

gives us the opportunity to recognize the recent celebration of National Adoption Day, which was November 19.

As cochair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, I have had the opportunity to work with so many of our Members and understand the broad bipartisan support for what we need to do to be looking at and more dedicated to adoption and to child welfare issues.

Last year, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I came to this new role as the Senate's cochairs of this caucus. I am pleased to be working with her on a resolution that would support National Adoption Month and National Adoption Day again this year.

We also have the good fortune to work with Members of the House. The idea that every child deserves to grow up in a loving, safe family is something I think we can all agree on.

We have a lot of agreement, while we have been working with Members of the Congress, on adoption issues over the last year. Just last week, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Congressman TRENT FRANKS, Congresswoman BRENDA LAWRENCE, and others, along with me, finalized a comment letter to the U.S. Department of State expressing concern over new international adoption regulations.

We have specifically highlighted the negative impact some of the Department's proposed changes could have on the adoption process.

Lately, the adoption process seems to have become more complicated internationally, and we need to make it less complicated.

We worked—many Members, including the Members I just mentioned—very hard on behalf of families who have currently been trying to resolve pending adoption cases from a number of countries, most recently finalizing adoptions out of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Uganda, Guatemala, and other countries as well.

In June Senator KLOBUCHAR and I introduced the Vulnerable Children and Families Act, which would help more children living without families or in institutional care to find permanent homes by enhancing our U.S. diplomatic efforts rather than making those efforts more difficult. We need to enhance what we do as a country. We need to enhance what we do through the State Department to where we are more focused on international child welfare, ensuring that intercountry adoption to the United States becomes a more viable and more fully developed option.

I am also continuing to support legislation to ensure that American families have the resources and support they need so that adoption domestically works. Specifically, there is the Adoption Tax Credit Refundability Act and the Supporting Adoptive Families Act.

Before I conclude, I want to make a few comments to highlight three stories of foster children in Missouri who

are currently waiting to get the family they would hope to have forever. According to the Missouri Heart Gallery, more than 1,200 Missouri children are in need of permanent homes. One of those children is Jason, age 15, who is an expressive young guy and, in his own words, "likes to play soccer when it is not too hot." He also likes art and music. He feels like he is creative. He is looking for a supportive family to call his own, one who will also help him stay in contact with his brothers and sisters.

Michelle, who is 9 years old, loves to dance and hopes to have her own pets in the future. However, she will tell you she would really rather have a dog than a cat. But what she would really like to find is a family—a family where she could have sisters, a family who would allow her to stay in touch with her biological sister as well.

Lastly, Terrance, age 13, and Terion, age 10, are brothers with a special bond. When you first meet Terrance, he appears shy, but after getting to know him, he really has an incredible sense of humor. He enjoys listening to music, sports, and playing outside. Terion has a smile that just goes on and on. He is very active. He has been on a Little League Baseball team, and he loves to bowl. The brothers are strongly committed to each other. They have a strong bond to each other, beyond just the normal bond of brothers. They want to find a home where they can stay forever and stay together.

Last year, I shared the stories of these two siblings on the Senate Floor. They are still looking for a family to call their own. Like so many children across the United States, Jason, Michelle, Terrance, and Terion are in need of a permanent, safe, loving home as a launching pad for their lives.

I am an adoptive parent. I am always encouraged to see families giving children the most important gift one can give somebody else, and that is a family. I urge my colleagues to join Senator KLOBUCHAR and me in marking November as National Adoption Month by passing this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I come to the floor as the vice chair of the Committee on Appropriations. That means I am the Democratic leader on appropriations for this session of Congress, and next to me is the distinguished Senator from Vermont, Mr. LEAHY, who will have that responsibility next year.

I come to the floor to say that, sadly, I am concerned we will not finish our job on appropriations the way we should finish it—to do an omnibus, to get the job done. Alas, the clock is slipping away.

Now, one needs to note that the Committee on Appropriations, during the

past year, under the leadership of Senator COCHRAN of Mississippi, worked constructively, worked in a well-paced, well-sequenced way, and we were poised to finish our work, with the Committee on Appropriations reporting all 12 bills for floor consideration 5 months ago. So we were ready 5 months ago to bring them up either as individual bills or in a series of minibuses. But instead of finishing Congress's work to fund the government, we are now contemplating putting the government on autopilot by something called a continuing resolution—a short-term continuing resolution that would only last for maybe 3 months.

I am very frustrated about this. It did not have to be this way. As I said, we have worked very constructively on both sides of the aisle and have been cooperating to do our job. We attempted to write bills that meet the needs of the American people—bills related to national security and economic growth and that meet compelling human needs.

For those Republicans who are obstructionists, they really have been setting us back. For those on both sides of the aisle who want to save money, they are actually going to cost us more money by delaying.

So where are we? There is only one bill—the VA-Military Construction bill, which is signed into law. There are 11 other bills left.

Funding for every mission—let's start with the Department of Defense. Our troops are fighting overseas, and we need to support them. There is Federal law enforcement, foreign policy and embassy security, infrastructure, education—from child care to college affordability. So instead of making choices about what to fund, what to cut, we leave these missions on autopilot, spending the same amount as last year on the same items with the same policies. No business operates this way. No family operates this way. It is irresponsible to spend \$1 trillion this way with no thought, delaying important investments, and thus resulting in increasing cost to the taxpayers.

Let me talk about why this really can give you heartburn. Last week, Department of Defense Comptroller Mike McCord warned that a stopgap CR delays ships and weapons our troops need. Hello. Did you hear that? It actually delays the construction of ships and the purchase of weapons our troops need. Without a special provision in the CR, DOD would have to delay planned replacement for their Ohio-class submarines, disrupting contract awards and ultimately delaying production for the length of the CR.

These new subs are necessary. They are the backbone of our nuclear deterrent—our nuclear deterrent. The current ships' nuclear reactors reach the end of their useful lives in the mid-2020s. So this isn't some new whiz-bang thing that might be untried. So without special provisions, other things will be delayed.

What are we trying to do here? We are concerned that people in this country are now facing death from heroin and opioid overdoses. Every Governor in the United States of America has cried out to the Federal Government for help on heroin and opioid overdoses. We have heard on both sides of the aisle advocacy for a comprehensive approach. The problem affects every part of the country—urban and rural—and every socioeconomic category.

Now, our appropriations bill is ready with new spending in law enforcement, prevention, treatment, and education. But in the continuing resolution, we won't get these investments, and more families will suffer. Every leading authority on treatment says when you need it and you are ready to ask for it, you need to get it on the same day. Just as clinicians have to act with urgency, so do we.

What else won't a CR help? It won't help college affordability with full-year Pell grants. It won't bolster security funds for the FBI, for the Border Patrol, for embassy security.

Remember Benghazi? Whoa, when people loved to investigate rather than legislate, Benghazi was in the news. That was at the same time the Congress had cut—particularly, the House had cut—embassy security considerably. But in this bill, working with both sides of the aisle, we were able to come up with the appropriate money for embassy security, border control, and so on.

We also won't have the funds for infrastructure funding, particularly for roads, to improve our ports, and to make our railroads safer.

We won't meet the needs of children—children who are on the march, children who are in desperate need of help in Central America.

I know the other thing we have supported on both sides of the aisle is an innovation agenda, particularly in the area of the medical research of the National Institutes of Health. Hopefully, we are going to be debating the Cures Act, yet right now we have the ability to act with the funding for the National Institutes of Health research and also the great work done at the Department of Defense in research.

All year long I have come to the floor and talked about how appropriations can be used to solve problems, whether it was children exposed to lead in drinking water—the compelling story of Flint, MI. We need to really modernize our water supply. In my own hometown of Baltimore, infrastructure funding could be fantastic. If we replaced the Baltimore water system that was built over 100 years ago, we would improve public health, we would create jobs in Maryland, in Baltimore, and we would leave our communities in a better, safer place by getting the lead out. We need to get the lead out of our water supply, and we need to get the lead out of Congress.

We want to solve problems, create jobs, and protect America. A CR is not

the best way to do it. But if we are going to do a CR, it should be for the shortest time possible.

So let me be clear. Senate Democrats are willing to work across the aisle and across the dome. It is our Republican colleagues who need to think about this long and hard. I really urge that you not spend another half year spinning your wheels and not serving the American people, addressing security needs and compelling human needs.

As I get ready to finish my time in being the ranking member on the Committee on Appropriations, I would like to finish it by working constructively, collegially, and in the best interests of the United States of America to get a real bill across the finish line for the longest time possible. That will provide certainty to Federal agencies that are protecting America and protecting our border while we try to protect American jobs.

There is much ahead and that will lie ahead in the new term and with a new administration. We can act with certainty now for at least the funding for next year if we acted, and we acted with a long-term CR.

I could elaborate on more, but, please, let's do our job. Let's work together. There are still a few days where we could get this done the right way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to conclude my remarks.

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, 2 years ago the American people entrusted Republicans with the Senate majority. At that time, things were in a bad way here in the Senate. Under Democratic control, the legislative process almost ground to a halt. Important bills weren't getting passed, and those that did get passed were frequently drafted behind closed doors, with Republicans and many rank-and-file Democrats shut out of the process, which, of course, means that the American people's voices were frequently shut out of the process.

When Republicans took control, we knew that getting the Senate working again had to be our first priority, and that is what we did. We opened up debate so Senators from both parties could make their voices heard. We started drafting legislation in committee again so that bills were the result of discussion and compromise instead of being dictated by Democratic Party leaders. And we got the Senate passing real, substantial legislation again—a balanced budget, appropriations bills, the first major Energy bill since the Bush administration, and the first significant education reform since 2002.

I am particularly proud of two bills that the committee I chair, the Commerce Committee, worked on—a Federal Aviation Administration bill with major airport security provisions and the first long-term Transportation bill since 2005.

The terrorist attacks in Brussels and Istanbul that occurred this year broadcast airport security challenges—particularly the soft target offered by large crowds in unsecured airport areas. Those were problems we had been working on in the Commerce Committee for months before the attacks, and in July we passed an FAA bill that addresses them and more. The bill we passed requires the TSA to look at ways to improve security checkpoints to make the passenger screening process more efficient and effective, and it significantly increases the security presence in unsecured areas in airports. It also improves vetting of airport employees to address the insider terrorist threat—the risk that an airport employee would give a terrorist access to secure areas. The Senate passed this bill in July, and the President signed it into law a couple days later. I am proud of this law, which is the kind of substantial legislation we should be passing for the American people.

I am also proud of the Transportation bill we passed, part of which came out of our committee. When Congress fails to provide certainty about the way transportation funding will be allocated, States and local governments are left without the certainty they need to authorize projects or to make long-term plans, important investments in infrastructure that support the economy are shelved, and jobs that depend upon transportation are put in jeopardy. The Transportation bill we passed changes all that. It reauthorizes transportation programs for the long term and provides 5 years of guaranteed funding. That means States and local governments will have the certainty they need to invest in big transportation projects and the jobs they create, and that, in turn, means a stronger economy and a more reliable, safe, and effective transportation system.

I am proud of what we were able to accomplish over the past 2 years, but there is a lot left to be done. Some of the most important measures we passed in the 114th Congress went nowhere, thanks to opposition from the Democrats and the White House—an ObamaCare repeal; legislation to overturn some of the Obama administration's most burdensome regulations; legislation to address the dangerous problem of so-called sanctuary cities, which refuse to work with Federal immigration officials to deport illegal immigrants convicted of crimes. I am hopeful that with a Republican President, we will be able to address these issues and many more in the 115th Congress.

Republicans have big plans for the 115th. If there is one thing this election