

pills, because sometimes they are reformulated to make it look like prescription pills.

That fentanyl is the killer. It is not that those other drugs can't cause you to overdose and die also, but with regard to fentanyl, that is the deadliest and riskiest of all. Any of these street drugs can be deadly. We need to combat this drug influx of fentanyl, and Congress has had a breakthrough recently in a way to do that.

I mentioned that it primarily comes from China, and it primarily comes through our U.S. postal system. The STOP Act, which is bipartisan legislation that I authored with my colleague AMY KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota—I see her colleague is on the floor now—will combat fentanyl at the source by closing a loophole that is currently in place in the Federal law.

After 9/11, we insisted that all of the private carriers—FedEx, UPS, DHL—had to give law enforcement information about every package that comes into America. This was after 9/11, remember. We asked the post office to study it, and we asked the Postmaster General to get together with the Homeland Security people and to come up with an answer. That was 16 years ago, and it hasn't happened.

Even though you send something by one of these private carriers, like FedEx, you have to provide this information up front: What is in the package? Where is it from? Where is it going?

Electronically, law enforcement takes that big data and decides what packages should be taken offline. They have been able to stop a lot of bad stuff, including fentanyl, from coming through. The post office doesn't require that because we haven't required it here in the Congress. It is time for us to do that.

I am pleased to tell you that after a few years of work, last week the House of Representatives passed the STOP Act by a vote of 353 to 52. The appropriate committee here in the Senate that has jurisdiction, the Finance Committee, also agreed to discharge the STOP Act recently. So now we can vote on it in the full Senate and get it to the President's desk to be signed into law.

As we developed the STOP Act, we conducted an 18-month investigation into this in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair. We revealed just how easy it was to purchase fentanyl online and have it shipped to the United States.

Based on our undercover investigation, these drugs could be found through a simple Google search. Overseas sellers accessed through an undercover investigator, essentially guaranteed delivery if fentanyl was sent through the U.S. Postal Service, not if it was sent through one of the private carriers.

Traffickers prefer the Postal Service because it doesn't have the screening that you have through the private car-

riers. So we need to be sure that the requirement is met with the advanced electronic data that is on all of the packages coming in. It tells law enforcement that they need to be able to use big data to identify suspicious packages and to keep this poison from coming into our communities.

That law is something we can do right now. The post office would say: Well, we are beginning to provide that information. Unfortunately, based on their testimony before my subcommittee, even with the pressure from us over the last couple of years, only 36 percent of packages are getting screened, and 20 percent of those aren't presented to law enforcement, based on their testimony. Also, some of the information is not helpful because it is not legible.

We need better data. We need to get 100 percent of the packages subject to this data. We need to be sure we can do a better job of, one, stopping the poison from coming into our country, into our communities, into our homes, but also, at the very least, increasing the cost of this. By reducing the supply, we can increase the cost.

One of the reasons fentanyl is growing so much is because it is so incredibly powerful, but, also, it is so incredibly inexpensive.

Let's have a vote on the STOP Act in the Senate as soon as possible. I think we can do it next month. Let's get it to the President. Let's get it signed into law. There is an urgency here.

As I mentioned, in just 7 years, in my home State, Ohioans have lost an estimated half million years of life expectancy as a result of opioid overdoses.

The impact is far greater than that, though. There are families who are broken apart. Prisons are flooded. Businesses are deplete of workers because of this addiction. We talked about this earlier. There is a lack of workforce because of this addiction.

The STOP Act will allow our country to push back against this international influx of fentanyl and will help our economy continue this positive momentum we have been experiencing since tax reform became law. We can do so by combating this newest and deadliest scourge of the opioid epidemic.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I am proud to join my colleagues today in recognizing the anniversary of a landmark Supreme Court decision, *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*.

Before I talk about that decision, I want to talk today about Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement. This is a pivotal moment in our country. With Justice Kennedy's retirement announcement today, the stakes have never been higher for making sure we

choose a Supreme Court Justice committed to the Constitution and to protecting the most fundamental rights of Americans—the right to vote, the ability to organize, and a woman's right to choose.

Whomever replaces Justice Kennedy will, no doubt, have a say on issues that affect the lives of every American—issues such as the healthcare system, our elections, and the health of our environment.

In February of 2016, some 9 months before the 2016 election, Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL issued a statement saying: "The American people should have a voice in the selection of our next Supreme Court Justice." He kept his word. He didn't hold a hearing or a vote on President Obama's nominee, Merrick Garland, during that election year.

I believe Republicans should be held to the same standard they set themselves. The Senate has a constitutional duty to provide advice and consent. We are a little more than 4 months away from an election that will decide the balance of the Senate. So let us let the American people decide who provides that advice and consent, especially given the close balance of the Senate as it stands today.

Back to the *Whole Woman's Health* decision, 2 years ago today, the Court reaffirmed that women have a constitutional right to make their own decisions about their reproductive health and family planning. The Court found that this fundamental right could not be unduly burdened with regulatory restrictions and requirements by the State or Federal Government. This was just one in a long line of Supreme Court decisions that affirm a woman's right to make personal, private decisions about her healthcare and family planning.

Whole Woman's Health recognized that in order to protect women's constitutional rights, it is not enough that abortion services are theoretically available. They must also be practically accessible.

It is especially important to recognize the anniversary of this important decision today because just yesterday the Supreme Court issued another decision, one that, unfortunately, threatens to make it harder for women to receive reliable and accurate information about the full range of their reproductive healthcare options.

As a U.S. Senator but also as a woman who served as a volunteer for Planned Parenthood and then as an executive for Planned Parenthood in North Dakota and South Dakota, I know that the right to access safe and reliable reproductive healthcare has a profound impact on women's lives.

Women cannot have economic security if they do not have the freedom to decide when and how to raise a family. This deeply personal decision influences women's choices about whether to go to school, buy a home, or start a new business. I trust women to make

these decisions for themselves and their families without the government looking over their shoulders.

Whole Woman's Health struck down some of the most egregious burdens on women's rights to access reproductive healthcare. But the fight to protect women's rights to accessible, safe, and reliable reproductive health is far from over. Despite this ruling, some States have continued their attempts to undermine women's constitutional rights.

In fact, in the 2 years since *Whole Woman's Health* was decided, States have proposed over 1,000 new restrictions on abortion, and 180 of those have become law. Many of these restrictions are aimed at shutting down clinics or criminalizing providers. Make no mistake. This is not about protecting women's health. This is about influencing women's choices, and it is wrong.

I believe strongly that the government has no business interfering in a woman's medical decisions. These decisions should be made by a woman, her family, and her healthcare provider. I trust women to make these decisions that are best for themselves and their own situations. This is why I am proud to cosponsor the Women's Health Protection Act, which would protect women's access to safe and legal healthcare services, regardless of where they live.

The bill would prohibit States from imposing restrictions on abortion services that do not promote women's health or safety. For example, laws that target providers with unnecessary and burdensome building codes or those that force women to undergo medically unnecessary testing and procedures would be prohibited.

This bill would codify the standards set in *Whole Woman's Health* and authorize the Department of Justice to protect women's constitutional rights by going after these unconstitutional laws.

I stand with women, and I invite my colleagues to do the same by cosponsoring the Women's Health Protection Act.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to spend a few minutes on a major piece of business this week, our 2018 farm bill.

Unlike so much of what comes to this floor—or never comes to this floor, never makes it to the floor—this is not a 5-month bill or a 5-week bill or a 5-hour extension; this is an honest to goodness 5-year farm bill. That is 5 years of certainty and predictability for our farmers and ranchers. It is a testament to the great work of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and I want to thank Chairman ROBERTS and Ranking Member STABENOW for leading yet another bipartisan, consensus-driven process.

When Democrats were in charge way back in 2014, we passed a bipartisan farm bill then. Now we are doing it again, only this time the Republicans are in charge. That is how this place should work. We have set aside the political antics and focused on our farmers and ranchers and rural communities, especially when they have all faced more uncertainty than they have in years.

In Colorado we have dealt with years of persistent drought. In the southern part of my State, waterflows in the Gunnison and Animas Rivers are at less than half of their average levels. Feed shortages are even forcing ranchers in Southwest Colorado to sell off their cattle. Besides drought, our farmers and ranchers are contending with erratic commodity prices, a broken immigration system that is actually putting some of them out of business because they can't find workers, and uncertainty over trade because of the administration's unusual approach to foreign policy. All of this has made it harder for them to plan for the next 5 months, let alone the next 5 years. This farm bill cannot come soon enough.

The Agriculture Committee has put together an excellent piece of legislation. For the first time in 80 years, this bill legalizes hemp. We forget, but hemp was widely grown in the United States throughout the mid-1800s. Americans used hemp in fabrics, wine, and paper. Our government treated industrial hemp like any other farm commodity until the early 20th century, when a 1937 law defined it as a narcotic drug, dramatically limiting its growth. This became even worse in 1970 when hemp became a schedule I controlled substance.

In Colorado, as is true across the country—I have talked to a lot of colleagues about this—we see hemp as a great opportunity to diversify our farms and manufacture high-margin products for the American people. That could help drive incomes in rural parts of my State, like Montrose County, CO.

Let me tell my colleagues about Montrose. It is a rural mountain area on Colorado's West Slope. It flattens out to the west. I managed to win 29 percent of the vote there in 2016, and I managed to win 29 percent the first time I ran as well. I can't seem to improve my position.

I want to show my colleagues a picture from there. This is from Montrose. Here is their Republican State senator, my friend Don Coram, who is standing right here, standing in front of a hemp plant. This is his greenhouse. He was kind enough to let me visit this past March. He told me that hemp growers operate under a shadow of uncertainty, worried that at any moment somebody in the Justice Department is going to wake up one morning and decide to cripple their operations by targeting their access to water or labor.

When we passed the last farm bill in 2014, Colorado farmers harvested

around 200 acres of hemp. Last year, we harvested 9,000 acres, and that is despite the uncertainty around hemp's legal status. Our farm bill eliminates that uncertainty by legalizing hemp.

If this farm bill passes, our growers are going to have a much easier time opening a bank account, buying and selling seeds, transporting their goods, and accessing water.

This bill also gives hemp growers access to important risk management tools, like crop insurance.

That is hemp that Don Coram, my Republican politician friend, is standing in front of at his greenhouse. This means dollars for rural Colorado and rural America, where the ingenuity and the creativity of people is already being unleashed on a crop that, until this farm bill was written, we could not grow in our country in a meaningful way and whose byproducts—the things that will create margins for our farmers—were imported from Canada.

Go into stores in the United States today and you will see hemp byproducts, hemp products, but they are grown in Canada. That doesn't make any sense. I am glad this farm bill fixes it, and I am glad the majority leader was the one who led the way on that.

Looking ahead in the West, we know that the risks of drought and wildfire are only going to grow worse. That calls on us to make sure that risk management tools are using the best available data. Over the past year, we have worked with Colorado's ranchers to make sure the USDA has good drought and market data for livestock disaster assistance.

In uncertain times, these programs are critical to sustaining our farms and working lands, which are fundamental to our heritage in the West and the legacy we hope to leave the next generation.

The same is true of our vast grasslands, healthy forests, and abundant wildlife. They are also fundamental to what it means to be in the West, which is why we made sure this farm bill emphasizes conservation and responsible management of our natural resources.

In this bill, we increase funding for conservation easements. We also make the EQIP Program easier to access for small farmers and ranchers. That idea came directly from Mike Nolan, a vegetable grower in Mancos, CO, who was having trouble accessing conservation tools designed more for big farms than for his 7-acre operation.

We reward farmers in this bill for improving soil health. We strengthen the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and reduce redtape for projects that improve drought resilience.

We increase funding for voluntary wildlife habitat improvements on working lands—an approach in Colorado that has helped us protect habitat for iconic species like the Greater sage-grouse but to do it on our own and in collaboration on the ground.

In Colorado, forests are one of our most important natural resources. The