

Colleen next attended Penn State, where she earned her B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Studies. After graduating and teaching Spanish for several years in Florida, she came to Washington in 1977, first working for Representative Joseph Ammerman of Pennsylvania as his executive secretary. Colleen then found her calling in the Joint Economic Committee, where she has made an indelible mark on generations of Representatives, Senators, and staff ever since.

Colleen has now served on the JEC staff for more than half the time the committee has even been in existence. All great institutions, of course, depend on institutional memory. The Joint Economic Committee depends on Colleen Healy. That is why for decades the first decision every incoming JEC chair has made, whether the chair happens to be from the House or the Senate, happens to be a Democrat or a Republican, the first decision made over and over again is retaining Colleen's invaluable services as financial director.

Colleen is the reason the JEC is known across Capitol Hill for being one of the most cooperative and congenial committees to work for, to work with, or to serve on because both sides trust Colleen. They also know they can trust each other. That has a ripple effect that is undeniably positive.

Staffers trust that they can always go to Colleen with their questions and their problems, whether it is about the committee process or procedure, and receive gracious, knowledgeable, consistent, honest answers.

But even more impressive than her acumen is her essential kindness and grace. Colleen is known to get a flag flown over the Capitol for each new baby born to a coworker. Staffers past and present joke that you can't walk 10 minutes with Colleen from her office in the Dirksen Building and get very far because she has befriended literally everyone across the Capitol complex, remembering personal details about their lives and their families and stopping to talk with each person along the way.

From Members to staffers, to interns and custodians, Colleen never misses an opportunity to make every single person feel important and valued and necessary. That, again, has ripple effects that are always positive in any organization and certainly are on the JEC.

As one former coworker put it, when you talk to Colleen, you are instantly made to feel like the most special, loved, and cared-for person on Earth.

When you step into her office, you know she is ready to laugh, listen, or cry with you.

As another has said, despite the length of time she has worked in Washington, DC, Colleen still exudes warmth and joy—a spirit that permeates the committee and touches everyone she meets. This in a city not necessarily known for those traits.

And though she lives it out quietly, she gives witness to her Catholic faith

each and every day. Mother Teresa once advised: "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier." I can think of no better way to describe how Colleen Healy lives her life.

In the words of the JEC vice chair, Representative DON BEYER, "Colleen is the JEC's administrator, historian, sage, and most important, the heart and soul of the committee. She is respected and beloved by decades of JEC Senate and House Members of both parties, as well as generations of staff. Her decades of service have been invaluable."

We are all better and happier for it.

I thank Colleen for her service to the committee, and I hope we are lucky enough to get another 40 years with her serving on the Joint Economic Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor of the Senate tonight to talk about the encouraging progress we have seen in finding a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus that has disrupted all of our lives and caused such great damage over the past year.

From the early days of this coronavirus pandemic, a public-private partnership has employed scientists who have worked around-the-clock to prevent people from getting infected by developing effective vaccines. We saw the results of this effort in the last week with announcements from Pfizer and now Moderna that their interim success rates were above 90 percent during their trials. Other companies have vaccines at various stages of development, and there is hope that they will have similar results.

Getting safe and effective vaccines across the finish line will be a monumental achievement. Not only are we witnessing unprecedented progress in creating an effective widespread vaccine, we are doing so at a speed unheard of in modern medical history. This result is going to be our best hope of getting out of this pandemic. With cases rising not only across the country but around the world, we are running out of other tools needed to stop the pandemic. I support the social distancing, wearing of masks, PPE, the testing, but I believe widespread inoculation is the most effective way to avoid the negative economic and social impacts the virus and the subsequent mitigation efforts have caused.

If these vaccines receive the expected emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration over the coming weeks and months, this will be a testament to the unprecedented support that Congress has provided for vaccine development, the Trump administration's innovative approach to cut bureaucratic redtape with Operation Warp Speed, and the

commitment and ingenuity of our researchers, our scientists, and our manufacturers.

The bipartisan CARES Act we passed here in March with unanimous support provided \$27 billion in funding for countermeasures against COVID, including funding this important vaccine development research. It was money well spent.

Thanks to these funds and the innovative approach by the administration, we have been able to invest in building the infrastructure to begin manufacturing these vaccines now so that if the vaccine is approved, we can quickly ramp up distribution. This two-track approach also involves ramping up large-scale clinical trials, which are critical to furthering our scientific understanding of this pandemic and verifying the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines. By using these CARES Act funds to invest in both research and trials and in manufacturing at the same time, we are able to ensure that the trials are thorough and methodical while also ensuring that if and when approved there is vaccine ready to be distributed.

At the same time, the Food and Drug Administration, which is the Federal agency responsible for approving the use of any new vaccine, has followed the science and moved cautiously. As an example, they have actually raised the standards needed for giving an emergency use authorization for a vaccine. Normally, a vaccine only needs to be effective about 50 percent of the time to be approved under the EUA, emergency use authorization, but with the coronavirus vaccine, the standard is much higher. By requiring companies to collect more rigorous information to show longer lasting results from their respective vaccine candidates, this will help ensure greater confidence in the system, and I am grateful that they took these additional careful steps.

This progress on the vaccine is critical for our economic recovery as well. When a vaccine and therapeutics are authorized by the FDA and made widely available and people actually get vaccinated, all of us will feel safer returning to the workplace, retail establishments, restaurants, churches and other places of worship, and schools, as well as feeling more comfortable gathering with friends and family. We will finally be able to truly reopen and get millions of Americans back to work. In short, a widely available vaccine is our best bet for getting America back to normal—something we all are desperate for.

Last month, I received a briefing from CTI Clinical Trial and Consulting Services, a research company that is based in my hometown of Cincinnati, OH. I met with them to receive a briefing to find out what is going on in Ohio and what they are doing around the country. CTI is a global leader in actually executing these clinical trials that we always talk about for these vaccines and therapeutics, and right now

they are helping to conduct clinical trials on a potential COVID vaccine being developed by a number of companies, including Janssen, J & J. That is Janssen, Johnson & Johnson.

I was impressed with the progress they had made in their phase 1 and phase 2 trials for the J & J vaccine, as well as the precautions they are taking with regard to safety and privacy of participants in the trial. In fact, the previous trial of this vaccine found 99 percent of participants developed antibodies to COVID-19, and 98 percent still had these antibodies in their system after 29 days. These are encouraging figures that suggest that this J & J vaccine could prove to be another useful tool in our toolkit to fight COVID-19, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

CTI explained to me that they were focused on encouraging more people to join their trials. I asked if it would help if I signed up, and they said yes. Along with tens of thousands of other participants, I am now joining this trial for this promising new vaccine. Like other participants in the program, I don't know if I got the vaccine or if I got a placebo.

I enrolled in this vaccine trial for really three reasons. One is because I think it is so important to get this vaccine moving, and these trials are really important to having that be successful. In my view, again, the vaccine is the most effective way for us to defeat this coronavirus.

Second, I enrolled because I want to encourage others to join these trials around the country. If you are interested, go online. Look at the vaccine trials and join one in your community.

And, third, I hope it will convince my fellow Ohioans and others that getting vaccinated makes sense.

There is a concerning Gallup poll from last month that found that only half of Americans are comfortable getting a COVID-19 vaccine, and 50 percent of us are not comfortable at this point getting vaccinated. Actually, that is down from August, when two-thirds of Americans said they would be willing to be vaccinated. This concerns me a lot.

I suspect in part this is happening because of the rhetoric we have heard from some public officials casting doubt on a vaccine solely because it may be approved by the Trump administration's FDA. We need to stop playing politics with people's health and let the science and the data determine which vaccines get approved. The FDA is being very cautious, and they are being driven by science. Casting doubt on the efficacy of a vaccine to try to score political points is dangerous and needs to stop.

Public confidence in vaccines is declining at exactly the time that we need these vaccines the most, and we need to do what we can to reverse that trend. My hope is that being involved firsthand I can use my platform as a Senator to help give people confidence

that these new vaccines being developed are safe and effective. The more folks participate in these trials, the sooner they will have the complete data to finalize this phase of the trial and move on to the FDA approval process.

But just as important as participating in these vaccine trials is what we do here as legislators in Congress to ensure that these vaccines can continue to be developed and deployed safely and rapidly. As I mentioned earlier, the CARES Act provided \$27 billion for the development of vaccines and other countermeasures—an unprecedented show of support from Congress in our fight to defeat the underlying healthcare challenges of this pandemic.

Unfortunately, since that bill was passed—the CARES bill—way back in March, 8 months ago, we have been unable to focus on following up with more funding to help this effort. Twenty-seven billion dollars is a lot of money, but it only gets us so far in an effort like this.

What is also missing from the uses for this \$27 billion is the ability to fund a campaign to explain to Americans that there is a safe and effective vaccine out there that they can use, that the science has been followed. As I mentioned, there is a lot of vaccine hesitancy right now. It existed before this pandemic. Unfortunately, it has been made worse by some elected officials trying to politicize this science-driven effort.

That is why I am working on bipartisan legislation to support a national awareness campaign that would empower HHS to cut through the politics and promote the scientific advancements we have made in order to increase public confidence.

We don't have a vaccine yet, and we are still facing another round of shutdowns, with little help to support those who will be impacted by it. That is the reason we need to do more here in Washington right now to ensure that the healthcare response to this pandemic does not falter, because this crisis is getting worse, not better. In my home State of Ohio and around the country, we are seeing this, and we can make a difference here.

In Ohio, the number of daily cases has risen every day for the past month. We are seeing double what we saw just a few weeks ago.

In the United States, we are now averaging more than 100,000 new cases per day, double the rate from just a month ago. As was predicted, it got colder, people are inside more, and the third wave has arrived.

Unfortunately, we have also seen an increase in Ohio in hospitalizations, in ICU patients, and, sadly, in fatalities along with these new cases.

We need to do more to help the economy, too, and that is another reason we need a COVID-19 package—a stimulus package—because as the pandemic has worsened, the impressive economic growth we were seeing has slowed down

at a time when the economy is still down 10 million jobs since February. What we really don't want is for those ten million people, in a slowdown of the economy, to become long-term unemployed and who may never reenter the workforce. And, of course, certain sectors—like hospitality, restaurants, hotels, travel, and entertainment—are still struggling badly, with no end in sight, as some States are beginning to re-implement stricter social distancing measures and even to close down these facilities in order to counter the spread of the virus.

I am pleased that Leader MCCONNELL has called on Congress to work together to pass another coronavirus response package before the end of the year. We can't afford to wait any longer. It is my hope that my Democratic colleagues recognize the urgency as well. And I have talked to a number of them who do. We have to refrain from making this political at this point. We have to figure out how to work together to find common ground.

If we can come together and get a bipartisan coronavirus bill passed before the end of this year that takes a commonsense approach targeting the healthcare challenges of this pandemic, targeting the economic consequences, we will not only help the men and women working tirelessly in labs around the country to fight this disease, but we will send a clear message to the American people that we are with them in this fight.

And as we continue this critical national effort, let's be sure we are doing our part here in Congress to pass legislation that provides additional funding for treatments and therapies for the coronavirus so that we can be sure we have the resources necessary to treat the virus as people get it.

The time is now for us to put the partisanship aside and figure out how we can work together to give the American people a little hope, to address the healthcare crisis that is in all of our States, and to ensure that the economic consequences are not devastating for the people we represent.

I urge my colleagues to come together and to do that before we recess for the holidays.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

INTERNET OF THINGS CYBERSECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2020

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1668, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1668) to establish minimum security standards for Internet of Things devices owned or controlled by the Federal Government, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding?