

of the problem, we must have more recovery and treatment services, and incarceration is not always the right answer. Sometimes treatment, not the criminal justice system, is the answer.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting an incredible young woman—inspirational, really—who knows all of this very well. Her name is Chelsea Carter, and she is from Logan, WV. When she met me yesterday, she said: We met. We met 10 years ago.

I said: Really? Where did we meet?

She said: I did your nails at Spa Bliss.

I said: Oh, well, thank you for that.

But along that journey, Chelsea has had a rough, rough go. At one point, Chelsea was charged with 17 felonies due to her drug habit. She told me her drug habit began when she was 12 years old. She said she was able to continue life through high school. It appeared as though she had a normal life. She was a cheerleader, participated in school, and all the time she was getting deeper and crawling deeper into a drug-addicted hole.

After she faced the criminal justice system, she became committed to getting off drugs and getting clean the very first night she spent in jail, and she has been clean ever since. She went through the drug court system, and, basically, it has saved her life. But that is not the end of the story for Chelsea. She has a bright future ahead of her, and she has moved forward.

She was in town for the annual conference of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. She has committed her life to helping people like her who have had this situation and who have been at the bottom of the pit of hopelessness, bad health, and bad decisionmaking. She is committed to helping her fellow West Virginians crawl out of that pit, like she did, and become productive individuals. This is the world's largest conference on treatment courts and criminal justice reform.

Back home in Logan, Chelsea is the program director at Appalachian Health Services. She just got her master's degree. One of the things that struck me is that, even in a management position, she continues to counsel and treat a full load of patients, and she told me she will always do so.

Chelsea's story is an example of the progress that can be made by fully committing to fighting the drug epidemic. There are victories and programs that work. Drug court is not the only one, but it is one in the spectrum of solutions.

I am committed to the fight and to working with all of our colleagues who are speaking out today. I know many of us are committed to this. It doesn't leave a family or community untouched. I am really inspired by West Virginians like Chelsea Carter who are on the frontlines.

With that, I yield for my colleague from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Thank you, Mr. President, and I thank my friend from West Virginia.

#### YUCCA MOUNTAIN

While I have an opportunity to take the floor, I want to change the subject, if I may. I want to talk about the concern I have of one of the President's priorities in the 2018 fiscal year budget. That priority is Yucca Mountain.

Specifically, the President included \$120 million in his budget for the Department of Energy to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository.

As a proponent and author of the legislation called No Budget, No Pay Act, which would restore regular order to the budget and appropriations process, I am pleased to see the President did submit to Congress a detailed budget proposal.

As a small government, fiscal conservative, I hoped that this new administration would focus on budget priorities that would reduce duplicative spending and streamline programs in order to save taxpayer dollars. You can imagine my disappointment that they, instead, decided to prioritize funding to restart licensing activities for a failed proposal.

Over the past few weeks, I have outlined on the Senate floor some of the issues with Yucca Mountain, whether it is the crippling effect it would have on Nevada's economy or the public safety issues associated with transportation of this nuclear waste. I will continue to come to the floor to educate my colleagues on the many issues associated with Yucca Mountain, because, plain and simple, it is not a viable option for the long-term storage of our Nation's nuclear waste. Instead of throwing more taxpayer dollars into a failed proposal, we should be working on a real long-term solution rooted in consent-based siting.

You have heard me raise the question that many Nevadans be thinking: Why should a State with no nuclear powerplants of its own be forced, against its will, to house all of the Nation's nuclear waste?

I stand by the Department of Energy's 2010 decision to terminate the Yucca Mountain program, and I stand by its 2015 recommendation for a consent-based siting.

Yucca Mountain is dead. Let me take you through what it would take to put this failed program back on life support. Prior to the suspension of the program in 2010, the Federal Government had spent close to \$15 billion on Yucca Mountain.

Now, I recognize that some of my colleagues might say: Well, the government has already spent this much on the government repository; shouldn't we complete it?

First of all, let me say that restarting the program would need \$2 billion more just to complete the licensing process—\$1.66 billion for the Department of Energy and \$330 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

After 3 to 5 years spent on licensing, there could well be another 5 years in legal challenges, and there is no certainty that Yucca Mountain would ever be built.

Second, even if Yucca Mountain were to go forward, it would be an expensive repository project. The Department of Energy's best estimate is that another \$82 billion—let me repeat that; another \$82 billion—would be needed to license, litigate, build, operate, decommission, and eventually close Yucca Mountain. On top of the money that has already been spent, that adds up to more than \$96 billion for what is called the total system life cycle cost.

That leads to my third point. We need to reevaluate the whole nuclear waste cost question. There is a business case to be made against Yucca Mountain. The Department of Energy's own estimates for Yucca Mountain say that the nuclear waste fund will only pay about 80 percent of the total life cycle costs, or about \$77 billion. The remaining \$19 billion would have to come from an annual appropriations voted by this Congress. That means more money for this project paid by taxpayers.

But it does not have to be that way. In 2012, the Department of Energy did its own cost assessment and concluded that all other costs, like transportation, being equal, walking away from Yucca Mountain and starting with a new repository site in a deep salt bed or deep shale formation would actually save between \$12 billion and \$27 billion over the life of the repository.

Before we spend any more taxpayer dollars on Yucca Mountain, we need to ask the Department of Energy experts to come before us and explain what they learned about repository costs in their previous studies. Beyond that, we need new cost studies on geologic disposal in repositories, studies that include the lessons learned from recent progress with repositories in Europe, and new studies that look at the nuclear waste program overall and incorporate the cost of safe on-site reactors, early removal of spent fuel from shutdown reactors, and consolidated interim storage facilities, as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

It is clear that rather than forcing the State of Nevada to accept nuclear waste at a scientifically unsound site, taxpayer dollars would be better spent identifying viable alternatives for the long-term storage of nuclear waste in areas that are willing to house it. Finding alternatives is the commonsense path forward, as well as the fiscally responsible decision.

I urge my colleagues, as we continue the budget appropriations process for this next fiscal year, to conduct oversight over the life-cycle costs of repositories and to focus on further implementing the Department of Energy's consent-based siting process, instead of wasting more taxpayer dollars on a failed proposal.

I stand ready to partner with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on this issue, and I am confident that together we can find a solution to this problem once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion on the Elwood nomination be withdrawn, and that following leader remarks on Tuesday, June 6, the Senate resume consideration of the nomination, with the time equally divided until 2:15 p.m. I further ask that at 2:15 p.m., on June 6, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Elwood nomination, and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I yield back all remaining time.

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

All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thapar nomination?

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 137 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Cornyn	Graham
Barrasso	Cotton	Grassley
Blunt	Crapo	Hatch
Boozman	Cruz	Heller
Burr	Daines	Hoover
Capito	Enzi	Inhofe
Cassidy	Ernst	Isakson
Cochran	Fischer	Johnson
Collins	Flake	Kennedy
Corker	Gardner	Lankford

Lee	Risch	Sullivan
McCain	Roberts	Thune
McConnell	Rounds	Tillis
Moran	Rubio	Toomey
Murkowski	Sasse	Wicker
Paul	Scott	Young
Perdue	Shelby	
Portman	Strange	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Markley	Warner
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wyden
Franken	Murphy	

NOT VOTING—4

Cantwell	Schatz
Hirono	Udall

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Iowa.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

### NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, May is National Foster Care Month. I thank my colleagues for unanimously supporting the resolution recognizing May as National Foster Care Month.

National Foster Care Month has been recognized for over 20 years as a time we all celebrate the voices of foster youth and bring awareness to the challenges these young people face. During this month, organizations in Iowa—and, for that matter, all across the country—have been working to support and to recognize the young people who are in foster care.

Nationally, there are over 425,000 children in foster care. In Iowa alone, almost 4,000 kids entered foster care in 2015, the last year for statistics. I salute all of those who work tirelessly to support these children. This includes a lot of different groups but particularly foster parents, who open their hearts and homes to children who need this vital support. The group also includes social workers, advocates, and alumni of the foster care system who, as young people, have gone through a lot. They are there to inform lawmakers and the public, and they are there to fight to secure better outcomes for kids in care.

As stated in our resolution, Congress must continue to work toward real solutions for these children, who often face trauma, abuse, and neglect, both before and after they are removed from their parents' care. We must work to ensure that all children, no matter their circumstances, have a permanent, loving home and consistent, caring adults in their lives.

With legislation such as the Fostering Connections Act, passed in 2008, and the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, passed in 2011, we have made some progress. These laws provided new investments and new services to improve the outcomes for children in the foster care system.

Even after all that, our work is not done. Over 20,000 young people aged out of the foster care system in 2015, with no legal permanent connection to any family. This impacts their ability to pursue higher education, to find employment and stable housing, and, most importantly, to prepare for the future.

While in care, children experience an average of three different placements; 65 percent of the kids in foster care change schools seven or more times. We see a great amount of instability and resulting insecurity when this is what happens in the life of somebody in foster care. This constant uncertainty compounds the trauma of neglect and of abuse and makes it hard for these kids to make connections to their communities.

Through my work in the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to hear firsthand what these young people in foster care need. They need love, they need support, they need safety and permanency, and they need a family. Those last two are the first words I ever heard from kids in foster care when I first took time 25 years ago to listen to some of them. They had been shunted from one home to another home over a period of time. They said: We would like to have a mom and dad; we would like to have a home. That is what this movement is all about.

Moving forward, Congress must continue to work to find better solutions and secure better outcomes for our young people in foster care.

Once again, I thank all of my colleagues for supporting this resolution. It is important that this month—and, for that matter, all year long—we continue to support the goals of National Foster Care Month.

### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I wish to address the issue of the healthcare debate that has been going on since the first of the year. Now that it has passed the House of Representatives, it comes to the Senate. The Senate is working on its own bill, not working from the House bill. This is still evolving, and I hope it will evolve very, very quickly.