

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,

“The death toll far eclipses those of all previous drug crises.”

The bill we will be voting on is our honest attempt to look this crisis in the eye, not to shy away from the ugly reality. The legislation tries, in several mutually reinforcing ways, to end what Caldwell calls the “artificial hell” of those who are addicted. It will supply States with critical funding. It will ensure that research is expedited and that patients will have access to substance abuse treatment. It will also improve detection and interdiction measures to reduce the supplies of illicit drugs that are being funneled across our southern border. I will return to the border in a moment and our neighbor Mexico’s role in this.

Part of the opioids package involves legislation I introduced with the senior Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, called the Substance Abuse Prevention Act. It is one of the critical pieces of this broader bill we will be voting on. In addition to reauthorizing lifesaving programs, it is aimed at reducing demand. Of course, supply increases to meet the increasing demand, and we have to do something about the demand side in order to deal with this problem.

It does this first by reauthorizing the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which oversees the executive branch’s efforts on narcotics control by developing a national drug control strategy and coordinating efforts with the States.

Second, it reauthorizes one of our Nation’s most important programs for preventing youth substance abuse and keeping drugs out of our neighborhoods, the Drug-Free Communities Program.

Third, the legislation expands opioid and heroin awareness. Of course, heroin is just one type of opioid. It also improves substance abuse treatment and will hopefully result in prescribers of controlled substances being better trained and educated on the potential harmful effects of the drugs they are prescribing.

Finally, under our legislation, Senator FEINSTEIN’s and mine, the Attorney General can also make grants available that focus on substance use disorders. Some of these grants will be used to determine the effectiveness of programs that pair social workers with families who struggle with substance use disorders. We need to invest in programs that actually work, that make a quantifiable, measurable difference. So these grants will help.

Like the rest of the country, my State is no stranger when it comes to opioid addiction. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Texas deaths from heroin and fentanyl—its wicked cousin—have been steadily increasing since 2010. These are real people we have lost, who have real families and real lives. Cash Owen, from Austin, TX, was only 22 years old. When he went to Westlake High School in Austin, where my daughters attended, he

liked to cook for a hobby. He later overdosed on heroin. His is just one example of another life lost to this terrible scourge.

Obviously, I come from a border State and realize, when it comes to stemming addiction, it is a two-way street. We need to do our part to try to deal with the demand side and to also prevent illicit substances from crossing our borders.

ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement—deserves a lot of credit when it comes to fighting the opioid crisis in America. Despite some politicians’ bizarre and irresponsible calls to abolish the agency, it continues to make great strides in protecting public health and public safety. For example, ICE initiated 3,900 cases for human smuggling just last year. It has arrested more than 4,700 members of transnational gangs who moved people and drugs across our border into the United States. It has seized more than 980,000 pounds of narcotics, including drugs such as fentanyl, a synthetic opioid. As I said, it is a two-way street.

Actually, fentanyl is worth dwelling on because it shows just how implicated Mexico is in all of this.

Fentanyl was first developed as a synthetic painkiller and anesthetic. It is 100 times more potent than morphine and up to 50 times stronger than heroin. What is happening is that enterprising drug traffickers and designers are taking pure fentanyl and cutting it with other substances—sometimes heroin, sometimes cocaine, and sometimes methamphetamine. But sometimes amateurs use cheaper fillers and less professional equipment, which makes the doses even more dangerous and the people who take it more likely to overdose.

There remains a debate on just how much fentanyl comes to the United States via Mexico. We know that some comes directly from places like China through our national Postal Service, but a sizable percentage is certainly snuck across our border, along with other illegal drugs, from Mexico.

According to the San Diego Union-Tribune, Customs and Border Patrol seized 355 kilograms of fentanyl at the San Diego ports of entry alone in 2017. By the way, a kilogram is 2.2 pounds. They seized 355 kilograms of fentanyl at the San Diego ports of entry alone in 2017.

There are fentanyl routes that run through Mexican cartel strongholds and head north across the border into the United States. They funnel an estimated 80 percent of the drug across the border.

All this is to say that we here in the United States are not alone because the Mexican Government has its hands full as well. Fentanyl seizures inside Mexico have risen sharply, with just under a kilogram seized in 2013 to more than 100 kilograms seized inside of Mexico last year. According to government data obtained by InSight Crime, in the first 6 months of this year, 2018,

Mexican authorities seized 114 kilograms.

Of course, it is not just problems with fentanyl that we share; our heroin problem in the United States is also tied directly to Mexico. U.S. officials estimate that 90 percent of the heroin used in the United States is produced and trafficked from Mexico.

From all the news regarding the opioid crisis, we know what the results are in our country, but what about Mexico? Is this a problem just for the United States, or is this a problem for Mexico as well?

In Juarez, right across the El Paso border, a rehab center treats nearly 300 patients a day, including many heroin addicts. In Tijuana, where drug use reportedly starts as early as middle school, we know they also have a big problem. We know that all across Mexico, adolescent consumption is on the rise, particularly with regard to drugs like marijuana. But it is not just marijuana, it is methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin—you name it. In fact, according to a recent survey, the percentage of Mexican men and women between the ages of 12 and 65 who admit to using illegal drugs has roughly doubled since 2011.

Here is my point: American and Mexican carnage is related. It is actually interrelated. That is why in recent years, through programs like the Merida Initiative, we have worked together with the Mexican Government to combat this multiheaded monster. But our two governments will have to work even closer in the months and days ahead because gangs, cartels, and drug runners are all adapting, diversifying, and evolving based on new circumstances, and we need to make sure we keep up with their innovations.

In Mexico, since 2007, roughly 200,000 people have died as a result of drug-related violence. That is more than all the deaths in the war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq combined. In Mexico, 200,000 people have died as a result of drug-related violence in the last 10 years.

Now the cartels have diversified. As someone put it, they are commodity agnostic—they will do anything for money. They will ship people from Central America across the border—adults with children, or so-called family units, or unaccompanied children. They will move drugs. Now they are involved in the fuel theft business as well. Black market gasoline is now a \$1 billion industry in Mexico. They are also involved in mining, port operations, and other industries. They have multiple income streams. As I said, they are diversifying.

Meanwhile, the bloodshed continues unabated. The most violent year in Mexico’s recorded history was 2017. The armed conflict between the cartels and Mexico’s military, which started 12 years ago under President Felipe Calderon, now ranks as perhaps the deadliest war in the world apart from Syria. Mexico is second only to Syria as the deadliest war zone on the planet.

As that war continues—and by the way, we support Mexico’s waging it—we may think that the United States has been mostly spared, but that really depends on your perspective. Fortunately, we have been spared the most gruesome acts of public violence by and large, although there are certainly notable exceptions.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 72,000 Americans died from a drug overdose last year. I wonder why we don’t read about this in the newspapers or hear about it on TV. We have somehow become numb or anesthetized to the fact that tens of thousands of Americans have taken their own lives accidentally through a drug overdose. Of those 72,000 people who died as a result of a drug overdose last year, 49,000 were associated with opioids, which include substances such as fentanyl and heroin.

The annual numbers continue to rise, with the death toll for 2017 nearly 10 percent higher than a year earlier. This problem is getting worse, not better. Experts believe the rise is attributable to opioids becoming more readily available and more potent than recent versions of the drug.

So here in the United States, we are losing lives as well. That is why the vote later this week or earlier next week on this bill is so important—it is how we will attempt to make some progress in dealing with this crisis. That is also why our partnership with Mexico must consistently be strengthened and reinforced.

Our drug problem—and ultimately the associated violence and criminality—is Mexico’s, and Mexico’s is ours.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER).

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday was the 17th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks—an event that changed my city and our country forever. I spent the morning at the 9/11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan. Two deep scars in the Earth remind us where mighty towers once stood.

I will never forget that day, nor the next: the phones—when they worked—ringing endlessly; the smell of death; the lines of hundreds of people holding homemade signs—I will never forget that—as I walked there. President Bush sent a plane, and we went to Ground Zero the day after. Hundreds of people were lined up asking: “Have you

seen my father Joe?” “Have you seen my daughter Mary?” The towers had crashed, but no one knew how many people had survived. It was awful.

Mr. President, 3,000 souls were lost in one day—one of the bloodiest days on American soil since the Civil War—people I knew: a guy I played basketball with in high school, a businessman who helped me on my way up, a firefighter with whom I went around the city to ask people to donate blood.

Seventeen years ago today, September 12, 2001, I called on Americans to wear the flag in remembrance of those who were lost, the brave men and women who rushed to find those who might still be alive. I have worn that flag every single day since. I will wear it every day of my life for the rest of my life in remembrance of those who were lost.

This year, I want to turn everyone’s attention to a harrowing statistic. By the end of 2018, we expect that more people will have died from exposure to toxic chemicals on 9/11 than were killed on that day itself. Last year, 23 current or former members of the New York Police Department died of 9/11-related diseases—the same number who died on September 11. A new tablet was recently installed at the Hall of Heroes at One Police Plaza to commemorate all the new deaths of members of the FDNY. There is now an American living with a 9/11-related illness in every one of the 50 States and 429 of the 436 congressional districts. I guess they have 436 counting the District of Columbia.

Just as we will never forget the bravery so many fallen Americans showed that terrible day, let us never forget those first responders who did survive, only to contract cancer or a respiratory illness from breathing in a toxic cocktail of dust and ash at Ground Zero.

Nearly a decade ago, I was proud, along with my colleague from New York, to pass the Zadroga Act to provide healthcare for our first responders and a victim compensation fund to help survivors who get sick and the families who lost a loved one to illness. Three years ago, I was proud to work across the aisle to make the healthcare component of the Zadroga Act virtually permanent.

Next year, however, Congress must reauthorize the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund because the administrator of the fund now predicts that the funding will not last until 2020, as we had previously hoped. So many new claims are being filed because so many of these deadly cancers are now showing up. As the death tally from 9/11 continues to grow, we have to make sure the fund is capitalized with enough money to provide an ever longer list of 9/11 victims. So I want to remind my colleagues that soon we have to come together once again to do what is right for the families of the first responders and the surviving first responders themselves who, without

hesitation, risked their lives to save other lives 17 years ago yesterday.

NOMINATION OF BRETT KAVANAUGH

Now, last week, the Judiciary Committee concluded its hearings on President Trump’s nominee to the Supreme Court, Judge Brett Kavanaugh. Over the course of 2 days of questioning, Brett Kavanaugh managed to avoid definitively answering nearly every question of substance, making a mockery of his participation in the hearings. He refused to say that he believed *Roe v. Wade* was correctly decided. He refused to say that he would affirmatively uphold the existing healthcare law, including protections for over 100 million Americans with preexisting conditions.

He even refused to visit what many consider to be his extreme views on executive power and would not even say if he believed the President was obligated to comply with a duly issued subpoena.

It didn’t matter if members of the Judiciary Committee phrased the questions about already decided cases or hypothetical situations. When he got an already decided case, he said he couldn’t talk about those. When he got a hypothetical case, he said he couldn’t talk about those. He couldn’t talk about anything—anything. What the heck did we have him before us and the American people for if he refused to answer any of these questions?

So after 2 full days of questioning, the American people are no closer to understanding the kind of jurist Judge Kavanaugh would be if confirmed to the Court.

In my view, Judge Kavanaugh’s silence on crucial questions about *Roe*, healthcare, and executive power speaks volumes about his fitness for the Supreme Court. There were so many questions he failed to answer or were purposely evaded, and many times, when he did answer, his answers were totally unsatisfactory and did not answer the question.

Senators LEAHY and DURBIN, for instance, asked numerous questions about his involvement in the Bush administration controversies, including interrogations and the nominations of controversial judges, like Pryor and Pickering. Judge Kavanaugh either avoided answering or offered misleading testimony.

In 2004, Judge Kavanaugh told Senator FEINSTEIN that he didn’t know about a potential judicial nominee’s views on abortion in the vast majority of cases, but recently released emails show that he was told about and discussed nominees’ views on ideology, including *Roe*.

Judge Kavanaugh repeatedly denied knowledge of the Bush administration’s policy on detention and interrogation of combatants, but emails released last week indicate that he had meetings on the subject, reviewed talking points, and opined on legal strategy.

Judge Kavanaugh claimed that he only learned of President Bush’s