

rules, paving the way for a massive consolidation among TV and radio broadcast stations. Continuing, he has acted as if the way to improve broadband in rural America is to lower standards and saddle our most remote communities with slower speed and worse service. He has also opposed widely supported updates to the E-Rate Program, which brings broadband to schools and libraries in every State in the Nation and leaves that critical program's budget—and the American schoolchildren—in the dial-up era. That is not what we want for our students. Furthermore, he has curtailed rules designed to help small businesses, schools, libraries, and hospitals to find competitive options for high-capacity telecommunications services. What that is going to do is likely raise the cost of these services and potentially harm their quality.

The list I just gave does not include the elephant in the room—Chairman Pai's planned elimination of the FCC's net neutrality protections. This Senator has been very clear that I oppose the effort to revoke these essential consumer protections on the internet. I think Chairman Pai's proposed course is shortsighted, especially when his preferred approach seems to be the abandonment of the FCC's oversight on the action of broadband providers. These are actions that directly impact on the lives of millions of Americans.

In March, I sent to Chairman Pai my deeply held concerns about some of these actions, and I expressed my sincere hope that his early moves were not a sign of things to come, but unfortunately my concerns have only been heightened by his record over the months since that conversation.

At the end of the day, the FCC has a responsibility to put the public interests ahead of the powerful special interests. Just as it has been under the leadership of the past Chairmen and Chairwomen, Congress expects the current FCC to uphold the laws the Congress has passed and to enforce the regulations properly adopted by the agency.

The vast majority of the actions of Chairman Pai have served to eliminate competitive protections, to threaten dangerous industry consolidation, to make the internet less free and less open, and to weaken consumer protections for those most vulnerable.

Ultimately, we need an FCC Chairman who has the consumers' backs. We need an FCC Chairman who is not afraid to use the robust statutory authority Congress has given to the FCC to protect consumers. Based on his record, I have serious and longstanding concerns about whether Chairman Pai really does have the consumers' backs. As a result, I will oppose this nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

FAA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, it is nice to see the ranking member of the

Commerce Committee on the floor today. I appreciate that he and I share a particular view about the privatization of air traffic control.

Today, we are going to presumably pass a 6-month extension for the Federal Aviation Administration. It was passed by the House earlier today, and once again we are in a position which, in my view, we shouldn't be in. We ought to be passing a long-term authorization of the Federal Aviation Administration. Last year, we did so. The Senate, with 95 votes, passed a 4-year FAA bill. It was the kind of meaningful, bipartisan accomplishment that is too rare in Congress today.

I supported that bill, but unfortunately when it was sent to the House and it came time to meet that last year's deadline, we were ultimately forced to pass a short-term extension—which I opposed.

Our ongoing efforts to pass a long-term bill, Republicans and Democrats in both Chambers of Congress, have found common ground and consensus among the entire aviation community on a wide range of important issues.

I am talking about reforms to strengthen the Contract Power Program, one of the most and overwhelmingly popular and successful FAA programs. That matters a lot to the State of Kansas, and communities in the State of Nebraska as well, the home of the Presiding Officer in the Senate.

I am talking about streamlining the aircraft certification process that allows the FAA to focus its valuable resources elsewhere while generating a positive impact on our economy and job security in the aviation manufacturing sector. Because, once again, Congress refuses to set aside the perpetually controversial proposal to privatize our Nation's air traffic control, we are left, again, with a short-term extension. It is another one of those take-it-or-leave-it moments that is occurring here at the eleventh hour in advance of September 30.

We know in the Senate this proposal for privatization will never have the votes to pass. Yet we keep considering short-term extensions that are damaging to the aviation community, particularly the airports that need certainty in planning their infrastructure projects, and they will be, first and foremost, to improve the safety for our air travelers.

A 6-month extension, in my view, is too short to provide the certainty that is needed. The grant process, at the Department of Transportation, will be ongoing, but no airport can plan based upon whether the FAA is going to be authorized 6 months from now.

I have come to the floor numerous times before to talk about how Kansas is a special place when it comes to aviation. Kansas has built three out of every four general aviation aircraft since the Wright brothers first flew at Kitty Hawk. Today, over 40,000 Kansans earn a living in manufacturing, operating, and servicing our world's

highest quality aircraft. These aviation businesses and their employees depend upon our ability to compete in a global marketplace, an ability which is significantly damaged when we are putting off passage of a long-term reauthorization bill not just once but year after year.

While general aviation manufacturing is our State's largest industry, it is not just those manufacturers and their employees who understand the problems and ramifications with privatization of air traffic control.

I have often said on the floor that I think at times I get categorized, as a Senator from Kansas, as a State that manufactures lots of airplanes and that my views are therefore solely related to the airplane manufacturing sector. I certainly bring that perspective to Congress, and I speak often and work often on behalf of the manufacturing of aircraft. But any of us who represent airports and communities that are not the largest in the country ought to oppose the privatization of air traffic control.

This is not the traditional rural-versus-urban argument that occurs sometimes around here. This is not about little towns versus everybody else. This is about everyone except for the largest cities with the largest airports and the most travelers. So this is not about just Garden City, KS; or Manhattan, my hometown; or Hays, my former hometown. This is about Wichita and Topeka. This is about Kansas City. All but the absolutely largest airports would be damaged by the privatization of air traffic control.

We have said this many times. It is important to the manufacturers, but it is also important to the survival of communities that I represent and that all of my colleagues represent across the country.

Everywhere I go in Kansas, I am reminded that ATC privatization is a bad idea. The idea that we would allow a 13-member private board to make decisions about the future of airports and air transportation across the country is troublesome. Moreover, even the major providers of aircraft and avionics equipment that reside in Kansas—those businesses that create thousands of jobs in my State—are perhaps even more outspoken against privatization than anyone. These businesses know that privatization of the Nation's most complex air system is a solution without a problem that will ultimately create lots of problems, lots of unintended consequences.

Americans expect leadership from their elected officials in Washington. At a time when partisan dysfunction puts up constant barriers in the legislative process, we should be doing everything we can to find common ground and pass legislation that will have immediate positive impacts on our economy. For so much of the FAA reauthorization last year and again this year, we found that common ground—except for this one divisive

issue that we know ultimately will not become law. It impedes the opportunity to do what, without almost any exception, Members of the House and Senate have agreed to.

True FAA reform will dramatically increase the ability of American aviation manufacturers and businesses to create jobs. This short-term extension represents yet another regrettably missed opportunity to do just that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO ROZANN KIMPTON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, every week, I have been coming to the floor to talk about my State and what I think makes it the greatest State in the country and in the world. We like to celebrate and recognize somebody in Alaska who is making a difference for their community, for the State, and for the country, and we like to call these extraordinary Alaskan individuals our Alaskan of the Week.

Like many of us here in the Senate, I spent a lot of time recently in August traveling throughout my home State, and wherever I went, I met strong, generous, versatile Alaskans, many of whom survive in some of the harshest conditions on the planet but still have time for their communities and their families and their neighbors. But, like in many places around the country, I also saw the scourge of addiction that is tearing apart communities and tearing apart families.

We have all heard how addiction is often passed down through generations. There are many in Alaska and many throughout the country who are determined to break this intergenerational cycle of addiction and many who are succeeding. We don't always hear about them, but there are many. So this afternoon I wish to introduce my colleagues to 81-year-old Rozann Kimpton, our Alaskan of the Week, who is doing that and a lot more.

Rozann and her husband moved to Alaska from Washington State in 1958, and they immediately settled in. They ran businesses together, including a small retail store, and then they got into construction and contracting. They raised two children. They were a team. About 10 years ago, they moved to a large plot of land in Wasilla, AK—over 50 acres—to spend time in retirement, and they made plans: gardening, traveling around the world. But it didn't take long for Rozann to recognize that something was wrong—very wrong—in her family, particularly with what was happening to two of her great-grandchildren, Luke and Amanda. They were living in a situation that was harmful to them and they needed help.

At this point, Rozann's husband was also suffering from his own illness—cancer—but the two of them took Luke and Amanda in and adopted them. "It was the only way to make sure they were safe," Rozann said. "And when a kid needs to be taken care of, and when

a mommy and daddy can't, you do it," she said. "I couldn't live with myself knowing that they were in danger and I did nothing." This is Rozann talking about her two great-grandkids.

That was 10 years ago. Rozann, now a widow, lives with Amanda and Luke on that big plot of land in Wasilla. Amanda is a senior in high school, and Luke is an eighth grader. They are great kids. As a matter of fact, I just had the opportunity to visit with them in my office yesterday.

Amanda loves geometry. She plays a violin with the Wasilla Youth Orchestra and drums and dances with the Intertribal Drum Group in Anchorage. Luke's big dream is to join the Navy, which I think is great.

The three of them volunteer in their community, helping foster kids. Amanda makes blankets for the foster kids. Every Sunday, they drive over 100 miles to attend Emanuel Presbyterian Church in Anchorage, which is like a second home to all of them.

In addition to all of this, Rozann is the area volunteer coordinator for Volunteers of America Grandfamilies, a grandparents support group. Once a month, she has a picnic for her fellow grandparents and other parents who have adopted kids. The kids play games, eat hamburgers and hot dogs, and adults sit around the campfire, share stories, and encourage one another in all the work they are doing. She is in constant contact with about 25 families, and whenever she spots someone she thinks might need help with their kids, their grandkids, or their great-grandkids, she gives them her card.

"I am not a shy person," she said. "I will talk to anyone who looks like they are struggling, and I am particularly good at spotting grandparents who are raising kids"—grandparents who are raising kids throughout our great Nation.

As the opioid crisis is hitting Alaska, just like it is hitting so many other States, she is seeing more and more grandparents stepping in. "It is a plague," she said, "but the most important thing is to help the children as early as possible, and to do what we can to make sure they don't carry on that plague."

Rozann Kimpton is here right now in Washington, DC. As I mentioned, I had a great meeting with her yesterday. She is here to attend a banquet where her efforts will be recognized. She is the 2017 recipient of the Alaska Angels in Adoption Award and will be recognized by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption.

Rozann, thank you for your warmth and for all your hard work for Alaska. Congratulations on your award, and congratulations on being our Alaskan of the Week.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. President, an issue I have been coming to the Senate floor to speak about for the past couple of years is an issue that I don't think we focus on

enough here in the Congress, here in the Senate, and that is the key issue of America's economic growth.

With the exception of national security, strong, robust economic growth is probably the most important issue we can be focused on in this body. We certainly have many challenges in this country, but so many of them are made easier when the American economy is strong, when job opportunities are plentiful and optimism in the future because of that strong economic growth is high.

So how have we been doing over the past decade? I want everyone to take a look at this chart. The answer is, not very well; not very well at all. This chart shows the gross domestic product—GDP—decade after decade through different administrations, Democratic and Republican, over the last several decades. So if we take a look at the chart, we see Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Clinton, Bush 41 and 43, and President Obama. We see where levels have been. We see that over the years, over the decades, the average economic growth is about right here—about 4 percent.

There has been a lot of talk about what has made America great and what makes America great. This is what makes America great: strong, robust, economic growth decade after decade. That is the key.

So what happened over the past decade, right here? If we take a look right here at this red line, that is 3 percent. That is not the traditional level. Traditional levels over 200-plus years of American history are closer to 4 percent. But 3 percent GDP growth is considered OK—not bad, not great, but pretty good, and something we should all aspire to, something we should hit.

When we look at this chart, we see that in the last decade we never hit it, not even 3 percent GDP growth—more like 1.5, 2 percent. As a matter of fact, President Obama is the first President in American history where we never hit 3 percent GDP growth for a year.

I know what some may be thinking. This seems to be a pretty important issue, right? Economic growth last decade not even hitting 3 percent. Why wasn't the press writing about that? We didn't hear many stories in the press about this very important issue—a decade of lost economic growth. Many of us come to the floor to talk about this critical issue, and there is a yawn in the Press Gallery. There is no interest. It is hard to understand why.

One theory I have is that if you look at our country more broadly, these are the numbers—very, very weak growth—but certain places in the country over the last 10 years have actually done very well, especially this city, Washington, DC. It has been growing very strong, with probably 5, 6 percent growth. Some other places, some of the coastal big cities, including New York, San Francisco, and Boston, are all doing well—way higher than 3 percent. They are growing stronger. So the