

member of the Democratic leadership. She is pretty tough when she wants to be. Because she is, I like working with her, and we have been able to do a lot with our committee.

We have 23 members on our committee. I thanked them today. I said, Senator Ted Kennedy used to say that we have the broadest jurisdiction of any committee in the Senate. I think we have the broadest range of views in the Senate of any committee. We have some very able advocates of those diverse points of view, and still, we have a very impressive record from fixing No Child Left Behind to 21st Century Cures, to the opioids bill, to passing important bipartisan legislation that is good for the country.

President Obama called the Every Student Succeeds Act a Christmas miracle. Senator MCCONNELL said the 21st Century Cures Act was the most important law of that Congress.

I thanked Senator MURRAY and all the Democrats and Republicans on the committee for creating an environment where we can have our differences of opinion but still get important results.

There was one other thing we discussed that I would like to mention. I see my friend from Connecticut on the floor. I know he wants to speak, and I will get out of the way so he can do it. But there were actually two things I wanted to briefly summarize, and then I will ask to put my statement into the RECORD.

One was that the New York Times said on March 1, that the United States was as well prepared as any country for COVID. To the extent that was true, it was because of several Presidents and several Congresses doing such things as, in 2012, authorizing three standby manufacturing plants for vaccines. Of Operation Warp Speed, Dr. Slaoui, who is their principle adviser, said that they could not be producing four of those vaccines if those plants had not been put in place back then.

In addition, earlier Congresses created more authority for the FDA, for example, to do emergency-use authorizations, which Dr. Hahn has used expertly. They have given the NIH record funding for 5 years in a row and new authority. All of this authority has been put to work by this administration to do what I would call an unprecedented sprint toward success on vaccines, treatments, and tests without cutting corners on efficacy and safety. There is a risk, but the risk is to the taxpayers.

The reason things are going so fast is because they are doing everything in parallel. They are manufacturing while they are developing the vaccine and while they are reviewing whether it is safe and effective.

Then, at the end of that process—say, at the end of this year—if it is effective, we are ready to distribute it. The States have been asked to get ready. If it is not safe, if it is not effective, then, we lose the money. The taxpayers lose the money.

I think most of us would be glad to lose that money if the result was that one or more of those vaccines turned out to be the one that produces 300 to 700 million doses of vaccines that are safe and effective as we move into the new year.

There is a lesson from all of this, and that is that the earlier Congresses and Presidents were visionary in this respect: They built those standby manufacturing plants. They created BARDA. Senator BURR from North Carolina was one of the leaders of that, for example. Without that, we wouldn't have this explosion of vaccines, treatments, and tests on the way. We need to do that again.

Senator Bill Frist, the former majority leader, testified before our committee with some others. He said we go from panic to neglect to panic, and we don't do the hard things we need to do after the epidemic is over.

The hardest thing to do is sustained funding. So we need sustained funding for manufacturing plants so they don't go cold while we wait for the next pandemic. We need sustained funding for our stockpile so they are not depleted by budget problems. We need sustained funding for the strategic stockpile, and we need sustained funding for our State and local public health agencies, which are about 50 percent supported by Federal dollars.

Sustained funding is something we don't do very well—that means mandatory funding that needs advanced appropriations. We like to do it year by year. But if we don't do it, you can see what it costs us: 200,000 lives we lost already and \$3 trillion we have already spent. So a little sustained funding to prevent the next pandemic would be a very wise investment, and we ought to do it now while we have our eye on the ball.

Jared Diamond, who wrote “Guns, Germs, and Steel,” pointed out in a recent article in the Wall Street Journal that, in his opinion, what is different about this vaccine is the jet plane—that people can fly from Wuhan to San Francisco or from San Francisco to Nashville, and pretty soon, suddenly, this is spreading all over the world. Jared Diamond said that the next pandemic could be next year. We hope it is not, but it could be, and we should be ready for it.

So I wanted to report to the American people and to my colleagues in the Senate that we hear a lot about problems, but I think it is important to know that vaccines are being manufactured, that the decisions are going to be made by scientists about when they are ready to distribute, that the States have been asked to get ready, that there are more treatments coming, likely, and that there has been an explosion of diagnostic tests. So, really, there should be plenty of diagnostic tests for anyone who wants to use them before very long in the United States. My theory has been for a long time that as soon as we had an oversupply,

we wouldn't have a problem or an issue.

I thanked those four witnesses, Senator MURRAY, and my Republican and Democratic colleagues for monitoring this COVID-19. I am glad the hearing was broadly carried for 2 hours on many television networks.

I hope it gave the American people some relief and sense that our chances of going back to school, back to college, back to childcare, back to work, and out to eat are increasingly good. It is very simple: Wear the mask, wash your hands, stay apart, and keep this unprecedented sprint toward vaccines, treatments, and diagnostic tests going.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

CORRECTING THE ENROLLMENT OF S. 2330

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 46, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 46) to correct the enrollment of S. 2330.

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I further ask that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion 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 concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 46) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

REMEMBERING JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and to express my grave concerns at rushing to fill this Supreme Court vacancy rather than focus on the pandemic and its health and economic devastation.

The passing of Justice Ginsburg is a monumental loss for our country, but she will leave an indelible mark as a historic and brilliant jurist, civil rights trailblazer, and personal hero to countless people. We can all take inspiration from her stalwart and lifelong crusade for equality, shaped by her own struggles facing gender discrimination as a young lawyer, despite her outstanding education and obvious talent.

Notably, one of her first and most important rulings as a Supreme Court Justice was when she wrote the majority opinion that struck down the male-

only admissions policy at the Virginia Military Institute. In this and many other cases, Justice Ginsburg opened the door for generations to come and heralded a new era of equality so that those who were traditionally excluded and oppressed could truly partake in the American dream.

Congress should honor Justice Ginsburg's legacy by grieving her loss with her family, her friends, and the rest of the Nation. More importantly, we should listen to the Justice's wish that the Court she loved and served so honorably should not be part of the election season. My sense is Justice Ginsburg recognized that, while the Court has become more political over time, filling her seat a month or so before an election would do incredible harm.

Some say we need nine Justices. They certainly didn't feel that way about Justice Scalia's open seat. Rushing here seems unnecessary, shows a disregard for history, and shows a lack of faith in the American people's choice in November, but it appears they will not be thoughtful and wait. Instead, it is full steam ahead.

I am angered and saddened that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are choosing to ram through a nominee who they know will not get broad support. While this is no different than their agenda over the last 4 years, the timing and circumstances could be not more startling or revealing as to their true priorities of power and stacking the deck.

My colleagues have been rushing to issue statements pledging their support for a Supreme Court nominee that President Trump has not even nominated. However, in the 4 months since the Heroes Act passed the House, they have not been able to muster any urgency to help the millions affected by the COVID pandemic. Indeed, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle keep bidding down the amount of assistance they want to provide.

Public health experts and economists alike have been sounding the alarm for weeks about what will happen if Congress does not provide further assistance. They warned that, without resources for testing, contact tracing, and other critical public health interventions, the case counts and deaths will only increase. They warned that, without rental, unemployment, and food assistance, evictions would skyrocket and households with children will go hungry. They warned that States would have to resort to deep budget cuts and layoffs without additional aid.

My Republican colleagues disregarded these warnings even as COVID-19 numbers continued to climb and even after the pandemic unemployment assistance and Paycheck Protection Program expired. They looked for excuses not to act, only pausing to bring up their so-called skinny bills, which fell woefully short of providing the help that is needed for families, businesses, and the States.

Due to the Trump administration's mismanagement and Republicans' inaction, much of what these experts predicted is already happening, and we continue to pass grim milestones signaling that we have failed to contain the virus and to adequately mitigate the economic fallout.

More than 200,000 people have now died, and the Department of Labor reports that nearly 30 million people are on unemployment. Despite the overwhelming need, Republicans seem eager to move on and shift all of their attention to filling a Supreme Court seat in as little time as possible.

They want to do it in a way that has never been done before. While other vacancies have arisen in an election year, the history is clear: The Senate has never confirmed a nomination to the Supreme Court this close to a Presidential election. Yet it is looking more like Republicans want to barrel ahead and deny the American people a chance to weigh in.

We have to ask ourselves: Why? One answer is easy: healthcare. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, along with President Trump, had complete control of Congress and the White House for 2 years, and after spending 7 years saying that they would repeal the Affordable Care Act, they tried with all of their might to do just that. What they didn't anticipate was that the American people would turn against that effort.

In 2017, I heard from countless constituents, writing and emailing me, calling my office, approaching me at the grocery store and around Rhode Island, telling me about how the ACA had benefited them and their families and urging me to do everything in my power to stop the Republican effort to repeal the law. I was not alone in this. I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle were hearing similar concerns from their constituents.

President Trump and congressional Republicans did not expect that they wouldn't be able to convince everyone in their party to go along with this scheme. As we all remember, late one night in July 2017, while voting on the Republican TrumpCare bill, my friend and my chairman, Senator John McCain, shortly before his death, courageously stood up and gave their proposal a thumbs-down, saying enough was enough.

The following year, the American people swiftly voted many Republicans out of office, handing control of the House of Representatives to Democrats, largely because of healthcare. Democrats won by vowing to protect the ACA for the American people.

So, now, President Trump and congressional Republicans are counting on the courts to overturn the ACA for them. They have spent the last 3 years stacking the courts with judicial nominees who they think will rule against the ACA, regardless of the facts or merits of the case.

With the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, they have their oppor-

tunity to add another anti-healthcare Justice to the Supreme Court, just days before the Court will begin arguments on the Trump administration's lawsuit to repeal the ACA.

What is worse is that they are not going to wait until the election to pursue this because they know the American people do not agree with them and they can't take the chance that they will lose the election and, along with it, their opportunity to take healthcare coverage away from millions of Americans.

Republicans' fervor to fill a Supreme Court vacancy goes beyond dismantling affordable healthcare and denying healthcare to those with preexisting conditions. They are counting on a conservative supermajority on the Supreme Court to accomplish many of their extreme conservative goals, which they know the majority of the American people do not share.

This will endanger so many of the rights that Americans have fought for decades to win. It could mean making our country less democratic by gutting what is left of the Voting Rights Act. It could mean overturning the right of women to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions, in consultation with their doctors, and the rights of LGBT individuals to live free of discrimination. It could include stripping away environmental protections, which will become all the more important as climate change wreaks havoc in our communities.

How these and many other issues are decided by the Supreme Court for the next several decades is hanging in the balance. That Republicans want to speed through their nominee shows not only their disdain for the will of the American people but, also, their lack of confidence that voters support these policy goals and those who wrongly espouse them.

The only good that may come of this is that the American people will gain an even clearer understanding of what is at stake. The American public now has a clear choice, and I have no doubt that it will make the right one. They can see and understand what Majority Leader MCCONNELL is doing.

At the very time the majority leader should be joining with us to protect the health of the American people in the midst of so much suffering and needless death during this pandemic, they are, instead, undertaking a misguided and unjustifiable effort to ram through a Supreme Court nomination. While I have little belief that Majority Leader MCCONNELL will change his plans, I would hope that my colleagues would take a moment and look at where we are. We can debate how we got here, but right now the matters before us are profound. I hope a few in the majority decide to reconsider and take a step back from their maximalist power theory and leave this issue to the next session.

Until then, I will do everything I can to honor Justice Ginsburg and her

life's work for what is right and what is fair. We will demand justice for the American people to make sure that their voices are heard.

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. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAY BOX

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, more than 100,000 Kentuckians choose every year to pursue a degree or develop their skills through the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, KCTCS. Composed of 16 colleges within a short drive of virtually every Kentucky household, KCTCS has helped over 1 million Kentucky students receive an affordable and quality education. Today, I would like to recognize my friend, Dr. Jay Box, who has served as KCTCS' second president for the last 5 years and is a leading architect of its success. As Jay retires at the end of this month, my home State will send him off with our sincere gratitude.

Nearly two decades ago, Jay and his wife Gayle left Texas to join KCTCS. I am so glad they did. Jay brought with him a personal belief in the importance of lifelong learning to adapt to a changing workforce. That vision has served Jay and KCTCS' students well while preparing them for 21st century careers.

Jay was quickly recognized for his transformative leadership at Hazard Community and Technical College. Tapping into his talent, he was given statewide responsibilities as KCTCS vice president, chancellor, then finally its president. In each role, Jay has constantly delivered for Kentucky students.

As president, Jay placed a renewed emphasis on helping students complete their degrees with a record number of graduates and credentials. He also encouraged schools to remove barriers, to support students pursuing GEDs and college credit at the same time, and to form partnerships with job creators to close the skills gap. As a result, graduates are gaining the skills to meet

local employers' demands and enter the workforce prepared to fill good-paying jobs.

His many achievements have brought national acclaim for both Jay and KCTCS. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump appointed him to be the voice for community colleges on the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board. Jay collaborates with leaders from educational institutions, governments, and some of the country's largest employers to increase preparedness in the workforce. Jay is also a member of the national board for Rebuilding America's Middle Class and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's National Advisory Group.

I have had the privilege to work directly with Jay to serve Kentucky's students. I am particularly grateful for his leadership to save Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, SKCTC, from losing its ability to offer Federal student aid. Working closely with Jay, I inserted a legislative provision to give the school a reasonable opportunity to make its case to the U.S. Department of Education. Jay and his team did just that, showing SKCTC's many contributions to its students and community. I am proud to say the school continues to thrive and help prepare Kentucky students to excel in the workforce.

Jay announced he would begin his well-deserved retirement in July. However, when the coronavirus crisis struck, he once again showed true leadership. Jay delayed his retirement to continue serving Kentucky's students and ensure KCTCS received the steady leadership transition it deserves.

Over the years, Jay has helped educate students, encourage industry, and drive growth in nearly every corner of Kentucky. It is a remarkable legacy, and I hope he and Gayle are proud of their accomplishments. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Jay Box on his retirement and to wish him many wonderful years to come.

TRIBUTE TO TOMMY TURNER

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, when my friend Tommy Turner was first elected to lead LaRue County in 1985, he was the youngest Kentuckian to ever serve as a county judge-executive. Now, 35 years later, Tommy recently announced he would leave office as our Commonwealth's longest currently serving county leader. Records bookend his service, and more accomplishments fill the years between. I would like to take a moment to congratulate Tommy on his decades of leadership for LaRue County and to thank him for his many contributions to Kentucky.

Every county judge-executive is responsible for local services such as the county's budget and road maintenance. As LaRue County's leader, however, Tommy was given an additional—al-

most sacred—charge. He helped preserve the birthplace of our most famous Kentuckian, Abraham Lincoln. Tommy took seriously his role in honoring Lincoln, and Kentucky will continue to benefit from his enthusiasm for our Nation's 16th President.

Along with a group of motivated citizens, Tommy helped establish the Lincoln Museum in Hodgenville. In a typical year, thousands of tourists will visit the museum and the nearby Abraham Lincoln National Historical Park. Tommy championed an effort to expand the National Park by coordinating a donation to include Lincoln's Boyhood Home on Knob Creek. This year, Kentucky Living Magazine named the Lincoln Museum as the Commonwealth's Best Museum, a well-deserved distinction for their efforts to safeguard the Great Emancipator's legacy.

In 2000, Congress created the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission to prepare national celebrations for the President's 200th birthday. Recommended by Kentucky's Governor at the time and appointed by the President, Tommy was a fine choice to serve as a commissioner. Hodgenville would later host the celebration's National Opening Ceremony and lead the country in honoring President Lincoln.

Over the years, I have worked with Tommy to preserve Lincoln's heritage in LaRue County and to deliver for the community's bright future. It has also been a privilege to join Tommy's radio show to speak directly with local families about their priorities and my work for Kentucky in the Senate.

Tommy spent half of his life as LaRue County's judge-executive. The results of his leadership can be seen across the county in its growth and opportunity. I would like to encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in thanking Tommy for his service and for preserving the memory of one of our country's greatest leaders. In whatever comes next for Tommy, I wish him the best. I look forward to his continued contributions to our great Commonwealth.

SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS

Mrs. LOEFFLER. Madam President, Mrs. Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, rejects the assertion by Mr. CHUCK SCHUMER, of New York, that there is no precedent for a Supreme Court justice being confirmed after July 1 in a Presidential election year.

In fact on three separate occasions, a duly-elected President appointed and the Senate confirmed a Supreme Court justice in a Presidential election year: John Hessin Clarke; confirmed by the Senate on July 24, 1916; George Shiras, Jr.; confirmed by the Senate on July 26, 1892; and Melville Fuller; confirmed by the Senate on July 20, 1888.

The Constitution does not limit the President's nomination powers during the fourth year of his term.

I support President Donald J. Trump's decision to nominate a justice