

6-year extension, which would be the longest extension ever. I think that is very important.

I heard from some families last week in Ohio who are wondering: Are you guys going to actually provide us with the certainty that our kids can continue to receive the treatment they are getting?

These are children who have serious health problems and who need that kind of care and rely on CHIP to provide it.

For all the disagreements we have in this Chamber—and there are plenty of them—there will be healthy and spirited debate on lots of issues later today, I am sure. This is one on which we can come together and agree that children should have that basic healthcare.

I came to the Senate floor last month—back in December—to strongly urge my colleagues and the leadership on both sides of the aisle to take the politics out of this and get CHIP done, get the long-term authorization done, in the last spending bill. That was not done. In fact, it was just a short-term extension of CHIP that basically coincides with the spending bills. That was disappointing. I said so at the time. It was not done last time. That was a mistake. Now we have the opportunity to do it. Let's take that opportunity. I am here to once again say, let's act to provide that long-term stability in the program.

Again, I am encouraged by what I hear—that the House of Representatives is likely to include that stability to ensure that children everywhere can receive adequate and affordable healthcare. The House 6-year extension would also return CHIP to a traditional Federal-State partnership, which has been a bipartisan effort, and provide additional protections for low-income children and more flexibility for the States.

There are some changes to the program and some reforms to the program that have been bipartisan through committee, and I am hopeful that will be part of it as well.

The House bill that includes this CHIP extension—it would be the longest extension since the creation of the program more than 20 years ago. Instead of these short-term ones, we are going to have a long-term extension, if we can pass this. By doing it long term, the Congressional Budget Office says we will actually save taxpayers \$1 billion. Having that predictability and certainty—not having the start-and-stop nature of CHIP—saves taxpayers money.

Is this CR perfect in terms of healthcare? No. There are other things we should do as well. We can do that with regard to the longer term spending bill we will probably be doing a couple of weeks from now or a few weeks from now or whenever we come to the end of whatever the continuing resolution is tomorrow.

We do need to find long-term funding solutions for community health cen-

ters, for instance. Again, that has been bipartisan in the past. These centers have been very effective in dealing with issues that relate to our communities, health issues, such as opioid addiction. Community health centers have been very helpful in providing treatment to people, particularly in rural areas that don't have access to other healthcare treatment centers. We should provide them with that long-term funding and certainty.

I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will vote to extend these important health insurance programs for our children. Again, CHIP stands for Children's Health Insurance Program. It should not be a bargaining chip for other political purposes. Let's get that done. This is a chance for everybody to ensure that we have that certainty for our children and help them to live up to their God-given potential in life.

STOP ENABLING SEX TRAFFICKERS ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I want to talk about another vulnerable group of Americans. This is an issue that doesn't relate to the looming government shutdown or the spending bill that will avoid that shutdown, but it relates to another issue that Congress has the opportunity to address this month.

January is Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Last Thursday was National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. We had a lot of people here in town talking about that issue.

I think everybody in this Chamber would agree with me that we live in a great country. We are blessed to be Americans. In this age of rapid scientific, medical, and technological innovation, we have been able to change the world in positive ways. That is good. But something else is happening that is discouraging; that is, in this country, in the 21st century, we are actually seeing an increase in a part of human trafficking, and that is heart-breaking. This is sex trafficking that is occurring in our country. Often it involves children, underage, who are being sold much like property. Experts tell us that this increase is happening primarily for one reason and one reason alone, and that is because of the internet. It is sort of the dark side of the internet. It is a ruthlessly efficient way to conduct this trafficking business.

This is a stain on our national character. It is something we should all be involved with, Republican and Democrat alike, all of us as Americans, to say: Let's push back. Let's not allow our country, during this period of so many positive technological changes, to use this technology—in this case, online websites selling people—in a way that devastates these families and creates so many dislocations in our communities. Traffickers are using the internet because of the fact that Con-

gress—the House and the Senate—passed legislation 21 years ago that they are able to hide behind. They have immunity under the Federal law called the Communications Decency Act. Ironically, it was actually put in place to push back against child pornography—in other words, to protect children from viewing pornography. It is being used now to say: Well, we don't have responsibilities as websites even if we knowingly are selling children online. Can you imagine that?

Our legislation to deal with that is something we have been working on for a couple of years. We had a 2-year investigation on this online trafficking. It focused a lot on one website—an evil website that sells people online and knowingly has been providing ads out there for underage girls and boys—backpage.com. As we looked into it and did more research, it became clear that even though they were doing this and even though there were people suing them because of it, none of the lawsuits were successful—whether from prosecutors or victims, whether criminal suits or civil suits—because of this immunity they were claiming under Federal law.

We found out that backpage.com—this one website—was responsible for about 75 percent of all child trafficking reports that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was receiving. In other words, the great majority of this was happening on this one website. We found out there has been a dramatic increase in trafficking because of this ruthless online efficiency.

When we got through our investigation, we also found out that this website actually knew that some of these ads were related to children and yet published them anyway. They went so far as to try to, as they called it, “clean” the ads for illegal transactions. Someone would place an ad, pay for the ad, and then backpage would say: You need to change this ad a little bit because you are using words like “schoolgirl” or “cheerleader,” which indicates they are underage.

In other words, they knew these kids were underage. Yet they edited the ads and placed the ads anyway and took the profit. That is what we are up against.

The cost to these families, the human suffering that results from this, is incalculable. I met with victims all around the State of Ohio and some from other States who have come here, as they did last week for this rally. Can you imagine being in that situation as a parent?

Kubiki Pride, who was here last week, had her 14-year-old daughter go missing. She was a teenager. Her mom was stricken with grief and concern over her. After 10 weeks, she couldn't find her anywhere. Finally, somebody said: You ought to look on this website called backpage because they are selling girls online. God forbid, they were right, and she found her daughter. She

found several photographs of her daughter—not photographs she wanted to see, but on the other hand, there was her daughter alive. She said: My first reaction was relief that she was alive. Then, of course, I called backpage, and I said: I found my daughter. She is on your site. She is 14 years old. Please take her ad down.

Backpage said: Did you pay for the ad?

She said: No, I didn't pay for the ad. That is my daughter. She is 14 years old.

They said: No, we can't take down the ad. You didn't pay for it.

Can you imagine?

She was eventually reunited with her daughter. And there is a film called "I am Jane Doe" in which she and other women, mothers and young women, are featured. You can see more about her story and what a brave woman she is because she is now standing up to it. She filed a lawsuit, but the lawsuit was not successful because the judge said there is this immunity.

By the way, the courts that have ruled that these websites are protected by this Federal law have said that Congress ought to do something about that. Most recently, last August, a Sacramento judge dropped charges against backpage, 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."

To me that is an invitation for Congress to act, saying: We get it; they are exploiting human beings online, but this Federal law gives them immunity.

This immunity was put in place 21 years ago in an effort to try to ensure that we could have a free internet, and that is very important, but it was never intended to provide immunity to illegal activity like this—certainly not to keep people in the business of sex trafficking.

That injustice is why we introduced our legislation. It is called the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act, or SESTA. I introduced it with Senators BLUMENTHAL, MCCAIN, McCASKILL, CORNYN, HEITKAMP, and others. Senators THUNE and NELSON took this bill through the Commerce Committee late last year.

We had a spirited debate in that committee, and it ended up coming out of the committee with a unanimous vote. Why? Because after hearing from the victims, after hearing from the experts on both sides, the Senators said: Whoa. This doesn't make any sense. As Senators, it is our responsibility to change this law.

It provides justice for victims of online sex trafficking because they will have the opportunity to sue. It holds these websites accountable that knowingly facilitate crimes. It also helps in terms of prosecutions because the State prosecutors now—the AGs, the local prosecutors at the State level—

will be able to have access now to the courts to be able to take on these websites and, again, hold them accountable. The prosecutions, again, have been thwarted because of this immunity.

These are very narrow changes. They don't affect the freedom of the internet at all. In fact, I would argue it helps to ensure a free internet. To take care of these bad actors and by holding these folks accountable, it is going to provide the justice the victims deserve.

It is a fair and commonsense approach, and that is why it has the support not just of the Members I have mentioned but actually, now, 66 or 67 Members of the U.S. Senate. That is out of 100 Members. That is a rare thing to have that kind of support. It has the majority of the Republicans on board. It has the majority of the Democrats on board.

It is a fair and commonsense approach that is going to make a real difference in the lives of the people we represent. It will be effective at curbing this increase in trafficking that we see online. Every day we don't act, there are more women and more children who are being trafficked unnecessarily.

It also has the support of an extraordinary coalition of law enforcement organizations, anti-trafficking advocates, survivors, faith-based groups, civil rights communities, major businesses, and even some members of the tech community that initially pushed back against this legislation. Looking at it, I think many of them realized this is not a defensible position to say we shouldn't amend this Federal law that is providing immunity to these bad actors.

Members of the U.S. Senate who have cosponsored the bill, including colleagues of mine who are in the Senate Chamber this afternoon, are saying: I want to be part of the solution. They are showing some courage, and I appreciate that. People who have really shown courage are these survivors—these children and these women who have been trafficked—and they need our help.

We need 60 votes to pass most things around here. In this case, we will have some objections, apparently, and so having 66 or 67 supporters of this legislation is a key number. It enables us to ensure that we can get this onto the floor and passed on the floor. So why are we waiting? We shouldn't wait. We should move this month, during Human Trafficking Awareness Month, Human Trafficking Prevention Month. We should move because it is the right thing to do for these victims and those who might be victims between now and when we act. It is the right thing to do because it will create a safer and a better and a more just society. Elected officials like us are elected to do just that.

There were hundreds of sex trafficking survivors on Capitol Hill last week, and I met with them. The stories

will break your heart. Some were the parents, some were trafficking victims themselves. They have shown great courage by sharing their stories, bringing their tragedy public, and now we owe them the opportunity to get this legislation passed, to ensure that we can protect some of the most vulnerable among us.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Indiana.

PAIN-CAPABLE UNBORN CHILD PROTECTION ACT

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise to talk about an issue that is very important to Hoosiers: protecting our unborn children. Right now, Hoosiers from across the State of Indiana are traveling to Washington, DC, to take part in tomorrow's March for Life. This annual event brings together the unsung heroes of the life movement—those who have dedicated their lives to saving innocent children.

Now, despite what is often portrayed in the media, life-affirming principles are supported by a majority of Americans. A poll by POLITICO and the Harvard T.H. Chan School for Public Health showed that 58 percent of Americans—almost three in five Americans—oppose allowing Medicaid funding to be used for abortion.

According to the Quinnipiac University polling, 60 percent of Americans, including 46 percent of Democrats, support Federal legislation limiting abortion after 20 weeks.

I am proud to cosponsor the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This act would protect unborn children at 20 weeks postfertilization—the point at which scientific evidence proves abortion inflicts pain.

It is estimated that this commonsense legislation will save roughly 12,000 to 18,000 babies annually, and it will not apply, incidentally, to cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is at risk.

Before being elected to the U.S. Senate, I sat on the board of directors of Hannah House. This is in Bloomington, IN, where I live. It offers women loving support during pregnancy.

I further spent 2 years as a smalltown attorney in little Paoli, IN, and I offered free legal services for parents who wanted to adopt. So you can see why I am very passionate about helping children find loving homes and helping caring adults become parents. I have seen firsthand, through my own experiences, the importance of advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

The United States is one of only seven countries in the world that allows abortions after 20 weeks. This list includes human rights violators like China and North Korea. This isn't company we want to keep.

During this time, when there is principled disagreement on so many