

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM D. DUHNKE III

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a former staff member of mine, William D. Duhnke III, who dedicated over 20 years of his life's work to the Senate.

Prior to his time on Capitol Hill, Bill Duhnke served in the U.S. Navy as a naval officer and at the Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. Bill received his juris doctorate from Catholic University and a bachelor of arts degree from his home State university, the University of Wisconsin. In 1995 Bill Duhnke joined my personal staff to handle defense, foreign relations, and judiciary policy. He quickly revealed his high work ethic and innate ability to thrive when tasked with the most challenging of assignments.

After swiftly climbing the ladder in my office, Bill became my staff director and general counsel when I chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee and later the Senate Banking Committee, where he was general counsel and staff director. He also served as my staff director when I was the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, when the Democrats were in control.

As a former naval flight officer, Bill always brought a high level of respect and discipline to the workplace. Without hesitation, he was able to spearhead tasks and get things done. Not only was he a trusted adviser, but he was an esteemed manager across Capitol Hill, where he was duly respected. Bill is exceptionally smart and was always well versed on the issues at hand. I would be hard-pressed to recall a time when he was unprepared. I can't think of one.

I am certain that Bill will continue to operate in this manner in his new role as Chairman of the Public Accounting Oversight Board.

I have relied on Bill Duhnke's professional advice and leadership for 20 years, and I know he will be an asset as the Board works to improve audit quality and promote public trust in our securities area. I believe SEC Chairman Jay Clayton has made an excellent choice in selecting Bill Duhnke to chair the PCAOB.

I have no doubt that Bill has stepped into his new leadership position with ease. His intellect and experience ensure his future success in this role, and I am confident that Bill will remain an outstanding leader as he continues on this new path in his career.

It is my honor to offer my deep appreciation and gratitude to Bill Duhnke for his decades of hard work and dedication to the entire country. I am privileged to have had him on my staff for all of those years.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, the good news about tax reform continues to roll in—wage increases, better benefits, increased investment, and employee bonuses. So far, more than 250 companies have announced good news for their employees—pay hikes, increased retirement contributions, or bonuses, and the list continues to grow.

Last week, JPMorgan Chase, Disney, Starbucks, and FedEx all announced increased investment in American workers. JPMorgan Chase announced that it will raise wages for 22,000 workers, add thousands of new jobs, and open 400 new branches in the United States. It also plans to increase its lending to small businesses. Disney will invest in employees' education and provide employee bonuses. Starbucks is raising wages, increasing benefits, and rewarding employees with company stock. FedEx announced plans to expedite raises and invest \$1.5 billion to expand its FedEx Express hub in Indianapolis. It is also making a \$1.5 billion contribution to its pension plan. To top it off, yesterday ExxonMobil announced that, thanks in part to tax reform, it will invest an additional \$35 billion into the U.S. economy over the next 5 years. That means a lot of new jobs and opportunities for American workers.

Stories like this are why we made business tax reform a key part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Obviously, a huge priority was immediately lowering Americans' tax bills, which is why we lowered rates across the board, nearly doubled the standard deduction, and doubled the child tax credit. But our other priority was creating the kind of economy in which Americans can thrive for the long-term—an economy that would create good jobs, higher wages, and more opportunities.

So how do we go about doing that? Well, the only way for individual Americans to thrive is for American businesses and the American economy to thrive. So we took action to improve the situation for American businesses.

Prior to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, American businesses, large and small, were weighed down by high tax rates and growth-killing tax provisions. Plus, our outdated international tax rules left America's global businesses at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act changed all that. We lowered tax rates across the board for owners of small and medium-sized businesses, farms, and ranches. We expanded the business owners' ability to recover investments they make in their businesses, which will free up cash that they can reinvest in their operations and their workers.

We lowered our Nation's massive corporate tax rate, which up until January 1 was the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. We brought the U.S. international tax sys-

tem into the 21st century by replacing our outdated worldwide system with a modernized territorial tax system so that American businesses are not operating at a disadvantage next to their foreign counterparts. Now, just a month into the new tax law, we are already seeing the results.

Thanks to the new tax law, businesses are seeing a future of growth, and based on those forecasts, they are making plans to invest in their workers, raise wages, create new jobs, and invest in the American economy: AT&T, Boeing, Fiat Chrysler, Bank of America, Home Depot, Great Western Bank in my State of South Dakota, First Hawaiian Bank, SunTrust Bank, Comcast, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Humana, Visa, Nationwide Insurance, JetBlue Airlines. The list of companies announcing good news for American workers thanks to tax reform goes on and on and on.

Tech giant Apple announced that as a result of tax reform, it will bring home almost \$250 billion in cash that it has been keeping overseas and invest it here in the United States. That is good news for the American economy, and it is a direct result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Before the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, our Tax Code encouraged American businesses to keep cash overseas. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act ended that. Now that we have altered the Tax Code to remove the penalty for bringing profits home to the United States, we can expect to see more companies bringing profits home and investing in the U.S. economy the way that Apple is doing.

We have seen a tremendous amount of good news this month, but it really is only the beginning. As the benefits of tax reform continue to sink in, we expect to see more growth, more jobs, and more opportunities for American workers, and we expect to see the kind of economy that will provide security and prosperity for Americans for the long term.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Stras nomination?

Mr. BURR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 27 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Alexander	Gardner	Murkowski
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Perdue
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heitkamp	Risch
Cassidy	Heller	Roberts
Cochran	Hoeben	Rounds
Collins	Inhofe	Rubio
Corker	Isakson	Sasse
Cornyn	Johnson	Scott
Cotton	Jones	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Klobuchar	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Tillis
Donnelly	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	Manchin	Warner
Ernst	McCaskill	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young
Flake	Moran	

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Reed
Blumenthal	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Nelson	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Capito
McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Arkansas.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Arkansas.

(The remarks of Mr. BOOZMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2364 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STOP ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I want to talk about the opioid epidemic that has gripped our country and my State of Ohio and talk a little about a report we issued last week with regard to synthetic opioids coming in through the U.S. mail system.

This tragedy has hit Ohio hard. We are not alone, though. Opioids affect every American regardless of age, area code, class, or color. Every State represented here in this body has experienced this—broken families, devastated communities, higher crime rates, friends lost, and, of course, lives taken through opioid overdoses.

The Centers for Disease Control recently reported that more than 63,600 Americans died in 2016 from drug overdoses. That is the last year for which they have statistics, but we all believe it was worse in 2017. With 63,600 Americans dying of overdoses, that means, on average, more than 174 Americans die every single day. That is up from approximately 143 Americans who died, on average, every day from drug overdoses a year earlier in 2015 and 105 Americans who died every day in 2010.

The problem is getting worse, not better. Drug overdoses, in fact, are now the No. 1 cause of death—not just accidental deaths but the No. 1 cause of death—in America for Americans under the age of 50. The reason for this increase in overdose deaths is the spread of heroin, prescription drugs, and now the synthetic opioids—fentanyl and carfentanil. Opioids were involved in more than 42,000—about two-thirds—of the overall deaths in 2016. Opioid deaths were five times higher in 2016 than they were just a few years ago.

This is a national epidemic. It has unfolded in three different waves.

The first wave was the prescription drug epidemic—pain pills—15 to 20 years ago. That started to increase dramatically.

Next, heroin deaths spiked. Heroin was turned to as a less expensive and more accessible way for people who were addicted to pain pills to continue to receive the high—in this case, from heroin coming mostly from Mexico.

Now synthetic forms of heroin are overtaking the illegal opioid market, and the results have been even more deadly. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin, has become the new scourge of the epidemic. Fentanyl is so deadly that 2 milligrams of it—as little as two flakes of it—can be lethal. It is cheap, easily accessible, and can be added to make any number of illegal drugs more potent—cocaine, heroin, pills.

In Ohio, fentanyl and its variations, such as carfentanil, were responsible for 60 percent of our State's more than 4,000 overdose deaths in 2016—the most recent year for which we have statistics. That 60 percent is a huge increase from just the previous year, 2015, when fentanyl was responsible for about 37 percent of the deaths. We have had more deaths from overdoses and a lot more deaths linked to fentanyl.

Sadly, again, this situation is getting worse, not better. Just last week in Ottawa County, OH, outside of Toledo, we had five overdoses in 1 single day. We had three people die of overdoses in 1 week. The suspected cause, of course, is fentanyl.

Earlier this month in Akron, a 57-year-old man—a board member of the Akron Public Schools system—was found unconscious in his car from a drug overdose. First responders were thankfully able to revive the man with Narcan—a miracle drug that reverses the effects of overdoses—and treat him at a local hospital. Again, fentanyl caused that overdose.

In July of last year, a 12-year-old Columbus boy encountered fentanyl while he was at his cousin's for a sleepover. He was rushed to the hospital but died days later from a lack of oxygen to his brain as a result of fentanyl.

These synthetic drugs have invaded communities across Ohio and across the country. Unbelievably, this deadly poison is primarily shipped into America from China through our U.S. Postal Service. The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which I chair along with ranking member Senator TOM CARPER, recently held a hearing on this issue. It came on the heels of our year-long bipartisan investigation that resulted in a 100-page investigative report that examined how these drug traffickers in China exploit vulnerabilities in our international mail system to ship these deadly synthetic drugs into our communities.

I encourage people to look at that report on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations website. The results of the report were shocking. We found that it was incredibly easy to buy fentanyl online. By simply searching "fentanyl for sale" on Google, our staff identified hundreds of websites, many affiliated with Chinese labs, all openly advertising this deadly drug. Online sellers were quick to respond, unafraid of being caught, and ready to make a deal. They even offered discounts for bulk purchases and tried to upsell us to carfentanil—fentanyl's even more powerful and deadly cousin.

This is an email from Chinese traffickers offering "a hot sale" for one fentanyl analogue before it is discontinued. Their preferred shipping method is the U.S. Postal Service because, as they told us, the chances of the drugs being seized were so insignificant that delivery was essentially guaranteed.

This chart shows a carfentanil advertisement and the online traffickers