

Washington, is that we are in the middle of a global pandemic. Yes, we are, but last I checked, that doesn't prevent or preclude us from discussing and addressing other things, from the funding of the government to Presidential nominees whom we confirm or don't confirm. That doesn't preclude us or excuse us from considering other pieces of legislation. I am struggling to understand how the existence of a global pandemic means that we can't even address another type of epidemic—one brought about potentially as a result of the abusive prescription and reckless misuse of abortion-inducing drug cocktails. This is beyond my ability to understand.

It is also beyond my ability to understand how a simple requirement that before one of these drugs is administered, the patient should have at her disposal a medical examination and some kind of medical attention. Nothing about *Roe v. Wade* says that you can't have laws restricting the manner in which abortions are performed. Nothing about *Roe v. Wade* says that a State or Congress itself may not require that abortions be performed by healthcare professionals under the supervision of a board certified medical doctor. Nothing about *Roe v. Wade* carries any implication for this. This legislation simply says: Let's make sure that medications like this are not used to harm American women.

I have other colleagues wishing to discuss this topic and other topics. Let me say this: Human life matters. Every human life means something. You can't snuff it out and pretend it doesn't exist, because it does. Every life matters to God. It matters in the universe. Whether you believe in God or not, life matters. You can't pretend it doesn't exist. Every life is unrepeatable, irreplaceable. We should vow to protect it. For those who aren't interested in protecting unborn human life, let's at least focus on protecting the human lives that we all agree exist. That is what this legislation is about. Shame on us if we can't even do that.

I yield the floor.
 The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague Senator LEE for an impassioned and effective argument.

I rise here today in support of my colleague Senator HYDE-SMITH's SAVE Moms and Babies Act, of which I am a proud cosponsor. I am disappointed that my colleagues would object to this bill to help safeguard and help expectant mothers.

The SAVE Moms and Babies Act would improve women's health by protecting important safety mechanisms put into place by the FDA. The Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy is an essential mechanism which ensures that drugs with serious safety concerns are used and prescribed correctly.

My Democratic colleagues and the abortion lobby may expect Americans to believe chemical abortion pills are

safe to use and should be available on-line without an in-person physician consultation, but here are the facts: Between 3.4 and 5.9 percent of women taking chemical abortion drugs require surgical intervention to complete the abortion. This meant 10,000 women in 2017 alone needed surgery after taking an abortion drug. Chemical abortion has four times the complications as surgical abortion during the first trimester. The risk of complications are particularly worsened in the case of an ectopic pregnancy. Women with ectopic pregnancies have suffered serious injury and even death from taking chemical abortion drugs.

I am disappointed this Chamber could not come together today to support Senator HYDE-SMITH's timely, needed, and important bill to protect women's health.

I yield the floor.
 The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COTTON. I know of no further debate on this nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no further debate on the nomination, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sonderling nomination?

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted yea.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 189 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Blunt	Burr
Barrasso	Boozman	Cassidy
Blackburn	Braun	Collins

Cornyn	Inhofe	Roberts
Cotton	Jones	Romney
Cramer	Kennedy	Rounds
Crapo	Lankford	Rubio
Cruz	Lee	Sasse
Daines	Loeffler	Scott (FL)
Enzi	Manchin	Scott (SC)
Ernst	McConnell	Shelby
Fischer	McSally	Sinema
Gardner	Moran	Thune
Graham	Murkowski	Toomey
Grassley	Paul	Wicker
Hawley	Perdue	Young
Hoeben	Portman	
Hyde-Smith	Risch	

NAYS—41

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reed
Bennet	Hassan	Rosen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schatz
Booker	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Tester
Carper	Leahy	Udall
Casey	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Peters	

NOT VOTING—7

Capito	Sanders	Tillis
Harris	Stabenow	
Johnson	Sullivan	

The nomination was confirmed.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, on rollcall vote 189, I voted nay. It was my intention to vote yea. Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote since it will not affect the outcome.

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

(The foregoing tally has been changed to reflect the above order.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, for debate only, for 30 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMANDER JOHN SCOTT HANNON VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I am pleased to share with my colleagues in the Senate that we have reached an agreement with the House to pass S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Improvement Act, and we expect the bill to pass the House of Representatives tomorrow.

This is a bill that passed—our most significant piece of legislation—from the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs dealing with mental health and suicide prevention. The bill came out

of the committee unanimously and was approved by the Senate unanimously, and we have been negotiating with Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for its passage by the House and with consideration by the Senate of other bills that the House has and will send us.

I want to thank my colleague Senator TESTER, the ranking member of our committee, Chairman TAKANO, and Dr. ROE, the ranking member of the House committee, for working expeditiously with me to reach an agreement to pass this comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention bill for America's veterans.

One veteran lost due to suicide is one too many, and it is a national tragedy that we continue to lose 20 veterans each day to suicide.

I am glad that Congress has come together to do our part to ensure this bill which will save lives. It needs to be passed without delay and signed into law.

This bill will establish a grant program and require the VA to better collaborate with community organizations across the country already serving veterans. This provision was specifically championed by my colleague Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas.

In addition, this legislation directs the VA to embark on groundbreaking research in the form of a precision medicine initiative that will improve how mental health conditions are diagnosed and treated, expand VA telehealth capabilities to better serve rural and Tribal veterans, bolster and expedite Federal research capabilities, increase accountability over the Department's mental health and suicide prevention programs, and make necessary improvements to the VA mental health workforce.

While this legislation puts in place the critical care, services, and support that will save veterans' lives, it is my hope that the bill will also serve as a signal to our veterans, servicemembers, and their families that they are never, never alone.

I want to extend my gratitude to the President for his support of this bill, and I ask him to sign this legislation as soon as it arrives on his desk.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, we must take our duty to America's veterans seriously, which is why the circumstances we find ourselves in today are extremely unfortunate. The extensions for important VA programs for the upcoming fiscal year—just 8 days away—are currently being held up from being considered and passed in the Senate.

This extension bill was negotiated in earnest and the four corners of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees agreed upon this legislation. This was a collaborative effort, not a partisan one, but, nonetheless,

this bill has not yet been cleared by the Senate minority.

Let me be clear: Countless veterans rely on these programs. Let me be clear: They expire at the end of the month.

From raising veterans out of homelessness to making certain that COVID-19 doesn't disrupt a veteran's pursuit of higher education, to helping rural veterans get their medical appointments, the fiscal year 2021 VA extenders bill contains a wide variety of extensions for programs that support a multitude of veteran populations.

Additionally, we have requested consent for several House-passed bills that will improve mental health care for veterans and increase annual veteran benefit rates to keep up with inflation. These are commonsense ideas that have broad support and will make meaningful differences in the lives of our veterans. These are items that would normally pass the Senate without difficulty.

Our veterans should not wait and should not need to wait. They can't afford to wait for the Senate to act on these matters. The deadline is quickly approaching. Our Nation's veterans did not serve their country for partisan reasons, and we must not let any partisan differences prevent us from authorizing the programs to support those veterans.

I ask my Senate colleagues to fulfill our collective duty regarding veterans programs and that we do not allow other issues to distract from that duty.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

REMEMBERING JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, this past weekend, we lost a brave and uncommonly fearless American.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg represented many things to many people. For some, her work was the gold standard of legal advocacy. For others, her arguments proved to be intellectual flashpoints, sparking opportunities to think critically about what we believe and why we believe it. But for each and every one of us, she served as living proof that the status quo is often much more fragile than it appears.

So today, I think I speak for so many Tennesseans when I say we are thankful beyond measure for that enduring legacy and the standard that she set as she broke barriers and crashed through glass ceilings, opening opportunities for women. I hope that I am as effective as she in increasing opportunities for women each and every day.

AMERICAN UNITY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, last week marked another Constitution Day celebration. It could not have come at a better time because, for

just one little moment, it helped us pause and contemplate two very important things.

First, we took time to think about those values that our Founders knew. They knew that these values were essential to the establishment of a model republic.

Second, we remembered the progress we have made in deciding for ourselves how the passage of time changes or does not change what we can do to make that "more perfect Union" even more so.

Free speech, petition, and protest, the right to defend ourselves, the right to cast a vote—these are the freedoms that unite us in times of turmoil, whether we find ourselves in the midst of all-out war or just a particularly contentious election year.

I would argue that how a nation reacts to that turmoil says more about its foundation than it does about who controls the news cycle on any given day.

Divisive voices are hard at work in this country, and they are doing their very best to convince our friends, families, and neighbors that our foundation is weak and that our founding principles are no longer good enough. I find that very sad.

They want us to believe that America as we know it is suddenly irredeemable, that it just can't be safe.

You might ask yourself: Why are they saying all of this in spite of hundreds of years and millions of Americans proving the exact opposite is true?

Here is what I think. They say it because they want us to give up. They want our neighbors, our families, and our friends to give up, call it quits; our best days are behind us. We have all heard them say this. They say: Throw the Constitution in the trash. Rewrite it. Start over. And after you throw the Constitution in the trash, then let's reimagine the world's greatest democracy through our very own destructive lenses of socialism, critical theory, and political correctness. That is what they say.

As I am sure we have all seen, they have come up with some fairly persuasive methods to try to get their way. But I believe that, in the end, these efforts will all be in vain because when push comes to shove, we, the American people, always manage to remember where we have come from and to remember who we are.

It is interesting. I think somehow we Americans always find our way home, back to those first principles. Indeed, I pray that continues.

Our Founders saw what tyranny really looked like. They saw it up close and personal because they had to live through it. They knew exactly—exactly—what would happen if they put the fate of the Republic in the hands of men alone. So what did they do to give that insurance policy, if you will, that democracy and a democratic republic would continue and would stand? They drafted a Constitution, recognizing