

it the way he saw it. He called out what was happening.

John also stood for his ideals as a leader on comprehensive immigration reform. I remember first coming to the Senate in 2007 and working on comprehensive immigration reform with Senator McCain, Senator Kennedy, and President Bush. That legislation ultimately did not pass, but it showed me that Senator McCain was a serious legislator who was willing to work across the aisle to get things done.

Senator Kennedy died in 2009 of the same form of brain cancer that Senator McCain succumbed to this past weekend. They both died on August 25.

In 2013, Senator McCain was part of the Gang of 8, along with Senator SCHUMER—the bipartisan group of Senators who wrote a 2013 measure to overhaul the country's immigration system and border security. I supported that bill, which passed in the Senate but sadly was never taken up in the House, although we all know there was enough support in the House to pass that legislation.

Senator McCain believed in working together to get things done. He listened and fought passionately for what he believed in, but he wanted to make sure we got things done in the best tradition of the Senate as the greatest deliberative body in the world. Senator McCain lived by that tradition.

In his memoir, Senator McCain said that his failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform was “a harder disappointment than other defeats.”

He continued:

We failed twice, and then once more after Ted had passed away, despite big majorities in both houses of Congress in favor of it. . . . I'd like to say I'll try again. But that is not up to me anymore. . . . That's a harder disappointment than other defeats have been because first, it's something that most Americans want, and most members of Congress know is the right thing to do.

He always called it the way he saw it. He showed his passion, but respected civility.

The Senate and the American people have lost in John McCain a man who was the very definition of service to his country. I will miss John terribly, and I hope all Americans will pause today to remember his legacy and admire his courage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the life of Senator John McCain along with my colleagues.

John is an American icon whose legacy is known not only across our Nation but around the world. His belief in American exceptionalism was unwavering, and it propelled him to a lifelong service to our Nation.

Few have demonstrated John's level of commitment and service to our country. Through both, his bravery serving in the U.S. Navy and his long tenure in Congress, he demonstrated his deep love of country.

As the son and grandson of four-star admirals, John began serving this country at an early age. He followed in their footsteps and attended the U.S. Naval Academy and was later commissioned as a naval aviator.

He served in the Vietnam war, where he was captured and spent 5½ years as a prisoner of war. During those years, through torture and misery, he never gave up. He was offered freedom but refused to be released unless every other prisoner was released with him. Think about that. He was flying over Vietnam and was shot down. He was projected from his plane and landed in a lake in Hanoi. He was bruised, in terrible shape, put in a prison, and was clearly in incredible pain, and, through it all, he was offered an opportunity to go home early, and he said: Nope, I am not going unless all of the POWs go. Think of the strength and character that takes. It is almost unfathomable.

I always affectionately refer to him as an admiral because both his father and grandfather were full admirals. There is no doubt that Senator McCain would have been an admiral had he stayed in the Navy, as well. It was just the way that I could recognize his amazing service in a fun way and in a personal way. Here is somebody, when you talk about serving our country in the military, who just epitomizes that grit, that determination, that character, and that service that we love, respect, and honor so much in our servicemen and servicewomen.

John's perseverance followed him as he began serving our Nation as a Member of Congress and in the U.S. Senate. He fought fiercely for what he believed in. Everyone talks about how, when he took a position, he took it with a passion. So whenever you debated him, discussed things with him, and worked with him—whether you were on the same side or if you disagreed with him—he had that amazing passion that came through, and many have remarked on it. It was a remarkable trait. It is part of that warrior in him.

For the entirety of his life, John endlessly advocated for our men and women in uniform. He served, and he served them throughout his life in the Senate. Working with him to support our servicemembers and veterans is something that I will never forget.

What many people will not know about John, though, is his warmth as a friend. You know, you hear about his temper. He could be mercurial. Although, then he would get over it, and you would be right back working again.

You heard about his incredible energy, about his war record, his time as a POW, the things he did as a Senator, but one thing that I think you don't hear as often but that was very much true is that he had a tremendous, tremendous sense of humor, and that came through so often in his interviews.

He was also a warm person. I can remember when somebody would come to

my office and want to meet Senator McCain. If it worked out timewise, I would take them over, and we would go over to Senator McCain's office. I would say: Hey, I have somebody here who would just like to say hi to John, get his picture and meet him.

If he was there, almost every time he would bring them in. It wasn't a case of getting enough time or getting a quick picture, or something like that. Invariably, he would have them come in, sit down, talk with him, and take pictures, and pretty soon he would be taking them all around his office and showing them pictures of his family—he was so proud of his family, his grandfather, his father—and his mementoes, all the amazing things that made up his amazing life. He loved it, and he was so warm.

There are so many things that I will never forget, but that is one that I truly treasure and will always remember. Here is Senator McCain, somebody who is known across America, around the world. He was certainly an icon and a colleague, obviously, to all of us, but he was somebody who really was a friend. When you went over and you wanted to talk to him about something or take someone over to see him, or whatever it was, he was a friend. He was somebody who was down-to-earth, who was a person you could connect with at a real level. That is pretty amazing for somebody who lived such an incredible life.

We will miss John McCain. May God bless him. From my wife Mikey and myself, to John's wife Cindy and the entire McCain family, we join with you in mourning his loss and honoring his tremendous memory and legacy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise on behalf of the 152,000 Montanans whose healthcare coverage is currently in jeopardy.

Next week, a Texas courthouse will become the newest battlefield in the war against our healthcare. The latest attack is a lawsuit attempting to get rid of legal protections for folks with preexisting conditions. These are protections that make it illegal for insurance companies to deny healthcare coverage or charge absurd rates because of common conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes or heart disease or cancer or even pregnancy.

These protections were signed into law almost 10 years ago, passed by majorities in both the House and in the Senate. Despite many attempts to undermine them, they have been upheld by the Supreme Court and continue to be supported by Members of both parties in Congress. That is because an overwhelming majority—more than three-fourths—of Americans support these protections. In fact, the Kaiser Family Foundation recently reported

that 88 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Independents, and 58 percent of Republicans think it is very important to maintain protections for folks with preexisting conditions.

So why are we even here?

Well, in June, the Department of Justice announced it would stop defending these critical protections in court. That is correct. You heard it right. A bunch of unelected bureaucrats have decided to stop defending the law of the land that protects folks with preexisting conditions. This decision not only harms millions of Americans, it threatens to create chaos in the marketplace and could drive up healthcare costs, not to mention it is a dereliction of duty.

Now, I know we all wake up some days, and we would just rather go fishing, but a job is a job, and you just can't decide it is not worth doing, especially when your job is to defend protections for millions of Americans and thousands of Montanans with preexisting conditions.

Montanans like Christina, from Missoula, who told me last week about how the Justice Department's decision could impact her husband who suffers from a chronic type of leukemia that can be managed but not cured. Christina wrote:

Six years ago, we started the cancer journey when my husband was diagnosed with CLL, a type of lymphoma/leukemia. Thankfully, he found work and is receiving the care he needs to manage his chronic disease that has no cure. But if he could be denied health insurance because of a preexisting condition, my husband probably would not have received the care he needs.

Karen, from Belgrade, MT, wrote something similar, saying:

I am very concerned about the DOJ's decision to no longer defend Americans against insurance companies who want to disallow people with preexisting conditions. I am a cancer survivor, as is my 22-year-old son. It is frightening to think that both of us may be uninsurable in the future if this trend continues.

Kim, from Helena, wrote me and said:

I have been a Type 1 diabetic for 35 years—and the burden is heavy. The cost of insulin continues to soar to the point that some people have to choose between their insulin or their rent, food, or other medication. I have good health insurance through my employer, which makes the financial cost of my diabetes manageable. But if preexisting conditions weren't covered, my next health insurer could simply choose not to cover my diabetes.

I am here to tell you, there are thousands of others in Montana like Karen, Kim, and Christina. In fact, a new report released today, also by the Kaiser Family Foundation, found that without current protections—without current protections—52 million Americans could be denied healthcare coverage because of a preexisting condition.

The report broke this number down even further and found that in Billings, MT—our State's largest city—one out of every four adults between the ages of 18 and 64 have a preexisting condition that could prevent them from get-

ting healthcare coverage if our current protections were repealed. That is not to mention the thousands of others who could be charged higher rates or denied reimbursement for care if these protections disappear.

Instead of doing their job and protecting folks like Kim and Karen and Christina, a bunch of unelected bureaucrats in the Department of Justice have decided to help repeal a law that it is their job to defend.

Well, if they will not protect Montanans, then we will. That is why I have helped introduce legislation that will authorize the Senate to intervene in next week's lawsuit and defend protections for people with preexisting conditions.

I would be the first to say that our healthcare system isn't perfect, but folks are no longer denied coverage or forced to pay higher premiums because of common ailments like high blood pressure, diabetes, or cancer, and the vast majority of Americans, on both sides of the aisle, want to keep it that way.

That is why a group of my colleagues from across the aisle introduced a bill last week to try and preserve some of these protections. That might sound good in theory, but in reality it will still threaten people with preexisting conditions.

That is why I am calling on my colleagues to pass our resolution, which will ensure folks with preexisting conditions get the coverage they need. The thousands of Montanans and millions of Americans who rely on these protections deserve nothing less.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

REMEMBERING JOHN MCCAIN

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, like so many here today, I rise to honor John McCain and to sing John McCain's praises.

There are many here—most here—who knew him longer than I did. I will admit that when the Presiding Officer and I first got here in 2014, I knew John McCain as somebody from the history books. I knew John McCain as somebody destined for the history books. I knew John McCain as an American hero, but I didn't know John McCain, the man. I didn't know John McCain, the flesh and blood, genuinely hilarious guy, but over the past 48 months, I had the privilege of actually getting to become friends with John McCain.

It is sort of weird to say, when you are roughly our age—I am 46 and John McCain was an octogenarian—that he befriended me. I went on many overnight flights with John McCain. I have been to refugee camps with John McCain. I have been to war zones with John McCain. I have been cussed out by John McCain lots of times. He called me a stupid bastard on a regular basis—and he meant it, affectionately. I am convinced he didn't use the term

“stupid bastard” lightly. He reserved it for those he really cared about.

I have laughed and cried with John McCain. I have wrestled policy with John McCain. I got to grill hamburgers and serve them to troops in Afghanistan on the Fourth of July with John McCain.

As we in this body praise John McCain today and for the rest of this week, as we rightly should, there will be a lot of people talking about his time in the Hanoi Hilton.

John McCain was in prison to fight for our freedom for more than 5 years. He was in solitary confinement for about 3 years. He was tortured for years. If you have ever met any of the POWs who were in the cells around him, almost to a man they credit the fact that they didn't lose their minds during that time to the fact that John McCain kept them sane. He kept them stable.

John McCain told me a story one time on one of those overnight flights—and he has told it to many other people around here—about tap code, which is sort of akin to Morse code, but new folks in the Army learn tap code. It is a way to spell out a five-by-five grid: You can put letters together and make words, make sentences, and make paragraphs.

John McCain thought it was very important that the men who were in prison with him would learn to tell each other stories—they would tell poems they knew from their youth; they would tap out songs they knew from when they were kids—because if they had a sense of history past, they would have a sense of hope and history future. John McCain kept those people sane.

I remember one time hearing him wax on and on about this story, and I was just in awe of how long it must have taken to persuade these men that they were going to teach each other songs and poetry from their youth. I said: How long did it take to do that?

He looked at me like I was just a complete idiot, and he said: What did I care? What the hell did it matter to me? We had infinite time, you moron.

He didn't say “you moron,” but it was clear: How do you not get that time was the one thing that just was completely irrelevant when you are in prison? If something takes too long, that is a virtue, not a liability.

One of the things we don't tell here and that we need to tell more is the connection between how he thought about time and why he acted the way he acted as a Senator. If we want to honor John McCain around here, one of the most basic things we should do is recognize that the reason he didn't suffer fools lightly is because he had a concept of time that was—as a man who had spent 5½ years in prison, he wanted to redeem the time. After he was released, he wanted to make sure he spent all of his time on big things.

His impatience, his volcanic temper flowed directly from the fact that he