

Let me run through a few things on that. Last year, ICE seized 2,370 pounds of fentanyl. That may not seem like a lot—just over a ton of fentanyl that they seized—but according to the DEA, 2 milligrams of fentanyl is a deadly amount to take in. Fentanyl is laced into heroin or into cocaine to dramatically increase the high, but if you have up to 2 milligrams of it, it is not going to increase your high. It will kill you.

The amount of fentanyl that ICE seized last year is a deadly dosage amount for just over 537 million people; 537 million people could have been killed with just the amount of fentanyl that ICE seized last year. On top of that, ICE agents seized almost 7,000 pounds of heroin, and a total of 1 million pounds of narcotics were seized just in 2017.

We also know that ICE freed 518 victims of human trafficking. They freed 904 children from child exploitation. They picked up 800 MS-13 gang members as an arrest, and almost 5,000 gang members were taken off the street just by ICE.

We hear a lot about ICE raids, as if ICE is wandering around neighborhoods looking to pick people up. I would like to remind folks, the majority of what ICE does is detain individuals at the border. In fact, last year, ICE agents removed 62,913 more people who were detained at the border than arrested in the United States.

ICE agents are law enforcement. They are enforcing the law of our country. It is quite remarkable to me to hear some people, even in this Chamber, discuss with seriousness abolishing Federal law enforcement that is taking human traffickers off the street, has taken gang members off the street, that is taking legal doses of fentanyl off the street, and taking tons of narcotics off the street. Why don't we show them some respect?

If there are things that need to be done to reform it, the ICE agents would be the first ones to step up to this body and say: Here are some ideas and things that can be done to reform it. Abolishing ICE is a ticket to lawlessness in our country.

As a reminder, the President asked Congress 21 days ago to enact legislation that would allow families to stay together. This Congress has failed to act on that at all. As we all know, over the course of 1 month, roughly 2,000 children were separated from their parents and placed in HHS custody while the parents were referred to the Department of Justice for prosecution. A great deal of attention, rightly so, has been focused on HHS to ensure that those children are reunited with those parents, especially those children under age 5. To do this, HHS has to first verify that adult is actually the parent of that child. As I mentioned before, just in the first 5 months of this fiscal year, there was a 315-percent increase of family units coming in that pretended to be family units but are really not family units.

I heard a lot of criticism saying put that adult back with that child again. This should be easy, but it is not that simple. Many of those adults who came with that child are really not their parent. They were using them as a vehicle to get easy access into the country.

What does that really look like? Well, let me give you a couple ideas on this. As we talk through the different numbers that are related to some of these children and how many of these children were connected or not connected with the adults who were with them, let me give you a few of these stats: Of those children who are 4 and under, 14 of those are not eligible for reunification because their parents have major issues—or those individuals claiming to be their parents.

Let's just talk about the people who are parents whom we know are parents. Eight of those parents had serious criminal history discovered when they did the background check, including child cruelty, narcotics, and human trafficking. One had a warrant for murder and robbery. So as Americans, we are not reconnecting those eight. Five adults were found not to be the parent of the accompanying child at all. These were of the children 4 and under. One of those individuals faced incredible evidence of child abuse in the process. We are not reconnecting those.

I hear a lot in the news of individuals saying every one of those folks needs to be reconnected as fast as possible. I hear a lot of criticism, saying they are doing DNA testing of these individuals. They are trying to figure out if that adult is really the parent of that child or has that adult picked up a child somewhere through Mexico or Central America to use them as a tool to try to get into the United States? I only wish that wasn't happening. It is.

Reconnecting families is a major priority. I said before, and would say it again, our default position should be keeping families together, but part of our struggle is determining who are the actual families we can keep together and who are individuals who could very well do that child harm?

So let's do this: Let's keep the attention on the reunification of families. Let's continue to ask very fair and reasonable questions of the administration as they are reconnecting these families. But let's also make sure this Congress actually acts on the issues that need to be addressed on immigration.

Twenty-one days ago, there was a request in this body to deal with the issue of family reunification. It still has not been acted on.

In February of this year, this body had a vote on dealing with what is called the Flores settlement. That is what causes the separation of these families. It is a settlement that goes all the way back to 1997. Every single administration since 1997 has struggled with the Flores settlement because the Flores settlement says that if you arrest a family illegally entering the

country, the children of that family can be detained for only 20 days. That sounds reasonable, except that, on average, it takes 35 days just to have a hearing. So since that settlement all the way back in 1997, every administration has said: I either have to separate families, or I have to release those families into the country and hope they show up for a court hearing at a future date.

By the way, we called and checked on some of the future court dates. If you are in line to get a court date—if you are released into the country and told to come in for a court date—the longest period of time that you will wait, depending on the region you are headed to, is 4 years and 2 months from now. That is the next available date. So as a family unit, you are released into the country for 4 years, and then we hope you show up for your court date 4 years from now.

This body knows all these numbers, and we have not acted to solve the problem. We need to address these issues. We need to be a country that continues to be open to legal immigration. We need to be a country that is open to workers—even workers who cross the border on both sides, north and south. We need to be a nation that deals with things like H-2B visas and asylum and refugees. We need to continue to keep the promise that we are a nation built on a set of values and the American dream that says: If you want to come and live under the law and live in a land of freedom, where you can become anything you want to become, you are welcome to be here if you come legally.

We need to be that Nation, but we also need to not just ignore illegal immigration and assume there aren't real problems with gang violence, the movement of drugs, human trafficking, and child-trafficking, because they are real. Is it every family who comes across? Absolutely not. But are you OK with it happening at all? What if it is 1 in 10 who is child-trafficking or drug-smuggling? Is that an acceptable number, or should we know the people who are crossing the border and know the issues that are there?

We can do better than this. Let's solve this. Let's keep the debate going, and let's actually resolve this in the days ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

In my home State of New York, more than 8 million people have health problems. That is almost half my State. They are living with diabetes. They have had treatment for cancer. They have a childhood disease.

Before the Affordable Care Act became law, if you had a health problem and you needed to see a doctor, health insurance companies were allowed to make you pay much more. The health insurance companies were allowed to turn you away. They were allowed to tell you "Sorry, you are not profitable for us because you are sick," and they did it many times. Let's not forget that included women who were pregnant.

But they can't tell them that anymore because of the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act made that simple statement illegal.

Now insurance companies must cover you if you are sick. They must cover you if you have had a health problem in the past. And millions of Americans are better off now because of that fact.

So what does this have to do with the Supreme Court? President Trump has made it clear that one of his biggest goals as President is to destroy the Affordable Care Act. He has already tried hard to get Congress to repeal the law, and luckily for us, he failed. He failed because people don't want their health insurance taken away from them. It is really that simple.

Millions of Americans raised their voices and told Congress that if the Affordable Care Act were repealed, they would lose their insurance, and that would be devastating for them and their families. And Congress listened to them.

But now there is a new challenge to the law in Federal court, and the Trump administration is refusing to defend the Affordable Care Act.

When this case makes it to the Supreme Court in a few more years, then the next Supreme Court Justice could be the deciding vote on whether the Affordable Care Act is overturned. That means the next Supreme Court Justice could have the power to decide that insurance companies don't have to cover patients anymore if they have a health problem. He could have the power to decide that insurance companies don't have to cover you or your child anymore if your child is sick.

Healthcare costs in my State have already skyrocketed because of the fact that the Trump administration has attacked this law over and over again. But repealing the law would be absolutely devastating to so many families. More than 8 million New Yorkers could lose their health insurance or pay more for their coverage. So would millions more all across the country. I am very concerned that is exactly what Judge Kavanaugh would do if he were given this opportunity.

Just look at his record. When Judge Kavanaugh had a case before him that was attacking another part of the Affordable Care Act, he dissented in the

case, and he said that even though the Affordable Care Act requires employers to cover birth control medicines for their workers, they shouldn't have to do it if they don't want to. He even took it so far as to say that if the President doesn't like a law—if the President doesn't like a law—then the President could ignore the law and ignore the courts.

Listen to this one opinion. This will interest the Presiding Officer, I am sure. Tell me if you think this is sound judicial judgment. He wrote: "Under the Constitution, the President may decline to enforce a statute that regulates private individuals when the President deems the statute unconstitutional, even if a court has held or would hold the statute constitutional."

Anyone with the most basic understanding of how the constitutional system of government works in this country knows that this is not what our Founding Fathers intended.

If this judge is confirmed, then there is a dangerously high likelihood that he will strike down the Affordable Care Act.

We must not go back to the days when an insurance company could charge a person more just because they have health problems. We cannot go back to the days when an insurance company could say no to a patient because they could say: You are just not going to make us enough money.

We must listen to our constituents—listen to the millions of men, women, and children all across this country who need access to basic healthcare, and they cannot afford to lose their insurance.

We must reject this nominee.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVOIR PROJECT IN FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I received very good news for Florida this morning. The Army Corps of Engineers has signed off on a long-awaited report that will allow Congress to authorize a new reservoir project south of Lake Okeechobee in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act—what we refer to as the water bill. Many of us in Florida have been pushing the Army Corps and the Trump administration to approve this project for months and months.

Last week I was in the area of Lake Okeechobee visiting with folks affected by the algae blooms on the west coast over in Fort Myers on the Caloosahatchee River and on the east coast in Stuart on the St. Lucie River. They are facing a problem that seems to repeat itself almost every year.

The heat of summer and the excess nutrients in the water—put those to-

gether, and you get the algae blooms that suck the oxygen out of the river, making it a dead river because there is not enough oxygen in the water for the fish. There was a similarly bad algae bloom back in 2016, in 2013, and many times in years past.

The pollution in Lake Okeechobee created a toxic brew of a blue-green algae that blooms and that at one point this summer covered 90 percent of Lake Okeechobee. Because the lake has risen to a 14½-foot level, the Army Corps will most likely have to resume releasing water to the east in the St. Lucie and to the west in the Caloosahatchee because of the pressure on the dike around Lake Okeechobee. Thus, here we go again—more nutrient-laden water flowing into these waterways in the heat of summer, and then the algae blooms just keep going and going.

There is one of many projects that can help, which is definitely a step in the right direction. The reservoir project that the Army Corps approved today is so critical because once it is constructed, it will provide storage so that the Corps doesn't have to discharge as much water to the east and to the west. When you combine that with the fact that just last week, the Army Corps, through the White House budget office, let us know they have approved the funds to strengthen the dike and accelerate its construction—the combination of these kinds of things is going to help, so that the Army Corps of Engineers doesn't have to release that nutrient-rich water, which will cause the algae blooms.

This reservoir to the south of the lake will include water treatment features so that the water can be cleaned as well as stored before it is sent farther south in the long journey that Mother Nature intended—sending that water in a slow, gravity-drained, southward flow through the river of grass otherwise known as the Florida Everglades. Many of us were cheering the news today that this project will be ready for inclusion in the water bill, which the Senate will be taking up perhaps next week. It was interesting timing to get the Corps of Engineers' report so that we could get this project in as a part of the overall Everglades restoration project.

REMEMBERING NATHANIEL REED

Unfortunately, Mr. President, we received the very somber, sad news this afternoon that one of our great Everglades restoration advocates, Nathaniel Reed, has passed away. Nat Reed leaves behind a long legacy as an environmental champion.

Nat served as environmental adviser to Governor Claude Kirk beginning in 1967. In 1971, he became Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and National Parks under President Nixon and stayed in that position through the Gerald Ford Presidency. Nat returned to Florida in 1977 and continued his career in public service by working under seven different Governors in various capacities, including