

These are inspiring stories, but supporting NIH is important for another reason—meeting the skyrocketing cost of treating chronic diseases. In total, today more than half of Americans are suffering from one or more chronic diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, taken together these chronic diseases cause 7 in 10 deaths and account for about 75 percent of the \$2 trillion we spend on medical care. This year it is estimated that almost 1.7 million people will be diagnosed with cancer, and almost 600,000 are projected to die from this devastating disease. That is approximately 1,600 people a day.

Everyone in this room knows someone who had cancer or has cancer now, and 26 million Americans are living with diabetes, with a new case diagnosed every 30 seconds. An estimated 5.2 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, and we know this number will escalate rapidly in the coming years as the baby boom generation ages.

The growing prevalence of chronic disease is having an impact not just on Americans' physical health but on our economy as well. In 2008 cancer cost our country over \$200 billion. A recent report on diabetes costs shows that the money spent on diabetes care has risen 41 percent, from \$174 billion to \$245 billion in the last 5 years, and Alzheimer's alone is expected to cost our country over \$1 trillion by 2050.

All of us as taxpayers help pay that bill because public programs such as Medicare and Medicaid cover a significant amount of the cost of care and treatment.

If we had earlier interventions and treatments that delayed the onset of these diseases, we would be able to reduce spending significantly. Take Alzheimer's as an example.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to executive session and it be in order to file cloture on Executive Calendar Nos. 201 and 220; further, that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived; finally, that if this request is granted, the Senate resume legislative session after the final cloture motion is reported pursuant to this order.

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

The Senate will proceed to executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF BYRON TODD JONES TO BE DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Byron Todd Jones, of Minnesota, to be Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Byron Todd Jones, of Minnesota, to be Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Mark Begich, Christopher A. Coons, Thomas R. Carper, Patty Murray, Martin Heinrich, Bernard Sanders, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Al Franken, Sherrod Brown, Tom Harkin, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, Charles E. Schumer.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before I proceed, I would just note it is coincidental that the Senator from Minnesota is on the floor. I have heard her often speak about what a wonderful job this man has done as U.S. attorney in the State of Minnesota, in addition to his other duties. I am glad she is on the Senate floor to understand we are moving forward on this nomination.

Mr. President, there is another matter to be reported.

NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA POWER TO BE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY, AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be the Representative of the United States to the United Nations with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Representative of the United States America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk on Calendar No. 220.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the

Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Mark Begich, Christopher A. Coons, Martin Heinrich, Parry Murray, Bernard Sanders, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Al Franken, Sherrod Brown, Tom Harkin, Thomas R. Carper, Sheldon Whitehouse, Bill Nelson, Charles E. Schumer.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

JONES NOMINATION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I thank the majority leader for his work and the Members of the Senate for allowing Todd Jones to get a vote to head the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau. This is a job that has gone unfilled, as you know, for 7 years, since it became confirmable under law—7 years, under President Bush, under President Obama. These 2,400 agents have had no leader.

During that time they have investigated extensive crimes, including just this year the Boston Marathon bombing, as well as the explosion in Texas. These are just examples of what these agents are doing. They deserve a full-time leader.

Mr. Jones is a former marine. He has five children. He has been going back and forth in Minnesota between the U.S. attorney's job and doing the ATF job for 2 years.

Enough is enough. I am glad we are moving forward with this nomination. I am glad for Mr. Jones, who deserves it, and who has been willing to put his name forward, willing to come in, clean up this agency after Fast and Furious and all the concerns we all had with that effort. He was willing to come in, take over this very difficult job, and do two jobs at once. He deserves to be confirmed for this job.

I am pleased for the agents as well, those 2,400 hard-working people who simply go to work every day, immune from the politicians, immune from what Democrats think or what Republicans think. They just deserve a boss. That is what this vote is about.

NIH

Mr. President, I want to finish my remarks about NIH. It is incredibly important in my State. It is the home of the Mayo Clinic, the home of the University of Minnesota where they are now undertaking the simple task of mapping the brain. And talk about what these cuts mean—I focused before

on the stories of individual Minnesotans, but I also spoke about the cost if we do not do anything, the cost of inaction, the cost of not doing the research, looking at Alzheimer's as an example. If we were able to delay the onset of Alzheimer's by just 5 years—this is not curing it; this is simply delaying the onset by 5 years—if we were able to delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years, similar to the effect that anticholesterol drugs have on preventing heart disease, we would be able to cut the government spending on Alzheimer's care by almost half in 2050. We are talking about billions of dollars.

The answer, of course, to delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years will not just drop from the sky. It needs dedicated scientists and doctors with the resources to conduct the experimentation and to move forward. I have seen what they are doing with mapping the brain. I met with those scientists afterward, and I asked them about the groundbreaking work.

They talked about the effect this is having on young scientists who are afraid to go into these fields. They don't know if their research will be funded because there is only enough money to fund the research that has been going on for years. So many innovative ideas can be lost if this continues.

At lunch last week we all heard from Francis Collins, who heads up the NIH. He talked about the hope and exciting developments that are going on in combating diseases. Yet our country—what a time to step back. This is not the time to step back when we are on the verge of delaying the onset of Alzheimer's, of helping so many people, and saving so much money. What we are spending on research is literally a drop in the bucket compared to the cost of the disease.

Investment in NIH is not just right to do from a public health perspective, it also makes good economic sense. NIH generates tens of billions of dollars in new economic activity across the country each year and supports hundreds of thousands of good jobs.

In 2012, NIH funding supported 8,800 jobs in my State alone. Unfortunately, Federal investment in medical research has stagnated in the last decade. As a result of sequestration, funding for NIH was slashed \$1.55 billion this year alone. This cut means 700 fewer competitive research grants will be funded and 750 fewer patients will be admitted to the NIH clinical center. This reduction comes at a time when we are funding only 18 percent of potential projects. That is a record low for the second year in a row.

In Minnesota, the University of Minnesota could lose \$50 million of its \$700 million Federal research budget in the next couple of years. This drop in support not only threatens research in the short term but could have devastating effects on innovation in the United States for many years to come.

I hear from countless students and researchers who are considering leaving the field or even the country because funding is not available here. If we are not going to have the funding, they are going to do their research in Canada or some other country. We can't allow the pipeline of future researchers to dry up or move overseas. Investing in medical research is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do, and that is why support for this research is not a partisan issue in the Senate.

I thank Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY and the Labor and Health and Human Services Subcommittee chairman, Senator HARKIN, and Ranking Member MORAN for their strong leadership on this issue. I applaud the work they have done prioritizing NIH funding by providing \$31 billion in 2014. This figure could again be cut by billions if we do not replace the sequester with sensible, targeted spending cuts similar to what we included in the Senate budget.

Why put the money aside if we are going to then slash it because of sequester, when we all know it should be replaced with more targeted spending cuts, something that makes more sense, is a mix of revenue and spending cuts as suggested by the Simpson-Bowles Commission and every other economic commission that looked at this matter. It is time to replace sequestration with something that makes sense. Cutting research that saves and lengthens people's lives who have Alzheimer's, diabetes, and helps people who have autism is the wrong way to go.

We all agree about the importance of reining in wasteful spending and reducing the deficit and the need for the government to improve its fiscal discipline, but we cannot do this in a way that is penny wise and pound foolish. Fiscal responsibility is about values and priorities just as much as it is about dollars and cents. It is about spending smart as well as spending cuts.

I strongly support NIH and the hope it brings to people in my State and across the country. I look forward to working with my colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to replace the cuts imposed by the sequester and ensure our country maintains its leadership in medical innovation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I wish to thank and join my friend and colleague from Minnesota Senator KLOBUCHAR in her remarks about Todd Jones. He is one of two very distinguished law enforcement nominees who will come before this body for confirmation in the coming days.

I wish to join my friend in enthusiastically praising Acting Director Jones for his perseverance and courage

in the past months, indeed years, he has served in this critical position.

When we recently went through the debate on sensible commonsense gun violence measures—which, unfortunately, did not pass this body—we often heard about the need for more prosecutions, more effective investigation and pursuit of cases against lawbreakers involving guns. Todd Jones is committed to that task. I believe—with many others—that there needs to be more prosecutions and more effective enforcement of these laws.

ATF needs more resources to do those prosecutions and it needs more leadership, which Todd Jones can provide if he is confirmed and given the mandate from the Senate that he needs and the agency deserves to do its work more effectively.

In just a few minutes, we will hear from my great friend and colleague from Connecticut about the continuing scourge of gun violence and how it continues to take a toll in the absence of effective measures from the Congress.

I join my colleague in urging that this body fulfill its obligation, mandate, and responsibility from the American people to do more and do it more effectively. We need to adopt sensible measures, such as national background checks, a ban on illegal trafficking and straw purchases, a more effective mental health initiative, and school safety measures, which Todd Jones will bring to this office. He will address gun violence and all of the responsibilities within the important purview of the ATF.

The Alcohol, Traffic, and Firearms Bureau has a long, storied, and distinguished history, and Todd Jones will make it more so through his leadership.

Equally important, this afternoon we will vote on James Comey—I am proud to say he is a resident of Fairfield, CT—as the next Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I know this agency well because I worked with agents of the FBI day in and day out when I was U.S. attorney in Connecticut for 4½ years. I know it well because I have seen his work as attorney general of Connecticut. I know it well because over the years I have come to know the extraordinary men and women of the FBI.

They are extraordinary in their bravery, perseverance, and skill. They are extraordinary in their expertise, experience, and their respect for the law, which is so critical. They have a sense of balance and mission along with their dedication to making America safer. Their mandate and purview has expanded over the years from the days when car thefts and kidnapping comprised a major part of their caseload to now cybersecurity, terrorism, and computer hacking.

Jim Comey is a man for the modern FBI, an agency with a long and distinguished history that now faces new threats and new responsibilities. He is

truly a prosecutor's prosecutor. His life's work has been about law enforcement.

He began in the U.S. Department of Justice as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York. He rose to become Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division. He soon moved to the job of managing assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, where his superiors recognized his exceptional ability, his remarkable combination of scholarship, and practical sense of investigation.

When they assigned to him responsibility for the terrorist attack on the Khobar barracks in Saudi Arabia, he quickly delivered 14 indictments and earned another promotion. This time he was promoted to become the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. His service there was recognized as remarkably distinguished and successful, especially in overseeing that office's terrorism investigations and prosecutions. He made a priority of corporate crime—white-collar crime.

He never feared to take on the toughest of challenges. He prosecuted big businesses but also terrorism. He received the Director's Award for superior performance and the Henry L. Stimson Medal from the New York City Bar Association.

He became Deputy Attorney General, the second highest ranking official at the Department of Justice. In that job—and much has been written about this incident in his professional life—he demonstrated unbelievable and passionate dedication to the rule of law by standing up to his own superiors and in speaking truth to power on a variety of issues but most especially when he stood up to some of the President's men, and his own superiors, in saying he would stand for personal constitutional rights at a time when they were threatened. He has been a person of integrity and dedication to the rule of law—bigger than any single person throughout his career—even in the face of that kind of tremendous pressure.

In my conversations with him, he has also committed himself to the vigorous and zealous pursuit of gun violence. I have spoken to him publicly and privately about this issue. He testified in response to my questions, and others, and clearly demonstrated his commitment to effective enforcement of existing and improved laws, such as background checks and a ban on straw purchases and illegal trafficking.

He has also committed himself publicly, and in his conversation with me, to a continued crackdown on human trafficking. I wish to thank and commend the FBI for its stunningly successful arrests of 150 pimps. They rescued 105 children in a nationwide crackdown—literally within the past 24 to 48 hours—including 6 children in New Haven, CT.

This stunning success shows dramatically—including the rescue of six children in Connecticut—how this invisible, pernicious scourge can hit close to

home. It has hit home in Connecticut. I saw it, as attorney general of our State, as a crime, a predatory scourge that hits men and women and children—most searingly and heartbreakingly, children who are forced into labor or into sexual exploitation.

The FBI's crackdown shows that an effective partnership involving local police—like law enforcement in New Haven, CT, where six children were rescued—along with State and Federal law enforcement can effectively crack down on this scourge. The FBI is to be commended and so is Mr. Comey for his commitment to combat this problem.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time is expired.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. As I said, I commend the FBI and I thank them for this effective action and Mr. Comey for his commitment to continuing that crackdown on human trafficking.

I also thank his wife and his family, his five children, for their generosity in becoming an adoption family; that is, adopting children, through the licensed foster parents program in Connecticut. I thank them for becoming foster parents, I should say more accurately, and caring for infants and toddlers. They have also donated money to create a foundation to support children who age out of foster care.

He is truly a man dedicated to public service. We will be proud of him as an effective and able leader of the FBI in a challenging time.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1243, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1243) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Murray (for Cardin) modified amendment No. 1760, to require the Secretary of Transportation to submit to Congress a report relating to the condition of lane miles and highway bridge deck.

Coburn amendment No. 1750, to prohibit funds from being directed to Federal employees with unpaid Federal tax liability.

Coburn amendment No. 1751, to prohibit Federal funding of union activities by Federal employees.

Coburn amendment No. 1754, to prohibit Federal funds from being used to meet the matching requirements of other Federal programs.

Murphy amendment No. 1783, to require the Secretary of Transportation to assess the impact on domestic employment of a waiver of the Buy America requirement for Federal-aid highway projects prior to issuing the waiver.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, let me associate myself with the remarks of my colleague from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL, as well as the majority leader, who was here earlier today, and Senator KLOBUCHAR—all speaking on behalf of our nominee to head the ATF, as well as Senator BLUMENTHAL's remarks on behalf of Fairfield, CT, resident James Comey to be the head of the FBI. Very few agencies, other than the ATF and the FBI, are more intricately involved in the preservation of the health and safety of the American public, and we deserve to have votes on those nominees tonight and this week.

But I also want to associate myself with the other remarks Senator KLOBUCHAR made. She talked about our obligation as a body to reverse these very damaging sequester cuts to NIH funding for medical research, and she listed some very compelling stories about men and women who have had their lives saved, preserved, lengthened because of discoveries made through medical research.

It is a reminder to the Senate and to the House—to anyone who treads upon these two floors—that we hold life and death in our hands with the decisions we make. We decide when we choose to fund or not fund the NIH as to whether we are going to give life to people who are waiting on those kinds of cures and treatments.

But, similarly, we make decisions about life and death when we choose not to act, when we choose to do nothing, to sit pat. In this case we make a decision to allow people to die in this country—specifically 6,633 people since December 14—when we make a choice to do nothing about the scourge of gun violence that continues to plague this Nation.

I have tried to come down here every single week—as Senator KLOBUCHAR did in speaking about the effects of funding medical research in very personal terms—to talk about the implications of doing nothing when it comes to the increasing levels of gun violence in this country, in similarly personal terms.

December 14, of course, for most people is easily recognized as the date