

most experienced practitioners in the State, on a bipartisan basis, to evaluate the people who apply for these important life-tenured positions.

I want to compliment the President for his sterling picks for the judiciary, certainly so far, starting with the Supreme Court of the United States. But at the intermediate appellate courts, like the Fifth Circuit and these district courts, these are the people who do the day-in and day-out work of the judiciary to make sure that all Americans have access to justice and the opportunity for a fair hearing before an impartial judge. That is one of the most important things the Federal Government provides through our judicial branch: "Equal justice under law," as the words above the Supreme Court building say.

TRIBUTE TO EMILY KIRLIN

Madam President, I wish to recognize and sincerely thank a member of my staff, Emily Kirlin, for her decade of public service here in the Senate. Everybody knows Emily in the Senate because of her bubbly personality, and she is always looking to find ways to help Senators be more successful and to recognize their tremendous contributions to this body.

Emily is originally from Crossville, TN, and we will not hold that against her. She is not a Texan, but many people from Tennessee eventually came to Texas, as I tell a couple of my Tennessee colleagues, most of them one step ahead of a great spouse or one step ahead of the law. Those are the Tennesseans who made their way to Texas at the time of our founding. Things have gotten better, by the way, but that is sort of an inside joke between Tennesseans and Texans.

Emily has been director of Member services in my whip office and is the longest serving member of our operation. Before working in her current capacity, she served under my predecessor, Senator Jon Kyl, and before that for my colleague, Senator ALEXANDER.

Everyone who has had the privilege of meeting Emily knows that she is one of a kind. Her smile lights up rooms, and her personality is contagious. Everyone loves being around her. But she also works incredibly hard. Some nights she is here until 1 in the morning and goes home and works even harder alongside her husband Michael. Together, they have two small children, Brock and Madge, who, I am sure, require a lot of love and attention.

So we are sad to see Emily go, but we wish her nothing but the best and want to express our sincere gratitude for her service to the Senate. We know her future will be bright in whatever path she decides to take.

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. PETERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

WORK OF THE SENATE

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, I believe every campaign for elective office in this great Nation is essentially a months-long job interview with the voters or, perhaps more accurately, it is thousands and thousands of individual interviews. Like any employer, the voters have expectations for us once we have been hired to do this job.

I will never forget I work for the people of Michigan, and I feel very fortunate to have earned the opportunity to serve them. When I ran for the U.S. Senate, I told Michiganders I would be a pragmatic problem-solver and stand by that promise each and every day. We were all sent here to be problem-solvers, especially the hard problems. Making the effort to participate in our democracy is fundamentally optimistic. Voters want us to make their lives and our Nation better. Every Senator elected to this body carries the hopes, the dreams, and the expectations of the people who live in their State.

While we should never lose sight of our Nation's hopes and dreams, today I wish to focus on expectations. Americans expect us to work together. They expect us to talk to each other. They expect us to negotiate and find common ground where we disagree. They expect us to help our fellow Americans after disasters. They expect us to respond to crises like the opioid epidemic and dangerously underfunded pensions that jeopardize their retirement security. They expect us to keep our borders secure and enact reasonable human immigration policies that keep our Nation competitive and boost economic growth, and they expect us to responsibly fund the Federal Government.

None of us should be proud of the recent government shutdown. There is no such thing as a good government shutdown. I am nevertheless hopeful that lessons can be learned from last weekend and a better path forward can be found. I think the coming weeks and months are of vital importance to the future of the U.S. Senate as a meaningful, functional institution.

Let's be honest with ourselves and with the American people. In the last few years, we have not been functional. We have blown deadline after deadline. It took us almost 4 months past the funding deadline to tackle the easiest problem: reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, a program that provides healthcare to millions of Americans children, while saving taxpayers money.

As I stand here, healthcare for over 600,000 Michiganders—including over 12,000 Michigan veterans—remains at risk because we have blown through deadline after deadline to fund community health centers, a program that

provides cost-effective care to millions of Americans in both rural and urban areas across our country.

How is it that a nation that put the first man on the Moon still can't put lights on for our own American citizens in Puerto Rico? We need to help families clean out their flooded homes in the gulf, support communities that have faced out-of-control wildfires and mudslides during the devastating 2017 disaster season, and ensure affordable flood insurance is available to every homeowner who needs it.

Americans stand by each other in the face of tragedy. This is why Senator STABENOW and I fought for a year to deliver Federal resources to Flint and continue working to make sure families are receiving the care they need and get their damaged pipes repaired. In addition to addressing all of these urgent issues, we need to keep the lights on in the Federal Government, where funding is set to expire again in just 2 weeks.

While the government was shut down this past weekend, I worked with a bipartisan group of Senators pulled together by my colleagues Senator COLLINS and Senator MANCHIN. This group is called the Common Sense Coalition, and we worked through the weekend to find a bipartisan compromise to open the Federal Government and find a path forward to tackle the complex, pressing issues before us in Congress.

While the lights are back on, the real work is just beginning. In the coming weeks, we need to find a legislative solution to provide certainty to the Dreamers—young men and women brought to the United States as small children. They grew up as Americans, went to school here, served in our military, only speak English, and are every bit as American as you and I. They graduate from our colleges and universities and provide critical talent to a growing American economy. They start their own small businesses and create jobs in our communities. They are young adults who voluntarily came out of the shadows to participate in the DACA Program and are fearful they will be ripped from their home and be deported to a country they have never visited, a country where they don't even speak the language and will find themselves a stranger in a foreign land, which is an absolutely terrifying situation.

Without question, we must also pass a disaster relief package to help communities devastated by the hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. We must also reauthorize the Community Health Center Program that provides essential healthcare to Americans and over 600,000 Michiganders.

We must do more to fight the far-reaching opioid epidemic that is hurting and killing far too many of our friends, family, and neighbors. The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis that touches everyone in every State and every county.

We need to deliver certainty to the hard-working Americans who spent

decades earning their pensions and now see them at risk as they prepare to enter retirement, and we must follow through on our most basic of duties. We need a bipartisan deal to fund the government that takes care of the men and women who serve our country in the armed services, keeps us safe, and properly funds both our military and domestic programs.

This will not be easy, but solving easy problems is not why we were sent to the Senate. I ran for the U.S. Senate to solve the tough problems facing our country, and I know my colleagues in the Common Sense Coalition ran to solve tough problems as well. We need the entire Senate and the House to start acting like one, big Common Sense Coalition. No organization or business can run their budget in 2- or 3-week increments.

The Defense Department and all of our domestic agencies need certainty for budget planning just like any household or business does. We cannot let the American people down any longer by kicking the can down the road with another series of short-term budget patches. The coming weeks will be difficult, but we need to rise to the occasion and deliver on all of these responsibilities. Now is the time for us to step up our game. The American people expect and deserve nothing less.

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. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN MILLER

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I rise to honor a member of my staff, Jonathan Miller, who has dedicated his life to serving his country and his State.

Not only does Jonathan serve the people of Ohio each day on our staff, helping Ohio servicemembers and veterans, but he also wears the uniform himself, first as a member of the National Guard and now as a member of the Army Reserve. Earlier this month was his last day in the office for a year as his unit is deploying to fight for our country.

Jonathan grew up in Macedonia, OH, and graduated from Nordon High School and Ohio University. In 2011, while working toward his master's degree, he enlisted in the National Guard. Jon told me he enlisted, in part, because he was "inspired by the debate and repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the stories of veterans in my family," like so many who join the armed services because of patriotism, family values, and family precedent.

He said: "The Army seemed like the place for me to help my community and my country and to experience new people, places, and ideas."

Jonathan went through officer candidate school in 2013 and now serves with the 300th Chemical Company, Army Reserve, out of Morgantown, WV. He has worked in our office since 2015 and has impressed all of us with his dedication to both of his jobs. In the Senate, he handles veterans and military issues along with energy and environmental policy. He has read, literally, thousands of letters from Ohio servicemembers and veterans over the years and has always worked to make sure their views and concerns have been heard and that our office has helped them whenever we have been able to. He has often called the families directly to follow up and listen to their stories.

In 2016, during a meeting with the Gold Star Wives of America, Jon learned that education benefits for some spouses who had lost their loved ones in the earliest days following 9/11 would expire before they could make full use of this benefit their families had earned. He immediately brought this issue to my attention, and we worked to introduce the Military Spouses Achieving College Education for Survivors Act. We passed this bipartisan legislation as part of a larger veterans package that will directly affect veterans and their families in my State, in Nebraska, and other States across the country.

Jonathan has played a critical role in ensuring that our military installations in my State have the support they need to perform critical national security missions—from the 180th in Toledo and the 910 in Youngstown, to Camp Ravenna, to the base in my hometown of Mansfield, to Springfield, and of course to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. He often attends visiting Ohio Honor Flight ceremonies, representing our office and supporting Ohio veterans who visit the memorials that have been built in their honor.

His love for the outdoors and for Ohio has also shone through in his work on issues like protecting the Great Lakes, including the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and in preserving the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which is near his childhood home.

I would add that Ohio is one of the lucky States east of the Mississippi in that it is one of the few States that has a national park, and it is not far from the population centers of Cleveland and Akron. Even though the Trump administration tried to zero out—the way we talk about it—or dramatically cut funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, I and Senator PORTMAN, a Republican, worked together to restore that funding.

We know keeping Lake Erie clean is an ongoing challenge. Right off the city of Toledo, Lake Erie is only 30 feet deep, contrasted with Lake Superior, which is 600 feet deep, on the average.

That means, whether it is Ashtabula and Cleveland in Lake County to the east or it is Toledo to the west, Lake Erie is much more vulnerable to pollutants than are the other Great Lakes. This is why the work Jonathan does is so important in keeping that Great Lake clean.

At the end of the week, while others might look forward to a relaxing weekend with family and friends, so often, Jonathan heads out for drill with his unit. He used to drive from Washington to Illinois and, later, to West Virginia for the weekend as part of his service. Now his unit is deploying. While we will miss his expertise, his enthusiasm, and his unique perspective in this office this year, we are also so grateful for his service to Ohio and to our country.

One final note, before his deployment, last month, Jon got engaged to his partner Kevin. Jon and Kevin will join so many of Ohio's military families who understand the unique challenges of having a family member serving far from home.

One of the things that is so important that we as Members of the Senate must do is recognize the service of our men and women in uniform. We should also recognize the importance of the service and sacrifice of those family members who are left behind and who often live in the margins financially.

On behalf of my whole office, we congratulate Jon and Kevin on their engagement. We wish Jon well on his tour overseas, and we thank him for his sacrifice and his service.

CHIP AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Madam President, Congress finally did the right thing, after having failed to do the right thing in September and October and November and December and early January, by reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program. The bill passed out of the Senate Finance Committee with only one "no" vote. The Children's Health Insurance Program has been around for 20 years, and it has always been bipartisan.

There are 209,000 children in Ohio who benefit from the Children's Health Insurance Program. These are children—sons and daughters—of parents who generally work full time but who only make \$8 or \$10 or \$12 an hour. These families often don't have insurance themselves, but the Children's Health Insurance Program will provide insurance for those children.

It is particularly aggravating to many of us that so many Members of Congress—all of us who have health insurance provided by taxpayers—failed to continue the program, which has always been bipartisan, in September, when the program expired, as well as in October and November and December. Now, as our vote the other day demonstrated, the Children's Health Insurance Program will be around for 6 more years as we continue to make improvements with it. The problem is, while we provide insurance for 6 more years for these 209,000 children in Ohio and 9 million children all over the country, we