

hospitals are why we need a new system, a new system that recognizes the financial challenges and obstacles that rural hospitals face today. Without an adjustment, there may be more facilities closing. A 2014 report by the National Rural Health Association identified 283 additional hospitals at risk of closing.

Now, we saw 55 nationwide hospitals already close. An additional 283 rural hospitals around the country are at risk of closing. Ensuring that rural communities have access to the life-saving care they need is why I am introducing—and joining Senator GRASSLEY—the Rural Emergency Acute Care Hospital Act or the REACH Act.

The REACH Act aims to allow rural hospitals which are in financial distress to become a new category of hospital, called a rural emergency hospital. Here is the problem and why we need to pass the REACH Act. Under current law, critical access hospitals are classified as hospitals maintaining no more than 25 acute care beds. These hospitals rely on rural payment mechanism for Medicare reimbursements for outpatient, inpatient, laboratory, therapy services, and post-acute swing-bed services.

As the medical service industry has evolved, patients find it more and more attractive to have services requiring rural hospital admission performed in large city hospitals because inpatient services are delivered there on a more routine basis. We see more people leaving rural hospitals to go to the city hospitals because they perform these inpatient services more regularly.

The problem, of course, is that leaves rural hospitals without enough inpatient volume to cover their costs, oftentimes resulting in hospital closures. So when a critical access hospital—again, these are hospitals defined under the law as 25 acute care beds. When a critical access hospital has to shut its doors for inpatient services, it has to stop providing inpatient services, it also means the emergency care closes with it.

So now you have a hospital no longer providing inpatient services and no longer offering emergency care. But as highlighted by my hometown story—the story I just shared from the CEO of the hospital, timely access to emergency services is truly the difference between life and death. Those two young men who would have faced a terminal outcome were saved because of the availability of a rural hospital emergency room.

So when dealing with life-threatening injuries, it is critical for patients to receive the kind of health care they need, that lifesaving care to prevent the terminal outcome within the golden hour. That is something doctors and hospitals use—a term for medical professionals—meaning that hour after injury where it is absolutely critical that they receive treatment, that can make the difference between survival—if they do not receive their care during

this critical golden hour, their condition could rapidly deteriorate.

Recent statistics from the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 60 percent of trauma deaths in the United States occur in rural areas but only represent 15 percent of the overall population. So if we are talking about why we need access to rural emergency hospitals, the statistic is very clear: 60 percent of rural trauma deaths in this country occur amongst a population that only represents 15 percent of the overall population. That is a pretty dramatic number.

It is critical that we provide rural hospitals that are under financial distress the necessary tools to prevent closures for those living in isolated areas, to make sure they have the same access to emergency services. The solution is the REACH Act, a solution Senator GRASSLEY and I are working on together, to allow rural hospitals in financial distress to switch from being a critical access hospital to this new category called a rural emergency hospital.

This new category would offer reimbursement rates that are consistent with the care, needs, and capabilities of rural hospitals, but more importantly allowing them to remain open, keeping that critical emergency room service open. Now, the emergency hospital must provide emergency medical care and observation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by onsite staff.

So we are still providing quality care, but we are allowing them to overcome the fact that they have seen their inpatient services decline, enabling them to keep their emergency services open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to make sure trauma patients can see the doctor and be provided the necessary medical care they need during that all-important golden hour.

The bill would also establish protocols for the timely transfer of patients in need of a higher level of care and patient admittance. The Presiding Officer and I both came from rural States, where we know—there are hospitals in our States that are facing financial challenges. There have been stories in newspapers in Colorado about the struggles some communities are having maintaining their services, keeping their doors open. But there are stories in each and every one of these communities like the story John Gardner told about those two young people in my hometown who otherwise would have had a terminal outcome but for the availability of the emergency care in rural Colorado.

So to avoid missing out on the services necessary to keep people alive, to make sure rural patients have access to care during that critical golden hour, the REACH Act provides our hospitals with an opportunity to keep health services and hospitals available across rural America—available, open with emergency care, giving troubled hospitals an avenue to keep their doors open and to keep providing the life-

saving care we all so desperately want in each of our communities, rural or urban.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time on the floor today. I urge my colleagues to support the REACH Act. We are always reaching out for more co-sponsors in a bipartisan fashion to make sure we can do the best job possible providing health care to rural America, to urban America, and to make sure we keep these hospitals open.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to discuss my hometown of Baltimore and the city's recovery after the civil unrest related to the Freddie Gray case. But first let me say a few words about the heartbreaking events in South Carolina. Words are inadequate to express the heartache of yet another mass shooting. Gun violence regularly takes far too many victims in Baltimore and other cities across the country, but to have a place of worship violated in such a hateful way is inexplicable.

My prayers are with the Mother Emanuel AME Church, its congregants, and the people of Charleston, SC, at this difficult time. I appreciate the Department of Justice's swiftness in opening a hate crimes investigation of this tragedy. Despite the alarming frequency of such shootings, we as a nation cannot become complacent and immune to the pain and anguish caused by these instances.

Every time a senseless shooting takes place, there should be more and more of us who shout to the Heavens in protest as loudly as we can. As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children to focus on things that unite all people and to view differences as strengths, rather than seeds for hatred and resentment. As lawmakers, we need to move from a place of political inertia to stop guns from getting into the hands of people who use them for the wrong reasons. We have mourned too many good people—men, women, and children—to stand idly by.

I am pleased State leaders have come together for the removal of the Confederate flag from the grounds of South Carolina's statehouse. I urge the State legislature to move quickly to permanently remove this symbol of intolerance from government facilities.

BALTIMORE ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Now, as I travel around Baltimore, and particularly the neighborhoods that are trying to recover, I hear a recurring theme from constituents: They don't feel their government truly represents them and their interests. They don't feel government has fully invested in recovery efforts in

their communities. They don't feel fully enfranchised.

So what steps have the local government and Federal Government taken so far? We have seen our State's attorney in Baltimore indict several police officers on numerous criminal charges as a result of the death of Freddie Gray. Mr. Gray suffered a severe spinal cord injury while in police custody, which ultimately led to his death.

The judge in this case has scheduled a trial to begin in October. At the Federal level, even before the Freddie Gray case, I had called for the Justice Department to intervene regarding allegations of brutality and misconduct by the Baltimore Police Department. In October 2014, the Maryland congressional delegation sent a letter to the Justice Department in support of greater Federal involvement with our local police force.

DOJ agreed to this request and opened a collaborative review process with their COPS Office in Baltimore City. Shortly after the Freddie Gray case came to light in April of 2015, I sent a letter, along with the Maryland congressional delegation, asking the Justice Department to open a pattern or practice investigation into civil rights violations in the Baltimore Police Department.

DOJ agreed to this request and opened the investigation, which is still ongoing, at the same time that the State trial for the police officers is occurring. For those of us who live in Baltimore, the events over those last couple of weeks have been heart-breaking. The city we love has gone through very difficult times. I wish to thank my colleagues who have contacted Senator MIKULSKI and me for offering their help, for offering their understanding, and for their willingness to work together so we can deal with the issues that have been raised in Baltimore and other cities and other places around our country.

It is our responsibility to move forward. The people of Baltimore understand that. We understand the national spotlight will be leaving, and we are going to deal with the issues that are left behind. I want to thank the administration for their high-level involvement as Baltimore gets back on its feet. Our congressional delegation and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has had the opportunity to meet at the White House with senior administration officials and Cabinet Secretaries to support our local priorities, including jobs, economic growth, education, housing, and law enforcement.

I thank President Obama for making Baltimore a top priority. Team Maryland is committed to working with the White House and Cabinet agencies to ensure that the tools and resources available from the Federal Government—from improving housing and increasing quality jobs to supporting our schools and small businesses, to providing citizens with second chances and expanding programs to rebuild the

trust between neighborhoods and law enforcement—are brought to bear in Baltimore as a national model for the restoration of hope and opportunities in our cities.

As Congressman CUMMINGS has said: This is a transformational moment for Baltimore. It is finally time that we look at comprehensive steps to restore hope and trust in our neighborhoods. We need to ensure that all our citizens' rights are preserved, while giving police the tools they need to reengage with families and individuals that they are there to protect.

Last week, I introduced the BALTIMORE Act, S. 1610, with Senator MIKULSKI as my cosponsor. The legislation stands for Building and Lifting Trust in Order to Multiply Opportunities and Racial Equality. The components of the BALTIMORE Act are powerful antidotes to many of the long-term ills facing our city and others. We must simultaneously promote economic development and opportunities for our cities.

But this bill gives individuals and law enforcement a second chance to do the right thing and contribute in a positive way to their families, their neighborhoods, and the larger community. The BALTIMORE Act contains legislation from this Senator and other Senators as well as new legislative ideas. The BALTIMORE Act consists of four titles. The first title deals with law enforcement. The BALTIMORE Act contains the text of my legislation, S. 1056, which is the End Racial Profiling Act. I have talked on the floor before about ending racial profiling. It should have no place in law enforcement in our communities. It is counterproductive, it turns communities against law enforcement, it is costly, and it can be deadly.

Now, if you have specific information about a person who has committed a crime, you can use that. That is not profiling. But when you target a community solely because of race, that has to end. The first title of the BALTIMORE Act also contains several reforms championed by Senator MIKULSKI, as part of the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill, approved by the committee for fiscal year 2016.

The legislation would require local law enforcement officials receiving Byrne-JAG and COPS Hiring Program funds to submit officer training information to the DOJ, including how their officers are trained in the use of force, countering racial and ethnic bias, de-escalating conflicts, and constructive engagement with the public. It requires State and local police departments to promptly submit the use-of-force data to the FBI.

The legislation requires the Department of Justice to issue a report on a plan to assist State and local law enforcement agencies to improve training in the use of force, in identifying racial and ethnic bias, and in conflict resolution through the course of officers' careers.

The final piece of this title I act establishes a pilot program to assist local law enforcement in purchasing or leasing body-worn cameras and requires privacy study. I thank Senators SCHMITZ and PAUL for introducing this legislation as the CAMERA Act, S. 877.

The second title involves voting rights reform and civil rights restoration. It includes the text from my legislation, S. 772, the Democracy Restoration Act.

My legislation will restore voting privileges for those who have completed their prison terms. I know I have support on both sides of the aisle. We have had a vote on this, and a near majority have agreed on it. Those who opposed it said it was on the wrong bill. Well, let's move it forward.

Once individuals have completed their sentencing, they should be welcomed back to our community so that they can be productive, law-abiding citizens, so they know they have become part of our community and they believe they have a future.

They should be able to serve on our juries. There is not a person in the Senate who didn't have a second chance sometime in their life. We should look at second-chance opportunities. In part our legislation provides additional funding for second-chance type programs that would employ those who have had criminal convictions. We also have the sense of Congress to end "check-the-box" so that in Federal contracts all persons have an opportunity to participate.

The third title deals with sentencing reform. I have spoken to some of my colleagues about some of the sentencing guidelines we have in this country. We need to take a look at our criminal justice system and the sentencing guidelines to recognize that if a person is of a certain race, a certain religion or ethnic background, that person is much more likely to end up in prison today even though the instance of violating the laws are not different in that community than in other communities in the country. We have to deal with it. The country has to deal with it.

The fourth title of the bill—the last title—deals with the reentry programs that I have already talked about. We need to finance those.

It may take time for Baltimore to recover fully from the damage done to its business and national image by the tragic events following the recent death of Freddie Gray, but this great city will come back. I am optimistic when it comes to Baltimore's future. From its earliest days, Baltimore's industrial and financial business sectors have proven themselves resilient and innovative, and these same qualities will be vital in the days ahead.

I am confident that together we can find ways to help Baltimore recover and grow all sectors of its diverse economy, spurring community improvements along the way.

We also need to have a serious discussion about sentencing reform and finding ways to restore the lost trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The BALTIMORE Act will allow us to move decisively in that direction by ending racial profiling, increasing accountability, collecting critical crime data such as officer-related shootings, and providing real strategies and resources to strengthen police-community relations. These measures will help protect the rights of every American on every side of our justice system.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, when I have constituents come to Washington, DC, I typically will describe this as being a little bit like Disneyland. It is a lot of fun to visit, with a lot of excitement. A lot of things happening here, but it is not real. It is not real.

What I mean by that is that what is real are the lives that are lived by the average American families all across this country, whether it is Nebraska, Texas or elsewhere and the struggles they have trying to raise their children, trying to get a good education, trying to keep a job—to keep a job that has good wages and one that hopefully grows over time. But in Washington, the focus is typically on winners and losers—winners and losers. If you look at almost any newspaper each week in Washington, they will talk about the winners and the losers. Usually, they are talking about political figures such as the President of the United States.

So I just happened to catch one headline that talked about the President being the biggest winner of the week in Washington, DC.

Why? Well, one is because of the trade promotion authority legislation that we passed that we worked with the President on. That happened to be a subject that I agreed with the President on—the importance of opening new markets to the things that we grow, the livestock we raise, and the manufactured goods we make. Hopefully, we will be able to enter into a good deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, opening up 40 percent of the world's economy in Asia to the new markets for the things that we make, grow, and the livestock we raise.

So that happened to be a subject on which I agreed with the President. He had more problems with his own party. We got 13 Senate Democrats to join us in passing this legislation, but we got it done. I think in that instance—maybe you could call the President a winner if you want—you could say that the American people were the winner, and I think that would be accurate too.

But on the loser's side of the ledger, we had a disappointing decision by the U.S. Supreme Court today, where they

ignored the clear language that Congress wrote when the Affordable Care Act was passed in March of 2010. Even worse, while the press may consider that this represents a win for the President, there is no question in my mind that the vast majority of the American people are the losers as a result of this decision. The fact is that ObamaCare has been a disaster for millions of hard-working families, and it was really sold under false pretenses.

The President said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Well, that ended up not being true.

If you like your policy, you can keep your policy.

Well, that ended up not being true for roughly 5 million people who lost their insurance coverage that they liked because the law said they couldn't keep it anymore.

Then there was the fact that the President said this: Prices of health coverage for an average family will come down \$2,500.

None of those proved to be true.

So despite the Supreme Court's disappointing decision, I will not stand down in my opposition to this bad law, because I know we can do better. I look forward to working with our colleagues to eventually protect the American people from the harmful effects of ObamaCare and get the American people what they thought they were going to get out of health care reform in the first place—coverage they wanted at a price they could afford, neither one of which is delivered under ObamaCare.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as I indicated initially, this Congress—and particularly the Senate—has had an unusually productive period of time of late. It may be hard for some people to believe, but the most common word I heard used to describe Congress last year, and in recent years, has been "dysfunctional." But we have actually been functioning very well. We have been able to accomplish quite a bit.

Today the Senate is marked by something that we refer to as regular order. What does that mean? It means that we operate according to the rules, where not only the majority but also the minority get to participate in the process, both at committees and on the floor of the Senate. If anybody has a good idea, they can offer that idea, and they can actually get a vote on it up or down.

I was pleased to read in the Wall Street Journal yesterday that two former Republican majority leaders wrote that they were encouraged to see "the Senate addressing big problems after years of inaction." I couldn't agree more.

Bringing the amendment process back is one obvious way we have done so under the new majority after years of inaction. Now that may sound like inside baseball or just talking about

procedure, but by allowing Members of both parties—the minority and the majority—to offer their ideas on legislation, we have restored the ability of all Members of the Senate, as elected representatives of the people, to cast our votes on numerous issues that affect all of our constituents and the country.

But restoring such a simple process, one that had been largely absent during the years the minority leader held the reins, represents a real sign of progress.

At the beginning of this year, it was reported that just 3 weeks into the new Senate, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader had allowed during the last year in its entirety. Let me say that again, because it is pretty shocking. In the first 3 weeks of this year, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader—when he was majority leader—allowed in the entire previous year.

Well, it would mean nothing if it didn't reflect the core philosophy of the new leadership of this Chamber. In other words, our successes on amendment votes didn't stop after our first month in the new Congress. I am now proud to say that voting is now the norm, instead of the exception to the rule.

What did our constituents send us here to do, if not to vote? During the last 6 months, the Senate has voted on 136 amendments in legislation, compared to just 15 last year. We are working for the American people, and, more importantly, the Congress is now working on their behalf and actually beginning to solve real problems that have lingered for years.

But we have done more than just allow amendments and votes on amendments. During the last few months, we have passed more than 40 bipartisan bills. Now, if anybody has been here for very long, one of the things they learned, perhaps to their chagrin, is that you can't do anything around here on a purely partisan basis. You just don't have the numbers to do it—with some notable exceptions. But we passed more than 40 bipartisan bills, and we have seen 18 of those already signed into law by the President.

This includes important legislation that I am very proud of called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which passed this Chamber 99 to 0 and is focused on making sure we help the victims of modern-day slavery recover and rebuild their lives and making sure that these women, typically teenage girls, are treated as victims and not criminals.

We have also passed other important legislation, such as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This law will give Congress the time and space to closely scrutinize any deal that the President negotiates with Iran concerning its pursuit of nuclear weapons. In so doing, we will make sure that the American people, through their elected representatives, can voice their opinions on what could be a bad deal that