

perform its advice and consent while our hands are tied by a partisan vetting process, hiding hundreds of thousand documents from the Senate and from we the people.

I call upon my colleagues to rise from this low point of censorship and the trashing of the responsibility of advice and consent. Stand up for the same principles you stood up for just a couple of years ago, when you demanded the full record for the Senate to undertake its investigation into a nominee. Bring courage and integrity into this process. Publicly refuse to proceed until we the Senate and we the people have the full set of documents about this individual's records. To do any less is to bring shame and injustice upon this body that I believe in so strongly, a responsibility of advice and consent that I believe in so strongly, and a responsibility that my colleagues believed in so strongly just a couple of years ago.

Let's stand together, as we stood together just a couple of years ago, Democrats and Republicans, demanding transparency and integrity. Let this not be the moment when my colleagues fail to uphold their constitutional responsibilities.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, first, I would like to comment briefly on the last two speeches. The first was from Senator LEAHY. He talked about the appropriations process. I commend him, as I did on the floor today in person, for the work he has done with Senator SHELBY and others to actually move these appropriations bills, these spending bills, through the process. For the first time in a couple of decades, we have the opportunity to actually get our work done. It is incredibly important for all the right reasons, including having proper oversight of the Federal agencies and departments. He deserves credit for that.

My colleague from Oregon just talked for a moment about the Kavanaugh hearings. He talked about the fact that he believes there is not enough information out about Brett Kavanaugh. Let me just say this. There has never been more information about any nominee to the Supreme Court, ever, in the history of our country. In fact, there are more pages of documents that have been provided on Brett Kavanaugh than for the past five Supreme Court confirmations combined—over 450,000 pages.

Maybe my colleagues who raised these concerns decided a long time ago they were going to vote no and said they are and that is fine, but I don't think you can blame it on the fact that there isn't enough documentation.

I know what they went, and I understand why they would want it. What they want is the documents that went through his office when he was Staff Secretary, which is a job at the White House where you are kind of like the

traffic cop, where everything that goes into the Oval Office and everything that comes out is coordinated and disseminated properly. But those weren't his documents. Yes, it is not appropriate to see all of those documents. That would be, by the way, millions of additional pages—millions. But the 488,000 pages that have been provided—including all of the documents from his legal positions where he was a judge, where he was an associate counsel in the White House—those have all been provided. That is good, and we should look at them and look at them carefully.

It is not about the documents. It is about some fundamental differences about philosophy. I like his philosophy. He says that you shouldn't legislate from the bench and that you should be independent as a judge and be fair.

He is totally qualified. The American Bar Association is sometimes criticized by Republicans as being too far to the left. It just said that he is "eminently qualified." In fact, they gave him their highest rating, and they gave it unanimously. This just happened last Friday. Not everybody knows this. This person is not just qualified. I believe he is as qualified as anybody in the country to be on the U.S. Supreme Court. I am looking forward to having the opportunity to have this vote here on the floor. I hope it can be bipartisan, as it has been for the nominees that President Obama brought forward, including then-Solicitor General Kagan and Judge Sotomayor. They were big bipartisan votes. Let's get back to that when somebody is as qualified as this candidate clearly is.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about this issue of opioids and the crisis our country faces.

Just in the last couple of weeks we have gotten reports from the Centers for Disease Control from last year's data on overdoses and deaths: 72,000 Americans lost their lives to overdoses last year from drugs. Most of those were from opioids. This is heroin, prescription drugs, and, now, these synthetic opioids—72,000 Americans.

In the wake of that, it is encouraging to me to hear the Senate talking about the possibility of bringing a package of legislation to the floor that will help to push back against this crisis and begin to turn the tide. We have to do it—not just talk about it. We have to act because this crisis is upon us and is very real.

These new efforts that we should move forward on would build on what this Senate has already done with regard to the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, or the CARA legislation, which is now being implemented in my State of Ohio and around the country. There is also the Cures legislation, or the 21st Century Cures Act. It has some additional provisions that allow States to take funding and use it

to fight this opioid addiction. That is smart. There are smart ways for us to fight this opioid epidemic. We know that, and we are beginning to do that.

At the Federal level we can play a role in this, among other things, by taking better practices from around the country and ensuring they are being used back home in our States. I have seen this firsthand because I have been around the State of Ohio a lot since this legislation actually passed. I have actually visited more than a dozen grant recipients of CARA and Cures grants to see what they are doing and then spreading that around to other communities—maybe communities that haven't been able to get the grants but want to see something innovative to be able to push back.

Last Friday I visited Hope Village Recovery Center in Portage County, OH. They received more than \$500,000 in CARA funding to expand a badly needed medication-assisted treatment program. They decided to look at this in a very comprehensive way, and it is working. They are getting people who normally wouldn't step up for treatment to come for treatment, and their success rate for getting people through treatment and not relapsing is relatively high. That is so important right now, because if you don't get people into treatment with an addiction, which is a disease, you are not going to be able to solve this problem.

The comprehensive approach includes treatment, counseling, outpatient treatment, aftercare services, peer support—and these are coaches who are in recovery themselves, and that is very effective—and transportation services to get people back and forth. This holistic approach is what we need to help people begin to heal, get over their addiction, get back to their families, back to work, and back to achieving their God-given purpose in life, which is not to be an addict using these drugs.

Last week I also visited CommQuest Recovery Services in Stark County, OH, to see their new program, an innovative program called the "mom and me program." These are moms who want to help to get over their addiction. They are struggling. This program allows them to come on board to this facility that I got to see, to be able to have some of the loving support and care from people around them, but also to have their kids come with them. This is very unusual. Very few treatment centers in the country allow children to come into the treatment program. We have found through evidence-based programs looking at this that, in fact, if you allow the kids in there and there is proper supervision, it helps. It helps the mothers heal. It helps the kids to be able to heal.

So this is an innovative program that I think is going to end up with great results. They are just getting started on it, but it is going to foster the kind of success that we want to see.

Programs like these are working. Yet the epidemic seems to be getting

worse. Why is that? Well, because we need to do more of this evidence-based stuff. We need to be sure that every community has the opportunity to provide treatment because a lot of people still can't get treatment. We need to encourage people not to go down this funnel of addiction by much more effective and stronger prevention and education programs. There are things we have to do.

CARA 2.0, or the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0, is how it was introduced. That legislation that I have introduced will ensure that those programs that are working get additional help so that the States can do even more by leveraging some of these Federal dollars to be able to do more with the private sector and with the States to be able to turn this tide of addiction.

I talked about the 72,000 lives lost last year. That was a record number. Here is a map of the States. This is a map of the changes in overdose deaths from last year. If it is a purple or blue State, that means they are doing a little better. Look at this map. Almost every State, unfortunately, is not purple or blue. These States that are tan and brown, like my home State of Ohio, indicate an actual increase in opioid deaths last year.

Why is this? I think one of the main reasons for this is because there is a new danger afoot. There is a new surge in drugs. It is very powerful. It is 50 times more powerful than heroin. It is very inexpensive. It is coming primarily from China and coming primarily through our U.S. Postal Service, if you can believe it. It is called synthetic opioids. Fentanyl is the name that most of it is called. Some of it is called Carfentanil and other derivatives, but this fentanyl—this synthetic opioid—is now the biggest problem we have in our States. This is the growing crisis.

Here is a chart that shows what has happened just since 2015 until now. It shows that, in fact, methamphetamines, other opioids, heroin, cocaine are all relatively flat. But look at this big increase. The big increase is with synthetic opioids. When you look at those 72,000 deaths from last year, the majority of them were from opioids. Again, increasingly, it is from these synthetic opioids.

What I hear on the frontlines in Ohio—whether it was at this Hope Village Recovery Center that I talked about or the CommQuest facility—is that unless we combat that influx of fentanyl, we are not going to be able to turn the tide, because despite some of the good programs and the good work that is being done with these programs, we are being overrun with fentanyl.

Over the past week alone, in the Columbus, OH, area, the Franklin County coroner has handled 18 overdose deaths, and 5 were within 24 hours. There were 18 deaths, and 5 were within 24 hours. Imagine that. The cause, the coroner suspects, is fentanyl. If you look at

some of these deaths that we talked about, the 72,000—or even deaths that occurred to people who thought they were taking cocaine or methamphetamine or something else—often it is because the fentanyl has been sprinkled into these drugs and the fentanyl is what is causing the overdoses and the deaths. It is 50 times more powerful, as I said, and that is the new scourge of the opioid epidemic.

From 2013 to 2017, fentanyl overdose deaths have increased nationally by 850 percent.

As coroners' reports for 2017 continue to come in throughout my home State of Ohio, fentanyl now appears to be involved in two-thirds of the deaths in Ohio. So those are record numbers, and two-thirds are from fentanyl. That is consistent with what I am hearing on the frontlines.

Unbelievably, we know where it is coming from, and we are not doing enough to stop it. It is being made in laboratories in China, primarily, and in other countries and shipped into the United States through our own U.S. Postal Service, a government agency. We conducted an 18-month investigation into this issue in the subcommittee that I chair called the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. We did a thorough study. We had undercover people working with us. We went on the websites to find out what is happening. We found out how easy it is to purchase fentanyl online and have it shipped to the United States.

Based on our undercover investigation, these drugs can be found through a simple Google search, and overseas sellers we accessed through an undercover investigator essentially told us they will guarantee the delivery if this poison is sent through the U.S. Postal Service. They will not guarantee it if it goes through a private carrier like UPS, FedEx, or DHL.

Why is that? It is because the private carriers are required to provide law enforcement with big data, or electronic data, in advance as to what the packages are, where they are coming from, where they are going, and what is in them. Law enforcement can then use big data, use their algorithms, figure out which packages are suspect, and get them off the line. I have seen it. I have been in those facilities. I have seen big packages being taken off and, therefore, lives being saved. At a minimum, this will increase the cost on the street.

What is the ultimate answer to this? It is prevention, education, a change in our hearts and in our families, better treatment so that people who have this disease can get the treatment just like another illness they might have, and dealing with this issue of longer term recovery, which leads to more success in treatment.

Those are all essential, but right now we have to put a tourniquet on this, folks. We have to stop the fentanyl from flooding into our country. Look at what it is doing. There is an 850-percent increase.

The information tells law enforcement what they need to be able to pull these packages off if it is provided. Yet, unbelievably, all of the private carriers are required to do it and have been since 9/11.

The post office has been spared. The thought was that the post office should study the issue. Well, I am waiting for the report.

Meanwhile, because of pressure from the Congress, the U.S. Postal Service is starting to look at some of these packages. Last year, they now testified before us in the subcommittee, they did receive data on about 36 percent of the international packages—not 100 percent as these other carriers have to do, but 36 percent. But that means that more than 318 million packages—318 million packages—are coming in with little or no screening at all and without this data.

Even when the post office conducted a pilot program to screen for these drugs, by the way, 80 percent of the time, they testified, these packages that were targeted by Customs and Border Protection were able to be pulled off, but 20 percent of the time they did not get the information to law enforcement. Also, in many cases, the information provided was not useful to law enforcement.

So we need to ensure it is 100 percent of these packages. We need to ensure that all of this information is getting to law enforcement, and we need to be sure that the information is useful and legible.

The bipartisan STOP Act is actually an answer to this. The STOP Act is very simple. My coauthor of the STOP Act is Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota. As we have both said, this is a simple, commonsense, and, quite frankly, long overdue reform. It simply says: Let's hold the post office to the same standard to which we hold these private carriers. Let's say they have to provide this data to law enforcement so that we can begin to address this issue and push back to keep this poison out of our communities.

This bill has been approved for a floor vote on the Republican side. I think it is very close to being approved for a floor vote on the Democratic side. We are very close to a consent agreement to get this broader opioids package I talked about to the floor as well.

I am very pleased that we are taking up that package this month. We need to ensure that whatever concerns people have, they are very frank about it. We have to get the politics out of this, folks. We have to be sure that we are moving forward, as we have been able to do on the CARA legislation and the CURES legislation, not just on a bipartisan basis but on a nonpartisan basis, because this scourge is affecting all of our constituents and it is one that we have to address here at the Federal level to help our States, to help our communities, and to help our families to be able to respond.

The broader opioid package we talked about would include the STOP

Act, but it also would include some other important legislation. It will include a number of provisions from CARA 2.0, such as national recovery housing standards and recovery support programs for high school and college students struggling with addiction, which have worked really well in Ohio. It will include \$60 million for a plan of safe care for babies who are born dependent on substances. These babies are born with what is called neonatal abstinence syndrome. These are innocent, small babies who are often born premature.

I have been in neonatal units around our hospitals in Ohio, and I have seen these babies. It is so sad. They have to be taken through withdrawal as tiny babies. We need to ensure that we do a better job of preventing this by working with the moms as they become pregnant and by ensuring that these kids get the help they need.

It also includes the CRIB Act, bipartisan legislation that would help newborns suffering from addiction recover in the best care setting and provide support for their families.

Again, this has been bipartisan. I have worked with Members on both sides of the aisle on the CRIB Act. It helps to ensure that these babies, when they are born with this neonatal abstinence syndrome, can get the care they need. It is working for these organizations that are doing it, but they need help—specifically, Medicaid reimbursement that they cannot get currently.

The bill also reauthorizes a number of other important programs that have a proven record of success, like the Office of National Drug Control Policy, drug courts, drug-free communities prevention grants, and the high-intensity drug trafficking areas grants, where law enforcement is focusing on drug interdiction in some of the worst areas of our country for drug use and drug addiction.

The STOP Act must be part of that Senate bill, as well, because, again, anything we offer to help deal with this issue of opioids has to include stopping the fentanyl from coming in.

It is time for Congress to move. This should be noncontroversial. It is common sense. We know where these drugs are coming from, we know they are devastating our communities, and we know how we can stop this deadly trend. Let's pass the STOP Act. Let's pass this broader opioid package as soon as possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. PORTMAN. Let's give Americans who are fighting addiction a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider

the following nomination which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Marilyn Jean Horan, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Horan nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of William F. Jung, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Jung nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kari A. Dooley, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Dooley nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Dominic W. Lanza, of Arizona, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Lanza nomination?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 203 Ex.]

YEAS—60

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Alexander | Flake | McCaskill |
| Barrasso | Gardner | McConnell |
| Blunt | Graham | Murkowski |
| Boozman | Grassley | Paul |
| Capito | Hatch | Portman |
| Cassidy | Heitkamp | Reed |
| Collins | Heller | Risch |
| Coons | Hoeven | Roberts |
| Corker | Hyde-Smith | Rounds |
| Cornyn | Inhofe | Rubio |
| Cotton | Isakson | Sasse |
| Crapo | Johnson | Scott |
| Cruz | Jones | Shelby |
| Daines | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Donnelly | King | Tester |
| Duckworth | Kyl | Thune |
| Durbin | Lankford | Tillis |
| Enzi | Leahy | Toomey |
| Ernst | Lee | Wicker |
| Fischer | Manchin | Young |

NAYS—35

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hassan | Schatz |
| Bennet | Heinrich | Schumer |
| Blumenthal | Hirono | Shaheen |
| Booker | Kaine | Smith |
| Brown | Klobuchar | Stabenow |
| Cantwell | Markey | Udall |
| Cardin | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Carper | Merkley | Warner |
| Casey | Murphy | Warren |
| Cortez Masto | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Peters | Wyden |
| Gillibrand | Sanders | |

NOT VOTING—5

| | | |
|--------|--------|--------|
| Burr | Moran | Perdue |
| Harris | Nelson | |

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the next nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Charles J. Williams, of Iowa, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Williams nomination?

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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 North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 79, nays 12, as follows: