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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, You are the strength of our lives. Use us to tell of Your wondrous works, inspiring others to glorify Your Name in the Earth. Help us to depend on You in the welter and variety of events we encounter each day. May we trust You to supply all of our needs, responding with gratitude to Your generous mercies.

Today, give our Senators an eternal perspective on the myriad issues they face. Infuse their hearts with faith, sharpen their minds with truth, and renew their spirits with courage. Bless the members of their staff who sacrifice so much for freedom's cause.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The majority leader is recognized.

### COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today we have an opportunity to take another step forward on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or CARA, a critically important and bipartisan bill to address the grow-

ing prescription opioid and heroin epidemic.

As we have worked through debate on this legislation, we have heard numerous stories from across our Nation about the toll this crisis is taking on Americans. Today, I want to take a moment to address the difference CARA can make in my home State of Kentucky, which has been among the hardest hit by this epidemic.

More people are dying from drug overdoses than car crashes in the Commonwealth, and that is largely due to prescription opioids and heroin. We know education and prevention programs can help reduce the number of people who experience drug addiction and overdose. One program I have been proud to support is the Drug-Free Community Program, which provides funding to local communities so they can promote education and awareness about the dangers of substance abuse.

I wrote letters of support on behalf of Oldham and Carter Counties, which have both received drug-free community grants. This funding helps them train community members, parents, and school officials in preventing youth substance abuse.

There are other programs in CARA that can help build on these efforts through community-based coalition grants that address local drug crises. Education is incredibly important, and it is great to see what we are achieving on that front. But for Kentuckians and Americans currently struggling with addiction, the cycle can be very difficult to break.

We have seen a staggering number of people lose their lives to overdose, and we know more must be done to stop that terrible trend. Fortunately, groups like the Harm Reduction Coalition are providing overdose prevention and naloxone training for drug treatment programs, recovery advocates, and health departments across Kentucky and several other States. Through State demonstration and first

responder grants, the group says CARA can give them a "stronger foundation to move from training to action."

Prescription drug monitoring programs are also instrumental in saving lives, and I have been a strong supporter of Kentucky's own program, called KASPER. Just last fall, I received confirmation from the CDC that the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center had been awarded funds to combat the prescription drug and heroin epidemic in Kentucky. These funds are being used to improve KASPER, as well as target interventions in counties such as Jefferson, Fayette, Boone, Kenton, and Campbell—counties that have seen some of the highest rates of overdose deaths in the Commonwealth. The bill we are considering today also places an emphasis on prescription drug monitoring programs and will strengthen efforts already in place.

Perhaps one of the most heart-breaking aspects of this epidemic is its effect on newborns. Just last year, I sponsored the Protecting Our Infants Act to address this specific issue and was proud to see it become law. Our work to protect these fragile lives continues with the legislation we have before us today. CARA would improve treatment for both pregnant and postpartum women by reauthorizing an existing grant program. It would also authorize a pilot program to enhance treatment options for this specific population.

CARA can make positive strides in terms of keeping communities safe, too. It would bolster the efforts of law enforcement through the authorization of grant programs for collaborative investigative units. What that means is Kentucky's outstanding drug task forces stand to benefit when it comes to investigating illegal trafficking and distribution of heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioids. I have strongly supported each of these efforts to intensify the Commonwealth's fight

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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