

whatever party they choose, we would then be engaging voters in every single State. We will lift voter turnouts. We will ensure that every Presidential candidate speaks to the needs of Americans in every State and every region. We will ensure equal representation for all.

You know, sometimes I come down here and I talk about issues that are very controversial. I must tell you, if you ask anyone on the street "Do you think the winner of the popular vote should win the Presidency?" I would say a very strong majority would say "Of course." If you ask them "Do you know of any office in the land, whether it is Governor, mayor, supervisor, city council, sewer board, sanitation district, you name it, where the winner doesn't win?" they will say "No, I can't think of any." You know what, there are none. So why not do the simple thing and the right thing and the just thing and make sure that the winner of the popular vote is sworn in as our President. I think this will be a huge boon for every single voter in this greatest of all countries.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I noticed the majority leader has given us all notice that, after consultation with the Democratic leader, he intends to bring up the Iran Sanctions Act, H.R. 6297. I point out that this legislation passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 419 to 1.

It is legislation that would extend the Iran Sanctions Act that was passed by this Congress that is set to expire at the end of this year. Let me repeat that. The Iran Sanctions Act, which was enacted originally in 1996—if no action is taken before the end of December, that sanction authorization legislation would expire.

This is our last opportunity to extend the Iran Sanctions Act before it is scheduled to expire at the end of December. It was passed in 1996 by a unanimous vote of this body. Its goal was to deny Iran the ability to be able to have financial support for its nuclear proliferation. Congress had passed several bills that provided sanction opportunities by the administration to impose sanctions in order to get Iran to change its behavior, its illegal activities in pursuing a nuclear weapon, which was against U.S. security interests, destabilizing for the entire region, threatened Israel, threatened the neighboring states. It was, I think, the unanimous view of our body that we had to take whatever steps were possible to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapon power.

The legislation we passed, including the Iran Sanctions Act, allowed the Obama administration to move forward with sanctions against Iran, and they rigorously enforced the sanctions they

imposed. I want to acknowledge the work done by the Obama administration in enforcing those sanctions that we gave our authorization to impose.

But the Obama administration went further than that. They then garnered international support to also impose and support the sanctions that we had imposed in the United States, which was strong enough to get Iran to recognize that they had to come to the negotiating table. Clearly, the sanctions were the motivating factor that allowed for the negotiations of the nuclear agreement that was agreed to 2 years ago.

This legislation is pretty simple. It extends for 10 years the Iran Sanctions Act that was used by the administration and in which we have a temporary—we have relief granted under that law as long as Iran is in compliance with the nuclear agreement. The nuclear agreement, JCPOA, specifically provides for the snapback of sanctions in the event that Iran violates the provisions of the agreement.

In order to have snapbacks, you have to have the sanction regime in place. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to extend the sanction authorization. This does not impose any new sanctions on Iran. That it does not. It is not in violation of the JCPOA. It just allows us to have effective enforcement to make sure Iran complies with their commitments. I want to underscore that point. During the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, I had a chance to ask the administration's witness, Secretary Lew, that specific question. I asked Secretary Lew—this question was asked July 23, 2015. I said to the witness:

The Iran Sanctions Act expires at the end of 2016. We will still be in the JCPOA a period of time where snapback of sanctions is a viable hedge against Iran's cheating. Congress may well want to extend that law so that power is available immediately if Iran were to violate the agreement. Is that permitted under the JCPOA?

The answer from Secretary Lew:

I think that if it is on expiration, it is one thing. If it is well in advance, it is another. I think the idea of coming out of the box right now is very different from what you would do when it expires.

Well, we are doing exactly what the administration asked us to do. We have held off for over—now it has been over 15 months, 16 months that we have held off before we have taken action to extend the Iran Sanctions Act. If we don't take action now, the authority given by Congress in the 1996 act, which would empower the snapbacks if needed, would not be available. So it is timely for us to act. It is totally consistent with the JCPOA and is not at all inconsistent with our responsibilities under that legislation.

I think, though, that we should have a little bit of a discussion as to what we do moving forward. I should point out that the Iran Sanctions Act, H.R. 6297, is identical to S. 3281, legislation I filed with 19 of my colleagues earlier this year. So I think this enjoys strong

bipartisan support, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Now, looking forward—I did not support the JCPOA. I did not support that agreement for various reasons, but it went into effect. I must tell my colleagues, I think it would be tragic if the United States unilaterally walked away from the Iran nuclear agreement. What that would do is give the ability to Iran to pursue a nuclear weapons program without inspectors on the ground to let us know what they were doing. They would be able to pursue that, knowing full well that the international community would not be unified in regard to sanctions against Iran. Yes, we would impose sanctions, but our allies around the world would no longer be obligated to follow that, since it was the United States pulling out of the agreement.

Many of those countries already have arrangements, and it would be very difficult to see that they would follow U.S. leadership. In fact, one of the adverse impacts of the United States walking away from the Iran agreement would be that we would lose our standing as an international leader, bringing the international community together to isolate Iran. Instead, we would be isolating the United States. That is not in our national security interest.

So what should we do? Well, as I said earlier, the first step is to pass H.R. 6297 so that we have all of the tools in place. Secondly, let us all join together to rigorously enforce the Iran agreement, the JCPOA. We need to do that. We need to make sure that every part of that agreement is adhered to, including making sure Iran never becomes a nuclear weapons state. We need to continue the use of sanctions on Iran's nonnuclear nefarious activities.

They are still a sponsor of terrorism. We all know that. I was recently in the Middle East. I had a chance to talk to a lot of our strategic partners. They tell me about Iran's activities in their region, how they are supporting efforts to destabilize other sovereign states in the Middle East. They are supporting terrorism.

We also know that they have expanded their ballistic program. That is in contravention to their international obligations. We can impose sanctions and continue to strengthen sanctions against Iran in regard to those activities. They are violating the human rights of the citizens of their own country. We can take actions there.

There are areas where we can continue to work with the international community to deal with Iran's nefarious activities. We should do that. I would just call to my colleagues' attention that several—actually in October of 2015, I introduced S. 2119, along with several of my colleagues, so that the Congress would be in a better position to carry out rigorous enforcement of the JCPOA and to take on Iran, working with our partners, in regard to their other activities.

It provides more information to the Congress on how the sanction relief resources are being used by Iran so that we can track the money. If they use it to support terrorism against the United States or they use it against our interests, we would be able to know about that and take action.

It provides for expedited considerations if Iran commits these types of violations. It makes it very clear that we will continue to work on a regional security strategy so that our partners in the region know that the United States will continue to be on their side against the aggression that we have seen from the Iran regime. To me, that is the responsible action for us to take in order to carry out what should be U.S. leadership in isolating Iran, getting it to change its behavior, recognizing that it has been a major problem for the security of the United States in the region, and we must continue to be actively engaged.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for such time as I may require.

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

21ST CENTURY CURES BILL

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, tomorrow the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on a piece of legislation that many in this body on both sides of the aisle have worked on and that the majority leader of the Senate has described as the single most important piece of legislation that will pass this year. We call it the 21st Century Cures Act, and it includes three mental health reform acts—the most significant reforms in mental health programs in 10 years.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks the more than 200 organizations from all across the country supporting the 21st Century Cures legislation.

Why would the majority leader say it is the most important legislation the Senate might act on—because we do a lot of important stuff around here, whether it is Defense authorization, whether it is cyber security, whether it is the bill to fix No Child Left Behind that we passed in a bipartisan way last December. I think it is because this legislation will affect virtually every American family because we are entering the most exciting period of medical research in our country. That is the first part of it.

The second part, which has to do with mental health, affects so many

families. We know that about one out of every five adult Americans suffers from some form of mental illness. This concentrates a large amount of money we actually spend on mental health programs every year from the Federal Government and spends it in a more effective way to actually help people.

In the next few minutes, I would like to acquaint the Senate again with how we have gone about this and remind Senators of how many of us have had a hand in this legislation. It is a remarkable 2 years of work that has involved many, many, many hearings, dozens of meetings, and that has been done in a large committee of 22 Senators of very different points of view in a largely bipartisan way.

I will summarize. The first thing I would mention, the legislation includes \$6.3 billion of funding and \$1 billion of that is for State opioid grants. Whether it is Senator WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island or Senator AYOTTE and Senator PORTMAN, probably most Senators of this body have seen on the front pages of their newspapers the tragedies of opioid abuse. I know that is true in Tennessee. This bill helps in two ways. The most immediate way is to provide State grants—Federal dollars to go to States—over the next 2 years to help States fight opioid abuse.

The other way it helps, when we get to the part about 21st Century Cures, is that Dr. Francis Collins, head of the National Institutes of Health—Dr. Collins calls it the “National Institutes of Hope”—says that one of the groundbreaking discoveries we expect to happen in this country is a non-addictive pain medicine. The problem with opioids is, they are addictive. Now, people need it. If you have a back surgery or if you have terrible pain, opioids can help people. We know that, but it is addictive and it is causing problems. What if we had non-addictive pain medicine? So this bill helps that in two ways.

There is other funding in this legislation: \$4.8 billion to the National Institutes of Health. The first 1.8 billion of that is for Cancer Moonshot. This is Vice President BIDEN’s initiative. He is motivated for many reasons by it. His son died of cancer. Many of us have family members or friends with cancer. There are startling discoveries going on in cancer today. This is \$1.8 billion in support of the Vice President’s Cancer Moonshot.

Then there is \$1.4 billion for the Precision Medicine Initiative. This is one of President Obama’s most important initiatives. I know he has said that very realistically he expects it to happen anyway, but he would like to move it along. This helps move it along. What this means is that if the Senator from Oklahoma and I each have a disease, that because of our genetic background, the medicine we might get for that disease should be different. If we know that genetic difference between the two of us, the doctor can prescribe for it. That is called personalized medicine or precision medicine.

Then there is \$1.6 billion for the BRAIN Initiative. This includes groundbreaking research in Alzheimer’s, for example. I talked to one drug manufacturer that has spent more than \$1 billion trying to develop a medicine that will help identify Alzheimer’s before it shows symptoms and then another medicine that will slow the progression of Alzheimer’s. Imagine what could happen in our country if, for the tens of millions of Americans who are going to suffer with Alzheimer’s, we could find that out before they actually have the symptoms and we can then slow down the progression of Alzheimer’s. Think of the suffering that would help avoid. Think of the billions of dollars it would save. This is for that kind of research. Dr. Collins says that during this next 10 years, he expects that we will be able to identify individuals at high risk for Alzheimer’s before any symptoms appear and provide them with effective medicines to slow or prevent the disease.

It also includes \$500 million for the Food and Drug Administration to help pay for the extra work we are giving the FDA.

One Senator was on the floor talking about this bill and suggested this isn’t enough money. Let’s talk about money just a minute. The United States spends more on biomedical research and development than Europe, Japan, and China—almost as much as those three put together. There has nevertheless been a real need for increased funding for the kinds of things I just mentioned, but the way we do things here is, we have authorization bills, which this is, where we decide what our policies and our programs are going to be. Some of us are on those committees—like the committee I chair, and of which Senator MURRAY of Washington is the ranking Democrat, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in this case. Then we have Appropriations Committees that decide how much we can afford to spend on that. We do that separately.

Last year, this Congress, a Republican majority, I would point out—but Senator BLUNT, chairman of the Appropriations Committee for the Senate, would quickly give Senator MURRAY, the ranking Democrat, full credit—added \$2 billion to the National Institutes of Health budget for 1 year. That means \$20 billion over 10 years. This year, the same Republican Congress, with the cooperation of the Democratic Members, added another \$2 billion to the National Institutes of Health budget. That is another \$20 billion over 10 years. The Cures legislation that I have just described is another \$5 billion. So that—20, 20, and 5—adds up to 45 billion new dollars approved. The first \$20 billion is law, the second \$20 billion has just been approved by the Appropriations Committees—hopefully it will become law—and the \$5 billion I just described. Now, that is real money.

It is unusual to find an appropriations bill stuck on an authorization