

to help students, and a lot of it is about debt forgiveness. You know what. I think people want to pay their debt in America. If they signed a piece of paper that says they will repay it, they want to repay it. Let's give them a chance to do that without continuing to mortgage their future and make them slaves to student debt.

I have a personal story. My niece and her husband were able to use this program. They continued to pay the same amount as they were paying when they had four or five different loans and they consolidated. They are spending the same amount on their student loan, and guess what. They have cut the time for payment of their student debt in half. They are now able to save for their children's future and college education.

People say it can't be done. You bet it can be done. We are doing it in North Dakota, and if we can do it in North Dakota, we can do it in this country. Let's step up and recognize this for the economic problem that is not just for families but for this country, and let's do something. Let's quit talking about student debt and actually do something about that.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH RUNNING OF THE INDIANAPOLIS 500 MILE RACE

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am on the floor with my colleague from Indiana Senator DONNELLY to talk about something that is very special to the State of Indiana which happens to be coming up this weekend. On Sunday, May 29, the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500, the greatest spectacle in racing, will take place in the town of Speedway, IN, a small town within the confines of the borders of Indianapolis.

The Indianapolis 500-mile race is the largest single-day sporting event in the world. It is almost staggering to think about this small town of Speedway, IN, hosting 350,000 fans this year. It is a logistical challenge that the city and security people have met year after year. It is something to see.

Since the first race in 1911, race fans from around the world have packed the grandstands and the speedway's expansive infield to enjoy the race and take in the experience of being at one of the world's most famous motor sports events.

I can't begin to describe the dimension of a 2½-mile track and the infield. There is a golf course—and a significant part of it is in the infield—that only takes up part of that infield. The 2½-mile track, with 350,000 people, is a spectacle you will not see anywhere else.

For those of us who are from Indiana, the Indy 500 is a celebration of our State, and along with basketball, is what it means to be a Hoosier. Timeless traditions, like the singing of

"Back Home Again in Indiana," are embedded into the fabric of Hoosier culture. When the announcer says the phrase "Gentlemen, start your engines," as was said for many years, 33 cars' engines start to roar to the cheers of the crowd. Today that same phrase is now "Gentlemen and ladies, start your engines" because the race has brought women to the track to also race.

Thirty-three cars start the pace laps, and off the third or fourth pace lap, as the pace car races down the straightaway and pulls aside, 33 cars come roaring around the fourth turn and hurtling down the home stretch at over 200 miles per hour to plunge into the first turn while 350,000 people stand there holding their breath, maybe saying a prayer, and saying: How in the world can those 33 cars at 200 miles an hour pile into that very small banked first turn without cataclysmic consequences? But they do it, and it is a testament to the agility of the drivers and the technology that has been incorporated into the cars. It is something to see.

The roots of all of this date back to 1909, when a group of businessmen, led by Hoosier entrepreneur Carl Fisher, purchased the 320 acre Pressley Farm—that is not Elvis Presley, by the way—just outside Indianapolis and began construction of the gravel-and-tar racetrack.

At that time, Indianapolis and Detroit were competing to be America's automotive capital, and Fisher believed that a large speedway, where reliability and speed could be tested, would give Indianapolis an upper hand.

Fisher and other speedway founders hired a New York engineer and asked him to design a 2½-mile track with a banked corner, a unique design that still endures today. The first track surface proved to be somewhat problematic so Fisher and his partners needed a way to pave it. They settled on bricks, and covering the 2½-mile oval required an astonishing 3.2 million bricks at a cost of \$400,000, which was no small change back then. That is why it is called the brickyard.

As time wore on, bricks didn't become the ideal surface, and when the current surface was put in place, we retained 1 yard of bricks at the finish line. If you are watching the Indianapolis 500 on Sunday—and I know all of these pages will be tuning into that spectacle after Senator DONNELLY and I are through convincing you that this is something you really want to see—that yard of bricks is there and symbolizes what that track has been.

With the bricks laid, about 80,000 spectators gathered around the track on Memorial Day weekend in 1911 for the inaugural Indianapolis 500 race. They witnessed Ray Harroun win the race in his yellow No. 32 Marmon "Wasp" at an average speed of 74.6 miles an hour—about what Senator DONNELLY and I try to drive when we are on the interstates in Indiana and

going no faster than that so we don't get a speeding ticket, which wouldn't help our careers.

Initially, the cars had two people. One was the driver and the other was a mechanic. This is early on in 1911. We were still developing cars, and of course the impacts the car had to absorb going around a tar-and-gravel track caused many stops, so the mechanic would jump out, make the fix, put on a new tire, and help with the fueling. Ray Harroun surprised everybody by showing up without a mechanic. He was the only person in the car. It was the first such instance that had happened. What they did see in the car was something they hadn't seen on any of the other cars—a rearview mirror being used in an automobile. That is the first instance that we know of that automobiles used a rearview mirror. Since that first race, the Indianapolis 500 has occurred on every Memorial Day since 1911, with the exception of 1917 and 1918 when the United States was involved in World War I, and there was an exception from 1942 to 1945 when the United States was involved in World War II.

When the soldiers came home after the war was over, they looked at the track and it was in a state of despair. It simply was not ready to be used. It had been neglected, understandably, through the war years and was broken down. At that time, the talk was let's close it down, but Terre Haute, IN, native Tony Hulman purchased the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and under his leadership the facility was restored and rebuilt.

Beginning in 1946 until today, the Indianapolis 500 restarted with massive crowds and the event has only grown over time. In the decades since, the speedway has been owned by the Hulman-George family and all race fans are indebted to this family for their passion for Indy 500 and careful stewardship of the world's most famous racetrack.

As the years passed, the technology used at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway has progressed and so has the speed. In 2013, Tony Kanaan set the record for the fastest Indianapolis 500, winning the race in 2 hours 40 minutes, at an average speed of 187.4 miles per hour. Think about that. Think of driving for 2 hours 40 minutes, at 187 miles per hour, including yellow lights, when everybody has to slow down significantly because of an accident on the track, a loose tire or something that causes the race to have to slow down, and the pit stops where they have to change the tires and fuel the cars—230 miles per hour is an extraordinary speed, and you have to run at that top speed almost continuously while you are on the track in order to achieve that 187-miles-per-hour record.

There is nothing like being there and seeing cars at that speed so deftly handled by drivers in very difficult situations. The Indianapolis 500 is a showcase of ingenuity, human achievement,

and the continuous pursuit of racing immortality.

Racing legends like A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, Rick Mears, Al Unser, and Bobby Rahal have become synonymous with the Indianapolis 500. The race is a source of great pride for all citizens of our State, and we are all very excited about the 100th running on Sunday.

I am pleased to be joined by my Indiana colleague Senator DONNELLY in recognizing—through a Senate resolution, which we will offering after Senator DONNELLY speaks—the tremendous occasion of the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500.

I am more than happy to yield to my colleague, Senator DONNELLY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I thank my good friend and colleague Senator COATS. He is truly an institution in our State.

I rise with Senator COATS to commemorate the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500. Think about that. What a long and storied history. The Indy 500 is more than a Memorial Day weekend tradition, and it is more than just a sporting event. It has a storied history, and the list of winners includes some of the most legendary drivers in motor racing history—names like Foyt, Mears, Unser, Andretti, and the legendary family who has been such good friends to our State and such good stewards of the track, the Hulman-George family.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Indianapolis 500 are a sight to see, with its iconic 2½-mile oval and the buzzing atmosphere created by hundreds of thousands of cheering fans. As my colleague and dear friend Senator COATS said, the singing of “Back Home Again in Indiana,” the winner drinking milk in victory lane, and raising the Borg-Warner trophy, this is defined by career-making victories as well as heartbreaking crashes and down-to-the-wire finishes.

The Indy 500 is more than just the greatest spectacle in racing. It is about a whole lot more than just that. It is about bringing people and families together. More than 300,000 people will come to watch the race in the city of the speedway this weekend. It boosts local businesses and gives Central Indiana an opportunity to showcase ourselves to the rest of the world.

Over its history, the Indy 500 has been part of the fabric of our Hoosier State. It has endured through economic booms, depressions, and times of turmoil at home and abroad. Through it all, the Indy 500 has become one of the biggest sporting events in the world. It brings together people of all different backgrounds. As the race has grown, it has drawn spectators from across the United States and from around the world—diehard racing fanatics and casual fans alike. Donald Davidson, the track historian, told the Indianapolis Star earlier this week:

There is nothing else like it. It just took off. There was Christmas, there was Easter, and there was the Indianapolis 500.

It is a special event, unlike any other. I have had the privilege of attending the 500 many times, and I am looking forward to attending Sunday's 100th running of the race. You can't help but be struck by the talent of the drivers and the team.

Earlier this month, I visited the Andretti Autosport, where I saw firsthand the craftsmanship and extensive preparations that go into building a single Indy car for the Indy 500. They were building a number of them. The dedication and teamwork is remarkable. Each piece is an intricate creation, and the driver of each car has to have complete trust in the team that designed and built this car, before it even rolls onto the track. The team has to have that same confidence in the driver, that he or she can bring that car into Victory Lane.

For thousands of Hoosier families and racing fans, the Indy 500 is a time for creating lifelong memories. Joining together with friends and neighbors, the race is a chance to showcase the best in Hoosier hospitality and the best our State has to offer. To win the Indy 500, one needs all of the things that we Hoosiers hold dear: determination, hard work, ingenuity, an unwillingness to give up in the face of adversity, and, sometimes, a little bit of luck.

To win you have to be able to overcome setbacks, get back up, dust yourself off, and put your nose back to the grindstone. That is the Hoosier way.

I wish the best to our drivers, to the crews, and to the teams and owners competing in Sunday's 100th running of the Indy 500. May it be a safe and competitive race. May God bless all those involved. God bless Indiana, and God bless America.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleague and friend, Senator DONNELLY, and myself, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 475, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 475) recognizing the 100th running of the Indianapolis 500 Mile Race.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 475) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

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

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

FILLING THE SUPREME COURT VACANCY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I have waited to give this speech for weeks, waited for the rhetoric to die down after the untimely and unexpected passing of Justice Scalia, and waited to speak about the sad state of affairs out of a hope that no more words would be necessary before this Senate acted.

It was my fervent hope that the initial reaction to Justice Scalia's death was due to the shock and the grief at the loss of a conservative icon.

I, like many of my colleagues, were publicly mourning the loss, and I assumed that my colleagues were simultaneously realizing that after decades of trending to the right, it was now more than likely that the Supreme Court was going to shift back to a more centrist, progressive point of view.

But now it appears that the Senate has descended into an “Alice in Wonderland” world where the Senate cannot even agree on how many Supreme Court Justices make the Court functional. Throughout our history, in the Senate there have been previous attempts to attack the Court by, on the one hand, denying it members, or, on the other hand, packing the Court. In those instances, this once august body has stood together and always protected the sanctity of the Court—but not today.

The Senate is not only displaying contempt for the Court, but it is demonstrating contempt of its constitutional responsibilities. It is hard for the people we are honored to represent to make sense out of much of what goes on here—who serves on the subcommittee that always sounds like the subcommittee on acoustics and ventilation, what a motion to table the amendment to the amendment to the amendment actually means—but this is an issue the American people get.

We know there are supposed to be nine Supreme Court Justices and the Senate ought to do its job and ensure that the Court can function without wasting years of people's lives and dollars by allowing cases to be undecided through deadlock.

I can state that I am going to be home this weekend for townhall meetings. At these townhall meetings, I hear from citizens who are exasperated.