

power. We have a lot lobbyists. We have a lot of abilities to stop you in the committee.

Yet, through persuasion and, frankly, through the personal testimony of victims and survivors who were willing to come forward and courageously share their stories, we were able to prevail. Today, it was a victory—not for this body, not for the legislative process, but it was a victory for those victims and those survivors.

One mom told me today: This means my granddaughter won't have to worry about this issue. It means that when my kid goes to the mall, I don't have to worry as much about what might happen, who might try to take her into this web of trafficking.

My hope is that this legislation will be able to curb the online trafficking in a significant way. We are already seeing the results of that. I was told today, in fact, that websites that trafficked people online are shutting down all over America because they don't want to be sued, because they are losing their immunity. It is not affecting the freedom of the internet, but it is affecting those evil websites that were engaged in criminal activity and hiding behind section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. I am told that as many as 80 percent of those trafficking websites have shut down just in the last several days because they don't want to be subject to these lawsuits.

We also had something else that was very interesting happen this week. The Department of Justice went after backpage.com. They actually indicted seven individuals. If you look at the indictment, which I have here—you can find this by going on the Justice Department website, I am sure; it is in the district court in Arizona—you will see that they named seven individuals. These are the same seven individuals we named in our report. They also used the information from our report about the fact that backpage was changing ads, editing ads. In other words, they were knowingly allowing ads about underage girls to be run because they wanted the profits. That is exactly what is talked about in this indictment.

The work of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations was very important because it enabled us to provide to the Justice Department information they used for these indictments. We provided that information 10 months ago, and the indictments came out in the last several days.

My hope is that now, because this law passed, we will see a lot more prosecutions because we have now allowed State prosecutors and attorneys general around the country and local prosecutors, district attorneys, and county prosecutors—who are the ones who ultimately are going to be much more effective and more able to go after this kind of activity—to do so.

Backpage has been in existence for 14 years. Until this week, the Federal

Justice Department had not made these indictments. It was great that they did it. It is also about time, in my view. Now we have this tool to allow other prosecutors to be more aggressive, to do what should have been done years ago—to save the lives of so many girls, women, and boys whose lives have been taken off track because of the trauma associated with this. We also now have the opportunity for the victims themselves to file lawsuits.

This is already having a chilling effect. In other words, it is already taking down these websites that don't want to be sued. They know our legislation—although very narrowly crafted—applies to them because they are knowingly involved in, supporting, assisting sex trafficking.

I think this is a victory for the victims, the survivors, and, maybe most importantly, the potential future victims. It is also an opportunity for us to celebrate something that this Chamber accomplished in a bipartisan way, going through the right process, doing the research, coming up with the facts, narrowly crafting legislation that works, which doesn't have a negative impact, but in fact, it helps to change behavior. We are already seeing it.

My hope is that we will do more of that around here. We have many other issues to address. Earlier, we talked about the opioid crisis. Congress passed some good legislation, but we need to do more.

We have an issue with getting people back to work who are in the shadows of our economy, some of whom have a felony record, some of whom are addicted to opioids, some of whom don't have the skills to engage in a modern economy. That is a huge challenge. To me, it is unbelievable that we have so many people who are in our country but not in our labor force. Our labor force participation rate, as economists call it, is as low as it has ever been for men in the history of our country. There are probably 9 million men between 25 and 55 who are able-bodied and not working today. That is wrong.

There are many issues we need to address. If we can do those studies in the same way and come up with sensible solutions based on research, based on good practices, keep it not just bipartisan but nonpartisan, and say: Let's get the politics out of this, and let's try to figure out how to help people—which is our job around here; that is what we were elected to do—maybe we can make progress in a number of different areas.

Today, at the signing ceremony for this legislation, the SESTA legislation, I had the opportunity to see a friend of mine, Theresa Flores, who runs a group called Save Our Adolescents From Prostitution, S.O.A.P. the reason she uses the acronym S.O.A.P. is that Theresa, who is a survivor—she was trafficked years ago and now has a passion for this issue. She calls her organization S.O.A.P. because she goes to major events around the country, sporting

events, where there tend to be an increase in trafficking. What she does is she goes to the hotels and asks them to put a bar of soap in the bathroom. On that bar of soap, she has listed the national hotline for sex trafficking. A girl can call that number and have someone come rescue her, and she can escape from her trafficker.

That simple act of making these bars of soap and getting hotels to place them in these bathrooms has been remarkably effective. Think about it. These girls or women may have no other time where they have privacy, where they don't have the trafficker with them, where they are not feeling under duress. When they have their private moment in the bathroom, they see the number. Many of them have called that number and have been able to escape this life and get back to a productive life, with treatment, with support, with the kind of longer term recovery that is needed to get through the trauma, to get through, in many cases, the drug addiction. Drugs are involved in this, as you can imagine, as a way to make these women, girls, and boys dependent. In fact, in Ohio, unfortunately, that is a common practice, is that drugs are involved.

Theresa Flores has done something incredible. She has channeled her frustration and all of the trauma she went through into something very constructive. She was there today, and her comment to me was that, by this act, by passing this law, we are going to save lives, and we are going to enable future generations to not go down the tragic and dark road she had to go down. That should make us feel good in this Chamber. It should make us feel good for those whose lives can be helped through this and for those victims to at least have the opportunity to have their day in court, to be able to seek justice.

I thank the President of the United States for signing the legislation today. I thank Ivanka Trump in particular for her support on the legislation all along the way. I hope this legislation will be a model for others to come.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:15 a.m., Thursday, April 12; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. Finally, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Pizzella nomination under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:15 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before

the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:54 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 12, 2018, at 9:15 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 11, 2018:

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

JOHN F. RING, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD FOR THE TERM OF FIVE YEARS EXPIRING DECEMBER 16, 2022.