he isn't even the only Texan.

In November of 2017, days before Thanksgiving, six Citgo executives were summoned to Venezuela for meetings with Citgo's parent company, Venezuela's state-owned PDVSA. During the final meeting, these men were detained by the Venezuelan Government, and for the past 16 months, they have been held captive beneath a military intelligence compound in Caracas. They have been denied contact with the State Department. They have been held without a trial. They have been unable to receive humanitarian aid. As the already horrible situation in Venezuela continues to worsen, their conditions are likely deteriorating even further.

In February, the children of two of these men wrote an op-ed in the Houston Chronicle that detailed the suffering of their fathers and that all six families have faced. They wrote: "In their isolation, our fathers have bonded together over a shared purpose: to stay strong in body, mind and spirit in anticipation of their eventual return to their families."

I assure these families that we will continue to stand alongside them in this fight. I call on the Maduro regime to immediately release these Americans and to allow them to return home. I have continued and will continue to urge the administration to make sure this remains a top priority.

Just as we have worked closely with the Tice family over the last 6 years in advocating for the release of Austin, their son, we will continue to do the same for these six men. The heartbreak felt by these families is unfathomable. Their spouses, children, and grandchildren are desperate to have their loved ones returned home. Together, we should do everything in our power to make that a reality.

Madam President, 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. Madam 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING FRITZ HOLLINGS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today I wish to start off by just sharing a few words about our former colleague, Senator Fritz Hollings—Ernest F. Hollings, to be precise—of South Carolina. He passed away this weekend at his home in Isle of Palms.

With Fritz Hollings, the people of South Carolina, the Senate, have lost a giant. Hollings was the longest serving junior Senator in American history—behind, of course, Strom Thurmond—representing his constituents for 38 years in the Senate.

Before that, he was a Governor, State legislator, and World War II veteran. Public service was his life's calling. He championed education reform, increasing teachers' pay, a national voice in the fights against hunger and poverty.

He was brought up in the old Jim Crow days, with a great deal of segregation, but as he went through South Carolina, he realized how terrible that was and began to move in the opposite direction.

He was an original. You could always go over to Fritz Hollings. Even when I was a younger legislator, he would pay attention, and he would have something very interesting to say.

Everyone talks about the days of blow-dried, look-alike Senators. Fritz Hollings certainly wasn't one of them. He was an original, and we were all much better for it.

So Fritz, we will miss you, and our thoughts go with your family, as do our prayers and well wishes.

DISASTER RELIEF FOR PUERTO RICO

Now, on another matter, Puerto Rico. Last week, Senator LEAHY and I offered this Chamber a chance to pass a natural disaster funding package that would have addressed everyone's concerns in the Senate.

The "all of the above" solution we presented contained \$16.7 billion in relief for all Americans affected by natural disasters. I would add, I see my two friends from Iowa on the floor today, one in the President's chair, one ready to speak. That would have included far more money for the Midwest than the Republican bill because the Republican bill that was on the floor, while it added 2019 to disaster relief, didn't add in any more money despite the devastation in Iowa and Missouri and Nebraska.

Well, our bill added an additional—an additional—\$2.5 billion in funding for the disasters of 2019, and the vast majority of that would go to Iowa, to Missouri, and to Nebraska, but it also provided much needed aid for the people of Puerto Rico and other territories. They need the help, too, and they are Americans citizens as well.

Let's face the music, folks. Everyone knows what is going on here. Democrats and Republicans had agreed, as we always do, when there is a disaster, we help. The original bill that was put together had aid for Puerto Rico, as