

only does this provision increase transparency, it will reduce bureaucratic inefficiency and will save about \$1 million in taxpayer dollars.

This agreement also provides \$589.7 million for the Government Accountability Office to hire additional staff to bolster oversight of government programs and spending. Having spent most of my career in the private sector, accountability is a good thing. There is not enough of it here in Washington, DC. In fact, according to a report issued by the GAO, the GAO returns \$128 for every dollar invested in its budget. That is a good example of accountability and getting results for the American taxpayer. In fact, the resulting benefit of this oversight by GAO was approximately \$74 billion in documented savings for the taxpayers in 2017. That is where you get the \$128 return for every dollar invested in the agency.

The Capitol Police is fully funded at the requested level of \$456.3 million, allowing for the continued protection of visitors coming to the Capitol campus every year, as well as the Members and their staff.

These are just a few highlights of the bill, which allocates resources in a responsible way to maintain existing services, as well as providing critical investments across the U.S. Capitol campus.

Lastly, and importantly, I want to thank Senator CHRIS MURPHY, my ranking member, for working with me in a bipartisan manner throughout this process. This is my first year as chairman of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee. I would also like to thank Chairman SHELBY and Vice Chairman LEAHY for their leadership and efforts to return to regular order on a Senate appropriations bill. This is quite remarkable, but it shouldn't be. The bar has been set so low in Washington, DC, that Congress can't get their appropriations bills or spending bills passed before the end of the current fiscal year going into next year. Well, guess what. The fiscal year ends on September 30, and here we are on September 12, moving forward now on appropriations. That is a good thing for our country.

I urge my colleagues to support this conference report as we continue to move these bills forward to fund the government on time and in the right way.

I see my distinguished colleague, Senator MURPHY from Connecticut, is here as well, and it has truly been an honor to serve with Senator MURPHY to move this forward on behalf of the American people.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, let me express my thanks in return to Chairman DAINES for being such a fantastic guide and a fantastic partner on this subcommittee budget. I am excited to bring this to my colleagues this morn-

ing. I will note that he took over midstream from Senator LANKFORD, who began this process. I will also note that we didn't really get moving so quickly to a conference committee until Senator DAINES took over. I give him great credit for adding so much and being such a great partner in all of this.

I really don't need to go through all of the important initiatives Senator DAINES already did; maybe I will spend a minute doing so. I would note that we made progress on some issues that had been stalled in the Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee for a long time—such as intern pay or the requirement to file campaign finance reports online—I think because we were able to do this budget on its own, with a real process, with a real committee debate, and with a real conference committee. When these budgets get tied up in giant omnibus negotiations, it tends to be that only the top four or five issues in the omnibus get the attention from the folks in the room. These budgets are very important, but maybe because they are a little bit smaller than the budget for HHS or the Department of Defense, they go untended to.

As we return to regular order, not only do I think that is a breath of fresh air for democracy, it is not good news for anybody when the decisions over a budget get decided behind closed doors amongst a very small set of people appointed by the Democratic leader and the Republican leader. It is also good government because when we do these budgets one by one, we get to flesh out some very important and sometimes controversial issues that we might not get to address when they are all lumped together in a massive package.

I hope this is now the way we do things. I congratulate Senator MCCONNELL and Senator SHELBY for setting the tone. I know there are a couple of conference committees tomorrow on some other packages. I hope they go as well as ours did.

In this budget, we did some very good things. We have a long list of deferred maintenance here on this campus. We have 16.5 million square feet of buildings. We have millions of visitors who come to experience the U.S. Capitol. We provide \$734 million for the Architect of the Capitol to make those targeted investments.

Accountability and transparency were things Senator DAINES focused on as chairman. We will have 50 additional auditors and investigators at the Government Accountability Office. That is the office which makes sure that we are doing our job, that we are spending taxpayer dollars wisely. When they issue reports, the taxpayers save money, and now they have the ability to do more of that great work.

It also provides full funding for the Capitol Police. I want to specifically thank Senator DAINES for working with us to include in this budget an initiative that we started here in the Senate to improve protections and co-

ordination for Members' security off campus, to recognize the new and emerging threats that exist in and around Washington, DC.

Finally—I have said it before, but I will say it again—there is a breakthrough, a small amount of money to help compensate interns. Lives change when they get to experience something like working for their Member of Congress, for their Senator. It opens their eyes to a set of experiences that would not be available to them otherwise.

Under prior practice where very few Senate offices paid for those internship experiences, you had to be a child of means in order to get here. Now, hopefully, with this small amount of money we are giving to our interns, we will have a much greater pool of applicants and a much greater pool of young men and women who will be able to be here and work in our offices. I think that is good for this place, and I think it is good for the kids who are going to get to experience government. Faith in government and belief in civic participation couldn't be lower today. Giving more kids from diverse backgrounds access to the Federal Government is a very positive development.

Again, it has been a joy to work with Senator DAINES. It is great to be on a conference committee. I had heard rumors about conferences committees, and we got to sit on one and hammer out a budget with our House colleagues. I hope it sails through as we move to final debate and passage.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise before you today to express the importance of freedom of the press both around the world and here at home. Journalists take risks—often great risks—to tell the stories of war, genocide, hunger, poverty, and corruption around the world while facing unprecedented rates of intimidation and violence.

Freedom of expression is the bedrock of our democracy, but we must not take it for granted. It is how we hold ourselves to the standards set by the Founders and hold ourselves accountable and how we protect our institutions from falling into traps set by those who seek to abuse power.

Earlier this year, I introduced S. Res. 501, a resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and freedom of expression. This resolution was introduced with Senators RUBIO and WYDEN, and I thank my colleagues for their leadership on this important issue.

This resolution highlights the importance of the freedom of the press, condemns attacks against journalists, and reaffirms press freedom as a priority

for the U.S. Government. This resolution is in honor of the 46 journalists who were killed in 2017 for their reporting, for the 262 journalists who were imprisoned around the world last year, and, as part of that 262, the 21 journalists who were jailed just in 2017 for “false news,” which more than doubled the 2016 record.

These journalists are mothers and fathers and sons and daughters who put their lives and, indeed, their freedom on the line to shed a light on some of the world’s toughest stories. I would like to tell the story of one of the journalists who lost his life last year, Chris Allen, while he bravely reported from a conflict area. I acknowledge Chris’s parents, Joyce Krajian and John Allen, who are here with us today.

Chris grew up in Narberth, PA, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Chris’s parents say he was an explorer from an early age and had a keen interest in history. He went on to pursue his master’s degree at Oxford. He was encouraged to go to places where history was being made. Chris embraced this calling and became a freelance journalist—first in eastern Ukraine, where he embedded with pro-Ukrainian forces and reported for outlets like the Independent and the Guardian, in order to help give his audience a glimpse of the conflict up close.

His mother Joyce and his father John have shared this memory of Chris:

This desire to bring to light untold stories from uncovered regions of the world and the plights of their peoples—that’s what motivated Chris. He wanted to know the thoughts and feelings of those encountering conflict firsthand.

So said his parents.

After 3 years in Ukraine, Chris decided to embed with the South Sudan opposition forces near the Ugandan border. On August 26, 2017, we understand that Chris walked overnight with these fighters and two other journalists to the town of Kaya. Chris was killed shortly after dawn while he photographed a gun battle between opposition and government forces. Chris was just 26 years old.

In the early years of his professional life, Chris had already committed himself to the vital job of covering dangerous places and exposing stories of vulnerable people whose countries were embroiled in war. In the year that has passed since his death, despite commitments from the South Sudanese Government to investigate, Joyce and John have no official information about how he was killed, and no one has been held accountable for the loss of their son. They have seen South Sudanese Government officials smear Chris’s reputation and threaten other foreign journalists with the same fate. This is unthinkable for any parent to have to endure.

Chris Allen’s parents have more questions than they have answers. Chris and others like him have lost their lives in the pursuit of truth, with no

accountability or justice. Other journalists sit in prison today for daring to speak truth to power. We have a responsibility to advance these core American values—the values of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. These values continue to serve as an example to the world.

As I mentioned earlier, our bipartisan resolution reaffirms press freedom as a priority for the United States. What does this mean exactly?

First, advocating for media freedom should be a feature of the U.S. Government’s interactions with other governments where the media is censored, silenced, or threatened. I have had tough conversations over the years, as I know many of my colleagues have had, with foreign government officials about human rights and the rule of law. I know it can be difficult to advance these values while always cooperating on other issues like security or other political issues, but we must press these issues. Whether it is advocating for the release of two Reuters journalists who were detained under antiquated laws in Myanmar, pressing for an investigation into Chris Allen’s death, or pushing for reforms to allow media workers to operate more freely, the U.S. Government must be consistent and persistent.

Perhaps more importantly, we must model the respect for free journalism and empower journalists here at home. Investigative journalism helps to hold accountable government officials, elected representatives, business leaders, and others. It exposes fraud and waste and corruption, which corrode our society. It helps us to connect with the men and the women in uniform who serve our Nation overseas and to understand the conflicts in which they fight. It shows us the atrocities of terrorist groups like ISIS and the abuses of dictatorial regimes like that of Bashar al-Assad’s. Journalists amplify the voices of the most vulnerable among us and provide for us a window into the homes and into the hearts of people a world away.

Instead of respecting these professionals, President Trump has called them the “enemy of the people.” When we hear powerful voices denigrate tough reporting as “fake news” or bar reporters from doing their jobs by blocking access, we all must condemn it. Reporters, writers, photographers, and media workers in the United States have not been intimidated and will continue to carry the torch of core American values like freedom of the press. On both sides of the aisle, we have a responsibility to rebuke any anti-press narratives by any public officials. This narrative is not only antithetical to the values our Founders laid out in the Bill of Rights, but it is dangerous.

I urge my colleagues to support S. Res. 501 this week and to speak up for media freedoms every day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, late this week or early next week, we will vote on a bill called the Opioid Crisis Response Act.

This is a powerful piece of legislation for which our colleague Chairman LAMAR ALEXANDER deserves great credit for shepherding through the process, but he was, by no means, alone in doing so. This bill, as he will tell you, represents the contribution of more than 70 different Senators and 5 different standing committees of the U.S. Senate. That takes a lot of careful work and a lot of determination. The bill is bipartisan, as one would expect, and that, of course, would not have happened without there having been intense collaboration. For those who like to say that bipartisanship is dead in the U.S. Senate, this bill and other bipartisan work we have done and will do is evidence that that is simply false.

In 2017, President Trump declared the opioid crisis a national public health emergency. Since then, we have seen 116 Americans die from opioid-related overdoses daily, and in places like New Hampshire, that death rate has been double the national average. In some places, coroners have asked local funeral homes to help because there has just not been enough room to store the bodies at the morgues. Let that sink in for just a minute. Coroners are asking funeral homes to help store the bodies because there is not enough room at the morgues because of the 116 Americans who lose their lives to opioid addiction each day.

People of all races and ethnicities—regardless of gender—are dying. Drugs, of course, do not discriminate. Even when people survive overdoses, they often come back only to return to the prisons of their addictions. Sometimes they rob, steal, or sell themselves in order to get their fixes for oxycodone, hydrocodone, heroin, or fentanyl—all opioids. Meanwhile, for the rest of their lives, their relationships, their families crumble. Maybe they are looking for escape. Maybe they are looking for some sort of meaning. Maybe they are veterans who are self-medicating or they have mental diagnoses that simply go undiscovered, and, thus, they try to medicate by resorting to alcohol or, in this case, to opioids. Yet the result is always the same. Their bodies can’t handle the poison, and their minds’ cravings can never be wholly satisfied. That is how the breakdown begins.

Drug addiction and the carnage associated with it is, of course, nothing new in our country. What is new are the types of drugs that are being created by those who tinker with chemical formulas in order to evade our current laws. What is also new is the extent of the tragedy. Overdoses are going up in many places—so high, in fact, that the average life expectancy for adult males in the United States has fallen. As Christopher Caldwell wrote in “First Things” last year,