

workers, their company's plant, equipment, technology, making their workers more productive. So 400 is impressive, but I know it is much larger than that. Thousands of businesses are taking advantage of this and therefore their employers are and therefore you are seeing this increased optimism.

The final example I want to talk about is one that has to do with our communities. I recently visited the University Hospital Rainbow Center for Women and Children in Cleveland, OH—a really impressive new facility they are building. This is a new \$26 million medical facility, and I learned during this visit that it was the new markets tax credit that was key to making this project possible. New markets is a tax incentive to spur economic growth and community redevelopment projects, and it helps to spur private investment, as it did in this case. In this Cleveland case, it spawned significant private investment from foundations and from individuals. This is something that has worked in the cities I represent in Ohio. We fought to preserve the new markets tax credit in the Senate version of the tax legislation, and the final agreement that became law has the new markets tax credit made permanent. That is critical for economic development opportunities like this new university hospital medical center I talked about.

So these benefits from tax reform are not abstract. They are very real. They are extra money in your paycheck, they are more affordable healthcare coverage, they are increased investments in emerging communities, and much more.

As the good news continues to roll in from tax reform, I will keep traveling Ohio, meeting with businesses, families, and workers to discuss ways tax reform can help them achieve a better economic future. A brighter future is really what our tax reform and tax cut legislation was all about.

#### SESTA

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, finally, I want to talk about something else we were working on in Congress to create a brighter future for many Americans. I am talking about our efforts to provide justice for victims of sex trafficking and to hold accountable those online entities, those websites that knowingly facilitate these evil crimes. I am talking about this because, although this week we are focused on these reforms to Dodd-Frank to help our smaller banks make the economy stronger and help individuals and small companies, next week we hope to take up this issue of sex trafficking.

We are closer than ever to getting this legislation passed, and just recently we had some good news in our bipartisan effort. The Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, or SESTA, a bill I introduced with 24 Senators back in August, is gaining momentum in Con-

gress. Last week, the House of Representatives actually offered the SESTA legislation as an amendment on the floor to a broader bill, and it passed by an overwhelming vote—over 300 votes. Just a couple of days later, the White House expressed their support for this legislation.

It is now the Senate's turn to act on this critically important issue, and Leader MCCONNELL—the leadership in the Senate—again has made a commitment to me and my colleagues that we will hold a vote on this sex trafficking legislation, the SESTA legislation, in the next couple of weeks. We now have 67 Senate cosponsors for SESTA. That is not typical around here.

It is a majority of Democrats; it is a majority of Republicans—two-thirds of the Senators in this body. By the way, this is a diverse group with wide-ranging political and ideological backgrounds. They have all signed on to this legislation because they want to be part of the solution. It is a common-sense solution to what is unfortunately a growing problem here in our country and in every State represented here in this body.

Unbelievably, sex trafficking is actually increasing in this country right now. In this century, in this country, sex trafficking is actually increasing. How can that be? What the experts tell us is that it is because of the online presence of these evil websites that are selling women and children online. The ruthless efficiency of social media—of the online presence of these websites—is what is causing this increase.

Victims of sex trafficking in Ohio have told me, as I have met with them: Rob, this has moved from the street corner to the smartphone. One website called backpage.com is the industry leader in online sex trafficking. They are involved in nearly 75 percent of all child trafficking reports that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children receives from the public. Seventy-five percent of the reports that this great organization receives to try to stop sex trafficking relate to this one site.

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations here in the Senate, which I chair, conducted an 18-month investigation into this issue. We looked at what the online presence was and why it was happening. We learned, of course, that backpage.com was by far the biggest problem. We found that backpage not only had the vast majority of the commercial sex traffic on their site, but they had knowingly facilitated and assisted criminal sex trafficking and covered up evidence of those crimes in order to increase their own profits.

For years, unbelievably, we have allowed them to get away with it. I think that is a stain on our national character. I think we need to address it, particularly because we have the opportunity here in the Senate to change a Federal law to help stop this.

Courts have consistently ruled that backpage.com and these other websites

are protected by a Federal law—a law that we passed over two decades ago—called the Communications Decency Act that protects these websites from liability for crimes users commit through their site, no matter how complicit they are in those crimes. It was certainly not the intent of Congress to permit this, but that is how the courts have interpreted it.

Prosecutors and courts from across the country, including 50 State attorneys general, have called on Congress to fix this injustice. In one of the most direct calls that I have seen, a Sacramento judge last year dropped pimping charges against backpage.com, stating: "If and until Congress sees fit to amend the immunity law, the broad reach of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act even applies to those alleged to support the exploitation of others by human trafficking." In other words, this judge is saying that there is now an immunity—a protection under Federal law—that allows these people, even when they are knowingly involved with sex trafficking, to continue to do what they are doing.

Our legislation makes two very simple changes to the Federal law that currently protects websites like backpage in an effort to restore justice.

First, SESTA says that if you are violating a Federal law, the Federal law on trafficking—and that is a law that was in existence long before we started this investigation. It is a law that is well established. If you are violating the Federal law on trafficking, assisting, supporting, or facilitating sex trafficking, and if you are doing it knowingly, which is a very high standard to prove, then you can be held liable and held to account. Again, this is very narrowly targeted legislation to deal with this specific problem.

Second, the legislation will allow State attorneys general—who cannot now but would be able under this legislation—to prosecute websites that violate Federal sex trafficking laws. It is very important because that is where you are going to see most of the action—at the State level, the State prosecutors.

We have tailored this legislation narrowly to ensure no threat to the freedom of the internet but ensure we are getting at this problem and actually dealing with immunity in Federal law.

Sex trafficking survivors, their families, and anti-trafficking advocates have shown great courage by sharing their tragic stories and personal accounts of injustice at the hands of online sex traffickers as we worked with them to develop this narrowly crafted legislation.

In testimony before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and in testimony before the Commerce Committee—which unanimously endorsed this legislation—we heard from victims and their families. We heard from moms who told us about their teenage daughters having been trafficked online.

One mom talked about her daughter who, at 14, was trafficked. She had been missing for 10 weeks. She finally found a photograph of her daughter on backpage. She called and said: I found my daughter. She is on your website. Thank you for taking her off your website. She is 14 years old.

The person at the other end of the line from backpage said: Did you pay for the ad?

The mom said: No, I didn't pay for the ad. That is my daughter.

They said: Then we can't take down the ad.

That is who these people are.

They have shown great courage by coming forward with their stories. Now it is our turn to show courage by coming together and voting on this bill, sending it to the President's desk, and fixing this problem, fixing the Federal law to allow justice for the trafficking victims and to finally hold accountable those who knowingly facilitate these crimes.

We have an opportunity to do something important here to create a better, safer, and more just society. I am hopeful that next week we will have that legislation before this body. We will have the debate. We will pass the legislation and begin to provide these victims of trafficking the justice they deserve and, most importantly, stop women and children from being exploited online.

Thank you, Mr. President.  
I yield back my time.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:06 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 7, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.

#### NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

##### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

LISA PORTER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, (NEW POSITION)

##### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PATRICK FUCHS, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS, (NEW POSITION)

MICHELLE A. SCHULTZ, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS, (NEW POSITION)

##### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

JAMES EDWARD CAMPOS, OF NEVADA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MINORITY ECONOMIC IMPACT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, VICE LADORIS GUESS HARRIS.

##### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

PETER C. WRIGHT, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE MATHY STANISLAUS.

##### DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

MICHAEL J. DESMOND, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE AND AN ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, VICE WILLIAM J. WILKINS.

##### NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

JON PARRISH PEEDE, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HU-

MANITIES FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE WILLIAM D. ADAMS.

##### IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AT THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY IN THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 9333(C) AND 9336(B):

##### To be colonel

ARTHUR W. PRIMAS, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

##### To be colonel

GREGORY J. PAYNE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531 AND 716:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

MICHAEL J. PATTERSON

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

##### To be lieutenant colonel

BRAD R. MATHERNE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED INDIVIDUAL FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE REGULAR AIR FORCE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 531:

##### To be major

JONATHAN A. MORRIS

##### IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY DENTAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

##### To be colonel

ERIC T. ASHLEY  
BRENT W. CLARK  
KEN JO  
ROBERT KEELER  
NAM K. KIM  
BENJAMIN R. METHVIN  
DALE A. NICHOLS  
DAVID OLSON  
KARL RICHARDS  
MICHAEL J. RYHN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

##### To be colonel

GILBERT AIDINIAN  
ROGER A. ANDERSON  
THOMAS J. BACKENSON  
KIMBERLY R. BARRETT  
TYSON E. BECKER  
RONALD D. BEESLEY  
PHILIP J. BERAN  
WILLIAM F. BIMSON  
JAMES B. BRANCH  
JAMES M. BROWN  
KEVIN L. BUFORD  
JASON B. CABOOT  
MICKY S. CHO  
PATRICK J. CONTINO  
CORD W. CUNNINGHAM  
KARLA L. DAVIS  
DAVID H. DENNISON  
JEANNE C. DILLON  
CRAIG P. DOBSON  
JOSEPH G. DOUGHERTY  
JEREMY V. EDWARDS  
THOMAS E. EDLWOOD  
MATTHEW V. FARGO  
ROBERT G. FOWERS  
DUNCAN A. GILLIES II  
BABETTE GLISTERCARLSON  
THOMAS J. HAIR  
BRIAN T. HALL  
DAWN M. HAROLD  
DAVID P. HARPER  
TYLER E. HARRIS  
WAYNE J. HARSHA  
JASON S. HAWLEY  
GARTH S. HERBERT  
MATTHEW H. HEFFER  
AARON B. HOLLEY  
NELSON HOWARD  
PAULA J. JACKSON  
MARK L. JACQUES  
JEFFERSON W. JEX  
DAVID E. JOHNSON  
RYAN J. KENEALLY  
EUGENE H. KIM  
WON I. KIM  
JACQUELINE N. KING  
JUDY KOVELL  
DAVID G. LAWTON  
LLEWELLYN V. LEE  
DOWNING LU  
RODD E. MARCUM  
JENNIFER W. MBUTHIA  
THANE MCCANN  
MICHAEL Y. MCCOWN

SCOTT T. MCNEAR  
STEVE B. MIN  
CRISTIN A. MOUNT  
JEANNIE M. MUIR  
LAUREL A. NEFF  
DANA R. NGUYEN  
CHARLES D. NOBLE  
PETER D. OCONNOR  
STEPHEN W. OLSON  
JEREMY C. PAMPLIN  
IOANNIS B. PAPADOPOULOS  
DINA S. PAREKH  
PARESH R. PATEL  
BENJAMIN K. POTTER  
NICOLE C. POWELL/DUNFORD  
GORDON K. RAINEY  
ROSEANNE A. RESSNER  
PEACHES A. RICHARDS  
ERIC A. ROBERGE  
JEFFERSON R. ROBERTS  
DAVID RUFFIN  
KEVIN E. SCHLEGEL  
MICHELE A. SOLTIS  
MARK E. STACKLE  
NEIL R. STOCKMASTER  
ABRAHAM W. SUHR  
TIMOTHY L. SWITAJ  
NATHAN TAGG  
WILLIAM THOMAS  
CHRISTOPHER TROLLMAN  
DAVID C. VANECHO  
PETER H. VANGEERTRUYDEN  
LUTHER WIEST  
HARRY J. WRIGHT  
BELINDA J. YAUGER  
D011955

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY VETERINARY CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

##### To be major

HAYLEY R. ASHBAUGH  
PEGGY I. BAIN  
CHAD E. BROWN  
CRAIG M. CALKINS  
AMI D. CAMPBELL  
ANDREW J. CHAMBERS  
JAMES S. CORRIGAN  
JENNIFER D. Cwikla  
LINDSEY S. DAY  
HANNAH S. DOLLAR  
NATALIE A. ERKER  
BRIAN D. FARR  
DANIEL K. FINNEGAN  
KIMBERLY M. FOX  
CASSANDRA M. FRAMSTAD  
JEREMY L. GALLMAN  
AMBRE N. GEJER  
JANAS L. GRAY  
ERIN C. HENNESSEY  
AIMEE M. HUNTER  
ASHLEY M. HYDRICK  
DAVID A. JOHNSTON  
AMORY L. KOCH  
KELLY M. MALLETT  
BRITTANY M. MARBLE  
JACOB G. MARCEK  
BRET A. MILLER  
LYNN J. MILLER  
JESSICA A. PERPICH  
LAUREN M. SEAL  
TERESA M. VAUGHN  
WHITNEY E. VICKERY  
SARAH T. WATKINS  
HEATHER L. WEAVER  
JORDAN N. YOLLES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL SPECIALIST CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 624 AND 3064:

##### To be major

JEFFREY A. ANDERSON  
JOSEPH R. BONGIORNO  
ALLEN R. BYRNE  
PATRICK R. CASEY  
ROBYN L. CHALUPA  
DONALD W. CHASE  
WILLIAM R. CONKRIGHT  
CARLY R. COOPER  
ROMMEL B. DAFFON  
PATRICK T. DEPRIEST  
ROBERT C. DICHIERA  
ADRIAN DONIAS  
ABE R. DUMMAR  
BRIAN G. GOMEZ  
JOSEPH N. GOMEZ  
CHARISSE L. GONZALEZ  
SETH GRUBBS  
JAMES R. GRUENEWALD  
DANNY L. HARRIS  
JEFFERY L. HEILESON  
GARY L. HELTON  
ALLISON F. HOWELL  
STEVEN D. HURTLE, JR.  
ADAM R. IRBY  
MACKENZIE J. JONES  
ANNA L. KAUS  
CHRISTINA M. KOREERAT  
NICHOLAS E. KOREERAT  
KURT D. KRESTA  
FRANCES P. LANG  
JOSEPH M. LANG  
DEANA M. LAWRENCE  
KAREN M. LONG