

we have become the “United States of oxy.”

With the opioid epidemic reaching epic proportions, our Federal budget should reflect the magnitude and importance of investing in treatment and recovery services.

In Massachusetts, approximately 65,000 people are currently dependent on opioids. Some 50,000 need treatment but are not receiving it. Treatment for prescription drug and heroin addiction is absolutely at the top of the list of the things this Congress should deal with, and that is why we need to work together. We need to make sure that the treatment is there for each of these patients, and that includes ensuring that patients receive from a physician the help they may need from Suboxone. Right now, that is denied to many different patients.

I have been in Congress for 39 years. I have never actually seen an issue like this that has grown so quickly and affects so many families in our country. Not a day goes by in the State of Massachusetts where someone doesn't come up to me and talk to me about a family member who has been affected by this epidemic. It is time for us to join together in a bipartisan fashion to produce the kind of legislation to give hope to families and let them know that relief is on the way, and that prevention and treatment will be there to help their families deal with this crisis.

I hope we can accomplish that goal this year, and I believe we can do it on a bipartisan basis.

I yield back the remainder of my time with thanks to the Senator from Alaska for her indulgence.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2012, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2012) to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 2953, in the nature of a substitute.

Murkowski (for Cassidy/Markey) amendment No. 2954 (to amendment No. 2953), to provide for certain increases in, and limitations on, the drawdown and sales of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Murkowski amendment No. 2963 (to amendment No. 2953), to modify a provision relating to bulk-power system reliability impact statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

DRUG ADDICTION

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, before I begin my remarks this morning

about the Energy Policy Modernization Act, I wish to acknowledge my colleague from Massachusetts. I come from a very large, remote State. About 80 percent of the communities in Alaska are not connected by a road, so one would think that our isolation would insulate us from some of the scourges that we see when it comes to drugs and drug addiction. Unfortunately, that is not the case. In my State we are seeing the same level of addiction. While the numbers might not be as eye-popping as Massachusetts or New Hampshire and other parts of the country, that is because we have fewer people. But on a per capita basis, the numbers are staggering and very worrying.

As my colleague from Massachusetts notes, this is not something that should be a Republican or a Democratic problem or have a Republican or Democratic solution. This should have all of us working together because what is happening and what we are seeing is simply unacceptable. It is destroying families and communities, and we must work together. I appreciate his comments here before the body this morning.

Mr. President, I hope the Senate is prepared for another good, busy day of debate on our broad bipartisan energy bill.

Late yesterday, while we were not taking votes, we were in session for a few hours—but what we were able to do during that time period was approve eight more amendments by voice vote. We are now up to 19 amendments accepted so far. The latest batch from yesterday featured a proposal from Senators GARDNER, COONS, PORTMAN, and SHAHEEN to boost energy savings projects that will limit the cost of government and save taxpayer dollars.

We also approved an amendment from Senators FLAKE, MCCASKILL, and BOOKER to evaluate the number of duplicative green buildings programs within the Federal Government. I think we all appreciate the need to be more efficient, but do we need to have dozens and dozens of duplicative programs to build this out? That is what that amendment addressed.

We also approved an amendment from Senators INHOFE, MARKEY, and BOOKER to renew a brownfields restoration program run by the EPA.

So we did OK yesterday, approving eight amendments by voice votes, which is not bad for a Monday around here when we were not scheduled to have votes, but I think we can do better than that. I think we can pick up the pace, and we are ready to do that.

We will have two rollcall votes that are scheduled for 2:30 this afternoon. The first one is an amendment by the Senator from Utah, Mr. LEE, amendment No. 3023, and it would limit Presidential authority to permanently withdraw Federal lands as national monuments. This is an issue that I have joined the Senator from Utah on, as well as many Senators from around the West, who have concerns that we would

see vast areas of our particular States permanently withdrawn—something that again resonates very strongly in my State, where 61 percent of our State is held in Federal land. I am pleased that my colleague from Utah has offered this amendment, and I am hopeful the Senate will adopt it.

The second amendment we will have this afternoon is the Franken amendment No. 3115. This would impose a nationwide efficiency mandate. This is a matter that we had before the energy committee when we were in markup in July, and many Members are already familiar with it.

I am aware that some Members are still filing amendments, but I think my advice to them is to know they are chasing the train down the tracks at this point in time. We had a total of 230 amendments filed as of this morning, so we have a lot to sort through as we are trying to deal with the debate and just kind of keep things moving.

A number of Members are also hoping to secure a vote on their priorities, so we have a line now. Those who are just thinking about filing should know where you are in this process. Senator CANTWELL and I intend to continue to process amendments as quickly as we can and we ask for the cooperation of Members to help that effort move along.

I do want to thank the ranking member on the energy committee. Senator CANTWELL and her staff have been working very hard and very well with me and my staff as we are working to process this bill. The level of back-and-forth has been very constructive, very helpful, and I appreciate it, and I want to give special recognition to the yeoman's work that the staff are doing right now.

We will be setting up additional rollcall votes today. We will hopefully be able to reach agreement on amendments that we can clear on both sides as well.

As we have moved through the debate process on this important Energy bill, we have seen some good, strong amendments. I mentioned some already. We have had amendments from both parties. We have had them offered by Members from all areas of the country. We have seen some particularly good ones that focus on hydropower. I wish to take a few moments this morning to speak about hydropower and the amazing supply source that hydropower provides for our Nation.

Hydropower harnesses the forces of flowing water to generate electricity, and it has many virtues as an energy resource. It is not only emissions free and renewable, it is also capable of producing stable, reliable, and affordable base power. How about that: stable, affordable, and reliable base power. It is emissions free. It is renewable. It is not defined yet as renewable, and we address that in this bill. Right now, hydropower produces about 6 percent of our Nation's electricity and nearly half of our renewable energy. That is more