

passed this week. It is going to be signed by the President, hopefully this week or next week.

I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator BOOKER. It is a very bipartisan bill. It passed here, passed the House—a really important issue.

By the way, the Trump administration is doing a good job on this issue. Even the U.S.-Mexico-Canada NAFTA agreement has a provision, and we are pressing for that, on this ocean debris problem. This bill is going to do a lot to help with this challenge. It passed. A bipartisan group of Senators strongly supported that. It passed this week and is being signed into law here soon by the President. That is good news.

I am pretty sure no one wrote about it, but if you look at global challenges for the environment—the ocean pollution, plastics, ocean debris challenge is a big one.

Again, I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, in particular—great leadership on this issue. We are taking important strides on this. He and I are already working on SOS 2.0, and I guarantee that is going to pass.

That is a bipartisan achievement, protecting our oceans, getting the world to clean up plastics, ocean debris. That is not bad for 1 week in the Senate, right? Hopefully someone will write about that. It was very bipartisan, that is for sure.

Another one that was signed into law 3 weeks ago is a bill that is really important to me, and it is one of the first bills I introduced as a Senator when I came here 3½ years ago, called the Pro bono Work to Empower and Represent Act—the POWER Act. That is what it is called, the POWER Act.

This is a bill that I worked on very closely with Senator HEITKAMP, a Democrat from North Dakota. She and I worked on this bill for over 2 years. It passed the Senate and finally passed the House and came back, had a couple more elements to it. We got it passed again, and the President signed it 3 weeks ago.

What does the POWER Act do? Well, we all know America has big challenges with regard to sexual assault and domestic violence. My State has huge problems with this horrible, horrendous issue. The POWER Act, through getting lawyers to step up and help victims and survivors of domestic violence, is going to provide more legal resources and services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. That is a pretty important topic, a pretty important issue for America.

Think about this: If you are an accuser—if you are someone who is a perpetrator of one of these horrendous crimes, a sexual assault crime—you get a Sixth Amendment right to counsel. That is under the Constitution. If you are the victim, you get nothing—nothing. Well, our bill, which is now the law of the land, is going to help change that. We envision an army of lawyers all over the country helping these survivors. So that passed. It is bipartisan.

It passed 3 weeks ago. It is an important issue, certainly, for Alaska but also for the country. We all know that we can do much better in this area, so that is going to help. I think it is going to help thousands of survivors personally as we work to implement it. That is good news. It is bipartisan.

What else? NAFTA. This isn't in the Senate yet, but it will be coming our way. The President and his team announced that they have reached agreement with Mexico and Canada on an updated NAFTA agreement. I think most Americans think that is very important. We will see if it is bipartisan. I certainly have been one who has been encouraging the President and his team. I am working hard on making sure we get there and address some of our other economic challenges and trade challenges. But that was announced a couple of days ago. That is good news.

We have to get to the details of it. We will debate it here on the Senate floor. It is important for the country, for our allies, for the American worker and American families. That is positive.

Then, related to NAFTA, of course, is bipartisan good news that should make every American smile; that is, finally we are once again unleashing the might of the U.S. economy—something I know the Presiding Officer cares a lot about, and certainly it is a bipartisan issue. We would rather have 4.2 percent GDP growth like we had last quarter than 1.5 GDP growth, which was the average over the last 10 years. There is a debate here—it is a healthy debate—on what is causing this robust economic growth. I think it is tax reform and regulatory reform and unleashing the promise and power of American energy. So there is a debate here, but there is no debate on the fact that everybody in this body, I hope, thinks that 4.2 percent GDP growth, thinks having the lowest unemployment rate in almost 50 years, thinks having wages finally start to go up after being stagnant for 20 is good news. It is good news, and everybody here should have bipartisan agreement on that. We will debate how we sustain it, how we keep it going, but nobody debates that it is bipartisan good news.

So I am just going to ask my friends in the media—it is not 1850; sorry, I know conflict sells. We are not on the verge of civil war. We don't all hate each other; we actually like each other. We work together. I certainly respect my colleagues here. Yes, we have our tough debates; we are having one right now. But for my friends in the media, it is OK to report on bipartisan successes. I just gave examples of a number of bipartisan initiatives that occurred over the last 4 to 5 weeks that are actually really good for the American people. They are good for the people I represent back in Alaska.

But even if you are not going to read about this or see it on TV, for anyone watching, for the people in the gallery,

for my constituents back home, there is a lot going on here that is bipartisan, that is significant, that helps us address challenges like opioids, helps us take advantage of industries like the aviation industry which, for Alaska, is so important. So keep the faith.

Again, to my friends in the media, it is OK to report on bipartisan successes. The American people care about them. You might not care about them, but the American people do. So let's work together and try to make sure everybody is understanding that there is some important work being done here, and a lot of it is going to help the people we represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate engage in its routine legislative wrapup as in morning business during today's session of the Senate.

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today the Senate passed a preconference Federal Aviation Authority bill without amendment offered or accepted by myself or my colleagues. I voted against this bill primarily for three reasons.

First, this FAA reauthorization does not include a critical and necessary consumer protection bill, the FAIR Fees Act. The FAIR Fees Act would have limited the amount that airlines could gouge consumers when they wanted to change flights. Now, without this provision, working Oregonians will still have to pay absurd prices, such as \$200, to change a simple \$80 flight.

Second, Senator MERKLEY and I had introduced legislation to qualify the Crater Lake-Klamath Regional Airport to receive Essential Air Service funding, and despite our attempts to include it to this 5-year FAA authorization, the legislation was excluded. The airport near Klamath Falls is currently without commercial air service, and Essential Air Service funding would help them recruit an airline to return commercial air service to the region. I was disappointed this important provision was not included by either the House or the Senate because it would have increased economic development and tourism for the Klamath region. I will continue to pursue any and all avenues to help restore commercial air service to the Crater Lake-Klamath Regional Airport, a must for quality of life and economic development in the Klamath Falls area.

Third, this bill includes the Preventing Emerging Threats Act, legislation aimed at empowering Federal agents to prevent drone-based crime.

This legislation confronts a clear need and represents careful—but incomplete—efforts to create a narrow program with appropriate congressional oversight. Specifically, this bill allows for broad carveouts to the Wiretap Act, and it is not clear this broad authority is necessary. Additionally, the privacy protections could be interpreted as applying only to information gathered between the drone and the drone operator and not applying to additional information gathered, collected, stored, or analyzed while initially detecting drones. Interpreted this way, the bill represents a massive expansion of the government's warrantless wiretapping authority.

I have received assurances from the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and my colleagues from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to work together to address my concerns. Despite that, I voted against this bill while looking forward to remedying this quickly in perfecting legislation. Similarly, I am looking forward to published guidance from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security making clear that all information gathered, stored, analyzed, or collected under this act are subject to the privacy protections.

SUPPORT FOR PATIENTS AND COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate has just cleared the most sweeping package of bills to address the opioid epidemic to date. These fresh policies will make a difference on the ground. In my view, there are promising ideas dealing with some key important priorities: helping people steer clear of addiction from the get-go and knocking down barriers that prevent people from getting help when they need it.

These policies were crafted on a bipartisan basis in practically half of the committees in Congress. The Finance Committee passed its own bill in June with more than two dozen policies that at least one member from each side of the aisle sponsored.

For example, Senator BENNET led the way on a provision that will help root out fraud by requiring prescriptions to be sent electronically from doctors to pharmacies. It is too easy to fake a script on old-fashioned paper and get a bottle of pills, so this policy would make electronic prescriptions the norm in Medicare's drug program.

Senators BROWN and STABENOW have important provisions that will help make sure new mothers and infants have access to the care and treatment they need. Senator MENENDEZ and Senator SCOTT worked on provisions that will help parents get treatment and find smart, safe ways to reunify families.

Since homelessness and addiction often go hand-in-hand, Senator CARDIN and I have worked on a bipartisan provision that is about uncovering innova-

tive opportunities in Medicaid to provide housing-related supports and services to individuals struggling with substance use disorders including for those transitioning out of residential treatment and for those who are experiencing homelessness.

Senators WARNER, CARDIN, and THUNE have also brought forward an important provision that would expand access to telehealth services in Medicare for older Americans struggling with substance use disorders. That will expand this promising technology so seniors who don't live in rural areas can also remotely connect with their doctors to get substance use disorder treatment. When it comes to ensuring a substance use disorder is being correctly managed, frequent and convenient check-ups can make all the difference in the world.

These are only a few of the ideas the Finance Committee has been able to bring forward in this bipartisan package.

This legislation represents a measured but important step towards ensuring Federal and State policies are working towards a resolution of this crisis, not making it worse. I view this legislation as an early step in dealing with the epidemic. Nearly 70,000 Americans are dying every year due to drug overdoses. This is one of the most serious issues of our time, and the work will need to continue, especially when it comes to identifying how the crisis began in the first place and holding those responsible accountable.

Congress is going to keep at it until pain policy in this country is back on track. I think of how this has progressed as a "prescription pendulum." Years ago, when I was the director of the Oregon Grey Panthers, I would get calls from the families of older people coping with pain. They would say, "My dad is 93 years old, he's in agony, but he can't get a prescription because they say he'll get addicted."

More recently, the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. If you broke a bone, came down with a bout of back pain, or had a root canal, getting a script for a bottle of opioids became routine. Millions of Americans got hooked. No community has been spared from the consequences—mothers, fathers, babies, sons, daughters, grandmothers, relatives, friends, co-workers—I would challenge any American to claim someone in their social network has not felt the effects that opioid addiction have had.

Congress has a responsibility to stay on this issue until no family is torn apart just because of a misused or inappropriate prescription after an accident, until no parent has to spend day after day wondering if they will receive a call that their child has overdosed again, until no baby has to spend days or even weeks after they are born recovering from opioid withdrawal. The bill before the Senate today will start to turn the tide, and I am proud so many of my colleagues supported it.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the October 1, 2018, vote on motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 302, long-term FAA reauthorization. I would have voted yea.

PROTECTING RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS ACT OF 2018

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to speak on S. 994, the Protecting Religiously Affiliated Institutions Act of 2018.

First, I want to thank Senator HATCH and the other supporters of the bill. In particular, I would also like to thank the House sponsors of the bill, Representatives KUSTOFF and KILMER, for their work in shepherding it through that chamber.

I am glad to see this bill finally enacted into law.

Early last year, a string of bomb threats to synagogues, mosques, and other religious affiliated institutions, such as Jewish community centers, threatened this Nation and one of its core constitutional tenants: the free exercise of religion. In the wake of these threats, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing on religious hate crimes.

Just 1 month after that hearing, two Islamic centers in northern California were attacked during Ramadan. At the largest Sacramento mosque, a burned Quran was also filled with bacon and handcuffed to a fence. That mosque alone has been targeted multiple times.

Despicable acts like these have become far too common. The statistics are startling. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, from 2014 to 2016, anti-Muslim hate crimes increased 99.4 percent, from 154 reported incidents to 307 reported incidents. There has also been a rise in anti-Semitic incidents. The Anti-Defamation League reported 1,986 anti-Semitic incidents nationally in 2017, compared to 942 in 2015, an increase of 110 percent. We heard testimony in the Judiciary Committee that this increase came after the dangerous rhetoric that was used during the 2016 election cycle.

Unfortunately, this sort of persistent hateful rhetoric continues to plague our Nation and our political discourse. This was made manifest during a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville last summer that culminated in a young woman losing her life.

The clear lesson is that all of us must strongly condemn hateful acts and state in no uncertain terms that they have no place in our country. This legislation is one way for us to do that. This bill updates the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 to specifically prohibit threats of force made against religious real property, including the property of religiously affiliated institutions.