

colleagues appear willing to lift a finger to help us do that, even though they know that ObamaCare is in melt-down mode.

We have promised multiple times, at least in the last three elections, to do away with this disaster of a healthcare law so that American families can get the healthcare they need at a price they can afford. This isn't just a talking point. This is our goal. This is our objective.

When I said that ObamaCare has been a failure, I am reminded of a letter written to me by one of my constituents from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This gentleman is a small business owner. Since the implementation of ObamaCare, he has had to change his insurance each year, and every time, his rates have increased. He estimates they had gone up from roughly \$350 a month now to \$800 a month, not to mention his out-of-pocket costs. They have skyrocketed from \$3,500 to \$14,000. That is not affordable healthcare. At that price, I can't imagine it does him much good at all, particularly when you couple those high premiums with higher deductibles, in many instances \$6,000 or more for the deductible alone. So even though you are paying premiums for insurance and those premiums are going up every year, you still have such a high deductible that it effectively makes you self-insured, and you don't benefit from the insurance you actually have.

The first time this gentleman was forced to change his healthcare plan was because his insurance carrier completely pulled out of the marketplace, and that is something we are hearing across the country. It is not just a Texas phenomenon. I imagine there are similar stories in States like Indiana, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Michigan, and Montana, just to mention a few. It is simply proof that the ObamaCare experiment is a failure, and the government-mandated, one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare doesn't work very well.

The next year, this same gentleman went with a different insurance company, but they canceled the plan he was already on. Then that insurance company pulled all individual healthcare plans from the State, so he had to find another health insurance plan.

That is not where the bad news ends. The doctor he has had for 20 years didn't accept the new health insurance plan, so instead of finding a new doctor, which he didn't want to do, he is now paying out of pocket so that he can keep the doctor he wants.

Remember what President Obama said countless times: If you like your plan, you can keep it. If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. He said that a family of four would find, on average, a savings of \$2,500 a year in their health insurance premiums. None of that has proved to be true. This is an experiment that has ended in failure. It didn't turn out to be the case for this

constituent of mine; each time his plan changed, he saw a price increase and a coverage decrease.

Even if Hillary Clinton had been elected President of the United States, we would still need to revisit the failures of ObamaCare because the situation is simply not sustainable for roughly about 11 million people—about 6 percent of the people who get their insurance in the individual market.

In spite of knowing that many of their constituents are being hurt by the failures of ObamaCare, our Democratic colleagues—even though they know it—refuse to do anything about it. Again, we invite them to work with us, not for our benefit but for the benefit of the people they represent.

This is not making life any easier for my constituents in Texas, and I am confident that is the case for people across the country. That is why our efforts to replace ObamaCare are so important, and that is why we will keep fighting to get it done because families across the country need access to quality healthcare they can afford that is not chosen for them but is what they choose because it suits their needs.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all quorum calls until 5:30 p.m. today be equally divided.

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

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last week, we confirmed two well-qualified nominees, Jeffrey Rosen as Deputy Secretary of Transportation and Rachel Brand as Associate Attorney General, and today we will have an opportunity to confirm another excellent nominee, Gov. Terry Branstad to be U.S. Ambassador to China.

While I am pleased the Senate is working to fill these important positions, it has been disappointing to see so much pointless obstruction by our friends across the aisle. They have continuously forced procedural hurdles on nominees for no other reason than to stall confirmations, launching more filibusters against this President's Cabinet than any other in history. They have done so not to change the result but simply to eat up floor time that could be used for legislation to help our constituents.

Take the floor vote they forced last week on the Branstad nomination. The Senate voted overwhelmingly, 86 to 12, on that motion, proving once again that our Democratic colleagues' tactics have little to do with the nominees themselves but are just delaying for

delay's sake. It is really past time to stop the games.

Once confirmed as Ambassador to China, Governor Branstad will be tasked with a portfolio that is important not only for our diplomatic relationship with China but also for our trade policies with that country. He has earned the support of Senators on both sides of the aisle and was reported out of the Foreign Relations Committee by a voice vote.

Having served as the Governor of Iowa for more than two decades, Branstad has developed a strong understanding of agriculture, trade, and other key national interests. His experience on these issues will guide him as he works to strengthen our relationship with China and pursue trade policies that can benefit American workers and businesses. I look forward to confirming him as our Nation's next Ambassador to China so he can get started on the important tasks before him.

#### NOMINATION OF JOHN SULLIVAN

Mr. President, after we confirm Governor Branstad, we will vote to advance another well-qualified nominee to serve as our Nation's Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan. It is both a critical and challenging role, but Mr. Sullivan's extensive background has prepared him for the task ahead. Through the years, he has worked at the Defense Department and the Justice Department. He also served as the Deputy Secretary of Commerce. I am confident that his experience will serve him well as he works as a key adviser to Secretary Tillerson and helps lead our Nation in addressing the range of security issues we face. We look forward to confirming him soon.

Having these key officials in place at the State Department is of great importance as we work with the administration on shaping our foreign policy and strengthening our posture in the international community.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL TRIP

As we know, the President is currently traveling on his first international trip as our Commander in Chief. The trip provides the President with an important opportunity to engage with key allies, discuss our shared interests, and continue conversations on issues where we can work together in the future. So we wish the President and the First Lady both a successful trip and safe travels as they return to the United States later this week.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all quorum calls until 5:30 p.m. today be equally divided.

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

The Senator from Arkansas.

#### NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize National Drug Court Month and show my support for the positive impact drug courts have on cutting crime, saving money, and restoring lives.

I have seen firsthand the impact of drug courts in Arkansas. This proven

approach has helped many Arkansans suffering from drug and alcohol abuse who have received the treatment and services they need to turn their lives around. For more than two decades, these courts have offered Arkansas' drug-addicted, nonviolent offenders an alternative to jail while rehabilitating them through a strenuous treatment program.

We have nearly 90 specialty courts in Arkansas that are providing lifesaving treatment to more than 3,000 individuals with substance use disorders, and the results are impressive. Our State saves \$45 million each year by diverting these offenders from prison to drug courts. Ninety percent of Arkansas drug court participants' drug tests come back negative for illegal substances, compared to 64 percent of those on probation and parole.

Drug courts are a critical component of today's criminal justice system. They have proven to be an effective alternative to jail for individuals convicted of nonviolent drug charges. Holding offenders with substance use and mental health disorders accountable through strict supervision and treatment, drug courts and veterans treatment courts have saved taxpayer dollars and the lives of more than 1.5 million people, including a remarkable man I recently met who shared his story.

Blayne was facing 20 years in prison because of crimes he had committed to support a 10-year addiction to prescription opioids. This epidemic currently takes 94 American lives every single day, but Blayne is one of the lucky ones. His community had a drug court. The drug court program gave him the tools he needed to stop using drugs and helped him reconnect with his family, find employment, and get his life back on track.

Instead of sitting in a jail cell on the taxpayers' dime, he is working as a teacher. Instead of breaking into homes, he owns one. Today, Blayne is a dedicated family man. He told me: "Drug court was a chance to become the father and husband that I wanted to be."

His story is similar to hundreds of Arkansans who have drug courts to thank for turning their lives around. An Arkansas drug court gave a woman named Sammy a second chance. She became addicted to painkillers at the age of 22 when she suffered a back injury. Her addiction led her down a very dangerous path, where she also started using meth every day. It also led her into the criminal justice system, and she was facing 20 years in prison. Drug court helped Sammy change her lifestyle. Now she is a positive role model for her children, holding down a full-time job and giving back to her community.

This is the power drug courts and other treatment courts have that change lives, heal families, and save money. The success of drug treatment courts has become a model tailored to

the needs of different groups from veterans to juveniles. The willingness of the judicial system to adopt alternative methods to jail time is a cost-effective approach to changing the habits of drug addicts and saving the lives of people like Blayne and Sammy.

As Washington pursues options for criminal justice reform, drug courts are a great example of a program that works. More than 25 years of research has proven they reduce crime and substance abuse, break the vicious cycle of recidivism, and keep families together.

In Arkansas and every other State in the country, drug courts are making a real difference. I want to recognize and thank the more than 30,000 drug court judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, probation officers, court administrators, and other professionals who are on the frontlines of providing a path to recovery. As we recognize National Drug Court Month, this is a great opportunity to show our commitment for the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and the Veterans Treatment Court Initiative at the Department of Justice. While there are 150,000 Americans being served by drug courts and veterans treatment courts today, there are more than 1 million individuals in our justice system who do not yet have access to these lifesaving programs.

I ask you to join me in supporting resources for these programs to improve public safety, save taxpayer dollars, and, most importantly, save lives.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, the United States' relationship with China is one of our most complicated and consequential in the world. The United States must maintain a constructive partnership with China to address global threats ranging from climate change to North Korea's nuclear program. While our interests are often at odds, our relationship with China must be built on respect, not rebuffs—on tact, not tweets.

On the campaign trail, President Trump's rhetoric about China was as caustic as it was hollow. He claimed that climate change was a "hoax perpetrated by the Chinese." He contended that we could not "continue to allow China to rape our country." He declared China was "our enemy" and that he would direct the Treasury Department to label China a currency manipulator on his first day in office. He said he would not honor the "one China policy" without extracting concessions from the Chinese on trade. None of these threats materialized when Trump assumed office, of course. When rhetoric met reality, Trump retreated.

Even while he railed against China during his campaign, Trump simultaneously extolled his deep financial ties with the country. He credited the Chinese for much of his own personal fortune, saying, "I've made a lot of money with China," and "I do great with China, I sell them condos, I have the

largest bank in the world from China, the largest in the world by far. They're a tenant of mine in a building I own in Manhattan."

Trump is the only President in modern history who has not divested his financial holdings or established a blind trust, and his financial entanglements with China have grown since his inauguration. Earlier this year, China gave the Trump Organization preliminary approval for 38 trademarks, paving the way for the President and his family to develop a host of branded business from hotels, to insurance, to bodyguard and escort services. On the very same night that Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner dined with Chinese President Xi at Mar-a-Lago, China granted Ivanka Trump's company three new trademarks. All of this points to the very real possibility that Trump and his family are using the Presidency to increase their personal profit, in violation of the Constitution, and that the Chinese are accommodating them.

Governor Terry Branstad is far from an ideal choice for the U.S. Ambassador to China. His record on labor rights is deeply troubling, including his decision earlier this year to sign into law a bill that dramatically scales back the rights of workers to bargain collectively for their health insurance, evaluation procedures, and supplemental pay.

However, in an administration that has put forward few qualified candidates for public office, Governor Branstad possesses some of the experience required for this critical diplomatic post. Governor Branstad has worked with the Chinese and with Chinese President Xi specifically for several decades. In his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he alleged he would use this longstanding relationship to press President Xi on the North Korean nuclear threat. He acknowledged the importance of opening Chinese markets to U.S. goods while recognizing the need to hold them accountable for unfair trade practices. He claimed that he would promote American values abroad, including human rights, the importance of a free press, and a rules-based international order.

Governor Branstad's recognition of the importance of these basic American values, values President Trump himself does not acknowledge, is vital in our engagements with China and countries around the world. Governor Branstad's longstanding relationships in China suggest he may be more responsible and disciplined in his statements and behavior than President Trump. Given the vast array of global issues that require China's cooperation, I hope Governor Branstad remains faithful to his testimony and attempts to foster a productive relationship with China. For these reasons, I support his nomination for U.S. Ambassador to China.

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STOP ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I came to the floor last week to talk about our police officers. It was during Police Week. We talked about the bravery and heroism of our officers back home. I talked about tragic stories of police officers who were gunned down in the line of duty and talked about what they do for us every day.

Today I want to talk about an issue that is endangering their lives and the lives of so many in our communities but specifically law enforcement. This happens in every single State represented in this Chamber. This danger is this new epidemic of synthetic heroin, of opioids.

We know more about heroin and prescription drugs. Now we have these synthetic heroines coming in that are even more powerful. Being a police officer has always been a tough job, but it is becoming riskier today because of this. Some people have heard it as carfentanil or fentanyl or U4. Most of this synthetic poison coming into our communities is coming through the mail system. It is coming from overseas, primarily from China, where they have laboratories, where some evil scientist is mixing up this chemical mix and sending it over here into our communities.

Let me tell you about something that happened last Friday in East Liverpool, OH. Some of you may know the name “East Liverpool” because it is the same city where there was a photograph that went viral on the Internet of a couple who had overdosed in the front of a car, with their 3-year-old grandson in a car seat behind them. It showed the grandson, and it showed the two who had overdosed passed out in the front of the car.

In this same town of East Liverpool, OH, an officer by the name of Chris Green pulled over a car in a routine traffic stop. As he came up to the car, he noticed there was white powder sprinkled around the car. He took the appropriate precautions. He put on his gloves, he put on a mask, and he began to deal with the situation at hand. The people in the car apparently had spread the powder to try to avoid it being detected, but it was easily detectible.

At the end of his arrest process, there was a small amount of powder that was left on his jacket, which he did not notice. He went back to the police station. When he got there, he noticed the powder on his shirt and instinctively he went like this to get the powder off of his shirt. This small amount of powder touching his hand caused him to overdose. Officer Green is not a small guy; he is about 6 feet 3 inches, 225

pounds. He is a big, strong police officer who overdosed just by trying to get a few flakes of powder off of his jacket. Why? Because this fentanyl is so powerful. It is so deadly.

Fortunately, his fellow police officers were able to save his life with naloxone. This is a miracle drug which reverses the effects of an overdose and which is being used on our streets every single day to save people from dying from overdoses. In this case, it was used to keep a police officer who was doing his duty and who had simply tried to get a few flakes of powder off of his uniform from dying of an overdose.

East Liverpool police chief John Lane put it this way:

If he had been alone, he'd be dead. That's how dangerous this stuff is.

Chief Lane later made the point that if Officer Green had gone home in that shirt and unknowingly had this powder on his shirt or his jacket, he could have endangered the lives of his family. That is a scary thought. Obviously, that is true. That is how deadly these drugs are.

It only takes a few milligrams, just a few specks, to kill you. This chart will show you how much it takes. Here you see that 10 milligrams of carfentanil is powerful enough to sedate a 15,000-pound elephant. Here is the carfentanil over here, as shown on this chart. You will see why a fatal dose can be a very, very small amount—30 milligrams for heroin, 3 milligrams for fentanyl, even less than 3 milligrams for carfentanil.

By the way, for those of you at home, if you look at a penny, you will see Abraham Lincoln's profile on one side of it. The deadly dose of fentanyl that we are talking about here is enough to only cover up the face of Abraham Lincoln on a penny. That is how little we are talking about and how deadly this stuff is. You can see why our law enforcement officers are so concerned about this.

Officer Green is not the only one to experience this. There was a famous case last year where two officers in Atlantic County, NJ—Detective Dan Kallen and Detective Eric Price—overdosed on fentanyl just by breathing fentanyl in the air at a crime scene. As some of you have heard, fentanyl is so dangerous that they are afraid to use dogs to try to sniff it out because just by trying to sniff these packages to see whether fentanyl is included in them, the dogs could overdose and die. Fentanyl is dangerous stuff.

By the way, it is taking up more and more of the resources of our police officers and other first responders. Earlier this year, I came to the floor and talked about Officer Ben Rhodes of Chillicothe, OH. Last year Officer Rhodes reversed more than 50 drug overdoses. This is one officer in one small town.

Talk to the firefighters in your community and ask them whether they go on more fire runs or more heroin and

fentanyl and carfentanil overdose runs. I almost guarantee you they will say they go on more overdose runs. As a result, in some communities, those firefighters are not there to be able to protect us as you would typically think from the fires that still continue to be a major problem. So this is a real issue. It is taking up more and more of their time and more resources and causing more and more crime.

On Thursday, in Middletown, OH, which is a town in Southern Ohio, a family was getting ready to leave the house. In fact, they had already strapped their 3-month-old baby into a car seat. It is not clear whether they had shot up with heroin before they put the baby in the car seat or after, but they went back into the house and they overdosed in the house. They had the baby in the car seat in the car. They overdosed in the home.

They have another son who is 5 years old. He ran out of the house barefoot. He went to a neighbor's house, to his stepfather's home, which is a few blocks away, and yelled at the door: Mom and dad are dead. Mom and dad are dead.

The grandfather called the police, and they rushed to the scene. They were able to revive the boy's dad with naloxone. They used seven doses of naloxone on the mother, but she still couldn't wake up. From talking to police officers about this, they tell me that there is a very good sign this involved fentanyl, perhaps carfentanil, because after two, three, four, five, six, seven doses of naxolone, she still could not be revived. Fortunately, the police rushed her to the hospital, where they were finally able to bring her back.

Again, this is what police officers are facing every day in my home State of Ohio, in your State, in your community.

After this incident, the Middletown Police said on Facebook:

It has to stop. Please get help before it's too late. Not only to save yourself, but to save your kids. Give these kids a chance by getting help. If you or someone you love has a drug problem, please seek help right now.

This is a cry from our police officers saying that this can't continue.

Talk to the firefighters and police officers who have administered naloxone to the same individual time and time again, overdose after overdose. These brave officers and police officers around the country are feeling overwhelmed.

Drug overdoses are now the No. 1 cause of accidental death in the United States of America. It has now surpassed car accidents. It has way surpassed gun violence. In the last 3 years, more Americans have died of drug overdoses than died in the Vietnam war. More Americans are dying of drug overdoses now than died of AIDS at the peak of the AIDS epidemic in 1995. This year, 2017, more people will die from overdoses from opioids than died from AIDS at the peak in 1995—another tragedy. According to an article in the New