

U.S. military is the strongest, best equipped fighting force in all the world.

On the healthcare front this Congress, we passed the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act to address the nationwide opioid epidemic. This bipartisan legislation reflected ideas and input from no fewer than 72 of our Members here in the Senate to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

We repealed ObamaCare's individual mandate tax, which forced patients to buy insurance that they didn't want and couldn't afford. We also eliminated ObamaCare's Independent Payment Advisory Board, which would have empowered a board of unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats to make substantial changes to Medicare.

We passed legislation to give terminally ill patients access to experimental care.

In February, we also passed the longest extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in the program's history.

Then, of course, there are the many excellent judges we have confirmed to the Federal bench—judges who can be relied on to uphold the law and the Constitution and to give anyone who comes before their benches a fair shake.

TRIBUTE TO ORRIN HATCH

Mr. President, as usual, more than one of our accomplishments this Congress would not have been possible without the leadership of Senator HATCH. He spearheaded the historic tax reform bill that is putting more money in the pockets of the American people, and he is also responsible for the longest extension of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in the program's history.

In his 40-plus years of public service, he has been a powerful voice for the people of Utah and for all Americans. He has fought for economic growth and job creation, for trade policies that benefit American companies and American workers, for judges who will uphold the Constitution and the rule of law, and for fiscal responsibility and intellectual property rights.

Senator HATCH has long been a leader on the issue of religious liberty. Together with the late Senator Ted Kennedy, he authored the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect Americans' First Amendment right to live in accordance with their religious beliefs.

A stalwart conservative, he has nevertheless known how to reach across the aisle to get things done for the American people. No legislator alive today has had as many pieces of legislation that he or she has sponsored signed into law by the President.

It is difficult to imagine the Senate without ORRIN HATCH. I have been privileged to serve with Senator HATCH throughout my time in the Senate, including on the Senate Finance Committee, which he chairs. It is hard to imagine his not being there, but the impact he has had on the Senate will

not soon be forgotten. He leaves a record of legislative achievement and an example of character and leadership, of fierce conviction paired with a consummate gentlemanliness. There are few people to whom the word "statesman" can be applied more fittingly.

I wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement. I know he will enjoy having more time to spend with Elaine, his wife, with his children and his numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as, hopefully, having some extra time to follow the Utah Jazz.

I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session, that the Chair lay before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, and that the final 10 minutes before the vote be equally divided between the managers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 2, which the clerk will report by title.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2), to provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same: Signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of December 10, 2018.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I may consume.

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

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I rise today for the final time representing the great people of Indiana here in the U.S. Senate. My 6 years representing Hoosiers in this body and the 6 years I spent as a Congressman for the Second District of Indiana before this have been among the great honors of my life.

I am the grandson of immigrants—immigrants who came here with nothing except the dream of America—a dream that says that any opportunity can come true, that if you work hard, you can accomplish anything.

My dad was in the CCC. For all of our young pages here who have no idea what the CCC is, it was the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was for teenagers your age, back in the Depression, who were asked to go and try to help raise money for their family so that the other family members could eat.

My dad was shipped to Idaho to build bridges. Today we call that infrastructure. Back then, we said it was building bridges. He built bridges all throughout the Pacific Northwest, having grown up in the Lower East Side of New York City and having never been west of the Hudson River in his life until that point. It was America that gave him that chance.

My brothers and sisters were the first generation to ever go to college. That is how America works. You work hard, and each generation builds on the next. We are so lucky to live in this country that is so blessed and that gives us this opportunity, but we have a responsibility here to meet the challenges that have been given to us.

I want to take this opportunity to discuss some of the things I have learned in my time in Congress and to share a few thoughts on how the work that happens here, and how it will happen in coming years, is going to be absolutely essential to how our Nation moves forward and succeeds.

In my 12 years here in the Capitol, I have prided myself on the relationships I have built and on the bipartisan nature of working together. I have been found to be one of the most bipartisan Members. My friend HEIDI, who is down the aisle here, who gave a wonderful speech this morning, was my partner on so much of this. I would never have been able to achieve for Hoosiers so much of this without working together in a bipartisan fashion.

My friend TODD YOUNG is across the way. He is the other Senator from Indiana. Our focus has been on how to make life better, whether it meant assisting constituents or resolving an issue with a Federal agency.

In one case, a pizza parlor owner came up to me. He was 90 years old. Now he is 93. He said: My streetlight is out. You are my Senator. It needs to be fixed before the big game this weekend.

I called the mayor, and it was fixed. He was asked that weekend, and he said: Of course, I got it fixed. I called my Senator. That is what I did.

We are multitasking in this job. It is to make lives better.

I was blessed to work with my friend RON JOHNSON, the Senator from Wisconsin. We worked on legislation called the Right to Try Act. It means giving people who are sick the chance to get medication they need.

We were told: There is no shot. This can't get done.

We had zero votes at the time. When it was done, we had 100—100. A young man from my State, Jordan McLinn, has the chance to get the medication he needs now. People all over the Nation do. Other kids with Duchenne

muscular dystrophy can also get help, and other people with ALS can also get help. That is the purpose of this job—that we work for them.

I was able to get more than 50 provisions signed into law over the past 6 years. It was only possible because I worked together every day with every Senator. There are friends like SUSAN COLLINS and LISA MURKOWSKI who, when the government shut down, we worked to end it. It became like a regular group that we had. Every time it shut down, we would work to open it back up again.

You learn from other Members, like ROGER WICKER, who I worked together with to end military suicide. We have not been able to end it yet, but we sure worked on it every day.

We learn from others Members in hearings about the difficulties people in their States are facing, and we work together to address common challenges. You can be from Idaho, you can be from North Dakota, you can be from New Hampshire, or you can be from Indiana, but we all have the same challenges.

All of us worked hard to get here. Our jobs should not be worrying about politics but worrying about making lives better. Partisanship gets us nothing. Division gets us nothing.

I was thinking: What is the best way to explain this? It is this. When a fire department goes to a house, they don't ask if the person living there is Democrat or Republican. They are just there to help their neighbor. No soldier has ever asked, when they are in a foxhole fighting their way out: Where do you come from? Which party are you? What is your religion? What is your ethnic background?

You are Americans. You are in this together. You have each other's backs.

As an institution, the Senate must be a place that we are all proud of, that promotes that ideal, and that sets the example that we want our children and grandchildren to follow. It means getting to know one another. It means listening to other perspectives and to other experiences.

One of the things that amazed me the most—and when I was out campaigning and going to town halls, I never failed to be astounded—was when folks came and said: You didn't do the one thing I wanted; so I am really mad at you, and I will never support you again.

I said: But we did 19 other things.

They said: But I didn't get that one.

I said: Apparently, you are not from a family of five children, like I am.

There were five children and two dogs. So when there were seven pork chops, I was the last to wind up with one.

So if you are someone who wants 100 percent of what you want every time, this is not the place. This is a place where we can get 70 percent to build America, to make it a better place.

The rhetoric—the divisive rhetoric—and the political campaigns, increasingly funded by tens of millions of dol-

lars of anonymous, dark money interests, are really doing damage to this country.

I have always been for campaign finance reform. The reason I wasn't very good at raising money—which I wasn't very good at—was because people ought to have a right to know who is talking to them, who is standing up for what they have to say. I have always believed that if you have something to say, you should be willing to put your name on it.

I am concerned by our inability here to tackle serious, long-term issues. My friend Heidi touched on it. Our obligation, as public servants, is to leave a country for our children and grandchildren that is in better shape than we got it. It is the most basic promise that we make.

My wife Jill's dad was a Guadalcanal marine. He was wounded in the South Pacific. I told him: You are our hero.

He said: No, I was born at the wrong time.

I said: But you are still our hero.

He said: Look, I did my job, which is to leave for the next generation a better country than was given to me.

That is what we are supposed to do. My friend MICHAEL BENNET has talked about this a lot, but we have a deficit right now of \$21.8 trillion. I had to look because it was, I think, \$21.7 trillion yesterday. This deficit is going to destroy everything we are trying to do in this country, and we have done next to nothing to address it.

My friend CHUCK SCHUMER can probably relate to this the best, but there is an old cartoon. It was Popeye. Popeye had a friend named Wimpy. Wimpy loved hamburgers, but Wimpy never had any money. So Wimpy's saying was this: "I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today." That is the American government today. We do things, and we don't pay for any of them—but someday we will. That someday is now.

My friends Jordan and Peter Hanscom just had a baby boy about 5 months ago. You know what he was born into? \$67,000 of debt. It is because we didn't have the responsibility to pay for our bills.

At the end of next year, 2019, the deficit is going to \$23 trillion. Unless we do something here, it is on an unstoppable course to be at \$30 trillion.

So what did we do here?

We passed a tax cut, because what is another \$1.5 trillion? It is a tax cut at a time when we have a full-employment economy, a strong economy. We passed a tax cut, and we are now running, in a great economy, over \$1 trillion in deficits every year.

If we can't balance our books now, when are we ever, ever going to do this? Right now we are on a course that, within 10 years, the interest payment will be almost \$1 trillion a year, which is unsustainable.

Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was asked in 2010, when the deficit was \$14 trillion: What is the most dangerous thing to our na-

tional security? China? Russia? He said: The debt, because we can't pay for anything, and if we can't pay for anything, how am I going to protect the men and women who serve this Nation?

We have serious, serious work to do.

At my church back home, St. Anthony's Church in South Bend, IN—I know, an Irish kid going to St. Anthony; you have to question it sometimes—we were running up a debt, and we were solving it by adding more debt to fix the debt we had. A new pastor came in. He came to the pulpit one Sunday, and he said: Here is the deal. We are not spending anything we don't have anymore. We need to have the revenue to match what we want to do, and the things we want to do and can't pay for, well, we will continue to want to do them, but we will not do them.

Magic occurred. We balanced our books. The parish went on. It got stronger, and all of a sudden, we were in the black.

As a body here, we do not have the right to tell CJ, that little boy, and children being born today—we don't have the right to financially cripple the country they will be inheriting.

We had ancestors who fought for this Nation. I think of my Uncle Tom, who fought with Patton in North Africa and who gave everything he had. His Purple Heart is in my office. It has been there every day while I have been there. They sacrificed everything. The least we can do is to pay our bills, not to give out crazy tax cuts that we can't pay for, and to make sure that we balance our budgets.

We are better than this. Sometimes we just have to have the ability to say no—to say no to things that, by common sense, you would never do with your own checkbook, or if you did, the end would not be very, very pleasant on that kind of thing.

If we continue doing these things, this amazing and wonderful place that I have been a part of, with the most amazing colleagues—that is the part that has been so great. It is every colleague, and one is better than the next. But this is a long-term threat to our democracy and to our country's success. We can do better, and every one of you can lead on this.

Too often, what we watch in our politics doesn't reflect the spirit or the values or the diverse coalitions of Americans that have made this country so successful. It is not the type of example we want to be leaving for our kids.

I will tell you the kind of example we want to leave. It is when we do great, great things when we have looked up and have seen our country in trouble. I had the privilege to represent Kokomo, IN, back in 2008, 2009 when the economy collapsed, and we had a transmission plant. We built all of the transmissions for all of the Jeeps in the country there. That is why I drive a Jeep. But those wonderful people—we went from over 5,000 to less than 100. They counted on us. We came together, and we

said: We can do big things. We can get this done.

President Obama—I told him: Chrysler is going to make it.

He said: How do you know?

I said: I lit a candle at Mass. Does that work?

He laughed. He said: Well maybe not, but I will give it a shot.

You have to have faith in the people of this country, that if you give them a fair shot, they can get it done.

As an institution, we came together, Democrats and Republicans, including my friend FRED UPTON from Michigan, who is right across the line, and together we got it done. That plant, which had over 5,000 people working there and then less than 100 when we crashed, has over 9,000 there today because we looked at each other and said: It is not about Democrats or Republicans; it is about making sure that mortgages can be paid, that these people will not lose their houses, that we can continue to make great products here in this country.

I think of healthcare, and I often think maybe this is why I wound up here. A friend of mine, Al Gutierrez, who is the CEO of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka, called me after we had so many problems getting it started a couple of months later, and he said: I just want to fill you in on something that happened. We had a big meeting of all of the brain trust. It is because we have had so many terrible heart cases come in, so many people who were sick who had come in, and we are trying to figure out what has gone wrong that so many people have had bad heart cases recently. So we had the CFO, the surgeons, the this, the that, and one person raised their hand 5 minutes in and said: This is the time they have ever had insurance. They could never afford it before.

These are our working families. Moms and dads, who would be really sick, had this amount of money, and it either went for the tuition for their daughter at Ball State or to get well, and parents always take care of their kids first. They looked at each other and said “Well, that is the end of the meeting” because they could get healthcare for the first time.

Every townhall I have gone to—and it is not unique to me; it is to everybody; it is to all our Members, Republican and Democrat—I have people come up and say: The healthcare bill saved my life. I wouldn’t be here otherwise. I have one family, triplet girls. They were born at 6 months, came out of the hospital at the 10th month. Their hospital bill, when they came out, was \$5 million. The mom and dad said: We would have lost everything, and we don’t know if our kids could have made it, but the healthcare bill saved us. The healthcare we had saved us.

It is big stuff that we do right, and it is not perfect. That is where we have to come together, not to attack things

but to fix things, to make things better. Almost nothing in this world started out perfect. You fix it a little bit here, you fix it a little bit there, and you can get there.

So when I saw those families, I thought of all of you because you gave them healthcare; you gave them a chance.

I think of my friend John McCain, who is not with us anymore, who stood up and said: I am not going to worry about party. It is country first. When he did that, he made sure those people could still get healthcare.

It is every Senator’s job to work toward those goals until they are reality. I know it sounds naive—constantly working together—but we can, and we must, and we know from recent experience there are a lot of things we can work together on, to be more functional, to be more productive.

One of them is the chance I have had to work with our men and women in uniform. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving with Chairman LEVIN, Chairman McCain, a wonderful ranking member, JACK REED, who is here with us today—chairman ad hoc—being able to advocate for those servicemembers is one of the most amazing responsibilities we could have, ensuring that they have everything they need. They are mostly in their twenties. They are defending freedom in every corner of the globe. They give us the ability to be safe, to live in our houses.

I remember going to Coast Province in Afghanistan, right by the Pakistan border. The Indiana National Guard was there. I said: What message do you want me to take home to your families?

They said: Tell them we got this. We know how to do this. And tell them we are going to make sure they are safe.

That is what these men and women were about.

I had the privilege of going to Iraq with KIRSTEN. We got the same message from amazing people who gave everything they had—everything.

I think of my first 8 months in Congress. It was in 2007, and things were in flames, and in our district in Indiana, as in many of our other States, we have a lot of people who serve. Per capita, we are about first in National Guard people, and in 8 months, I lost eight young men. We were losing one every month.

Last year was 10 years later. If you want to know the awesome responsibility we have, all of those young men we lost—those children who were 2 and 3 and 4 and 5—they were 13 and 14 and 15. I saw their folks; I saw their moms, and their moms would say: They want to know what their dad was like because he is not here anymore. I would tell them what a hero their dad was, what an amazing person he was.

We have tried to work to not only keep them safe, but to stop military suicides.

I worked with the dad and mom of a young man, Jake Sexton, who took his

life on his second tour when he came home for R & R. His home is near Muncie, IN, and he just couldn’t go back and took his own life. His dad called me and said: Can we do something? I want Jake’s death to mean something.

So all of you helped me, and we all worked together, and we made it so that every servicemember would get an annual mental health assessment, and they wouldn’t be punished for doing it. What I mean by that is they wouldn’t worry that they wouldn’t get the next promotion, that they wouldn’t get the next step up.

I remember four-star GEN Joe Votel, who came before our committee and said: I want everybody to know that I have sought mental health. I am a four-star general, and we are in this together.

So in every branch of every service, every member can now get an annual mental health assessment. You helped me give them the chance to do this. We have to also make sure that as we do this, we help them transition back to civilian life.

One of the other things the Indiana National Guard told me in Afghanistan—as I was leaving, I said: What do you need? Trucks? Vests? Better MREs?

They said: No, we just need a job when we go home.

We need to make sure they have that chance, that we stand up for our veterans.

We have been able to get new veterans centers in a number of places around our States because we promised them we would be there for them, and we have an obligation to keep our word. I know that JOHNNY ISAKSON and JON TESTER work every day to make sure they can get it done.

The work that has been done by all of these people takes your breath away. They don’t get paid much. They are in the most difficult places in the world. And when they come home, all they ask for is a decent job, decent healthcare, and a chance to see their family survive and do well.

As I said, I think of those young men and women every day. When you want to know what progress you have helped us make—when KIRSTEN and I first came in together in the House, we were losing almost one every month. Now, it is not perfect; the world isn’t perfect. But most of our young men and women are home. We do the best we can to keep those countries safe, to keep our country safe, and together we can continue to improve on it.

One other thing I want to mention is—and HEIDI talked about it today—this past year we have lost 70,000 young people to drug addiction—70,000. It has become more than car crashes. It has become more than anything else you can think of—70,000 people to opioids, meth, fentanyl; it is the whole batch. We can try nonstop to help them, to provide hope and purpose and dignity where they may not be feeling it—one kind word, one bit of assistance, one bit of encouragement.

I went to an event in Indianapolis, and it was an event for families who had lost someone and families who have someone in rehab. A young man came up to me from one of the wealthiest families you could think of—doing really well, the whole family. I saw him there, and I said: Mike, who are you here for?

He said: Me.

He had gotten hurt, had received an opioid in treatment. He was in a spiral that was nonstop.

His mom was there with him. She said: I don't think I have slept a night since.

So we can do this together. One of the things we just did, we just passed a law that would allow the FDA to give early approval to nonaddictive painkillers so that when somebody is hurt, they don't wind up getting addicted.

I am telling you that this is a five-alarm fire. In my State, well over 1,000 died last year from this in all parts of the State, all towns, all areas, Bridgeport—it doesn't matter, your religion, your race, anything. This is the great danger that parents need to be worried about, that we can stop. We can provide hope and purpose and dignity; that is what we have to do. These are moms and dads and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters, and when you lose one, your family is never, ever the same again.

I have seen the faces, I have met the families, and I spend time with them. The Senate can be a place in which we work together as a team—PAT has seen it in Kansas; JOHNNY has seen it in Georgia. When we work together as a team, when we leave name calling out, there is no division, and there is no agenda, other than making it so that every kid can come home safe every night.

Before I finish, I would also like to thank so many wonderful people. I have met so many friends and had so many opportunities. I have traveled to places I could never imagine. You know, we used to have a saying in Indiana: The only places you could go to in a CODEL are places where you could get killed. I was able to go to Afghanistan, to Iraq, to South Korea. I say the first part as a joke. The second part is, it is because our young men and women were there, and they were there keeping us safe. All they ever wanted was a chance to represent this Nation that they love so much—those wonderful people.

I want to thank the folks who work here in the Senate, who have done so much for all of us—the ones who, when you talk too loud, will lean over and tell you “The whole country is hearing what you are saying right now,” and then quickly move away to the back—for their hard work and dedication. I want to say thank you to the committee staffs who help shape policy and ensure we can have robust debate and oversight on the big issues of our time; to the Capitol Police, our friends, who have been so amazing to all of us, who

protect us and keep us safe; to the cooks and the cleaning teams and the building maintenance folks. I think my office was painted every month for the last 6 years. To the whole gang, you make this place work. You make this Nation work.

I also thank my staff, who are here on the floor with me—no, HEIDI, you were wrong; this is the best staff in the Senate—who have done amazing work and who have every day made me look better and smarter than I am. I am incredibly grateful to them. They have resolved thousands of cases. In 2016, we received about 350,000 faxes, emails, letters, and combinations. We had an election. In 2017, we received 1.5 million—five times more—with the same amount of people, who sent out every letter, who followed up on every call, who repeatedly were there for the people of our State so that they knew their government cared about them and loved them and wanted their lives to be better. I couldn't do this job without them.

I also want to thank my family, who are in the Gallery—my children: Molly, her husband Mike, my son Joe, and my wife Jill—who have been through all of this.

I remember we had a family dinner, one of those summits you have around the table. This was back when I decided to run for Congress.

I told my family: What do you think? I have been asked to run for Congress.

My son said: That is the worst idea I have ever heard.

He was close. But they have been on this journey with me for 12 years, and it has been an amazing journey.

I want to thank everyone from my State. What an amazing privilege to represent them.

I remain optimistic about the future of our country. We have to take these issues seriously. Our country is filled with hard-working, decent people who just want us to do commonsense things. I have been privileged to travel all 92 counties all over my State, all corners of the State, and I think Indiana's best days are ahead and our country's best days are ahead.

May God bless all of my colleagues here in the Senate with the wisdom and courage you will need, because we don't just lead the Nation; we lead the world.

May God bless and protect this institution, Indiana, and our country that we all cherish and love so much.

This has been the privilege of a lifetime for a person whose family came off the boat at Ellis Island. My grandmother's passage documents said she had \$10, and her occupation was “maid.” But she believed in America. She believed in this amazing country. We have been privileged to help lead it, and it has been one of the greatest privileges of my lifetime.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving with both

speakers I have heard today, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP of North Dakota and Senator JOE DONNELLY of Indiana. They represent the best of the Senate. All of us are proud to be here. All of us are proud of the opportunity to serve. But they are two special people. They are special because they have a smile on their faces. They are special because they are very smart. They are special because they know how to play the game in a bipartisan way—not block things but help them pass.

I have enjoyed getting to meet JOE. I have enjoyed getting to know HEIDI. I am going to miss them a lot. America is very proud to have a great son like JOE and a great daughter like HEIDI. I am very lucky to have had the chance to have them cross my way so I can become a friend of theirs.

God bless both of you. Thank you for your service. Thank you very much.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I, too, rise to recognize my distinguished colleague, JOE DONNELLY, for his years of dedicated service to the State of Indiana. I also want to commend his family for their dedication. I know this is a team effort in public life to work on behalf of our country and our States and our constituents. They have been all in for the people of Indiana, and I just want to rise them up during this important time as they turn to a new chapter in their lives.

JOE DONNELLY has a heart for service, clearly, from his service on the school board, to serving as a Member of Congress—our terms overlapped—to the last 6 years he has spent in the U.S. Senate. I have to say it has been a real privilege to have JOE as my partner in the Senate over the last couple of years.

Back home, he describes himself as the hired help. Throughout his time in public life, JOE has never forgotten whom he works for. That is because he genuinely likes people—not in the abstract; he likes individual Hoosiers and individual Americans and servicemembers and veterans and our seniors and young children. That is why he has such a magnetic personality. That is why he is beloved by colleagues on the right and the left, who represent red States and blue States. That is why I have enjoyed working with JOE as well. Hired help.

JOE touched on the casework and the challenges he has been able to resolve on behalf of the people of Indiana, individual problems people have had with this vast government maze that sometimes we have to navigate. He does have a reputation for having done very well on that front. I think that is a reputation he is rightly proud of. He has also been able to get some important legislative initiatives done on behalf of the people of Indiana, and I would like to emphasize a couple on which we had an opportunity to work together—again, consistent with his bipartisan nature.

JOE and I worked together to ensure that our brave law enforcement officers have greater access to mental health services. Actually, truth be told, JOE was really the champion of that effort. That is certainly one of his legacies during his time in the Senate. I can think of no more important legacy as I look at his record of achievements.

We worked to make sure that we properly commemorated the Landmark for Peace Memorial in Indianapolis, where Robert F. Kennedy delivered some stirring words the evening of Martin Luther King's assassination. It was a moving moment for all present, Black and White and people of modest means and wealthier means. They all came together that evening because of that stirring speech. JOE and I worked together to make sure that memorial park is tastefully recognized from here into the future. It is a nice piece of legacy, and it wouldn't have happened but for the efforts of JOE DONNELLY.

JOE and I worked on a resolution to designate August 3, 2018, as National Ernie Pyle Day. We are proud of that in Indiana. Ernie Pyle is a celebrated war correspondent and Hoosier journalist who deserves memory in the consciousness and imagination of future generations of journalists. There, again, JOE and I had an opportunity to work together.

We worked together on perhaps the most consequential issue of our time—fighting this scourge of opioid abuse. We have worked on multiple bills on that front.

One of the more fun areas we worked together was actually one of the first things JOE and I did after I was sworn in to the Senate. We struck from all government publications the word “Indianan.” We don't use that back home. Because of JOE DONNELLY and our work together, the word “Indianan” will never appear in government publications. Instead, it will forever hereinafter be the word “Hoosier.” The word “Hoosier” is the proper word and will now be used to describe someone from the State of Indiana.

I think JOE would characterize himself as a regular guy. I actually think he is an extraordinary guy in so many ways. He is uncommonly approachable for a U.S. Senator. That is very important in this democratic republic in which we live. We want to make sure that the people we hire to help us—we want to make sure our elected representatives are people we can talk to and people who will listen. He has developed a reputation that I think he should be very proud of as being regarded as someone who is really approachable.

JOE is refreshingly plainspoken. There is not a lot of flowery language that he brings to bear. He is who he is, and he is very comfortable with that, and he speaks in such a way that is equally accessible to all Hoosiers and all Americans. That is really important, too, and I think it is something that others will seek to model moving forward.

You have been an example on that front.

Perhaps most important to me, he is a really good guy. He is authentic. We don't want our public servants to be phony-baloney, plastic figures. JOE is not. JOE will tell you what is on his mind and how he is feeling. He is just a really good guy. He is somebody you might want as your neighbor.

I know JOE has an incredible future. I know he is going to stay engaged in making sure his community is taken care of. I know he will continue to care about Indiana and America and things going on around the world.

Perhaps we will have an opportunity, my friend, to partner together moving forward and do some good together and—as I think you put it, plainly but very directly—to leave this world a little better than you found it. Thank you for your service, JOE. Thank you to your family.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to lend my voice and talk for a moment about a very special friend, Senator JOE DONNELLY.

One of the things we know about the Midwest and Great Lakes is that we do care about our neighbors. Someone with a really good snowblower might clean off his neighbor's driveway, too, since he was out there anyway. That reminds me of JOE DONNELLY.

We know that JOE is the senior Senator from Indiana. It is a wonderful neighboring State. We may compete now and again, but I have been so grateful to be Senator DONNELLY's neighbor and his friend.

Over the past 6 years, I have had the good fortune to partner with Senator DONNELLY on many issues that affect our States and the country.

We are both passionate about fighting for workers and stopping the exporting of American jobs. We want to export our products, not our jobs. JOE has been at the front of the line fighting for American workers.

Making things and growing things—that is what Michigan does, that is what Indiana does, that is what we are all about, and JOE has been at the front of the line to make sure that jobs are there making things and growing things.

We have had the opportunity to work together on the Senate Agriculture Committee, and in just a moment, we are going to hopefully be passing a 5-year farm bill. JOE has been an important voice in that. It is something that we relish because, as a committee, we work together on a bipartisan basis and get things done. Senator DONNELLY has been a very important part of that, including getting important wins for Indiana. It includes his legislation that targets the opioid crisis by expanding USDA rural development investments in community treatment facilities and telemedicine—no small thing.

That will save lives. It provides peace of mind for farmers to use crops and

participate in crop insurance. It creates a broadband grant program, which will connect underserved communities. As Senators from the Great Lakes States, we have fought together to protect our water—our most precious resource.

I will never forget the event Senator DONNELLY and I did to celebrate the Regional Conservation Partnership Program when we announced nearly \$14 million in public and private investment improving water quality and wildlife and fish habitat in the St. Joseph watershed—a watershed that we share. We held that at Pier 33 in St. Joseph, MI, just up the road from South Bend. If you have ever been to Pier 33, you have probably seen their showroom and the amazing collection of beautiful boats. In fact, I am not sure “boats” is the word for these amazing boats. I know Senator DONNELLY was impressed, as was I. After the press conference, I asked him how he thought it went, and he said it was good, but he was disappointed that he wasn't going to get to take home one of the boats. I shared that as well.

If you ask anyone in the Senate, they are likely to say the same thing: Senator JOE DONNELLY—JOE—is one of the nicest guys you will ever meet.

He is also very funny. Both of those qualities have made him a real joy to work with. I know I speak for everyone on both sides of the aisle; he will be missed.

Senator DONNELLY—JOE, thank you for your hard work, your leadership. Thank you for being a wonderful and great neighbor. Let me know the next time you are up North, and we will grab lunch and check out some of those boats.

Mr. DONNELLY. Good deal. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, very quickly, I want to add to the remarks of my distinguished ranking member, Senator STABENOW, on the sometimes powerful Senate Agriculture Committee, and I associate myself with her remarks.

In a moment or two, we are going to go to the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, for which he had positive contributions. We wouldn't have been able to pass a bill without bipartisan support, which he stressed in his last message to the Senate.

JOE, thank you for being a friend, and thank you for being a great colleague, and thank you for being such a great member of the farmers, ranchers, and growers in Indiana. You have done a good job. We will certainly miss you.

Mr. President, I think we have to ask unanimous consent to give an additional 10 minutes to the distinguished ranking member and me to make remarks prior to the vote on the farm bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Michigan.

H.R. 2

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to first thank our majority leader and the Democratic leader for their support in bringing this bill to the Senate floor for consideration. Thanks to all of our Agriculture Committee members, including the Presiding Officer and conferees on both sides of the aisle, for working to put this bipartisan farm bill together. Most importantly, I want to thank our distinguished chairman of the committee—my partner, my friend—for working so hard.

We have worked together from the very beginning. We promised each other we would deliver a strong, bipartisan farm bill. Despite many obstacles along the way, we kept that promise.

The final farm bill reflects a hard-fought bipartisan agreement on a 5-year bill to strengthen the diversity of American agriculture and the 16 million jobs it supports. We know something about that in Michigan, where agriculture and the food industry support one out of four jobs. That is a lot of jobs. We also grow a wider variety of crops than any other State but one—a small State called California.

Now more than ever, we need to be broadening the diversity of American agriculture, and that is exactly what the farm bill does. Our farm bill continues to support the wide variety of farms all across America—big farms, small farms, ranchers, urban, rural. We provide new permanent support to keep this progress going, which I think is really important.

We invest in the bright future of agriculture by helping new and beginning farmers, including young people and our returning veterans, who are playing a greater role in agriculture in Michigan, as well as across the country.

New investments in international trade promotion will help farmers sell their products abroad. This couldn't come at a more important time. Streamlined, permanent support for farmers markets, food hubs, and local food processing will help our farmers sell their products to their neighbors. We need to sell around the world, and we need to be able to sell in our own communities.

By protecting and expanding crop insurance and improving support for our dairy farmers—in fact, strengthening the support for our dairy farmers, who were hit so hard with price drops and other issues—we maintain a strong safety net for farmers. Importantly, we maintain a strong safety net for our families.

We said no to harmful changes that would take away food from families. Instead, we will increase program integrity and job training to be able to make sure that things are working as they should and that every dollar is used as it should be. Instead, we will connect participants with healthy food through strong investments in farmers markets and nutrition incentives.

This bill also continues the farm bill's legacy as one of the largest investments in our land and our water. It is so important to Michigan. By focusing on successful conservation partnerships, we will actually grow funding by leveraging nearly \$3 billion in new private investment over the next decade.

This bill also supports our small towns and rural communities, such as Clare, where I grew up. New investments in high-speed internet will support communities most in need. There are new opioid treatment resources to help those struggling with addiction.

The bill also helps ensure that small town water systems are providing clean and reliable tapwater. All of these things create opportunities for young people to stay in their homes and their hometowns and raise their families, which is what we want. That is what this bill is all about—growing opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this bill. I want to thank all of my incredibly talented staff for their hard work, as well as the chairman's staff. I know we will have another opportunity to speak more at length about the provisions of the 12 titles of the farm bill and be able to speak more about the hard work of our staff, but today we are ready for a vote, to be able to get this done so that we can send it to the House for their support, as well, and then on to the President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE).

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for her remarks and associate myself with those remarks. I rise today as the Senate considers the conference report on an issue that is critically important to our Nation—the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, the farm bill.

The goal, the responsibility, the absolute requirement is to provide farmers, ranchers, growers, and everyone within America's agriculture and food value chain certainty and predictability during these very difficult times. This conference agreement includes policy improvements from both the House-passed bill and the Senate bill, which passed this body with a strong bipartisan vote of 86 to 11. We have worked to maintain as many priorities for as many Members as possible.

This farm bill meets the needs of producers across all regions and all crops. It ensures that our voluntary conservation programs are keeping farmland in operation while protecting our agriculture lands, our forests, and other natural resources.

The bill focuses on program integrity—program integrity, and common-sense investments to strengthen our nutrition programs to ensure the long-term success of those in need of assistance. With trade and market uncertainty, to say the least, it provides certainty for our trade promotion and research programs.

Feeding an increasing global population is not simply an agriculture challenge; it is a national security challenge. This means we need to grow more, raise more with fewer resources. That will take investments in research, new technology, lines of credit, and proper risk management. It takes the government providing tools and then getting out of the producer's way.

Organizations representing thousands of agriculture, food, nutrition, hunger, forestry, conservation, rural, business, faith-based, research, and academic interests have issued statements supporting this conference report. This is what happens when the Congress works in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion. This is a good bill. It is a good bill that accomplishes what we set out to do—again, to provide certainty and predictability for farmers, families, and rural communities.

We have made tough choices, being judicious with the scarce resources we have on behalf of the taxpayer. This may not be the best possible bill. We know that, but it is the best bill possible under these circumstances. Importantly, it provides our farmers, our ranchers, and other rural stakeholders much needed certainty and predictability.

I encourage my colleagues to support this conference report. Every farmer, every rancher, every grower, everyone within our Nation's food supply is watching to see if we cannot meet our obligations and pass this bill. Let us do that. Let us tell those farmers and ranchers, who are going through tough times, that they are going to be good for the next 5 years. Their lender is paying attention to this bill. Let us support this bill.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question occurs on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, 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. JOHNSON assumed the chair.)

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 13, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Leg.]

YEAS—87

Alexander	Cortez Masto	Hirono
Baldwin	Crapo	Hoeven
Bennet	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Blumenthal	Daines	Inhofe
Blunt	Donnelly	Isakson
Booker	Duckworth	Jones
Boozman	Durbin	Kaine
Brown	Ernst	King
Burr	Feinstein	Klobuchar
Cantwell	Fischer	Lankford
Capito	Gardner	Leahy
Cardin	Gillibrand	Manchin
Carper	Graham	Markey
Casey	Harris	McCaskill
Cassidy	Hassan	McConnell
Collins	Hatch	Menendez
Coons	Heinrich	Merkley
Corker	Heitkamp	Moran
Cornyn	Heller	Murphy

Murray	Sasse	Thune
Nelson	Schatz	Tillis
Perdue	Schumer	Udall
Peters	Scott	Van Hollen
Portman	Shaheen	Warner
Reed	Shelby	Warren
Risch	Smith	Whitehouse
Roberts	Stabenow	Wicker
Rounds	Sullivan	Wyden
Sanders	Tester	Young

NAYS—13

Barrasso	Johnson	Paul
Cotton	Kennedy	Rubio
Enzi	Kyl	Toomey
Flake	Lee	
Grassley	Murkowski	

The conference report was agreed to.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Montana.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY RELATING TO "RETURNS BY EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS AND RETURNS BY CERTAIN NONEXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS"—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 630, S.J. Res. 64.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 64) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to "Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain NonExempt Organizations."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of 5 USC 802, there are 10 hours of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I just want to make a very short statement and then flesh it out a little further tomorrow.

The resolution we are about to take up will help to protect our democracy, and it will hold special interests accountable. I do not believe we can continue to allow special interests to hide under the cover of darkness, as they have such great influence on our elections. The American people have spoken. I think they have made it clear that they are very tired of the dark money in our elections and that the decision by the administration to allow megadonors and special interests to further hide is not acceptable.

The vote is simple. The vote is for more transparency by these special interests. Quite frankly, it has major impacts on our elections. I just went through one, and I will talk a little more about it tomorrow.

The bottom line is that this resolution is one that, I believe, will add more transparency, will help our de-

mocracy, will help both Democrats and Republicans know who is trying to influence the elections, and will also allow us to determine whether foreign entities—which is, by the way, illegal—are trying to influence our elections.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

2008 HOUSING CRISIS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, this is a special time of the year—Christmas. All of us are in a hurry to get home. Our children are waiting for us to get home. Our families can't wait to share the joy of the day. We want fun around the fire and the household. I would hate to be the grinch who stole Christmas in the Senate. I don't want to think that 10 years from now, if only I hadn't said this, this wouldn't have happened or, maybe, if I had seen it coming, I would have done something.

In 2008 and 2009, the Senator from Montana, Senator HOEVEN, and I, among others, went through the 2008–2009 housing crisis that ended up in mortgage-backed securities failures, in all of the trouble that happened on Wall Street—Dodd-Frank—and in the collapse of our economy. It was the worst collapse of our economy ever since 1927. We all remember what happened. We ended up getting the TARP. We ended up having crisis after crisis. Slowly but surely, we guaranteed enough stuff to get the market strong enough to begin to build back. Just now, it is back where it ought to be from the standpoint of values, which is a decade later.

Quite frankly, the housing market is not as strong. Its only strength is that there are not that many houses for sale. That is because people aren't putting them on the market. Builders can't build specs, and there is not near the credit that there should be. People who have resales are putting them off and fixing the houses up because they are staying longer. So they are selling them for more money.

On the Multiple Listing Service, in Atlanta, GA, when I left my company in 1998, there were 140,000 houses on the market in Atlanta in June of 1998. Now there are about 60,000. That is not because the market has failed. It is just that there is not that big a housing stock out there, and it is for all of the reasons I said. In terms of financing being readily available, it is readily available, and that is what I want to talk about.

I was thinking the other day. I heard an ad on the radio about no-doc loans, and I heard an ad about the VA's 100-percent loan—that we will approve what the banks will not—and stuff that I knew was patently wrong. So I turned to the business section, which I used to look at as a businessman every day but don't anymore because I don't have the decisions to make. I am glad that I did because it taught me a lesson, and I want to read you this from last Sunday's paper: How about a loan with no down payment, zero-down mortgages,

and jumbo loans? We will approve what the banks won't.

That is exactly the thing that took us down the wrong path in 2008 and 2009. Greed took over common sense. Then, common sense failed, and we did some bad things. All of the things in the mortgage-backed securities market took place all at once. What happened was, because money was chasing rates and rates were starting to rise—and now they are starting to rise; that is happening in our economy—the instruments that yielded higher rates than the going rate for regular credit started being created to be sold and packaged on Wall Street. You would make money on the sale of the security, but you would also fund the mortgage at a higher yield to you, the investor, which is just fine and dandy until the person at the lower end of the spectrum, who gets approved with a no-document, no-down payment loan, ends up qualifying for it, gets it, does not make a payment, and gets foreclosed on. All of a sudden, the credit is lost. The house is lost. The same thing that happened in 2008–2009 starts happening all over again.

I am not saying that we are on the verge of a collapse. What I am saying is that it is a carbon copy—I mean a carbon copy—of exactly what was happening in 2008 and 2009 when the markets collapsed. We can't afford another one. Banking is stronger today for a lot of reasons. It is mainly because there aren't nearly as many of them. There aren't nearly as many of them because a lot of them failed. In the South—in Atlanta, GA, my State—we lost more than almost anybody in the country, simply because the capacity was not there.

As I said about the housing market, the number of houses available in the marketplace is much lower than it was back in the 1990s and back in 2005, 2006, and 2007. It is down because there is not as much to put on the market. There is not enough credit to finance it and put it on the market and have spec loans. People are very tight with their money because a lot of them got burned in 2008 and 2009. They see their parents who lost their houses and their savings. They see values collapse. They couldn't get through their college by borrowing against their homes because their home equity loans died.

There are lots of folks out there who are trying to put together instruments and package them in an attractive way to sell them on the New York markets and through mortgage-backed securities and to attract low-credit borrowers or young borrowers who aren't totally prepared to borrow the way they should be. It is of higher risk for us. It is a high risk for our economy. The middlemen make a lot of money early, but on a 30-year mortgage, you don't want to just make your money early. You want to have somebody with skin in the game for all 30 years.

So I just want to say to all of my colleagues—and I am talking to myself as