

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2333. An act to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct an assessment of the responsibilities, workload, and vacancy rates of Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention coordinators, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 98-183, as amended by Public Law 103-419, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore and upon the recommendation of the Majority Leader, appoints the following individual to the United States Commission on Civil Rights:

Gail Heriot from California.

SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT—100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. SMITH of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Scotts Bluff National Monument's official designation.

Having grown up in Gering, Nebraska, I am proud of the monument and the uniquely American story of the role it played in our westward migration. As one of the highest points in Nebraska, dominating the landscape, it stood as an unmistakable part of the Oregon Trail. When I look at the monument, I can't help but think of the brave pioneers of the Oregon Trail.

Stunning sights and Oregon Trail landmarks, such as Scotts Bluff Monument, must have been a source of awe on the arduous journey west. It had to have served as motivation to keep going and a relief to know they were well on their way.

Scotts Bluff was named for Hiram Scott, a fur trader who died nearby in 1828. Just as the monument's name comes from early economic activity in our region, the monument is still important to our regional economy, drawing 150,000 people from across America and around the world each and every year.

I thank the great folks who dedicate their time and hard work to keep the park in great condition so others may enjoy it for generations to come. It is with great pleasure I join with all Nebraskans to celebrate the centennial of this Oregon Trail icon.

STARFISH EQUINE RESCUE

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today, I want to recognize a nonprofit organization in my district providing a home

and a future for horses who have experienced abuse and neglect. Starfish Equine Rescue works to rehabilitate and ultimately adopt unwanted, abused, and neglected horses.

Since 2012, this organization has been rescuing horses from the most deplorable conditions and giving them a second chance at life. Starfish Equine Rescue works hard to bring these horses back to health and identify caring and supportive homes in south Jersey and in surrounding states.

In addition to rescuing horses from abuse and neglect, Starfish Equine rescues horses that were slated for slaughter and are saved. And this is a practice that I have joined with Representative SCHAKOWSKY and other House colleagues in opposing under H.R. 961, which I hope someday will be the law of the land.

The volunteers at Starfish and the adoptive homes of these once vulnerable horses have provided a great service to south Jersey and into the future. We are proud of them. May God bless them.

IN RECOGNITION OF BO BIGGS OF LUMBERTON, NORTH CAROLINA

(Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to recognize my friend, Mr. Bo Biggs of Lumberton, North Carolina, on the occasion of his ascension to the chairmanship of the Golden LEAF Foundation, and in doing so, to acknowledge the significance to North Carolina of the organization he now leads.

Bo is an indefatigable servant of his community and state in business, professional, and civic leadership. Bo's life of service includes Antioch Baptist Church of Lumberton, the Lumberton Rotary Club, of which he is past president, the Lumberton Area Chamber of Commerce, the North Carolina Association of Certified Public Accountants, the FreeEnterprise Foundation, the Retail Merchants Association, and still others.

Time and again, Bo has invested himself in the State of North Carolina and its citizens, and that is why I am honored to recognize his new role with an organization that is committed to the same. I have seen firsthand the impact of Golden LEAF in North Carolina. It promotes cutting edge agriculture, creates new jobs, and provides scholarships for future leaders.

The Golden LEAF Foundation has a 20-year history of investing in Carolinians with over 60,000 jobs created, \$624 million in new payroll stimulated in economically distressed areas.

IN MEMORY J. DOYLE CORMAN

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District, I rise to offer our condolences on the passing of former State representative J. Doyle Corman.

Senator Corman represented the 34th senatorial district, including areas within Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District from 1977 to 1998. While in the State Senate, Senator Corman championed lower taxes, transportation issues, local government, and reforming the State's welfare system.

More importantly, Senator Corman was a family man who prided himself on titles other than "senator." Titles like: Public servant, husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather. These titles are Senator Corman's lasting achievements. Even more so fitting, as an example for his son, Jake, who ran for and won his Senate seat following his father's retirement and has served as the Pennsylvania State Senate majority leader for the last three legislative sessions.

A family man, community servant, and friend—that is the legacy of Senator J. Doyle Corman.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District, I again send our heartfelt condolences to the Corman family for the loss of such a great figure and public servant.

HONORING THE LIFE OF STATE SENATOR CORMAN

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of former Pennsylvania State Senator J. Doyle Corman, who passed away peacefully on Sunday, December 8, at the age of 87. Doyle leaves behind his wife, Becky, with whom he raised five children. He was the proud grandfather of 13 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

A Bellefonte native, Doyle faithfully served the people of Centre County for more than 20 years as State Senator, and 10 years prior to that as county commissioner. He was a man of principle, deeply committed to service and the betterment of his community. He left his mark on Harrisburg by championing critical transportation legislation, helping to make Pennsylvania a safer, more connected Commonwealth.

I can attribute Doyle's mentorship to where I am today, as he convinced me, in 2002, to follow in his footsteps to run for Centre County Republican Party chairman. Through the outpouring support from fellow Pennsylvanians, it is clear Doyle will be sorely missed but his legacy not soon forgotten.

I offer my prayers and deepest condolences to Becky and the entire Corman family.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

(Mr. GUEST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, on December 13 through December 15, First Baptist Church of Jackson will present Carols by Candlelight, a much-loved Christmas music tradition in Mississippi that shares the good news of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, through a magnificent Christmas concert.

This year, Carols by Candlelight celebrates its 50th anniversary, with more than 325 choir members, 60 orchestra members, and hundreds of volunteers. They will present five live performances for more than 16,000 people while many more will watch online.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate First Baptist Jackson on achieving this special milestone.

May God bless this 50th anniversary performance of Carols by Candlelight.

“Soli Deo Gloria.” To God alone be the glory.

FAIR PRICES, BETTER CURES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BEYER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I went to the doctor recently for a common ailment, and he prescribed an antibiotic.

I said, Well, Doc, let's check the price on that before we go any further. He said, Oh, don't worry about it. It is commonly used throughout the world. It is about \$6.

Well, guess what? It was \$6 dollars in the year 2011; and now the list price is about \$430.

Now, I have insurance provided by the House of Representatives, which I am thankful for, but even with that, it is still close to \$200. And then you have to start searching for a coupon to try to bring it down a little bit more.

So why does an antibiotic, that just a few years ago cost \$6 now cost over \$400 if someone has to pay cash?

Why? Why?

This is one of the premier questions before this body. And we debated this today in a prescription drug bill, and it was a robust debate and a good debate. And as I said earlier, I commend my Democrat colleagues for raising the issue and putting something on the table.

There were substantive policy disagreements with that bill. There is a realistic fear that if that bill became law, which the President said he will not sign, that we would undermine America's leading role in inventing lifesaving drugs. But there are real considerations as to how to contain costs.

□ 1545

We should be focused on negotiations and government programs.

I also commended my Republican colleagues for having an alternative

answer by coalescing all the bipartisan solutions that are innovative, that have come from both sides, and putting it together in one package that presented an alternative. But that didn't pass, either.

So we are stuck. We are right back to where we are.

But I only tell my own personal story not because this is about me. That is a simple issue, the little problem that I had. Many other Americans are suffering grievously from this ever-escalating, skyrocketing prescription drug problem.

Let's just take, for instance, the case of insulin. About 30 million Americans suffer from diabetes and need insulin.

I want to show you something here. Here is an important chart, Mr. Speaker. It starts down here in the year 2011. Basically, this is a chart that shows the price of insulin in 2001, about \$35, and here we are today, approaching \$300.

So, what is happening? That is about a 1,000 percent increase. Is insulin pretty much the same drug? Yes, there have been some modifications and improvements. There have been. Justifying a 1,000 percent increase? No, absolutely not.

What is going on here? The price of insulin has gone up dramatically, and there has to be a reason for it. Big pharmaceutical companies and middle management, responding to bad government policy, have created a huge mess in this healthcare space.

Not just this problem with insulin, but the average annual cost of a brand name drug has more than tripled in the past decade. Families with diabetic children, seniors on Medicare, and others face prohibitively high costs for these lifesaving drugs, and they deserve better.

I want to show you something else right quick, if I could. This is a chart of the last 5 years. Going back to the issue of insulin again, 30 million or so Americans need this drug.

This is a difference between what is called the average net price and the average list price. We have about \$400 here 5 years ago. Now, we are up to almost \$600.

But look at this net price. What does that mean? Well, the net price is the price, basically, that the manufacturer is getting. The middle sector here, the marketing sector here, is getting a much higher price.

So what is a solution? We didn't come up with a good solution today in debate on the House floor. So what is a real solution? Well, because we can't seem to solve the overall problem with one large piece of legislation, why don't we start with something very small? But it is not small to people affected by diabetes.

Why don't we just take this particular drug and allow the manufacturer to sell it directly to the patient? Again, we have an average price of about \$600 and a net price of \$135. That huge cost savings that could be at-

tained by a person in need by simply being able to pay this price is what I am talking about here.

I have dropped a piece of legislation, and I am really hopeful that it rallies Republicans and Democrats away from the big construct that we can't necessarily agree on, but we should continue to work toward, which involves major structural change. Why don't we do something that is very, very specific to one group of Americans that is suffering from exorbitantly high prices?

Basically, now, under this one-line bill, manufacturers would be allowed to sell insulin directly to a patient. It is just one line.

I am from Nebraska. Many people write to me and ask: Why does legislation have to be so complicated? Why don't you make it a single page? I have made this a single line, one line.

What we do when we do this is we begin to cut out these layers upon layers of management and bureaucracy that have driven the price upward, while being fair to the manufacturer and without undermining America's system of innovation that leads the world in producing lifesaving drugs.

Nonetheless, we have added this problem, or this middle management, if you will, to the way in which we dispense drug prices. That is part of the problem of why they have gone up so fast, especially around drugs like this. Again, not necessarily a brand-new formulary. No extraordinary innovation has happened over the last number of decades, some changes, some modifications and improvements, but no way to justify these price increases.

I think this would be a good idea that actually could unite us, to get us away from the large philosophical differences when we discuss how we move forward, ensuring that we both find fair prices and better cures without undermining the good, innovative, leading industry in the United States, but an industry that has a real problem, that really ought to be rallying around solutions that I am suggesting here.

That is just one idea, but I am hopeful it is a start because this idea actually pulls a thread. It is specific enough to affect tens of millions of Americans. It would be so beneficial to lower costs, yet without infringing upon the dynamics of a good market system that we have.

I think this is an answer. Perhaps, this could be a good start.

Besides this one-line solution, Mr. Speaker, another obvious solution here should be the acceleration of generic drugs. Drug companies, however, have a long history of slow-walking generic drug approval through legal maneuvers, anticompetitive prices, and patent extensions.

I have been given a unique responsibility in helping to lead the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, which has oversight responsibility for the Food and Drug Administration. Through our focused efforts,