

But he didn't do that. He never lost hope. He never gave up. He set his sights on getting back to work for the people of Illinois and the Nation. That is exactly what he did.

We were there to witness his triumph several months later. Cane in hand, a smile on his face, JOE MANCHIN to one side, JOE BIDEN to the other, one foot in front of the other, Senator MARK KIRK climbed and climbed and climbed. He ascended each of those 45 Capitol steps to the top of this Chamber as we all cheered him on.

MARK could rest assured no one was going to let him fall that day. And Senator MANCHIN could rest assured that he wouldn't have to go another day waiting for his buddy to return.

Days after MARK's stroke, Senator MANCHIN hopped on a flight to Chicago to check on his friend in person. He saw firsthand the many challenges KIRK had to overcome in recovery. But he never doubted MARK's will, determination, or desire to get back to work.

KIRK, he said, is like the Energizer Bunny. He just keeps going and going and going.

MANCHIN and KIRK might seem like an unconventional pair. One is a Democrat, the other a Republican. The West Virginian is an outdoorsman, the Illinois Senator is a gamer. Senator MANCHIN is a mountaineer, and Senator KIRK ascends skyscrapers.

But as the senior Senator from West Virginia put it, they "just clicked from day one" and quickly became the best of friends. Now they go boating together. They meet for lunch nearly every Thursday. And they support each other. The support of good friends like Senator MANCHIN has been critical to Senator KIRK's dramatic recovery.

He has found support in other places, too, including the mailbox. A few weeks after his stroke, Jackson, a 9-year-old fellow stroke survivor from Illinois, wrote Senator KIRK to share his own story and some words of encouragement. "Do not give up on yourself," Jackson wrote. "All the hard work is worth it."

"P.S.," he said, "I think kids should get paid to go to school."

The pair quickly became pen pals and even picked up a new joint sport of tower climbing in their rehabilitation.

Senator KIRK calls Jackson his personal hero. Last year, he invited him to visit Washington and be his guest at the State of the Union. To hear KIRK tell it, he may have never made it back for that address at all without Jackson's support and kind words.

I know the support he received from his fellow home State Senator didn't go unnoticed either. After MARK's stroke, Senator DURBIN visited KIRK's staff, offering to help out however he could.

Senator KIRK's story reminds us that the Senate can be more than just a place of work, it can actually be a family. In his own words, "The things that divide us in politics are infinitesimal

compared with the dignity of our common humanity." It is a powerful message, and I think it is one we can all learn from.

Senator KIRK said that America's men and women in uniform represent "the greatest force for human dignity on Earth." He is right. And the work he has done to help us meet the obligation our Nation has to military families and our veterans will endure beyond his term.

MARK KIRK, a veteran himself, understands the sacrifices our servicemembers and their families make each day on our behalf. He knows they deserve our full support, not only when they are on Active Duty but also after their tours are complete.

That is why he has worked to help guarantee the quality of health care that our heroes are counting on. It is why he has worked to help eliminate corruption within the VA so that our veterans receive timely care as well.

He has proven himself as a leader on national security issues too. He understands the value of our alliances and worked to strengthen them, especially with Israel.

He has a clear-eyed view of our adversaries too and has never been afraid to speak out or take action, from North Korea to Iran. When it comes to Iran specifically, Senator KIRK was the tip of the spear on this issue, bringing attention to the threat of Iran's aggressive behavior and pushing for legislation to help hold Tehran accountable.

He has long been an advocate for critical Iran sanctions like those extended just this past week, even when the administration pushed back and even when Democratic colleagues pushed back too. He doesn't back down, and thanks to efforts like his, we were able to see the legislation through.

So, yes, Senator KIRK may be leaving the Senate, but he has cast a long shadow here. And he is not done yet. We know he will not stop looking out for our country. We know he will not stop advocating for stroke survivors. We know he is not going to stop. He will just keep going and going and going as he always has.

Senator KIRK reminds each of us that it is possible to persevere through even the most difficult of obstacles life presents. So, today, we thank him for the impact he has made on this body, for the inspiration he has been to so many, and for the years he has dedicated to serving the people of Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, has the Chair announced the business of the Senate?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TSUNAMI WARNING, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 34, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 34, an act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill.

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell amendment No. 5117, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 5118 (to amendment No. 5117), of a perfecting nature.

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

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

DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset that I took the floor last week and said a few words in tribute and friendship to my colleague, Senator KIRK. I am glad to hear the majority leader's statement this morning. It was spot-on, and it captured his public spirit, as well as his personal strength, that has brought him to this moment in history. I have been honored to serve with him for the last 6 years.

I would say to my colleague Senator COATS from Indiana: We served together in the House, in the Senate, and I actually visited him when he was an ambassador representing the United States in Germany. It is an amazing public career on his part, and I wish him the very best for whatever the future holds for him.

DACA

Mr. President, I wish to tell a story about an extraordinary young woman whom some of you may know. Her name is Laura Alvarado. When she was 8 years old, Laura was brought to the United States from Mexico. She grew up in Chicago in my home State of Illinois.

In high school, she was an extraordinary student and was involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities. She was a member of the National Honor Society. She played soccer, tennis, basketball, and was a member of student government, the school newspaper, the chess club, the yearbook club, and many more. She decided to go to Northeastern Illinois University. She worked two jobs while she was going to school because she didn't qualify for any Federal assistance to go to college.

In 2006, she graduated with honors from Northeastern. Her major was justice studies. But then she was stuck

again. Her ambition in life was to become a lawyer, but she couldn't pursue her dream. It took her 6 years. In 2012, President Obama established DACA, an Executive action which said to Laura and thousands just like her: You are in a special category. You were undocumented in America, but you were brought here as a child. You didn't make the decision to come to this country; your family did. So we are going to give young people like Laura a chance, on a temporary basis, if they will pay a filing fee of almost \$500, submit themselves to a criminal background check to make certain they are no threat to anyone in this country, we will give them a 2-year status where they cannot be deported and they can work in America.

Laura applied. There were people who were cautioning her: Be careful. If you identify yourself as undocumented to this government, somebody might use it against you someday. But Laura, who aspired to be a lawyer, decided to follow the law, register, pay her fee, go through the background check, and try to get the status of DACA. She received it. And because of it, she was allowed to apply and be accepted at Southern Illinois University School of Law at Carbondale.

In law school, she was an outstanding student again. She won the moot court competition. She was selected for the Order of Barristers, a legal honor society.

This spring, 10 years after she graduated from college, Laura received her law degree. Over the summer she passed her bar exam, and just last month she received her Illinois law license, which she is holding here proudly.

Laura never gave up on her dream of becoming a lawyer, but it is a dream that never would have happened were it not for President Obama's Executive action, the Executive action that didn't give her a free pass to law school—just the opposite. It said to her: If you are accepted into law school, the government will not pay you a penny to help with your education. You have to go out and work for it. She did.

Now we face a question with a new President coming in who says he wants to abolish the DACA that made Laura eligible to go to law school. He wants to abolish the status where these young people, brought as babies, toddlers, into this country are not subject to deportation and can work for a living. If that is abolished, then Laura, despite all of her hard work, all of her education, all of her achievements in life, faces deportation from this country.

Laura said she wants to use her law degree to help people who don't have a fighting chance without lawyers who are more focused on service than on money. We are better if Laura is here as a lawyer practicing in America. We are certainly better in Illinois to have someone with a law license willing to give back to our State.

Now the choice is up to Congress. Are we going to step in and give Laura the chance she asked for to prove herself again as she has so many times in her young life? I am glad to say that LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Senator from South Carolina, and I are joining in an effort to draw up legislation to achieve that goal and at least to give these DACA-eligibles a temporary reprieve so that if there is an elimination of this Executive action, we don't eliminate the protection that keeps them here in the United States and where they cannot be deported and they have a chance to work. That is something we need to do—not just for Laura but for 744,000 other young people as well who grew up in this country and just deserve a chance to make this a better nation.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA MIKULSKI

Mr. President, I join my colleagues in saluting the public life of Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI. Before I do that, I want to thank a woman who is not here. She was a Catholic nun and the debate coach for Senator MIKULSKI when she was in high school at the Institute of Notre Dame, an all-girls Catholic high school in Baltimore, the same school NANCY PELOSI graduated from.

As a young BARBARA MIKULSKI was preparing to debate a particularly tough opponent, this nun, her debate coach, told her: "You can do it, Barb—get out there and roll those Jesuit boys!"

I went to a Jesuit college and law school, and I am proud and relieved to report that I never had to face BARBARA MIKULSKI in that kind of debate. I have rarely found anybody who can stand up to her in a debate. She can still "roll those Jesuit boys," or anyone else who tries to stand in the way of helping women, children, seniors, or advancing fairness.

BARBARA MIKULSKI has been my colleague for 20 years, my friend, the chairwoman of my Appropriations Committee and the ranking member, and so many times an inspiration.

As most of my colleagues know, my first job was working in the Senate as an intern, myself, in the office of Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois. Like BARBARA MIKULSKI, Paul Douglas was a champion for the underdog, and he was a pit bull when it came to protecting the American taxpayers.

Every year, the University of Illinois chooses a leader of uncommon decency and courage to receive the Paul H. Douglas Award for Ethics in Government. This year, I was honored to present that award on behalf of the University of Illinois and in the name of Paul Douglas to BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland. I know Senator Douglas would have been thrilled that she is carrying on that same public service tradition.

Some day—and I hope and trust I will live to see it—the ultimate glass ceiling will break, and there will be a woman elected President of this country. When that historic day comes, we

can be sure that Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI will have had a hand in bringing it about.

Many of my colleagues have spoken about the long list of times she has already broken glass ceilings herself: BARBARA MIKULSKI, first woman ever elected statewide in her beloved State of Maryland; BARBARA MIKULSKI, first Democrat elected to both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate; BARBARA MIKULSKI, first woman to ever serve as head of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee.

But as BARBARA, very self-deprecating, has often said: She has never been interested in simply being the first. She wants to be "the first of many," and she has been.

When Maryland voters sent BARBARA MIKULSKI to this Senate in 1986, there were two women in the entire body: Nancy Landon Kassebaum of Kansas, a Republican, and BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland, a Democrat—two women in this Chamber out of 100 Senators. Today, there are 20 women Senators, and after they are sworn in on January 3, there will be 21. That is great progress, but not nearly enough by BARBARA MIKULSKI's standards.

Senator MIKULSKI also had the brainchild of making sure the women in the Senate became an even more powerful force. Her bipartisan, women Senators-only dinners were a rare display of bipartisanship in an institution too often divided. The discoveries of common cause, common trust, and common purpose resulting from those dinners have made a big difference on the floor of the Senate.

BARBARA ANN MIKULSKI is the proud granddaughter of Polish immigrants. Her parents owned a small grocery store in Baltimore. She, her parents, and her two younger sisters lived across the street in one of the famous Baltimore row houses. As a young girl, Barbara thought about becoming a Catholic nun. She changed her mind because, as she put it, "that vow of obedience kind of slowed me down a bit." So she found other ways to practice the social gospel of justice.

She was a driving force behind the first bill signed by President Barack Obama, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. I was there that day. The President signed the bill, and he took the first pen from the first bill he was signing and handed it to BARBARA MIKULSKI because he knew that she had been a champion for equality in the workplace for women throughout her career.

There are two stories that I always think of when I think of Senator MIKULSKI.

In October 2002, the Senate voted on whether to authorize the war in Iraq. Only 23 of the 100 Senators then serving voted against the Iraq war resolution. Of those 23 Senators, only 8 still remain in the Senate today: BARBARA BOXER, who is leaving at the end of this Congress, PATRICK LEAHY, PATTY MURRAY, JACK REED, DEBBIE STABENOW, RON WYDEN, BARBARA MIKULSKI, and

myself. This is a woman who has always been willing to risk her career to follow her conscience.

One of her great heroes is Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. The reason, BARBARA MIKULSKI says, is that Dorothy Day was always “trying to find the hopes of people,” rather than preying on people’s fear and anger.

I saw BARBARA MIKULSKI’s instinctive appeal to hope on that infamous sad day—September 11, 2001. As dust was settling on that heart-wrenching, heartbreaking day, most of the Members of the Senate gathered on the steps of the Capitol. The hope was that there would be a demonstration by Members of both parties to the Nation and to the world of solidarity. Suddenly—unplanned, unscripted—BARBARA MIKULSKI started singing “God Bless America.” Everyone joined in. In one of America’s darkest hours, BARBARA MIKULSKI brought us together. That is what a real leader does.

I and so many in the Chamber and so many untold millions of Americans are going to miss her presence in the Senate. We take consolation in knowing that, while she is leaving the Senate, she is not leaving the fight. She will never leave the fight.

Those of us who are returning in the next Congress have learned from Senator MIKULSKI, and we will continue to fight the good fight to invest in life-saving, job-creating medical breakthroughs at the National Institutes of Health—or, as BARBARA MIKULSKI calls it, the “National Institutes of Hope.” We will continue the good fight she has fought with such pithiness and passion to make our Nation safer and make our economy fairer for all Americans. I know that she will continue that fight as well.

BARBARA MIKULSKI may be leaving the Senate, but no one ever has, and I doubt anyone ever will, think of Baltimore’s BARBARA MIKULSKI as “retiring.”

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONORING NEBRASKA’S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tribute to this generation of Nebraska heroes. They are the men and women who have given their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each one has a different story, and each Gold Star Family has the same request: that we remember the sacrifice of their loved one. By telling these stories of their service here on the Senate floor, we can honor that family’s request.

SERGEANT GERMAINE DEBRO

Mr. President, today I honor the life and service of Germaine Debro, a man who seemed destined for military service. Germaine’s father, Alvin Debro, was a career Air Force technical sergeant. At a young age, Germaine even picked up a nickname: “G.I. Joe Maine.” Even then, family and friends saw qualities that would make Germaine a great soldier. Because of his military service, Alvin and his wife Priscilla and their three boys moved often.

Germaine attended Benson High School in Omaha, NE, for a year before his family moved to Arkansas. There, Germaine graduated high school in 1991. Later, he and his family returned to Nebraska. For a time, Germaine worked as a manager at the local Burger King.

In 1994, G.I. Joe Maine followed his calling and he enlisted in the Army. In 1997, he joined the Nebraska National Guard. During those years, Germaine became known for his genuine personality and for developing a great camaraderie with his fellow soldiers. According to SPC Shawn O’Neil, Germaine was the “nicest guy you could ever meet.” He would walk into a room and it would light up. To his battle buddies, SPC Germaine Debro was affectionately known as DB. His dedication to his fellow soldiers was obvious. Being single, Germaine volunteered for assignments so that married soldiers might remain at home with their families.

Germaine deployed to Kuwait in 2001 and to Bosnia in 2002. In 2005, he learned that his unit, the 1st of the 167th Cavalry of the Nebraska Army National Guard, would deploy to Iraq. Germaine would be assigned to Troop B. Germaine’s family was anxious about him deploying again, but Germaine would not let his Army brothers go without him. In the end, his family supported his decision.

In explaining how his fellow soldiers felt about Germaine, SGT Josh Graft put it simply: “He was like a Dad to all of us.”

After a year of training, the 1st of the 167th Cavalry arrived in Iraq in early 2006. That is when the Sunni-Shia civil war erupted. In February, the al-Askari mosque was bombed and Iraq was plunged ever deeper into sectarian violence. American forces had come to enforce peace; they found themselves engaged in intense wartime operations. Germaine’s unit was right in the thick of it. Enemy attacks were frequent. Tensions were high.

On September 4, 2006, a 20-truck convoy headed out from a site 30 miles north of Baghdad. In the United States, Americans were celebrating Labor Day with barbecues, sporting events, and family gatherings. In Iraq, Germaine was driving a humvee, providing advanced security for the convoy. Thirty miles outside of Baghdad, Germaine’s humvee struck an improvised explosive device. The vehicle was spun several

times before erupting into flames. SGT Josiah Warren, riding in the right seat, tried unsuccessfully to pull Germaine free. Germaine Debro died on September 4, 2006.

At Iraq’s Camp Anaconda, members of the Nebraska Army National Guard assembled to honor the man who had cared so deeply for them.

On September 18, 2006, the Morning Star Baptist Church near downtown Omaha was filled with people paying a final tribute to Germaine Debro. Outside, 110 patriot riders stood guard.

Germaine’s brother, Maurice, read from a letter Germaine had written to him. In it, his brother offered some advice: “If you don’t take a risk, then you’ll never know what happened.”

“That was my brother,” said Maurice. “He was a loving, caring person.”

Germaine Debro was promoted posthumously to the rank of sergeant. His military decorations included a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. SGT Germaine Debro is survived by his father Alvin, his mother Priscilla, and his brothers, Alvin, Jr., and Maurice. He is a true Nebraska hero. I am honored to tell his story.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today for my 151st “Time to Wake Up” speech on climate change. I have covered many topics during these speeches—from pulling back the veil on the fossil fuel industry’s web of denial to sharing my visits to States from New Hampshire to Florida to Utah to see the effects of climate change there firsthand. But one recurring theme of my speeches and in the scientific literature has been the warning that the effects of climate change will hit home first and hardest along our coasts.

The oceans have soaked up more than 90 percent of the excess heat that has been trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gasses. That is a lot of heat. The Associated Press has compared the ocean heat we have added since 1997 to a, “Hiroshima-style bomb being exploded every second in the ocean for 75 straight years.”

That excess energy is warming our oceans at alarming rates, and by the principle of thermal expansion, we know that when water warms it expands. That, coupled with the melting ice sheets, is driving up sea levels worldwide. For my Ocean State that is a big deal. Warming and rising seas carry real consequences for coastal economies.

New England is being hit particularly hard on this front. The Gulf of Maine is warming faster than almost any other part of the ocean in the world. Narragansett Bay, in my home state of

Rhode Island, has already seen a nearly 4-degree Fahrenheit increase in winter water temperatures since the 1960s. Since measurements started in 1930, sea level is up nearly 10 inches at the tide gauge at Naval Station Newport.

Now, 10 inches may not sound like an enormous amount, but if you do a little mathematics and take that 10 inches and you multiply it by the 147 square miles that Narragansett Bay occupies, that adds nearly 100 million cubic meters of water offshore—throw weight for when the next storm comes.

Now, we don't model storm surge very well yet. But there is a lot of potential harm for Rhode Island. If you look not just at Narragansett Bay but at Rhode Island State waters, it is more than 500 million cubic meters, which is more than 500 million metric tons of potential storm surge.

Earlier this year, researchers published in *Nature* an updated estimate of global sea level rise. With new estimates of how melting Antarctic sea ice will contribute to sea level rise, the scientists were able to paint a more accurate picture of what lies ahead. It is not good news.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had previously estimated sea level rise to reach between 1.7 and 3.2 feet by 2100. The new study doubles that estimate, putting global sea level rise over 6 feet by the end of this century.

To complicate matters more, as Antarctica loses ice and consequently mass, it will actually also affect the gravitational pull of the Antarctic on the oceans. With Antarctica's gravitational pull reduced, other continents will proportionately carry more gravitational clout, drawing even more ocean water away from the South Pole to their coasts.

Ben Strauss, the director of Climate Central's sea level rise program, recently told the *Washington Post*:

[T]he 22nd century would be the century of hell. There would really be an unthinkable level of sea rise. It would erase many major cities and some nations from the map.

A study published in the "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" last month looked at the effects of rising seas on more than 100 coastal cities around the world. The study predicts that we will hit 2 degrees Celsius of average global warming, which scientists say brings catastrophic and irreversible climate effects, sometime between 2040 and 2050.

When that happens, over 90 percent of the world's coastal areas will experience almost 8 inches of further sea level rise. On the Atlantic coast of the United States, it is estimated to be more than 15 inches. If we continue emissions unabated and hit 5 degrees Celsius warming by 2100, New York City could see over 3½ feet of seawater swamping its streets.

The year 2040 is not that far away. If you buy a house on the coast today, 2040 would fall well within your typical 30-year mortgage. As you might imag-

ine, the real estate business is starting to take notice. Zillow, the online real estate marketplace, has looked at how 6 feet of sea level rise by 2100 would affect over 100 million U.S. homes in its database. Around 1 in 50 homes in the United States, or just under 2 million properties, would find their ground floors underwater by 2100.

Thirty-six U.S. cities would be considered completely lost, and another 300 cities would lose at least half of their homes. Florida fared the worst in the study, losing more than 12 percent of the State's housing to sea level rise. Hawaii is not far behind, with over 9 percent of its homes expected to go underwater. Though New Jersey's overall housing situation fares somewhat better, with a loss expected at just over 7 percent, the value of those homes well exceeds any other State. New Jersey alone accounts for over 10 percent of the \$882,000,000,000 worth of potentially underwater properties.

Miami Beach would be the hardest hit city, losing over 37,000 homes, worth over \$33 billion. Those numbers just count residential properties, not expected losses to commercial or public properties. The insurance industry uses the term "100-year flood" to describe a flood that has a 1-percent chance of occurring in a given year. According to a 2013 study commissioned by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the area in the United States susceptible to 100-year floods will grow by 45 percent by the end of the century. Our Government Accountability Office says Federal flood insurance premiums are not keeping pace with that growing risk.

From 2002 through 2013 already, taxpayers bailed out insured properties to the tune of \$18 to \$25 billion. Government-backed mortgage giant Freddie Mac is preparing itself for broad losses from climate-driven flooding. "The economic losses and social disruption may happen gradually," says its Web site, "but they are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and the Great Recession."

Let me say that again: "They are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and Great Recession." Some of the effects of climate change, it says, may not even be insurable. Unlike the 2008 housing crash, owners of homes that are subsumed by rising seas would have little expectation of their home's value ever recovering. Therefore, they would have little incentive to make their mortgage payments, which would add to steep losses for lenders and insurers.

We don't, of course, have to wait until 2100 to see the effects of sea level rise on coastal cities like Miami, Charleston, Norfolk, or Newport, RI. So-called sunny day flooding is increasing in coastal communities. As sea levels rise, regular high tides can be all that is needed to flood streets, sidewalks and basements. NOAA estimates that non-storm-related nuisance

flooding, just from tides and sea level rise, has increased somewhere between 300 to 925 percent along the United States' three coastlines since the 1960s.

This past October's King Tides—the year's highest tides—brought around 2 feet of water to Boston's waterfront. Last month's Super Moon pulled water into the streets of Charleston and the parking lots of New Hampshire. This wayward octopus—I don't know if you can see it clearly, but there is a fairly good-sized octopus here—ended up swimming through a Miami parking garage.

These extreme high tides give a preview of what may be the new normal in this century. Higher seas plus stronger storms forebode real catastrophe for coastal communities. The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 is the worst in Rhode Island's history. A storm surge of 12 to 15 feet hit Narragansett Bay, engulfing downtown Providence. You can see old photographs of the streetcars with just their roofs showing over the water.

If that storm hit again today, it would have a big head start, riding to shore on 10 more inches of sea with that potentially 500 million metric tons of water available for storm surge. Again, we don't know how much of it becomes storm surge, but it certainly raises the potential.

This picture is from historic Newport after Superstorm Sandy gave us a glancing blow in Rhode Island in 2012. It brought a storm surge of over 9 feet to Providence, and over 4 feet to the south coast of the State. This is downtown Newport and Seamen's Church Institute right here, and somebody is kayaking through downtown.

According to the most recent report from the National Ocean Economics Program, more than 134 million people lived in U.S. coastal zone counties in 2014. Those counties accounted for nearly half of the total U.S. GDP and more than 40 percent of total U.S. employment. In my State of Rhode Island, the coastal economy accounts for \$55 billion of the State's GDP and employed over 400,000 people in 2014.

This productivity is at risk if those communities and their businesses cannot protect themselves from the consequences of our changing environment. A lot of places are taking this threat seriously. Although partisans in the State government make the phrase "climate change" a taboo in Florida, local policymakers, particularly in South Florida, are making climate change adaptation a priority, forming a regional bipartisan compact on climate resiliency, hiring resiliency and sustainability staff, building seawalls, installing pumps, updating building codes, and in Miami Beach's case—just in that one city—making \$400 million in storm water management upgrades.

In New Hampshire, the Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission has advised cities to prepare infrastructure and buildings for rising seas. Louisiana rewrote its Coastal Master Plan to accept the dark predictions of land loss

and sea level rise facing that lowland State and to include around 200 projects designed to protect Southern Louisiana's marshes and limit the effects of storm surge.

In Alaska, Native villages are seeking financial support to relocate their traditional coastal homesteads to higher ground. In Rhode Island, under the leadership of Grover Fugate at our Coastal Resources Management Council and in cooperation with the leading experts at the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Sea Grant, and Rhode Island Geological Survey, we are well aware of what climate change, sea level rise, and storm surge mean for our coastal communities.

STORMTOOLS, a free public online tool developed through this collaboration, is providing our city planners and concerned citizens with a visualization of the effects of various levels of sea level rise and storm surge on their properties. The Coastal Risk Environmental Index, which is shown here, will add even more specificity to the models working in STORMTOOLS. Users can actually navigate Google Earth to see what flood damage from sea level rise and storm surge will look like on a building-by-building basis. The city of Warwick, RI, featured here, is already using its maps in its future planning and emergency planning.

The rising tide calls for increased investment in coastal resiliency around the country. Senators MERKLEY, MENENDEZ, and I asked the Government Accountability Office to review the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's support for coastal States' resilience efforts. Among its findings, the GAO report said that the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program "received 132 qualified applications requesting a total of \$105 million during its first application period in fiscal year 2015." Well, guess how much money was available to meet that \$105 million approved or qualified need. Only \$4.5 million. NOAA was able to support less than 5 percent of the coastal States' demand.

Climate change doesn't care whether you believe the science or the propaganda and nonsense pumped out by the fossil fuel lobby—shoreside homes' basements will flood either way. It is not a matter of belief, it is a matter of physics.

For all the denial and diversion, you will notice that the fossil fuel industry's web of denial groups don't talk much about the effects we are seeing in our oceans and along our coasts. Their business is denial and, through calculated misinformation, creating phony doubt. That is their mission. If that is your mission, it is hard to deny water levels that are measured essentially on a glorified yardstick at tide gauges. It is hard to deny measurements from a Ph test that high schoolers do in their science classes. It is hard to deny readings from thermometers.

Here in the Senate, our choice is clear: We can take action or continue

to sleepwalk through history. But we should remember Pope Francis's warning. Pope Francis said: "God always forgives, we men forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives. If you give her a slap, she will give you one." And we have a big slap coming.

If we do nothing, what will we tell the millions of Americans who live by the sea and rely on it for their livelihoods? What should we tell them when they can't get insured for the next hurricane or when their mortgages are underwater in a literal sense? If we refuse to help our own citizens, who then will help the millions of others in developing countries around the world suffering the same fate and looking to our country for leadership? We have a moral obligation to pluck our heads from the sand and get to work. The oceans warn; it is time we woke up and listened.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

JUSTICE FOR ALL REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it is my honor to come to the floor with the senior Senator from Vermont, my friend Mr. LEAHY, to talk about bipartisan legislation that will soon help victims of crime restore their lives. The Justice for All Reauthorization Act passed the House last week, and the Senate followed suit with unanimous support. Now it is on its way to the President's desk so it can become the law of the land.

When I served as the attorney general of Texas a few years ago, I felt that one of my most important jobs was to protect crime victims. I know that all Members of the Senate feel the same way. The Justice for All Reauthorization Act is first and foremost a bill that will help victims. It includes a number of provisions to help them get the justice they deserve. It will improve victims' rights by increasing access to restitution, reauthorize programs that support them in court, and increase resources for forensic labs to reduce the rape kit backlog.

I have spoken about the rape kit backlog before, and it is a big problem. At one point, it was estimated that there were as many as 400,000 untested rape kits in America, and this was due primarily to a lack of resources and lack of focus in making this a priority. This is evidence which has proven to be enormously powerful to help convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent.

This legislation will also give law enforcement more resources to keep violent offenders off the street and fairly prosecute crimes.

I know sometimes people must think Senator LEAHY and I are the odd couple of the Senate. We worked together not only on this legislation but also on reforms of the Freedom of Information Act. We share a passion for that topic as well. I am enormously grateful to him for his partnership on this important legislation. I also wish to thank Senator GRASSLEY for his leadership in

helping to shepherd this bipartisan bill through the Judiciary Committee.

I am looking forward to the Justice for All Reauthorization Act becoming law soon so we can help more victims restore their lives.

I yield to the senior Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Texas. Senator CORNYN and I have had the privilege of being prosecutors, he as an attorney general and I served as the State's attorney. I think you get a special view of what is needed. I have enjoyed working with the Senator because we do not have to paint a great picture for each other; we both understand the mistakes that can be made and why we do not want them.

For more than 6 years, I have championed the reauthorization of the Justice for All Act. I want to ensure that our criminal justice system lives up to our national pledge of liberty and justice for all. Having served as a prosecutor—and most former prosecutors—I am committed to ensuring that our criminal justice system has the integrity and confidence of the public it serves. I should not just say former prosecutors; current prosecutors feel that way.

From my time on the frontlines as a State's attorney in Chittenden County, VT, to the more than 15 years I have served as either chairman or ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, it has become clear to me that our system is deeply flawed. There is not always justice for all. I have met many innocent people wrongly convicted of crimes they did not commit.

I shared the story of Kirk Bloodsworth. He was falsely convicted. He was sentenced to death for the rape and murder of a 9-year-old girl—a horrible crime, but he maintained his innocence. In 1993, he became the first death row inmate to be exonerated by DNA, and they were finally able to charge the man who did commit the horrible crime. The irony there is that some have said: Boy, don't they look alike? That is what happened.

We know our system gets it wrong. We have a responsibility to improve our criminal justice system. That is why I joined with Kirk Bloodsworth years ago to introduce and enact the Post-Conviction DNA Testing Grant Program. It was originally part of the Innocence Protection Act, which was enacted in 2004. It gives defendants like Kirk a chance to prove their innocence.

To ensure our justice system gets it right from the beginning, the bill provides a means to improve the quality of indigent defense. Ensuring good representation for those accused of crimes means fewer innocent people will be behind bars. It is an outrage if an innocent person is wrongly punished, but then that injustice is exacerbated because it means the person who committed the crime is still out there, and

oftentimes, as my friend from Texas knows, they will commit the crime again. The American people deserve a system that gets it right the first time.

Many Senators in this Chamber know the story of my friend Debbie Smith, also a friend of the senior Senator from Texas. She has become a champion for victims of sexual assault. She waited 6 years after being attacked before her rape kit was tested and a culprit was caught. Think about that. During those 6 years, she had to live in terror that the person who did this heinous crime might come back and do it again. No one should have to live in fear while an attacker remains free to victimize someone else or them.

This legislation not only provides important resources to improve the quality and efficiency of forensic testing, but it also expands it to underserved populations, such as those in rural areas, which is much of my State. Actually, every one of us has rural areas in our States.

I have worked with Senators on both sides of the aisle to craft solutions to some of the most significant issues of our time. That is why I am proud to partner with Senator CORNYN on this important legislation.

I hope we will continue to work together in the next Congress. We have to continue to protect all victims. We have to create fairness in our criminal justice system. We have to make sure we get it right the first time.

I call on those who have worked with me on this important legislation to continue to support our efforts. We can correct costly mistakes in our criminal justice system; we will be a better country for it. We will have a lot more respect for our criminal justice system, and we will do what the best of our prosecutors and police want to do—get it right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I again wish to express my gratitude to the senior Senator from Vermont, Senator LEAHY, for his critical role in making sure this legislation becomes law, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on similar topics in the future.

LEGISLATION BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, we are about a week into the lameduck session, and we have already tackled some pretty significant legislation.

Last week, I was proud to see two bills that I introduced pass the Chamber. The first was the Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act, a bill that will help staffing, safety, and efficiency at our ports of entry, and it passed the Senate unanimously.

In Texas, as the Presiding Officer knows in Arizona, this is not a new concern. Some of our border communities have seen the infrastructure and the staffing prove to be inadequate at our legitimate ports of entry, with a negative impact not only on the envi-

ronment, as cars stack up to cross the border, but it also provides an unnecessary drag on legitimate trade and commerce.

Through the use of innovative public-private partnerships, we have seen that we can increase staffing, improve the infrastructure, and basically end up filling the gap left by the Federal Government not doing its job by dealing—as it, of necessity, must—with our international borders and making sure they work as they should. This is a good step in the right direction, and I am hopeful we can get the legislation to the President's desk in the coming days so that more ports of entry throughout the country can take advantage of its benefits.

Senator LEAHY and I just spoke about the Justice for All Reauthorization Act, and then last night this Chamber voted to move the 21st Century Cures bill forward with—incredibly—85 Senators voting in favor of it. It passed the House overwhelmingly last week, and I look forward to getting it through the Chamber and to the President's desk as soon as possible. This legislation will play an important role in supporting our scientists and researchers working to find cures for diseases like cancer, and that includes resources that will support the Cancer Moonshot Program, which will help those studying and researching to actually find a way to end cancer. That means cancer centers like the MD Anderson hospital will have more support to carry out their mission to make cancer history.

The Cures legislation will support research for Alzheimer's and help fight the opioid addiction that is running rampant through many parts of our country. In other words, this legislation is critically important to the health of our country now and for generations to come.

Significantly, the 21st Century Cures bill includes reforms to our mental health delivery system, in part, based on legislation I introduced in the Senate called the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act. As a result of the de-institutionalization and treatment of people with mental illness in the 1990s, the safety net that was supposed to be there to catch people so they didn't fall through the cracks never came into being. So many people suffering from mental illness simply live on our streets as homeless individuals or they are frequently fliers, so to speak, in our criminal justice system and in many instances never had their mental illness diagnosed, much less treated, so they can actually have a chance at a better life. The mental health provisions included in the Cures bill is one way to correct that course. It would also help families with a mentally ill loved one find a path to treatment and a way forward, including assisted outpatient treatment programs.

One of the biggest challenges families have when they have a mentally ill family member—particularly when

they are an adult—is getting them to comply with their doctor's orders and take their medication. Due to the miracle of modern pharmacology, many people with mental illnesses, if they are compliant with their medication, can lead very productive lives. Often there are additional tools that need to be available to family members when they find their loved one is getting sicker and sicker and not being compliant with their medication, potentially becoming a danger to themselves or to the community at large.

This legislation will equip State and local governments with better tools to assess individual health care needs so those suffering from mental illness in the criminal justice system can begin to recover and get the help they need, instead of getting sicker.

This bill also encourages the creation of crisis intervention teams so our law enforcement officers and first responders can know how to deescalate a dangerous confrontation. If a police officer comes to the scene of a call only to confront a mentally ill person, if they are untrained and don't know how to deescalate the situation, they may find themselves in danger, both the first responder as well as the individual person with mental illness. This is about finding ways to help the mentally ill individual get help while keeping the community safe at the same time.

Mr. President, the last bit of business we have is to fund the government. I said many times the best way to do that is to take the appropriations bills up one at a time so we can properly vet them, discuss them, and pass them. Our friends across the aisle had a different view this year and blocked the passage of individual appropriations bills. While it is not my preference, it is where we are. Right now, we are looking forward to passing a continuing resolution soon as we fulfill our important responsibilities to the American people.

I am glad to see we are making some progress on other pieces of legislation, including the Water Resources Development Act, a bill that will help us strengthen our waterways to account for growing trade and provide help for drought and flood protection.

Finally, we are working to finish the national defense authorization bill that will make sure Congress provides the resources for our military men and women so they can accomplish their missions and keep America safe.

We have quite a bit of work left to do and not much time left to do it in before the holidays, but with a little cooperation, I am sure we will get it all done.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am here, along with a number of my colleagues, to applaud the 21st Century Cures Act as a major milestone and a long-overdue initial investment in combating the opioid epidemic. In particular, I applaud the inclusion of \$1

billion in funding over 2 years that will address this crisis. For treatment providers on the frontlines of the epidemic, I am pleased to say help is on its way with this bill when it is passed by the Senate—and I believe it will be.

Make no mistake, these resources are badly needed. This remains an uncontrolled epidemic and unfortunately is still gaining strength. A staggering 47,000 Americans died of drug overdoses in 2014—more Americans than died in car accidents. Sadly, in New Hampshire, we are a bull's-eye for the highest percentage of drug overdoses per populace of any State in the country so I am pleased this bill includes language to prioritize the allocation of these new resources to the most heavily affected States, and I intend to work with the current and incoming administration to get this funding out to States as quickly as possible.

More than a year ago, I introduced legislation to help stem the tide of the opioid crisis by providing emergency funding to States, first responders, and treatment providers. I joined with other Senators in working to include funding in the Cures Act to provide at least an initial infusion of funding to fight the opioid epidemic. I am relieved these efforts have led to the bipartisan agreement we will soon vote on.

Last month, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, issued a landmark report and an urgent call to action. He said 21 million Americans have a substance use disorder—far more Americans than have cancer—yet only 1 in 10 is receiving any kind of treatment.

My State of New Hampshire, and New England overall, has been especially hard hit, but make no mistake, this is a nationwide epidemic, and it doesn't discriminate. It is impacting young and old, urban and rural, rich and poor, White and minority, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

This fall I met with Susan Messinger of Holderness, NH. Her son Carl experimented with heroin at a party and quickly became addicted. He got treatment, was in recovery, and was doing great, but he came down with a respiratory infection and was prescribed medicine that unknown to him, included an opioid—just simple cherry cough medicine. Carl relapsed, and he died of a fentanyl overdose days before his 25th birthday.

This chart entitled “Drug Overdose Deaths Across America” shows very vividly the extent of the problem. It was compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It shows the inexorable spread of the opioid crisis and the disease it causes from 2003, here where we don't see as much bright red, to 2008, where it is growing, to 2014, where it is almost the entire country. We can see that in the Presiding Officer's section of the country, in the Southwest, it is particularly challenging, as well as in the Appalachian region of the East. According

to the CDC, mortality trends in the opioid epidemic are now similar to the trends in the HIV epidemic at its peak in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The second chart shows drug overdose deaths across New Hampshire. It shows a parallel spread of the opioid epidemic in New Hampshire, with especially devastating effects in the northern part of the State—what we call the north country. In 2003, we see no orange and no red. In 2007, we are beginning to see patches of orange. In 2011, they have turned red, and by 2014, it is particularly affecting the entire State, and here—the northern part of New Hampshire—is where it is hardest hit.

In his landmark report last month, the U.S. Surgeon General said: “It is time to change how we view addiction—not as a moral failing but as a chronic illness that must be treated with skill, urgency and compassion.” Yet what we are seeing in New Hampshire and across the country is that treatment centers are completely overwhelmed.

Certainly, the new funding in the Cures Act will be welcome news to Friendship House in Bethlehem, NH, which is a treatment center I visited on Friday. It is up here in the northern part of the State in New Hampshire's north country, which has one of the highest overdose rates per capita in New Hampshire. Friendship House is the only treatment center within a radius of 65 miles.

Back in April, Kaiser Health News reported on the case of Eddie Sawyer. Eddie overdosed and died while he was waiting for his turn to be admitted to Friendship House. When police found Mr. Sawyer, on the table next to his bed was a list of treatment facilities. There were checkmarks next to the name of each facility. Mr. Sawyer had called every place on the list, and he had not found one that could take him for treatment.

The Surgeon General's new report states that nearly 9 out of 10 people with substance use disorders do not receive treatment. They are being turned away. They are being denied treatment due to a chronic lack of resources. Hopefully, this legislation is going to help that because over the last year, I visited treatment centers in every part of the Granite State. These centers are staffed by skilled, dedicated treatment professionals. They are saving lives every day, but they tell me that for every life they save, others are being lost for lack of treatment capacity, facilities, and funding. When people with substance use disorders are turned away, this means they remain on the streets, desperate, often committing crimes to support their addiction and at constant risk of a lethal overdose.

Last year, a promising young woman named Molly Alice Parks died of a heroin overdose in Manchester, NH—New Hampshire's largest city. Her father wrote her obituary which appeared in the Union Leader newspaper. He wrote openly about Molly's addiction, and

the obituary included this plea to readers: “If you have any loved ones who are fighting addiction, Molly's family asks that you do everything possible to be supportive, and guide them to rehabilitation before it is too late.”

I admire the courage of Molly's father, his willingness to warn other families, and talk openly about his daughter's addiction, but what if a family persuades a son or daughter to seek treatment and no treatment is available? Sadly, that is the case in so many communities across America where treatment centers are overwhelmed.

That is why the additional resources in the Cures Act are so important. This new funding will make a real difference for treatment providers in each of our States. Make no mistake, this legislation will save lives. The funding in the Cures Act is a welcome initial investment in combating the opioid epidemic. President-Elect Trump, during dozens of visits to New Hampshire over the last year, pledged aggressive action to fight the opioid epidemic. When the new Congress convenes in January, we must come together with our new President, on a bipartisan basis, to address the opioid crisis in a comprehensive fashion, including continuing resources for policing, prevention, treatment, and recovery. As Surgeon General Murphy says, “How we respond to this crisis is a test for America.” With so many lives at stake, it is a test we must not fail.

With the 21st Century Cures Act, Congress is providing urgent new funding for treatment on the frontlines—professionals who have been doing truly heroic, lifesaving work. Our message in passing this legislation is: Help is on the way. I urge my colleagues to give strong bipartisan support to this important bill.

I yield the floor.

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

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

COAL MINER HEALTH CARE BENEFITS AND PENSIONS

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to explain what is happening for all of my colleagues and my friends on both sides of the aisle.

I have been here for 6 years as a Senator. I have always fought to make the body work, and for the people of West Virginia and for our country. I have never believed partisan gridlock is a way to accomplish our policy goals, so I haven't come to this decision easily. I have never used the procedure that I am using today, and I will use, to basically stop all UCs, a lot of good pieces of legislation, a lot of good friends who have worked diligently on this. I want to be able to work with them.

My reason for doing this is that over 2 years ago we promised the retired coal miners of America—we promised them—mostly their families, and there are a lot of widows now; we promised them they would have their health care benefits that were guaranteed to them and their pensions. We have been working toward that.

We knew this day would come. As of December 31, the end of this month—less than 4 weeks away—there are going to be 16,500 retired families, retired miners who are losing their health care benefits. There will be another 4,000 the first of next year.

So I am using this procedure, which I do reluctantly and I never thought I would have to, because we are fighting for those people whom we promised, fighting for those we believe in, to thank them for the power they have provided to this Nation. Now we are turning our backs on them.

We have pay-fors for this. We have a way to move forward. These are the health care benefits for our retired miners. It is something they have worked for, they have earned, they deserve, and we are the country we are because of the hard work they have done.

So I wanted my colleagues to know why this procedure is going to be a little bit more laborious than they would have liked, why we might not be leaving here when they would have liked to go home. If we don't stand for the people who have made our country as great as it is, we stand for nothing.

So with that, I hope my colleagues understand where I am coming from and why I hope they will be with me on this for the sake of all of these families and all of these widows and all of these miners who have given to much so our country.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to start by expressing my appreciation to all of my colleagues who have worked so hard on the priorities in the 21st Century Cures bill, including investing in tackling our hardest to treat diseases, confronting the opioid epidemic, strengthening mental health care, and advancing medical innovation.

The legislation that we will be voting on either really late tonight or tomorrow morning takes important steps to improve the care that patients receive.

I am very grateful to every Senator and Member of Congress who worked across the aisle to make this legislation the best it could be for those whom we serve. In particular, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Vice President JOE BIDEN. Not everyone has the strength to respond to profound personal tragedy by doing even more to protect and help others, but that is exactly what he has done. I know we are all grateful for and inspired by his leadership, and I am confident it has

given a lot of families hope, knowing that JOE BIDEN is fighting for them and their loved ones.

Of course, I want to acknowledge and thank the chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator ALEXANDER, for his work and leadership on this bill, as well as the Energy and Commerce Chairman FRED UPTON, Ranking Member FRANK PALLONE, and Congresswoman DIANA DEGETTE.

I am proud of our country's history of lifesaving public health initiatives and world-changing medical innovation. From eradicating smallpox to mapping the human genome, we have risen to challenges and found ways to combat seemingly unbeatable diseases and public health threats. There is no question we are a strong country for that.

The bill we are talking about today, while far from perfect, gives us the chance to build on that tradition of leadership and respond to some urgent health challenges we face right now. One of those is the opioid epidemic. Like many of my colleagues, I have heard from far too many families and local leaders in my home State about the ways that opioid use disorders are ruining lives and tearing families apart. My constituent Penny LeGate, whose daughter Marah died of an overdose at the age of 19, said that this crisis can happen anywhere and it is everywhere. That is the same thing I have heard from worried parents and sheriffs and community leaders across Washington State.

I was glad that earlier this year, the Senate passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act to strengthen and improve programs that address opioid addiction. But, as Democrats made clear, improving policy wasn't enough. Tackling this crisis head-on requires putting new investments into these efforts as quickly as possible, and that is what this bill will do. It dedicates \$1 billion over 2 years, above and beyond the budget caps, to help States and communities fight back. And critically, we were able to secure changes that ensure this money will go to States based on where it is needed the most.

Many of my colleagues were closely involved with this effort, but in particular I wish to recognize Senators WHITEHOUSE, SHAHEEN, BALDWIN, MARKEY, DONNELLY, and MANCHIN.

I have also heard from people across Washington State and the country about what a broken mental health system means for them and their families. One constituent whose experience has really stuck with me is Jenny. Jenny is from Olympia, WA, and she was pregnant when her husband began having severe psychotic episodes. Jenny told me that she remembered how striking the differences were between the coordinated, thoughtful care she received as an expectant mother and the confusing patchwork that she and her husband had to navigate to try to help him get better. Jenny's hus-

band cycled in and out of the hospital without effective treatment, and tragically he took his own life while Jenny was in the NICU with their newborn baby.

Jenny's story is unfortunately one of many about families struggling to find quality mental health care for loved ones with mental illness. I am confident that everyone here today has heard these stories, and we know we have to do better.

Our legislation will help expand access to quality care for mental illness and substance use disorders by making it easier for patients to get in touch with providers. It will strengthen coordination between local agencies that are engaged in crisis intervention, and it will make sure that resources are available to strengthen the mental health workforce.

While we weren't able to resolve the IMD exclusion, which is a policy that makes it extremely difficult for States to provide inpatient care to those with mental illness and substance abuse disorders, this bill does change policy so that Federal funding will fully support the physical needs of children in psychiatric facilities.

It also puts in place measures to strengthen our mental health parity law to make sure that health insurance will cover mental health and addiction services when it is needed. Chairman ALEXANDER and I worked with Senators MURPHY and CASSIDY to move this legislation through our committee this year, and I wish to recognize their commitment and leadership on this issue in particular.

In addition to investing in and tackling the opioid epidemic and putting in place desperately needed reforms to our mental health care system, this legislation makes real investments in tackling the hardest to treat diseases. According to the National Cancer Institute at NIH, 40 percent of men and women in the United States will be diagnosed with some form of cancer in their lives. Right now, more than 5 million people are living with Alzheimer's. These are truly staggering statistics, and they represent enormous hardship and suffering and loss in nearly every family and community.

Now we have made enormous progress in understanding and treating cancer, and we know more about how the brain works and what diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and traumatic injuries do to human minds, but we can and must do more, and that is exactly what the investments in NIH in this bill will mean.

While this is not the mandatory funding we had hoped for, I want to be very clear: This is real funding. So \$4.8 billion is paid for within this bill, targeted to specific NIH initiatives, and available to appropriators above and beyond the budget caps. That means, as a result of this legislation—and thanks, in particular, to the leadership and vision of Vice President BIDEN—we will be able to invest billions right

away in better understanding, preventing, and treating diseases that have impacted so many families.

This bill also ensures that those investments in research will benefit all Americans, including women and children, LGBT individuals, and racial and ethnic minorities.

This bill also puts \$500 million above and beyond the budget cap toward helping the FDA meet the same high standards of patient and consumer safety in the face of increasing demands on the agency and new responsibilities under this legislation. As Democrats have made clear throughout this process, upholding the gold standard of FDA approval that patients and families across the country trust is a top priority.

In light of the antibiotic-resistant infections linked to contaminated medical devices called duodenoscopes in Seattle and across the country, it was particularly important to me to make sure that this bill strengthened the FDA's authority to require that medical device manufacturers ensure their products will remain safe after they have gone into repeated uses at our hospitals.

We also fought hard to move many of the other FDA reform policies that are included in this bill in the direction of greater patient and consumer safety. In particular, I was pleased that we were able to take out legislation that would have watered down transparency around drug and device industry payments to doctors, and I appreciate my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who were ultimately willing to work with us to make those changes.

Now, looking ahead to next year, I plan to monitor implementation of this bill extremely closely, with a focus on making sure the incoming administration adheres to the policies laid out in this bill and upholds the FDA's responsibility to patients and families to ensure our medicines and treatments are safe and effective. This standard has been critical to fueling biomedical innovation in America for over half a century. And while I am disappointed that Republicans were unwilling to take action on this legislation to tackle the high cost of prescription drugs, I am very glad we were able to remove expensive provisions that could have driven up costs for consumers even more.

While this bill is not what I would have written on my own, it is certainly not what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would have written on their own, either. It locks in critical advancements ahead of the incoming administration and the partisan approach they are signaling they will take on health care, and it will make a real difference for patients and families across the country now and for years into the future.

Before I wrap up, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary time and effort put in by all of our staffs. There have been a lot of late nights and weekends

for our staffs, not just this year but last year as well on this bill, and I want to take just a minute to recognize their extra effort and sacrifice.

On Senator ALEXANDER's staff, I want to particularly acknowledge and thank his staff director, David Cleary, as well as Mary-Sumpter Lapinski and Grace Stuntz, his health and FDA policy leads, who worked very closely with my staff over many months. I also want to acknowledge and thank Margaret Coulter, Brett Meeks, Laura Pence, Melissa Pfaff, Kara Townshend, and Elizabeth Wroe for their efforts on this bill.

In the House, I want to recognize and thank the staff of Congressman PAL-LONE, including his staff director, Jeff Carroll, along with Tiffany Guarascio, his health policy lead. I thank the staff of Chairman UPTON, particularly his staff director, Gary Andres, and Paul Edattel, his health policy lead.

In addition, I thank the staff of my members on the HELP Committee, who worked so closely with my staff to make this a reality. In particular, I thank David Bonine and Joe Dunn with Senator MURPHY.

I want to acknowledge the assistance of Amy Rosenbaum, Jeanne Lambrew, Kate Mevis, and Dr. Francis Collins, among many others within the administration who helped make today possible.

Finally, I want to close by thanking my staff. I can't say enough about my incredible staff, who have put their time and talents into this bill from the word "go." In particular, I thank my staff director, Evan Schatz, and my health policy director, Nick Bath, for their extraordinary efforts on this legislation. Thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Remy Brim, Julie Tierney, Andi Fristedt, Colin Goldfinch, Melanie Rainer, Madeleine Pannell, Megan Howard, Elizabeth Wagner, Wade Ackerman, Kalah Auchincloss, Jane Bigham, Helen Hare, Eli Zupnick, John Righter, Nick McLane, and my chief of staff, Mike Spahn. I want you to know that I noticed their long hours and unwavering commitment on this legislation. It means a lot.

I urge my colleagues to join the House when we vote on this, which voted overwhelmingly in support of this bill—392 to 26—and to join us in sending this legislation to President Obama's desk.

Thank you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, before the distinguished Senator from Washington moves on to her other duties, I want to commend her and Senator ALEXANDER for the outstanding job they have done and for the long hours she and her colleagues on the HELP Committee have put in to making the Cures Act the reality that it will be in a few days.

I know the distinguished Senator is on her way to other meetings. I have a

few things to say about it, but I want to express that before she leaves the Chamber.

Truly, as Senator MURRAY said, the 21st Century Cures Act is a world-changing piece of legislation. It seems rather quiet and unremarkable today, but I actually believe we are taking a major step toward disease cure and health care research that rivals the legislation which actually founded the National Institutes of Health some decades ago. So we are about important business here at Christmastime as we near the end of this lameduck session.

Senator BLUNT and I and perhaps other Senators were over in the Chamber of the other body last Wednesday afternoon when the House of Representatives passed the 21st Century Cures Act by an overwhelming bipartisan vote, 392 to 26. I appreciated the work House leaders did from top to bottom and on both sides of the aisle on this important legislation.

Of course, I am always pleased to visit my colleagues over there. A number of our House colleagues were over here last night when the Senate invoked cloture on the Cures Act by an overwhelming vote of 85 to 13. We will get to the vote either this afternoon or early tomorrow, and I have every confidence that there will be a strong vote on final passage.

The 21st Century Cures Act is the product of several years of bipartisan work in both Houses. My friend from Washington State gave a comprehensive overview of the legislation, which is indeed breathtaking. I wish to come behind her and mention what an accomplishment this is in three areas—first, in Alzheimer's research; second, in pediatric research; and finally, in the drug approval process.

I appreciate my friend from Washington and 62 others agreeing to take into this legislation the EUREKA Act, which I was happy to sponsor and which 62 of my colleagues cosponsored. EUREKA would and will initiate prize competitions in the fight against some of our Nation's most terrible diseases, including Alzheimer's. These prizes would pay only for success, and they would complement current funding that is and will be ongoing, according to the legislation. So this will be over and above what we are already doing for Alzheimer's. The Senator from Washington is correct about how costly Alzheimer's is. It will top \$1 trillion in taxpayer cost by the year 2050 unless we get a cure or unless we achieve major goals with regard to stopping Alzheimer's. So it is an expensive disease—the most expensive disease in the history of this country—but it is also terribly expensive in terms of human suffering. I know many Americans, including my family, have been touched in a very terrible and dramatic way by Alzheimer's.

I am pleased that the EUREKA prizes are part of this legislation. I want to thank everyone who helped us in this regard.

I am thankful for the advice we got from the XPRIZE Foundation and from all of the Alzheimer's groups, including the Alzheimer's Association and UsAgainstAlzheimer's.

Thanks should also go to Dr. Francis Collins and the entire team at the National Institutes of Health for making this legislation work and for listening to a different idea—the concept of prizes for health care research—and giving it an attentive ear and being willing to agree that, in addition to the funding, we would attack these diseases with a prize competition.

The NIH funding in Cures includes additional dollars for the BRAIN Initiative, and these EUREKA prizes will ensure that our researchers have the tools they need.

Secondly, another important part of the NIH section of the Cures Act is the National Pediatric Research Network, inspired by the Pediatric Research Improvement Act that I was happy to cosponsor with Senator BROWN earlier this year. Senator BROWN and I have been working together tirelessly to see NIH implement the National Pediatric Research Network, and I am glad to see this provision in the bill. Very simply, the goal is to expand access to clinical trials and treatments for children, especially those with rare diseases. That is a second aspect of this Cures bill that I am so pleased to see the leadership of this committee being attentive to.

Thirdly, this bill makes major breakthroughs in the way we approve drugs in this country. I am pleased that language from another bill I cosponsored, the Patient-Focused Impact Assessment Act, was included in the bill. This section of the Cures bill would ensure that patients understand the way FDA considers the patient experience and the way FDA considers data in the drug approval process. So for patients like those living with Duchenne and their families, for people who are interested in the drug approval process, and for the parents of children, this is a truly bipartisan achievement.

I am happy that Senator MURRAY was here so I could congratulate her in person. Certainly Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, chairman of our HELP Committee, deserves high praise from both sides of the aisle for his leadership in this regard, as well as the bipartisan leadership of the House of Representatives.

As we enter this holiday season, patients, advocates, and providers have an extra reason to rejoice as this bill heads to the President's desk.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess, following the remarks of Senator CASEY, until 2:15 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, in the interest of time, I will limit my remarks.

I rise this afternoon to commend and salute three Senators from the Democratic caucus who are leaving the Senate this year. I will have longer written statements for the RECORD to appropriately pay tribute to their service. In alphabetical order, Senator BOXER of California, Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland, and Senator REID of Nevada.

BARBARA BOXER AND BARBARA MIKULSKI

I will offer some specific remarks about Leader REID, in the interest of time, but I do want to commend and salute Senator BOXER for her service to the people of California and to our Nation, as well Senator MIKULSKI for her great work—two great advocates, two individuals whom we are going to miss terribly here in the Senate. As I said, I will put longer statements in the RECORD.

HARRY REID

With regard to Senator REID, I can't help taking the time to say a few words about him in the remaining minutes we have before we break for the caucus lunches.

Mr. President, as many people know, Senator HARRY REID is a son of Searchlight, a small community in the State of Nevada, and he comes from humble beginnings. It is probably best to read his words about his beginnings rather than trying to describe or encapsulate them. Among many things he said about his background and his family, he said this, in short fashion, about his background:

My dad was a hard rock miner. My mom took in wash. I grew up around people of strong values.

That is a direct quotation from HARRY REID about his background. I think those values have helped him his whole life. Those values, that work ethic, and that strength of character allowed him to go from Searchlight to rise up to become a leader in his home State of Nevada in many positions in State government, to be a Member of the United States House of Representatives, later to be elected to the United States Senate in 1986, and then, of course, to become the Democratic leader—and he remains so until the end of this Congress—but, of course, the pinnacle was his service as majority leader, one of the longest serving majority leaders in our history. That is kind of a summary of his positions in government, important though they are, leading a large and diverse caucus. It is a difficult job whether you are leading that caucus in the majority or leading it as the minority party. So we salute and commend his service to his home State of Nevada and to the people of the United States.

But maybe more important than just talking about positions he held is to talk for just a minute about who he is—a fighter. No person has fought harder for workers and for their families than HARRY REID. No Senator, no person I know in public life, has made that such a central part of who they are and a central part of their priorities, also, at the same time, being a fighter for those who often don't have a voice here—people who don't have power ever in their lives or often don't have power on a regular basis. They always had a friend in HARRY REID—someone who would go to the end of the Earth fighting on behalf of them.

Over and over in our caucus, he would say: We have to work on this issue, or we have to get this or that done for people who are hurting. There are so many different examples of that, which we don't have time to enumerate them today.

I am recalling today a great line from a great Democratic leader, William Jennings Bryan, who talked about the power of one individual to make a difference and the power of an issue or set of issues to drive that person's success in public life or even beyond public life, as a citizen. William Jennings Bryan once said: "The humblest citizen in all the land, when clad in the armor of a righteous cause, is stronger than all the hosts of error." So said William Jennings Bryan about one citizen clad in the armor of a righteous cause.

HARRY REID is a Senator and he has been a leader, but he is also a very humble man at his core. His righteous cause wasn't just one issue, but if you had to encapsulate it or summarize it, the righteous cause for HARRY REID was fighting on behalf of those workers, fighting on behalf of those people who did not ever have power in their lives.

His ability to not just articulate their concerns and their struggles but literally their hopes and their dreams was one of the reasons why so many of us have such a high regard for him. We commend and salute his service. We appreciate his commitment to strong values, but we especially appreciate his steadfast support for those who needed his voice, who needed his work, who needed his votes, and needed his leadership.

To Senator REID, we say thank you for your service, thank you for what you did for your home State of Nevada, and thank you for what you did for the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ROBERTS).

TSUNAMI WARNING, EDUCATION,
AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2015—
Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Vermont is recognized.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer, the Senator from Kansas.

An editorial this morning in the New York Times is entitled: "Why Does Donald Trump Lie About Voting Fraud?" This is the editorial of which I speak. That is a question that many of us who have been fighting for the right to vote have been asking for decades. In a bipartisan fashion, this Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act 10 years ago. During the course of many, many, many Senate and House Judiciary Committee hearings, we fought against the false narrative that in-person voting fraud was at all common in our country. The evidence clearly and irrefutably shows that it is not, but, of course, the evidence does not stop those who are determined to make it harder for Americans to cast their votes.

Right after five Justices on the Supreme Court gutted the core protection of the bipartisan Voting Rights Act, several States led by Republican majorities enacted voting restrictions that made it harder for many Americans to vote.

It is most troubling that our President-elect has decided to make an unfounded charge of widespread voting fraud. I can imagine that he is disappointed in the fact that he got 2.5 million less votes than his opponent and did not win the support of a majority of Americans who voted last month. We should all hope that when our next President is presented with unfavorable realities, he will not resort to spreading information that has no basis in fact. That cannot and should never be the standard of American leadership.

In an article published in the Valley News of West Lebanon, NH, and reprinted this morning in VT Digger, researchers at Dartmouth explored President-Elect Trump's allegation of widespread voting fraud, and they found nothing to support his claim, noting "voter fraud concerns fomented and espoused by the Trump campaign are not grounded in any observable features of the 2016 Presidential election." Many other analyses have also made this crystal clear.

In a report to Congress, the Government Accountability Office concluded

that "no apparent cases of in-person voter impersonation [were] charged by DOJ's Criminal Division or by U.S. Attorney's offices anywhere in the United States from 2004 through July 3, 2014." That is the reality. The President-elect should not continue to peddle lies about voter fraud.

I say that because this year we have seen a dangerous uptick in what some call "fake news." These articles have no basis of reality or factual evidence, but they are broadly circulated because they affirm a particular ideology or because they are a proven way to make a quick buck by drawing the attention of unsuspecting online readers. Fake news stories get attention and clicks. We saw what happened when a man walks into a pizza place in the District of Columbia where children often congregate and fires a rifle because of one of these fake news stories he had read.

Some consider this despicable propaganda to be harmless, but it is certainly not without its victims. We know that the spread of lies through fake news can have real-world consequences, even for the public's faith in the Republic itself. There is no doubt that this is the way Russia sees it.

In conclusion, it should not be too much to ask our elected officials to operate on facts and reality. We will have many debates over policy in the years to come, as we should, but Americans deserve leaders who refuse to peddle in lies for political gain.

I call on leaders from both sides of the political aisle to no longer defend the indefensible.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the New York Times editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Dec. 5, 2016]

WHY DOES DONALD TRUMP LIE ABOUT VOTER
FRAUD?

(By the Editorial Board)

The long-running Republican war against the right to vote has now gone national at the instigation of President-elect Donald Trump, who has promoted the lie that millions of illegal votes were cast in the presidential election.

There is not a scintilla of evidence for this claim, and Mr. Trump's own lawyers have admitted as much, stating in a court filing opposing a recount in Michigan that "all available evidence suggests that the 2016 general election was not tainted by fraud or mistake."

Yet one after the next, leading Republicans are spreading this slander of American democracy, smoothing the way to restrict voting rights across the country.

On Sunday, Vice President-elect Mike Pence told ABC's George Stephanopoulos that it was Mr. Trump's "right to express his opinion as president-elect." When pushed to admit that the illegal-voting claim was not true, Mr. Pence shifted the burden of proof away from Mr. Trump, even though Mr. Trump has accused millions of Americans of committing a crime. "Look," Mr. Pence said, "I don't know that that's a false statement, George, and neither do you."

Paul Ryan, speaker of the House, told CBS's "60 Minutes," "I have no knowledge of

such things," before defending Mr. Trump's claims as "giving voice to a lot of people who have felt that they were voiceless." (As recently as October, Mr. Ryan's spokeswoman noted that "our democracy relies on confidence in election results" and that Mr. Ryan was "fully confident the states will carry out this election with integrity.")

Reince Priebus, currently the chairman of the Republican National Committee and Mr. Trump's pick for chief of staff, told CBS's John Dickerson that "no one really knows" if millions of people voted illegally. "It's possible." It's equally true that no one really knows for sure that Reince Priebus wasn't snatched away and replaced with a doppelgänger hatched by aliens—it's possible, isn't it?

This is how voter suppression efforts start. First come the unverified tales of fraud; then come the urgent calls to tighten voter registration rules and increase "ballot security," which translate into laws that disenfranchise tens or hundreds of thousands of qualified voters.

That's already happened in Wisconsin and North Carolina, in Ohio and Texas, where Republican lawmakers pushed through bills requiring voter IDs or proof of citizenship; eliminating early-voting days and same-day registration; and imposing other measures. Virtually all these laws aimed at making voting harder for citizens who happen to be members of groups that tend to support Democrats.

While federal courts have struck down some of these laws, more keep popping up. In Michigan, lawmakers are pushing to fast-track a voter-ID requirement even though there was no evidence of voter impersonation there. In New Hampshire, the incoming governor, Chris Sununu, wants to do away with same-day registration, also despite the lack of any evidence that it resulted in fraud.

Reality is beside the point. Dallas Woodhouse, the executive director of the North Carolina Republican Party, recently told The New Republic, "Whether there's widespread voter fraud or not, the people believe there is." It doesn't seem to matter to G.O.P. leaders that election officials around the country of both parties have confirmed that there was no fraud on Election Day. What matters to them, as strategists have long known, is that Republicans do better when fewer people vote.

Under a Trump administration, anti-voter efforts could become national in scope—through congressional legislation, a hostile Justice Department or a Supreme Court nominee with little regard for voting rights.

Undermining the integrity of the electoral process and making it harder to vote is threatening to all Americans, regardless of party. The cynical Republicans now in power figure that all they have to do is fool the public long enough to win the next election. It's outrageous, but it's hard to see why they would stop when lying has gotten them this far.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor and thank my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I have some good news. Today we have before us a legislative package that reflects 2 years of work for the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

When we first embarked on this process, the goal was to find ways to spur innovation and reduce the time it takes for new therapies and treatments to get from the research bench to the bedside for patients. The bill is the 21st