

I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will quit referring to it as “crumbs” because I know the American people don’t see it that way.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to oppose in the strongest terms the nomination of Patrick Pizzella as Deputy Secretary of Labor.

With this nomination President Trump is once again breaking his promise to put workers first. Mr. Pizzella has a record that is time and again at odds with the goals of the very Department he would help to lead as Deputy Secretary. His track record is one of not merely failing workers but of failing to enforce laws to protect the health and safety of workers, seeking to diminish workers’ rights and protections, and undermining the unions that represent and fight for them.

In fact, his record includes working with convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff on behalf of causes that are counter to the mission of the Department of Labor.

In the 1990s, Congress was moving to expand labor and immigration protections to the Northern Marianas Islands, a U.S. Territory, to end the operation of sweatshops that did not follow Federal labor laws. The law at the time let companies bring in foreign workers to toil under inhumane conditions. The workers were underpaid. They were forced to sign contracts signing away their rights to protest labor conditions, and some were even coerced to have abortions.

The companies operating under these inhumane conditions were able to print the words “Made in the U.S.A.” on their products.

While Congress was looking to take action to change the law so we could better protect workers, Pizzella was working with Abramoff to coordinate all-expense-paid trips for dozens of Republican lawmakers and staff and seeking to maintain the sweatshop status quo.

Patrick Pizzella chose not to work for workers but for corporations. These efforts are not just counter to the mission of the Department of Labor, they are counter to our national values.

The rest of Mr. Pizzella’s record shows that he has taken equally extreme positions throughout his career. Take, for example, his radical record as the sole employee of the Conservative Action Project, a far-right group funded by billionaire donors like the DeVos family, or his record when he last served in the Department of Labor. Under his leadership, the Department

of Labor cut its budget in part by cutting down its own employees’ collective bargaining rights and decreasing official time.

Then there is his long record championing anti-union policies and arguing to limit collective bargaining rights.

At the Federal Labor Relations Authority, Pizzella not only ruled consistently against workers and unions, but he repeatedly broke with longstanding policy by calling out the names of individual workers in his decisions. He chose to call out defendants by name and put them in the public spotlight. The pattern of Mr. Pizzella’s anti-worker ideology is clearly unchanged today. Throughout his career, Mr. Pizzella’s record has been alarmingly consistent. From his years serving as the right hand to Jack Abramoff until now, he has shown that he is not going to fight for workers. He will fight against them.

It would be irresponsible to put a man with such a strong track record of anti-worker conviction a tweet away from leading the Department of Labor. It is unconscionable that someone of Mr. Pizzella’s background would be the No. 2 leader at the Department of Labor. It is unacceptable that he could be in line to serve as Acting Secretary should Secretary Acosta leave the Department.

I strongly oppose his nomination. I will be voting against him, and I encourage our colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from Colorado.

OPIOID CRISIS

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, over the past couple of weeks Congress and the Senate had its State work period, and during that time we go back to our State and travel, listening to our constituents. I had the incredible opportunity to go to Colorado and spend time on the Front Range, on the I-25 Corridor, where the vast majority of the population of Colorado lives, and also spent some time in Western Colorado, which most people identify as being where they travel to Colorado, with the ski resorts, mountains, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the Great Sand Dunes National Park.

I also had a chance to visit some of the smaller communities in Southern Colorado, including an area known as the San Luis Valley, where some of the longest living Colorado families have farms. There are families and businesses.

The focus of this visit was about how we grow the economy in the San Luis Valley, the Eastern Plains, and the Western Slope—areas that haven’t seen as much economic growth as, perhaps, Denver, Fort Collins, or Colorado Springs.

I also wanted to spend some time getting into the community and talking about a couple of the issues they face when it comes to the opioid crisis that this country faces. Over the past sev-

eral years, a great deal of attention has been paid to prescription drug addiction and to prescription drug overdoses.

My home State of Colorado actually has an average that exceeds the national average when it comes to prescription addiction and overdose. We are losing a person in Colorado to drug overdose every 36 hours—far too many people. In our rural communities, it is not just the wealthy who are immune or the poor who are immune or the wealthy who are affected or the wealthy who are affected. It is everyone—wealthy, poor, low- and high-income. The opioid crisis and prescription drug addiction have affected every nook and cranny of our communities.

The attention that has been paid to the addiction crisis in this country has resulted in some of the greatest bipartisan achievements Congress has had over the past several years. The passage of the 21st Century Cures Act will expedite new treatment methods through the FDA and provide research treatment dollars for the opioid crisis and the prescription drug crisis and addiction.

It also led to passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, legislation that had great bipartisan support. People on both sides of the aisle worked on this legislation together to pass a bill to address what is happening to our communities.

Every single one of us has a story about somebody close to us, near to us, perhaps a friend or relative—probably both—who has fallen victim to prescription drug addiction and opioid addiction. Of course if you end up with a prescription drug addiction, that one pill might be \$60 or \$80, but you can go out on the streets and find heroin for \$10 to \$15. Now we see the rise of heroin replacing prescription drugs and you see the cycle. The drug dealers have figured out a way to lace cocaine with fentanyl so that it becomes a little bit more addictive and so people are hooked on cocaine more than they already are.

You know the dangers of fentanyl, a synthetic drug so powerful that you can’t have a dog sniff for it at the Post Office because it would kill the animal.

During these roundtables that were held in the San Luis Valley about opioids, I learned a couple of things. In Alamosa, CO, I learned that about 90 percent of the jail population in Alamosa is addicted to drugs. At the same roundtable, we talked about the challenges that rural communities have in treatment. We know that if a police officer or law enforcement officer or paramedic finds somebody who is overdosed and they are revived with Narcan, yes, you saved their life. You brought them back, but what happens after that? They are left to their own devices. Do they return to that abuse? Do they return to that cycle of overdose? Without treatment, yes, they will.

We learned in Swedish Medical Center Englewood, CO, the Front Range

suburb of Denver, that 1 out of every 10 visitors to the emergency room of people who are revived by Narcan or some other treatment after an overdose will be dead within a year. So 1 out of 10 who come into an emergency room will be dead within a year.

We know that there has been great success in finding alternatives to opioid medication. In fact, Colorado emergency rooms and the Colorado Hospital Association, working together with a number of hospitals, developed a program called Alternatives to Opioids, or ALTO, which is a program that we actually introduced legislation on—Senator BOOKER, myself, Senator BENNET, and others—to try to make sure that emergency rooms don't just turn to opioid medication but find other alternatives because there are other alternatives. You don't just have to prescribe an opioid-based medication.

As a result, opioid prescriptions out of the emergency room have decreased by 36 percent over the 6-month course of this pilot program in Colorado. Those are remarkable results. We introduced legislation to mimic the same thing and to learn best practices at the Federal level so that hospitals around the country can work together, share those best practices, identify what works, and use them.

We have to reform the Medicaid Program so there is no incentive for doctors to overprescribe addictive medication. In Alamosa, physicians we talked to are entering into contracts with their patients. At San Luis Valley Health Regional Medical Center, they are entering into contracts with patients about the responsibility that goes with taking these powerful, powerful drugs.

We found new ways to make sure that the pill mills are being discovered and abandoned. We try to make sure that people can communicate with each other on how these treatments work.

While I was in Colorado, we talked about the devastation that drugs are having on their small communities. We learned about a group of high schoolers who are talking to other high schools about the dangers of addiction and prescription and drug overdose. They are trying to work with each other to stop the cycle and to make sure that people who need help find help and hopefully will avoid it in the first place.

Perhaps, one of the most frightening things that I heard during this roundtable—being a parent with three children of my own, I often worry about what happens to them when they go to school and what pressures they face. Two of them are young now. Our daughter is 14, and she will be entering high school. I worry about the pressures they will face from their peers. I worry about them, and I worry about what happens to our community and to their friends with what is around them. But I never thought that I would hear what I heard in the San Luis Valley.

We were talking about prescriptions and reimbursement from Medicaid. One of the providers brought up a challenge

that they had with getting reimbursement. I later learned from a pharmacist that it may simply be a coding problem, and if it were coded correctly, the reimbursement would occur.

This is what this provider said. They were trying to make sure Medicaid could reimburse for the nasal spray of Narcan so that children could administer it to their parents when they overdosed, because it is easier for a young child or a little child to administer a nasal spray than to give an injection.

Kids are given nasal spray so they can revive their parents. If that parent goes to the emergency room at Swedish hospital in Denver, CO, revived by that child, 1 in 10 of those parents revived will not come back again because they will be dead.

We have done a lot of work in this country, and we have a lot more work to do when it comes to opiate addiction and crisis. We have a lot of work to do in this Congress to come together and find ways to stop this—to break the cycle, to make sure it is easier to prescribe the drugs that will help instead of create addictions.

We have talked to people who said they have to have 8 hours of training and certification, which makes it impossible for certain drugs to be administered by a physician in the emergency room because they don't have time to comply with the paperwork. They actually would rather prescribe this drug than the opiate-based drug because the opiate-based drug, they know, would create the possibility of addiction. Yet this other drug wouldn't. There are more barriers to prescribe the drug that wouldn't cause the harm than the drug that would cause the harm. So we have a lot of work to do. These aren't Republican issues or Democratic issues. They are our families' issues. They are our friends' issues. They are our communities' issues.

I will end it with this story. One of the healthcare professionals we talked to told a story of their son who was a golfer—an athlete, loved to golf. He was injured golfing, so they wanted to make sure their son was cared for so he could recover and go on to a golf career or whatever career he had in front of him. They took their son to the doctor. Their son was given Vicodin to address the pain from the injury. At this point in the story, the mother started to cry because she feels guilty and responsible for the very first treatment that led down a path of addiction and the eventual death of their son. All this mom wanted to do was help, and she now feels the blame of the powerful drug that led to the addiction and death of their son. It is not a unique story. That story has been shared far too many times around the country, and yet here we are once again talking about it.

So I encourage my colleagues, let's continue the great work we have already done. Let's do more. Let's work together, and let's make sure we can find solutions this country will be proud of. We will know this when our

communities recover and people stop dying.

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.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Pizzella nomination expire at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Pizzella nomination; further, 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; finally, that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to each vote.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

FISCAL YEAR 2018 INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I am putting a hold on the Fiscal Year 2018 Intelligence Authorization Act, as currently drafted, for two reasons.

The bill marked up by the Senate Intelligence Committee included three amendments I offered, one of which required that the Director of National Intelligence, working with the Department of the Treasury, produce a report on the threat to the United States from Russian money laundering. My first objection to the current version of the bill is based on a change to that provision which downgrades responsibility for the report and removes the Department of the Treasury. The critical importance of this issue to our national security requires the highest level responsibility within the intelligence community. It also requires the direct involvement of the Department of the Treasury to ensure that all the Department's financial intelligence resources, including those that fall outside the intelligence community, are brought to bear.

My second objection, as I explained in my minority views to the bill in committee, is that it includes a provision stating that it is the sense of Congress "that WikiLeaks and the senior