

come out with the unanimous recommendation of our committee, and it was unanimous today.

Just because it was unanimous, I don't want anyone to think it was easy. It was hard work. Because it was unanimous, I don't want anyone to think it is not important.

It is important in Tennessee to those 16 families who had a family member die. It is important to the dozens of families with a member of their family who is sick because of those injections. It is important to those families who may still become sick in our State and other States.

No. 1, it is important to know after this who is on the flagpole. It is either the FDA or the State agencies, and there will be no more finger pointing.

No. 2, any doctor or hospital that chooses to buy its sterile compounded drugs that are shipped interstate in large amounts without prescription from an FDA-related facility may do that.

This is a day of results in the Senate, which I am pleased to see.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. While the Senator is on the floor, I wish to thank my colleague from Tennessee for this legislation and the hard work he has done on it. Also, there was significant pain and difficulties experienced by his constituents in Tennessee. This is something that I think will benefit all Americans and a rare bipartisan occasion in the Senate, which we should all celebrate. I thank my colleague from Tennessee.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. MCCAIN. First, I obviously wish to join all of my colleagues in welcoming back our dear friend, the Senator from Oklahoma, JIM INHOFE. We know he has gone through a very terrible family tragedy, and our thoughts and prayers continue to be with him and the members of his family. We are very happy to see him return, working and leading on this very important aspect of our work, the National Defense Authorization Act.

Today I will have filed an amendment on behalf of Senator SESSIONS and myself—Senator SESSIONS, as we all know, is the ranking member of the Budget Committee—to try to address the issue of this terrible effect on our defense establishment as a result of sequestration. Rather than go into the background of why it happened, the fact is that now in 2012, 2013, and into 2014, we see a continued decline in funding for national defense and then a rise, as it is currently planned. This is current law.

Obviously, it is not a rational approach because our defense business and people in the Pentagon do not plan on a day-to-day or week-to-week or month-to-month basis.

What this amendment does is it preserves sequestration—which I am op-

posed to—but the fact remains that in order to try to ease the burden of sequestration on our military, this would smooth out this dip that has taken place over an 8-year period until the expiration of current law in 2021, and next year and the years after for 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 it would give increases in spending and then reductions in those outyears and still achieve the same reductions in spending as dictated by sequestration.

The reason I say this is because we are looking at a dramatic impact on our military if we allow spending to go down to that level for 2014 before we start climbing back up.

What is happening to our military today? It has a large impact, it is disgraceful, and it is harmful. In this very unsettled world we live in, we are seeing unprecedented reductions and impact on our national security that we have not seen since the end of the Vietnam war.

Two weeks ago the Armed Services Committee held a hearing to understand how the sequester had impacted the Department of Defense. We learned, according to the Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Ray Odierno, that continued sequestration along this line will cause the Army to end, restructure or delay over 100 acquisition programs. The Army, already drawing down by 80,000 Active-Duty troops, will be forced to reduce and eliminate an additional 60,000. The Guard and Reserve would also be forced to remove tens of thousands of men and women from their ranks. It amounts to an almost 20-percent cut in troop strength over the next 5 years and will result in an Army that has tens of thousands fewer soldiers than it had in 2011. Unit training has been curtailed such that by the end of 2014, if we go down this scale, General Odierno forecasts that only 15 percent of Army brigade combat teams will be fully ready in the event of a contingency.

The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Greenert, testified that sequestration means the Navy will operate more sparsely across the globe and be less able to reassure our allies that U.S. interests around the world are properly served. The Navy is the most visible sign of America's strategic deterrent, and we are putting that deterrent at risk.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James Amos, said that because of sequestration, he was "mortgaging" long-term modernization to pay for keeping his marines trained and ready today, but he also said the plan is not sustainable. As equipment and facilities age, he won't be able to pay for their upkeep while simultaneously paying for training. What will give, unfortunately, is readiness.

As all the service chiefs testified, "readiness" means lives. The lower their readiness, the greater the risk to the lives of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines in the event of a deployment.

The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. Mark Welsh, told us that the Air Force had to ground 13 combat squadrons—had to ground 13 combat squadrons—because they lacked funding due to sequestration. Other squadrons' flying hours were cut in half. He warned that continued cuts to flying hours, which are a certainty under this present plan, will guarantee that many more squadrons will forego mission readiness in the coming years. General Welsh's least damaging plan to pay for sequestration is to cut some 25,000 airmen and 500 aircraft, almost 10 percent of the aircraft inventory.

Obviously, what is not reflected in these numbers is the impact on morale and retention. The Air Force is deeply concerned about the number of pilots it is losing to private industry. My colleagues may not know that there is a large exodus of airline pilots that will be leaving the airlines due to retirement in the next few years.

There is a recent story where a number of Air Force pilots were offered a bonus of \$225,000 to remain in the U.S. Air Force and most of them turned it down. Why are they turning it down? It is because they are not flying, and they are not sure whether they are going to be flying.

We are cutting their flying hours to the bone. We are grounding entire squadrons. We are harming the morale and readiness of our military today in all of the services.

I provide those examples, but as one Air Force leader said recently: "If you're not flying your aircraft because it's grounded, you might as well go fly something else."

I provide these examples because it is important for us to understand that our actions in Congress are presently and materially degrading our military's ability to defend the Nation and protect our interests abroad. This is not an abstraction, especially at a time when international threats and instability are growing and not lessening.

I acknowledge there is a fatigue after more than a decade of war. Cutting the defense budget seems an easy way to ameliorate the Nation's dire budget problems, but such thinking is wrong.

I remember the troop cuts and the budget reductions after Vietnam. I remember that it took us 15 years to restore the military to the proficiency, capability, and professionalism that we have today.

Defense represents less than 20 percent of total government spending. We could zero out the entire defense budget and would still, with the growth of entitlement spending and the prevalence of tax loopholes, not be able to reduce the Federal deficit.

I have worked with colleagues for 2 years trying to address this issue. I have toured the country with KELLY AYOTTE and LINDSEY GRAHAM and met with community and business leaders. I joined with our distinguished chairman CARL LEVIN and hosted a series of meetings with Senators to find common ground. None was to be found.

So here we are, with an obvious impact for next year of sequestration which would dramatically impact our ability to defend this Nation. In desperation, I am asking my colleagues to at least agree to smoothing out this path—which would end up with the same reductions in the spending but at least not hit this bottom level which would cause us to have planes that will not fly, ships that can't sail, and men and women in the military unable to train and operate. Once we reduce and impact operations and maintenance, readiness suffers, and readiness incapability only shows up over time.

I spent last Sunday with my friend Senator ALEXANDER. The Senator from Tennessee and I were at Fort Campbell, KY, where we spent some time with the men and women who are serving in the military. We were briefed by the military leadership and the command master sergeants of the various units based at Fort Campbell, KY. We found that already the ability to train, the ability to retain, the ability to act with the kind of proficiency which is necessary in today's world is already being seriously degraded.

So I ask my colleagues, in working with Senator SESSIONS via the Sessions amendment, to consider this amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act so we can at least soften the blow, to some degree, of sequestration.

Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER and I were taken by the patriotism, the hard work, and the quality of the men and women serving our Nation in the United States Army at Fort Campbell, KY. Senator ALEXANDER and I were both deeply alarmed at the fact that these people are literally having to budget and operate on a month-to-month basis. They are not able to sustain the level of readiness and capability that this Nation needs at this very difficult time.

So I urge my colleagues to consider this amendment that Senator SESSIONS will be sponsoring. I look forward to debating and hopefully passing this legislation to give our men and women the relief they need to serve this country with the patriotism and the efficiency we need in these difficult times.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SEVERE NOVEMBER STORMS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am here to talk about legislation I have introduced that I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting, but first I would like to make a couple of comments about the terrific storms that roared through the Midwest, including my

State, yesterday afternoon and evening. Mother Nature was in full fury and caused significant damage to my State. Fortunately, no deaths were reported, but there were injuries, destroyed buildings, turned-over cars, and downed trees and power lines. There was quite a bit of damage across our State affecting a significant number of towns—Muncie, Kokomo, Marion, Lebanon, Washington, Lafayette, and others. It was a line of storms that packed a lot of power and did a lot of damage.

We were fortunate in Indiana not to suffer loss of life. Our neighbors to the west in Illinois took the brunt of this storm. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those families and those loved ones who were lost in that storm.

There has been a good response by FEMA. People are on the ground already. Assessments are being made and Hoosiers are rolling up their sleeves and cleaning it up, as we fully expect them to do. The response has been terrific. I certainly have to acknowledge that this caused some severe damage but the response addressing it has been terrific.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES ACT

Mr. COATS. The bill I would like to talk about is S. 1471, the Alicia Dawn Koehl Respect for National Cemeteries Act, which hopefully will come before the Senate this week. I wish this legislation were not necessary. It should not be. Tragic events happened on May 30, 2012. Obviously, we wish that had never happened and wish there never had to be a bill named after Alicia Dawn Koehl. I regret that the Department of Veterans Affairs made a mistake that resulted in even more pain and heartbreak for this family who is already suffering from heartbreak from the loss of Alicia Dawn Koehl.

These are the circumstances. On May 30, 2012, Michael LaShawn Anderson went on a shooting spree at an Indianapolis apartment complex, injuring three people and taking the life of Alicia Dawn Koehl, a devoted wife and loving mother of two children. As police were arriving at the scene, Anderson then killed himself.

Shortly after the Koehl family faced the unimaginable—putting their mother and wife to rest—they discovered that the local Department of Veterans Affairs had made a very disturbing mistake. The VA erroneously granted the shooter a burial with military honors at Fort Custer National Cemetery in Augusta, MI, on June 6, 2012. Although Anderson was a U.S. veteran, his unthinkable act made him ineligible by law to be buried in a national cemetery. We passed a law prohibiting a veteran who has committed a federal or state capital crime, even though they have given service, from benefiting from the honors of a military cemetery burial.

After learning that Anderson was given this distinct honor of being bur-

ied alongside our country's heroes in a national cemetery, the Koehl family requested that the VA disinter his remains. They contacted our staff, me, and for over a year, together, we worked and we have been working with the VA and the Koehl family to remove Anderson's remains from the Custer National Cemetery in Michigan.

However, earlier this year the VA informed me personally that it could not exhume the remains of Anderson because the Department does not believe it has the legal authority to do so without the Congress passing legislation and signature by the President. In other words, the VA was not permitted under current law to bury Anderson at the national cemetery, but the Department's legal interpretation of the law says it does not have the legal authority to fix that mistake and exhume the remains of this ineligible veteran. Legislation had to be offered to right this wrong. The bill that is being presented here would grant both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense the authority to disinter ineligible veterans buried at national cemeteries who have committed a Federal or State capital crime. It would give the VA the authority it needs to exhume the remains of Michael Anderson.

Last month I testified in support of this bill before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing, and I was pleased to be joined by Alicia's father-in-law Frank and mother-in-law Carol, who traveled from Fort Wayne, IN, in support of this particular bill. I thank chairman BERNIE SANDERS and ranking member RICHARD BURR and members of the committee for immediately grasping the nature of this and being willing to do everything possible to help us move this legislation. It could not have been done without their support, and their efforts have been advanced and expedited by their commitment to support this and to have Senate action on the legislation as soon as possible.

I am here today to urge my colleagues to support and pass this Alicia Dawn Koehl Respect for National Cemeteries Act. The victims and family members of this tragic shooting have suffered enough and should not be forced to wait much longer to have their requests met. As a veteran myself, I have the deepest respect for those who have worn the uniform to serve and defend our country. But no veteran who commits a capital crime should be given the honor of a military burial and being laid to rest next to our Nation's military heroes. That is the law today, and we need to make sure that law is followed. By passing this legislation, we can resolve an unacceptable mistake and help provide the family with a sense of peace and closure.

My Indiana colleague, Congresswoman SUSAN BROOKS, has introduced legislation in the House and is working to carry this across the finish line.