

these men and women of good will and faith who labor still day in and day out, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, working for that time when justice will be done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I would say that the views expressed by the good Senator from Missouri are not views widely shared by people in this country. And to compare the decisions in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the *Dred Scott* decisions with the *Roe* decision dishonors the memory of Congressman John Lewis, who only today was buried, put to rest in Georgia.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the systemic racial inequities, inequalities in our healthcare system.

While the virus has touched Americans of every race and nationality, it disproportionately impacts people of color. We all know that. People of color make up just 40 percent of our country's population but account for over 60 percent of all coronavirus cases and 50 percent of deaths from coronavirus.

These inequities manifest themselves differently in each of our States. In Hawaii, for example, we are seeing pronounced disparities among our Pacific Islander community and particularly among citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. I am focusing my remarks on this vibrant community today because our country has rarely done right by them. Let me give you some background.

After liberating their territory in World War II, the United States administered the Trust Territory of the Pacific—which includes what are now the Freely Associated States—for nearly 40 years. Even in the most generous characterization, the United States failed to live up to its trust obligations to promote the political, social, and economic development of the region.

In addition to chronically underfunding social programs like healthcare and education, the United States used the Marshall Islands as a base for dozens of nuclear tests over a 12-year period, from 1946 to 1958, including the 15-megaton *Castle Bravo*—the largest thermonuclear device ever detonated by the United States. Decades later, the citizens of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands continued to suffer generational health consequences with substantially increased rates of cancer, birth defects, and miscarriages.

In 1986, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands achieved independence and formally entered into Compacts of Free Association, COFA, with the United States. Palau followed in 1994. Under the terms of these compacts, these three countries provide the U.S. military with exclusive access to their strategically situated lands in ex-

change for security guarantees, economic and financial assistance, and the right of their citizens to travel, work, and live in the United States without having visas.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the compacts to our strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. In a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing last year, U.S. INDO-PACOM Commander ADM Philip Davidson succinctly noted how the compact nations “contribute way out of proportion to their population in our defense.” This is particularly true with respect to China, wherein our compacts with these island nations enable us to literally hold the line against aggressive Chinese economic and military expansion throughout Oceania.

If we are to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, we must treat the compact nations with the respect they deserve. First and foremost, this means keeping the promises we have made to these partners, especially on healthcare. Our initial compact agreements stipulated that COFA citizens were eligible for a range of Federal programs as “permanently residing under color of law,” including Medicaid coverage. The so-called welfare reform law of 1996, however, resulted in COFA citizens’ suddenly becoming ineligible for Medicaid and other Federal programs even as they may live in the United States legally and indefinitely.

I have done some research as to what happened in the welfare reform law, and there is absolutely nothing in the legislative history of that law to indicate why, suddenly, COFA citizens were not eligible for Medicaid coverage. According to a report from the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization, the exclusion of COFA citizens from Medicaid increased the mortality rate of COFA citizens by 20 percent and contributed to significant public health issues in my home State of Hawaii.

I have led the fight to pass bipartisan legislation to restore Medicaid eligibility for COFA citizens throughout my time in the Senate, and we have come close to righting this wrong on several occasions, including in the bipartisan comprehensive immigration bill that the Senate passed in 2013.

The COVID-19 pandemic injects a new urgency into this effort. All across the country, COFA citizens work in essential industries like meat processing, food service, and custodial services. These jobs put COFA citizens at an increased risk, and they are suffering disproportionately from COVID-19 as a result.

In Hawaii, Pacific Islanders make up about 4 percent of our population but account for nearly a quarter of our COVID-19 cases. In northwest Arkansas, the Marshallese make up no more than 3 percent of the population but have suffered half the deaths. In DuBuque, IA, the Marshallese community accounts for more than a third of the city’s COVID-19 deaths despite their

making up only about 1 percent of the city’s population.

A number of factors drives these disparities, but reduced access to healthcare certainly isn’t helping. In fact, it is hurting a lot. The Government Accountability Office estimates that 14 percent of COFA citizens in Hawaii lack health insurance—nearly three times the State’s average. Nationwide, 22 percent of COFA citizens are uninsured.

In the absence of restored Medicaid eligibility, which would certainly lower the number of uninsured COFA citizens, our community health centers are, once again, stepping up. My conversations earlier this month with representatives from Kokuia Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services and West Hawaii Community Health Center reinforced the crucial role these community health centers play in building reciprocal trust with the communities they serve. Both community health centers have been working closely with COFA citizens to combat stigma and fear by reaching out directly to the community to encourage them to seek care. This includes providing testing and outreach services in multiple languages. They have also been coordinating food deliveries to families, including to COFA citizens who are quarantining at home, and assisting some families with alternate housing arrangements so they can isolate away from healthy family members.

Our health centers are doing exceptional work with COFA citizens, and I strongly support providing them robust funding in the next COVID-19 relief bill.

Most importantly, we need to uphold our commitment to the compact nations and restore Medicaid eligibility for COFA citizens who are legally in our country. We can do that by including my *Covering our FAS Allies Act* to restore Medicaid eligibility for COFA citizens in the next COVID relief bill. In the *Heroes Act*, the House has already restored eligibility to this population, and it is time for the Senate to join them in righting an historic wrong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 711.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Mark Wesley Menezes, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.

Mitch McConnell, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Todd Young, Pat Roberts, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roy Blunt, Mike Crapo, Martha McSally, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

The Senator from Nevada.

HEALS ACT

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, this Nation faces a moment of crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has taken a serious and devastating toll on our country. Right now, in every corner of America, families are struggling to get by, and they are worried about what the future holds in store for them. Americans are worried about where their next paychecks will come from. They are worried about whether or not they will be able to keep their small businesses open. They are worried about how they will be able to pay their mortgages, their rent, or their utility bills, and they are worried about how they are going to feed their children.

As I said before, this is a time of crisis, but it is a moment that we can overcome together. We are a nation that in the face of great challenges has responded with caring and compassionate leadership. COVID-19 is a major challenge—make no mistake about that—but we as a Congress can bring real and meaningful results to the American people. I am sad to say that the legislation introduced by Leader MCCONNELL, the HEALS Act, does not do this. In fact, it does not even come close.

This is a bill that slashes Federal unemployment assistance for people who are out of work not due to any fault of their own and because of a deadly pandemic and an unprecedented economic catastrophe. This is a bill that has no money for programs like SNAP to ensure that American children don't go hungry. This is a bill that provides no support to State and local governments so that they can continue to provide critical services during the pandemic. This is a bill that provides no support for the EIDL Program or EIDL Advance, which provide direct support to small businesses to pay their operating expenses. This is also a bill that doesn't even continue the eviction moratorium, putting countless Americans at risk of losing their homes as

soon as this weekend when the rent comes due. This is unacceptable.

In Nevada, our travel and tourism industry has been hit hard by the pandemic, which has hurt our entire economy. In April, unemployment reached over 30 percent—30 percent. It is the highest in our Nation. Even now, months later, unemployment is still in the double digits—15 percent by the last count—which is more than four times our pre-pandemic level.

Now, just as Nevadans feel that we can't take any more pain, this bill plans to slash unemployment relief?

Amidst our unemployment crisis, State and local governments are also struggling. In Nevada and across our country, our public employees have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, fighting against the disease and working to ensure the safety and well-being of all Americans.

With little revenue coming in and significant costs going out, our States, our cities, our towns, and our Tribes are now facing massive budget shortfalls that will require cuts to critical programs and which threaten the pay of our teachers, our firefighters, and our first responders. The HEALS Act—Senator MCCONNELL's proposal—has zero funds for any of them.

While the majority leader's party prides itself on helping business, our Nation's small businesses, too, are left behind in his legislation.

Small businesses, the economic engines that keep our communities going, have been hammered by this pandemic. But the HEALS Act has zero—zero additional funding for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, which has benefited millions of small businesses nationwide, including tens of thousands of small businesses in Nevada.

Senator CORNYN and I introduced bipartisan legislation last week that would not only provide \$180 billion in funds to the EIDL and EIDL Advance Programs but will also lift the Small Business Administration's arbitrary caps on the loans and grants that all small businesses can receive.

Real bipartisan solutions are possible, but our bipartisan proposal to help small businesses is not in Senator MCCONNELL's bill either.

Let's be clear. The HEALS Act is not a bipartisan solution, and it does not address all the needs of the American people. Just as a house cannot stand without support from a sturdy foundation, we cannot expect the American people to stand upon a bill that is the legislative equivalent of cheap drywall and a coat of paint.

Our constituents, my constituents, need real support, a lifeline, not just window dressing. So I ask my colleagues in this body to rise to the challenge we face and provide that lifeline to the people of Nevada and to all of the American people.

Let's help people keep their homes. Let's help families feed their children. Let's help small businesses keep their

doors open. We must come together and develop timely, targeted, and thoughtful legislation to protect both the lives and livelihoods of the American people during this crisis. They deserve no less.

Across the country right now, scientists and healthcare professionals are working around the clock, maximizing resources, developing innovative ways to protect the health of our Nation and save lives. As they work day in and day out, Congress needs to do the same.

The House passed the Heroes Act over 2 months ago. It is long past time for the Senate to get to work. It is imperative that the Senate remain in session and that Senators remain in Washington, working tomorrow through the weekend until the Senate passes a true coronavirus relief bill. Working Americans don't get Fridays off, and neither should Congress.

Although we may not agree on every aspect of how to address this crisis, my Democratic colleagues and I stand ready to work across the aisle to deliver relief to the American people.

So I ask the majority leader, who controls our schedule—I ask him this: Don't we owe it to our constituents, to the American people, all Americans, to work through the weekend until we have an agreement? The essential workers on the frontlines of this battle aren't taking the weekend off to rest, and neither should we.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

ELECTIONS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, while I come to the floor this afternoon, I am kind of questioning whether the heat of Washington, DC, has gotten to people. Clearly, it has been a record July here, with 90-plus degree temperatures every day. But the notion that we should somehow cancel the election in the fall, I think, is either the heat of the moment or just clear wrongheadedness.

I have been waiting for some time to come to floor to talk about our voting system and why it is so important to protect it and why now we should recognize that Americans, in having to deal with the coronavirus, have had the ability to vote and the ability to get there and the ability to be protected while they are voting. It has occurred in several elections that we need to be doing more.

That is why I continue to support the efforts of our colleagues to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect elections.

I know that Leader MCCONNELL has proposed the HEALS Act, but it doesn't contain any money for helping safe and secure elections in November. I know that the House bill, the Heroes Act, does help put money in place to keep polling workers safe during the pandemic. I know that we have other legislation, whether it is Senator WYDEN's bill, which I am on, the Vote By Mail