

for diabetes and can alleviate the suffering associated with that disease, it not only will help lives across America, but it will save us money in our important health care programs. Investment in medical research by the United States of America has been the pillar for the world when it comes to looking to a better day for the people who live in each country.

This brain initiative, which was described to us this morning by the National Institutes of Health, needs to be funded. It is not adequately funded now. We dedicated some \$350 million to Alzheimer's and brain research. It sounds like a lot of money. It is about one-third of what the researchers need. They have that many opportunities waiting to be funded. Will they all succeed? No, but that is the nature of research, and each one of them will be a good investment which will lead us to the day of prevention, treatment, and a cure when it comes to Alzheimer's.

I hope that we come together on a bipartisan basis when it comes to this budget. In this area of medical research, there is plenty of room for us to work together, and there has already been leadership shown on the other side of the aisle. We are going to help to try to move that forward, both in the Senate and in the House, on a bipartisan basis.

When I meet with people across my State—and I guess many other States—and talk about political issues, there are a lot of folks with some very strongly held opinions on one side or the other, but when it comes to funding medical research, I have found that this is the kind of issue that opens the doors. People of all political stripes agree this is a good investment for the future of America.

UNIVERSITY OF PHOENIX

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it hasn't been a very good week or two for the University of Phoenix. The University of Phoenix is the largest for-profit university in the United States. University of Phoenix students cumulatively owe more in student debt than any other institution of higher education in America. The students enroll at this university, which is largely online but has some classroom experience, they sign up for a higher tuition than they would at community colleges or most universities, and when they can't finish and drop out, they still have debt, or when they finish, they may have a diploma that can't find a job.

The University of Phoenix—this private, for-profit company—receives nearly \$3 billion a year in Federal Student Aid funding, but the quality of education from this for-profit school is suspect. The for-profit college and university industry is the most heavily subsidized for-profit business in America. We have seen a lot of warning signs about the University of Phoenix. We've seen how they target the military and veterans.

Paul Rieckhoff of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America said that the University of Phoenix "is constantly reported as the single worst by far" when it comes to for-profit colleges taking advantage of veterans.

Well, it has caught up with them. A few weeks ago the University of Phoenix was placed on probation by the Department of Defense, restricting the company from enrolling new servicemembers who used the Department's tuition assistance or spousal MyCAA programs. The Department found violations by the company, the University of Phoenix, after completing a review prompted by an investigative report from the Center for Investigative Reporting.

The article that started this investigation exposed the University of Phoenix's strategy to flout Department of Defense rules, including an Executive order meant to protect our servicemembers—men and women in uniform and their spouses—from aggressive and unfair recruiting by for-profit colleges. You see, if these for-profit colleges can sign up a member of the military or their spouse, they can bring in the money that is set aside in the Tuition Assistance program for education and training, and so they want to sign up as many members of the military and their families as they can.

The University of Phoenix avoided the rules set down by the Department of Defense by sponsoring events at military bases—not just a few but a lot. In one instance they paid \$25,000 to sponsor a concert for military members and their families. They spent \$25,000 for a concert? The company gave away computers and wrapped the stage in a giant University of Phoenix banner. They used official Department of Defense seals and logos on challenge coins and gave them out to servicemembers in order to show that they had some kind of close relationship with the military.

In other instances found by the Center for Investigative Reporting, the University of Phoenix sponsored resume workshops, which essentially amounted to recruiting members of the military and their family to sign up for this for-profit college. According to the article, the company sponsored hundreds of events, such as rock concerts, Super Bowl parties, father-daughter dances, Easter egg hunts, chocolate festivals, fashion shows, and even brunch with Santa, on military bases.

The University of Phoenix spent \$250,000 to sponsor events over the last 3 years at one place—Fort Campbell, KY. Let's face it, these were recruitment events for the University of Phoenix, and they were paid for, by and large, with taxpayers' dollars. In the name of corporate sponsorship, the University of Phoenix could gain direct access to military bases with a nod and a wink from servicemembers. They told them they cared about the military. They also cared about the fact

that they had potential students who would sign up and spend their TA benefits at the University of Phoenix. It paid off for them. The University of Phoenix is the fourth largest recipient of Department of Defense tuition assistance funds. In fiscal year 2014 the University of Phoenix received more than \$20 million from these benefits. It is not surprising then that the company would be so concerned about the decision by the Department of Defense to put them on probation. It means they will lose access to millions of dollars from these military families, and it was reflected when their stock went down in value.

Since the Department of Defense took action against the company, the University of Phoenix stock value has plummeted nearly 50 percent. In its decision, the Department of Defense also cited concerns related to ongoing investigations of this same University of Phoenix by the Federal Trade Commission and the attorney general of the State of California. In fact, there are two ongoing investigations of the University of Phoenix by the Federal Trade Commission, one is related to deceptive marketing and advertising, and a second is related to safeguarding student and staff personal information.

In addition to the attorney general in California, at least two other States are also investigating the company. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and the Department of Education inspector general also have ongoing investigations at the University of Phoenix.

The Department of Defense is not alone. Many agencies, Federal and State, are investigating this major for-profit university. They do have some friends though, and one of them is the Wall Street Journal.

Last week, on the same day an editorial of a similar tone appeared in the Wall Street Journal, a few of my colleagues in the Senate sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, telling him to lay off the University of Phoenix despite the fact that the Department noted the violations were of such frequency and such scope that they were "disconcerting." My colleagues in the Senate think the Department of Defense's decision to protect servicemembers and to put this university under probation was "unfair."

There is no question that the Department of Defense has a duty and a responsibility to protect members of the military and their families from exploitation. They have established rules under the Voluntary Military Education Program, and now my colleagues in the Senate are writing letters to the Department of Defense saying: Look the other way. The letter they sent criticized the Department for its concern over the University of Phoenix's continued participation in Voluntary Military Education Program in light of the multiple ongoing investigations. I think it would be grossly

irresponsible for the Department of Defense to back off of this protection of our military because of a letter from Members of the Senate.

The broad and ongoing regulatory scrutiny of the University of Phoenix gives the Department of Defense legitimate cause for concern when it comes to the company's future participation in the Voluntary Military Education Program.

My colleagues in their letter said: "The TA program is critical to our nation's servicemembers' educational and career opportunities." I couldn't agree more. That is exactly why the Department of Defense should ignore the demand of my Senate colleagues and exactly why they should not turn a blind eye to the University of Phoenix's violations.

In order to provide quality educational options for servicemembers and to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being wasted, we must promote integrity in the program, and the highest priority should not be the profitability of a for-profit university, such as the University of Phoenix. The highest priority is quality education and training for the members of the military. I thank the Department of Defense for taking this bold action and encourage them to remain steadfast in protecting students, military members, their families, and taxpayers when it comes to future decisions related to the University of Phoenix's participation in the Voluntary Military Education Program.

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.

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

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

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, we are on the floor in celebration of the American democracy, that occasionally things can work, and that we can overcome extremes in our country and actually pull together to do something for American manufacturers, to do something for American businesses, and to do what is right.

I know my colleague, the senior Senator from the great State of Washington, is on a short timeframe, so before I proceed with my remarks I would like to yield the floor to Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here with my colleague, and I thank the Senator from North Dakota for her exhilaration we all share because of the vote last night in the House overwhelmingly in support of Ex-Im.

I am here to reiterate my strong support for reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, and I applaud the Members of the House who easily passed the reauthorization bill last night. It is actually easy to see why the bill got so much support. It is good for American jobs, it is good for small businesses, and it reduces our national debt. The fact that Republican leadership has let this program go dark for so long, held hostage by political pandering, is outrageous.

The longer Ex-Im is shuttered, the more it hurts American competitiveness. In my home State of Washington, nearly 100 businesses—the majority of them medium or small businesses—used the Bank services last year to help sell their products overseas. We are talking about everything from Apple and airplane parts to beer and wine, to software and medical training supplies. In fact, I actually recently visited one of these small businesses—a brewery in Seattle.

In 2011, Hilliard's Brewery started with three employees dedicated to making good beer. Thanks to a loan from the Ex-Im Bank, Hilliard's tapped into foreign markets and developed a following. Fast forward to 2015. They have dramatically increased their production, they continue to grow, and they built a business that thrives today.

The reality is that people in other countries want American-made products. That is great because these businesses support tens of thousands of jobs around the country and they keep our economy moving. The Export-Import Bank is the right investment because it expands American businesses' access to emerging foreign markets, creating jobs right here at home. Do you know what it costs taxpayers? Not a single penny. In fact, the Export-Import Bank puts money back into our country.

Here is the bottom line: Republican leaders allowed partisan pandering to put the brakes on a program that creates jobs, strengthens our small businesses, and helps our economy grow. I believe—and I am joining my colleagues today—it is time to put this ideology aside. Let's restart this proven program. It is critical the Ex-Im Bank continues to receive the strong bipartisan support we have seen in the past as we work to reauthorize this bill that is a success. I am proud to join my colleagues to say let's get this done.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, yesterday was a great day, and it was a great day not just because something we have worked so long and hard on actually was advanced, and that we care about, reopening the Ex-Im Bank, but it was when a majority of people in the U.S. Congress stood up, led by a Republican from Tennessee, Representative FINCHER, and actually said: We are not

going to let hard rightwing politics get in the way of American jobs, American manufacturing opportunities, and get in the way of moving our country forward. I think that speaks volumes, and I hope it becomes an opportunity to move other broad bipartisan pieces of legislation forward.

The frustration the American people have with the U.S. Congress is that things that seem to be no-brainers—legislation that seems to be so obvious in terms of the right kind of policy—do not get done in the U.S. Congress. So I am elated with what happened over in the House.

Now the ball is back in our court. We have been waiting for a number of months to see House movement on this. Because of the discharge petition, because of this big vote, we now see House movement. The House has done their job. It is now time for us to do our job.

I want to point out a couple of things about that vote. It ended up being over 70 percent of the House of Representatives. Think about that. In this time of hard partisan fighting, we have 70 percent of a body agreeing to an important public policy. What also is significant about that vote is 127 Republicans—in fact, a majority of Republicans in the House—voted to support the Ex-Im Bank, reauthorize it, open it up, and open up this opportunity for American manufacturers.

There can be no debate. Along with my colleague from Washington, we have been saying all along that we believed there was broad support in the House of Representatives to do this. I think they hadn't had a test vote in the past. Now we know, and we can say it with great certainty, not only is there majority support, there is supermajority support for the Ex-Im Bank.

Now it is our turn. Now it is our job once again. A few short months ago I stood in this body, working with my two great colleagues who have joined me on the floor, to push back and say: Look, if we believe in a trade agenda, we believe as the three of us have voted, to support TPA. We are now evaluating and analyzing TPP. What sense does it make to take one of the most significant and important trade tools such as the Ex-Im Bank—something that levels the playing field and creates huge opportunities for us to be competitive against a world where these kind of private agencies are supported by every major economy and every major government, including some of the developing nations right now—what sense does it make to shut down or restrict that tool? In what world does that make sense? We have been making this commonsense argument and fighting against things that make absolutely no sense and, quite honestly, in many ways seems almost idiotic.

Unfortunately, there are casualties to this failure in America today. American jobs have been lost, American economic opportunity has been lost, and