

Is that what we want to see happen across America? We know what these young people are doing. They are going to school. They are working while going to school. They are teachers. They are nurses. They are involved as first responders and law enforcement. They are in medical school.

The Senator from Texas questions why I am in such a hurry to get this done? I am in a hurry to get this done, and he should join me in understanding that there is a sense of urgency here. There are a lot of rumors flying around here. I am not going to honor any of them as to what might occur, other than to say, when we get Senators who are willing to sit down and accept the principle of the Dream Act, that the principle is that those who were brought here as children, who have grown up in the United States, who have no serious criminal charges in their records, and who have completed school have a chance to become legal and become citizens—that is the fundamental of the Dream Act.

It is a bill I introduced 16 years ago. I am still trying to pass it. There are bills that are not identical but are very similar that accept that premise and have been offered twice by Republicans as well.

So if the Senator from Texas will start with the Dream Act, we can then engage in additional conversations about border security. He can take the draft I gave him last week, which includes, incidentally, 12 provisions from his own bill. The Senator from Texas had a bill drafted on border security. We read it. We picked up 12 of the major provisions and included them in our offer to try to get this done in an expedited way.

I will just tell you this. If any Senators want to come to the floor and say it is not that important, it isn't timely, we need not hurry about this, we can get around to it later, I would like them to come home with me. Maybe they should even go home to their own States and meet with these young people and realize that their lives are on hold because we have put this issue on hold.

For goodness' sake, let us face our responsibilities as Senators. Let's do what we are supposed to do—legislate solutions to problems. The President challenged us. He said: I am going to abolish this program; now Congress, you pass a law to create it. He challenged us. Let us accept the challenge and do it in a bipartisan professional way. That is all I have ever asked for and all I continue to ask for.

Yes, I want it done this calendar year. I don't want excuses about maybe next January or maybe next February, because we know that on March 5, when the deadline hits, it will be a disaster for 1,000 of these young people every single day. Yes, there is a sense of urgency. Yes, there is a need for us to work together. I am going to continue to meet with Republican Senators and Democrats to find a solution,

to find a way through this, and to get it done this month in December. How can we, in good conscience, pass a spending bill giving authority and resources to this administration to go out and arrest and deport these young people and not address the underlying issue of their legality and their future in the United States? That, to me, is obvious.

I hope my colleagues, those of good will and good faith, will join me in making sure that we don't go home for the holidays until we get this job done.

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Madam President, very briefly, the President of the United States went to Utah to announce that he has done something that is going to be challenged in court—and should be—but is virtually unprecedented in the history of the United States. Presidents have the authority, going back to President Theodore Roosevelt, to establish monuments around this country—special land that is set aside because we believe it is important for future generations to have special access to it.

President Obama, before he left office, created the Bears Ears National Monument. It is in San Juan County in Utah. I know a little bit about it. Twenty years ago, I visited this area when it was characterized as the Red Rocks Wilderness, and I introduced a bill to protect it.

Over 20 years, little or nothing happened until President Obama designated a monument. Now comes President Trump, who has made a decision to dramatically eviscerate this monument, to basically eliminate 80 or 90 percent of the land that has been set aside.

It is a beautiful part of America. It is an extraordinary part of America. It is something that most of us know little about, but if you go to the southeastern corner of Utah, you will find tourists from all over the world who come to see the beauty of this region—the Bears Ears region, the Red Rock Wilderness region.

You ask local people: If you didn't set this aside for future generations, if you didn't protect it, what would you do with this land? The people of Utah are the first to tell me: Well, there is not much you can do with it. We don't think there is oil and gas there to be drilled. The uranium efforts have petered out; there is very little of that that is left. There is not much that can be done with it. But if it is preserved, clearly people want to come visit it and be part of this unique American experience.

When I was there just a few weeks ago, there was a group in Moab, UT, in a gift shop. I kind of drew near the group—there were about a dozen of them—and they were all speaking French. These were French tourists who came to this part of Utah not only to spend their money but to see something special.

President Obama said: Let's protect it. Let's make sure that future generations can indeed enjoy it and value it.

President Trump said: No. For 80 or 90 percent of it, let's make it go away.

This is a terrible decision. It is terrible for this section of Utah, it is terrible for our country, and it is terrible for our future. If we do not protect our natural heritage for our kids, grandkids, and their kids and grandkids, then we have walked away from a fundamental responsibility, and I believe we have.

We have a wonderful system across America protecting national parks. If you read the history of some of these national parks, you will know that it was a battle to stop someone who wanted to create a commercial interest there and didn't want it to be protected by the government. In this case, there doesn't appear to be any other economic interest that can really lay claim to this, but there is an effort by the Trump administration to remove the protection anyway. I think that is a serious mistake.

America is not America without its great outdoor spaces—its national parks, its historic monuments—that Congress and Presidents in both political parties have preserved for the benefit of future generations. To diminish our commitment to protecting the natural landscapes and historic places in this country from ruin by exploitation or environmental degradation would constitute a breach of our responsibility both to those who founded this Nation and to those who will inherit it. That is why we are deeply troubled by President Trump's announcement today, which would undermine the preservation of some of the country's most important national monuments and would remove protections for more than 2 million acres of public land—the largest elimination of protected land in the history of the United States of America.

Utah's most cherished national monuments—Bears Ears, which I mentioned, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante—will now be under threat from this new Trump order. Many of these are sacred lands to Native Americans, and they will now be put at risk for desecration and looting. Is that what we want to leave future generations? Is that the honor we are going to give to the lands that were part of the heritage of Native Americans? I think it is a serious mistake.

I hope that some will stand up and speak up about preserving this heritage for future generations.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALVIS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, today I am proud to stand here for the

recognition of the 50-year anniversary of a great organization in Ohio—Alvis. It is in Columbus, OH, and was formerly known as Alvis House. It was founded in Columbus, OH, with a broad mission of helping people in the community through human service programs to promote prosperous lives, with a focus on an individual's potential and not their past.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of working closely with Alvis as they have become a model for reentry programs and treatment service programs with a focus on meeting individual goals—a customized approach—building a successful future, and implementing fundamental change for families and for our communities.

Since its opening in 1967, Alvis has grown from a single 15-bed home helping 60 men a year to an organization of 13 locations throughout Columbus, Chillicothe, Dayton, Lima, and Toledo. It now serves more than 8,000 people annually. This agency has helped provide support and hope to thousands of individuals who are returning to their communities after having spent time in the criminal justice system, as well as offering recovery and developmental disability services that encourage health, growth, and independent citizenship.

Alvis has been the recipient of Federal grants authorized by the Second Chance Act for their work in reentry. As the author of the Second Chance Act when I was in the House of Representatives, I have had the opportunity and the privilege to go to Alvis facilities and to see firsthand the good work that is being done using that legislation. I am proud to have worked with my friend and the corporate president and CEO of Alvis, Denise Robinson, to assist Alvis as it delivers services to Ohioans to turn their lives around so that people can indeed fulfill their God-given potential in life, and they have had a lot of successes.

Alvis recently opened its 14th location, the Alvis Pages Recovery and Treatment Center, in April of this year on the South Side of Columbus to help provide access to treatment and recovery. Alvis continues to lead in its mission to turn lives around 180 degrees.

In my work with regard to the opioid crisis in Ohio, we have looked to this treatment center and looked to the model that they provide other treatment centers to turn those lives around.

I am confident that Alvis will continue these next 50 years to offer these same comprehensive services for overcoming the challenges of transitioning out of the correctional system, treating substance abuse, mental health, trauma, and promoting dependence and accountability for those with developmental disabilities.

I applaud the outstanding commitment of Alvis, its staff, and all those who have been involved in reaching this milestone and making these first 50 years such a success in the lives of so many people.

Madam President, I would also like to speak today about a nomination that is before the Senate right now. Today we will have the first vote on Kirstjen Nielsen, the administration's nominee to be the next Secretary of Homeland Security. I want to talk about why I believe she must be confirmed.

I had the privilege of introducing Kirstjen Nielsen during her nomination hearing in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. In that committee, she received broad bipartisan support, and I hope the Senate can now come together in a bipartisan fashion to confirm her as Secretary so she can get on with the critical work of leading the Department of Homeland Security.

I am delighted we are having a closure vote today—I wish it had been a few weeks ago—and I am looking for a vote to confirm her later this week. I would encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to look carefully at this nomination because we need her there, and it would be great if we had a strong bipartisan vote to send her there. I think she is ready to hit the ground running on day one. I say this because she knows the Department. She knows what the challenges are, and she knows how to address them.

She will be the first Department of Homeland Security nominee ever to have had previous experience at the Department of Homeland Security. She was a Policy Director for the Transportation Security Administration during the George W. Bush administration—that is TSA. She took over that role shortly after the attacks on September 11, 2001, and later served on President Bush's White House Homeland Security Council as the Senior Director for Prevention, Preparedness, and Response. I got to see her good work in that capacity. Most recently, she served as the Department's Chief of Staff for former Secretary John Kelly. She proved herself during the early stages of the administration's transition and experienced firsthand the challenges of managing this diverse and sprawling agency.

With her homeland security experience from those transformative years in the Department, her industry and homeland security consulting experience, and her most recent efforts in this administration, I believe Ms. Nielsen will be a capable leader—needed badly in this ever-evolving threat environment in which we find ourselves.

Throughout her career in government and in the private sector, Ms. Nielsen has developed extensive experience in homeland security strategy, cyber security, transportation security, and emergency resilience—all critical areas for the next Secretary to understand. As we have seen countless times from terror attacks, cyber attacks, and natural disasters, tragedies persist despite our preparation, and we need to remain resilient and responsive

to overcome new challenges and combat these evolving threats. I believe she gets that. She understands it. I believe she is well qualified to lead the Department of Homeland Security as a result.

From our conversations we have had both before and during her nomination hearing, I can say confidently that Ms. Nielsen is committed to addressing the most pressing issues facing our country. She has signaled that she has a full commitment to working with the U.S. Congress on both sides of the aisle to get this done.

There are so many issues this Department faces. For a moment, I would like to talk about one of those issues that is critically important to me and really to every Member in this body that she has made a commitment to addressing and will be able, I think, to make a big difference; that is, the scourge of deadly forms of synthetic heroin that are being shipped into your communities.

Synthetic heroin—usually fentanyl, sometimes carfentanil—is one of the great new threats we face in our communities. It is an example of one of the emerging threats that the Department of Homeland Security and its agency, Customs and Border Protection, must address.

Fentanyl is up to 50 times more powerful than heroin. Carfentanil is even stronger than that. These drugs are increasingly taking people's lives in my home State of Ohio and around the country. Fentanyl is so deadly that as little as 3 milligrams can be lethal to an adult male.

By initial estimates of 2016 statistics, fentanyl deaths in America have increased by 540 percent in the past 3 years. In 2016 alone, more than 20,000 Americans died from fentanyl overdoses.

Tragically, my home State of Ohio is at the center of this national epidemic. In 2015, fentanyl was involved in slightly more than 38 percent of the State's overdose deaths. Last year, that number increased to more than 58 percent. Fifty-eight percent of our drug overdose deaths in Ohio last year involved fentanyl. In the first 2 months of this year—2017—fentanyl was involved in approximately 90 percent of drug overdoses. So this is an emerging threat to all of our communities.

Fentanyl is a threat to every State represented in this Chamber and in every community. While overdose victims are most often the drug users themselves, it has also become a great threat to law enforcement and to children who have been inadvertently exposed—tragically exposed—to this substance.

An example is Chris Greene, a police officer in East Liverpool, OH. He was exposed to fentanyl while performing a routine car search, he thought, earlier this year. He pulled a couple of guys over. When he pulled them over, he noticed a white powdery substance in the car, and being alert to that, he put on

his gloves, he put on a mask, and he proceeded to determine it was fentanyl they had spread around the car to try to hide the fact that they were moving drugs.

When he got back to the police station after the search to book these individuals, Officer Green noticed there was something on his shirt, and he did what any of us would do; he reached down to brush it off of his shirt. Unfortunately, it was fentanyl, and the fentanyl became exposed to his fingers. Just that small amount absorbing through his skin caused him to have an overdose. This is a big guy, 6 foot 2, 220 pounds, great shape, and he fell to the ground unconscious.

Luckily, he was able to get immediate medical assistance at the police station, but it took four doses of Narcan to revive Officer Green. He said at the time he would have died had he been alone. Think if he had gone home to his family and he had hugged one of his kids and his kids had been exposed to that fentanyl.

So this is a great danger, obviously, to our communities generally and to individuals but also to our first responders who are, unfortunately, finding out that these dangerous poisons are more and more of a danger.

Children are also being exposed. This fall, a 12-year-old Columbus boy died as a result of fentanyl exposure. He was at a sleepover for a birthday party when he came into contact with the deadly poison someone had left lying around. He was unconscious by the time paramedics arrived, and he died in the hospital 2 days later.

These synthetic forms of heroin have created a new challenge for law enforcement as they increasingly account for more and more of our overdose deaths. Combating this threat requires solutions from across the Federal Government, along with local, State, and private sector initiatives. We talked earlier about an organization in Ohio that is dealing with this threat that is coming into our communities, and the private sector and nonprofits have a huge role to play but so does the Federal Government, and so does the Department of Homeland Security. Again, Kirstjen Nielsen understands that need. The Department of Homeland Security plays a critical role in countering the significant threat because it comes through the U.S. mail system, and it is Customs and Border Protection officers who are meant to screen those packages that come in through the mail.

Unlike heroin, which enters the U.S. over land, typically from Mexico, manufacturers, mostly in China, ship fentanyl through the U.S. mail directly into our communities. The Federal Government is responsible here. We are supposed to combat the spread of illegal drugs coming through the mail system, but in the case of fentanyl coming from labs in China, the U.S. Postal Service is oftentimes used as a conduit without any check. Drugs should not

be as easy to send as a postcard, and the U.S. mail service should not be able to be exploited as a drug trafficking service.

This is why we have introduced in the Congress legislation called the STOP Act. It is bipartisan. It is sensible. If enacted, it would give Customs and Border Protection officers, along with their law enforcement partners, the tools they need to identify suspicious packages by requiring the U.S. Postal Service to provide advanced electronic data on all of the packages and mail entering the United States. Already information as to what is in the package, where it is from, where it is going, the name of the center is required if you send it through one of the private carrier systems—UPS, FedEx, DHL, and others. Unfortunately, the Postal Service is not required to do that and, as a result, traffickers do what one would think they would do, they choose our U.S. Postal Service to send this poison into our communities, to a post office box, maybe to an abandoned warehouse address.

This fentanyl is being spread throughout our communities. We need to hold the Postal Service to that same standard.

At a recent hearing, Acting Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan voiced his support for reforms like those in the STOP Act and said advanced electronic data would enhance their detection and prevention efforts. I have seen this firsthand. I have visited the sites in Ohio where Customs and Border Protection is asked to screen these packages. When they are with these private carriers, they can find packages, take them offline, and carefully—because it requires a lot of care, given the poisonous nature of the packages—deal with it.

President Trump's opioid commission recently issued its recommendations. They endorsed the STOP Act and called for it to be enacted and implemented into the Commission's final report just a month ago.

At her confirmation hearing last month, Ms. Nielsen voiced her support for the STOP Act. I was pleased to have her commitment to getting this bill into law and implemented by CBP—Customs and Border Protection—so we can keep more of these deadly poisons off our streets.

There is no one solution to the opioid epidemic, but the STOP Act will give law enforcement the tools they need to help stop this synthetic form of heroin from entering our communities in the first place, while also raising the cost of this synthetic heroin. The end result will be saving countless lives.

So to get back to Ms. Nielsen, again, she is eminently qualified for this post and able to address so many of the tough issues we face as a country, including the evolving threats like the fentanyl issue and the terrorism issues we have talked about today. We need her at the Department of Homeland Security. We need her now. She is the

leader we need for this critical and sprawling Department at a time when our homeland security posture has never been more critical, more important.

I hope my colleagues will come together, on a bipartisan basis, and vote Ms. Nielsen out this week as the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to first compliment my colleague from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN, on his leadership on so many different fronts in the U.S. Senate. His leadership is nowhere more important than what he has been doing on the opioid epidemic that is raging through Ohio, Alaska, and almost every State in the country. The STOP Act he just talked about is legislation I have cosponsored, and he is leading on it. It is one of the many things we need to do to really get a handle on this.

This should be a bipartisan issue. The opioid epidemic is ravaging through States, families, and communities. There has been no better leader in the Senate than Senator PORTMAN on these issues so I just want to thank him for that.

Mr. PORTMAN. I thank the Senator.
TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I also want to express appreciation to a number of my colleagues and, again, Senator PORTMAN is certainly one of them. We had an important night the other night with regard to the critical passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I think it is going to be very important legislation to help grow our economy and, finally, get money in the hands of middle-class families and small businesses so we can finally start growing this economy nationally and, back home in Alaska, get my State out of a deep recession that it is in.

There are a lot of Senators who played critical roles. Senators HATCH, PORTMAN, TOOMEY, SCOTT, and so many others, but, in particular, I want to thank the majority leader. There is a provision in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which I think is going to be critical for America and certainly critical for my State, which is to help unlock more of the vast energy resources we have in Alaska, particularly on the coastal plain of the North Slope—what we call the 1002 area of Alaska. That pass is part of this bill. It is something in Alaska we have been working through in a bipartisan manner. Over 70 percent of Alaskans want to get this done. We have been working on it in Alaska for over 40 years to get this done.

I really want to commend and thank the majority leader, MITCH McCANNELL. Over a year ago, he and I sat down to talk about doing this. Every step of the way, his commitment to me and to the people of Alaska to make this happen for my State as well as for our great country—he was there for us.