still a long way to go—a long way to go. Additional miles of pipeline and specialized train cars are just the beginning. I believe we can do better—much better, in fact—than simply sitting idly by as we watch good fuel being burned off into the night sky.

(Ms. MCSALLY assumed the Chair.)

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, today I wish to speak in support of including provisions in any reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act that would ensure Tribal governments can prosecute heinous crimes on their lands.

When Congress last reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, also known as VAWA, in 2013, we made historic advancements to address domestic violence on Tribal lands. Those important steps must be preserved, but we must also fix gaps in the law that the last reauthorization left open. These gaps allow crimes against children, the elderly, and law enforcement to essentially go unpunished.

As I have mentioned before, I support H.R. 1585, the bill passed by the House to reauthorize VAWA. One of the reasons I support that bill is because it addresses those gaps. Tribes should be able to address violent crimes that happen on their lands and to their most vulnerable populations.

According to a 2016 Justice Department report, ''more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime.'' That is disturbing. The report also found that 56 percent have experienced sexual violence; 56 percent have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner; and 49 percent have been stalked.

For me, these numbers are even more upsetting because California has the largest Native American population in the United States. There are almost 700,000 Native Americans living in California, which has 107 federally recognized and 50 unrecognized Tribes.

We must continue to respect Tribal sovereignty, to advance the very core of what sovereignty means: the right of Tribes to exercise dominion and jurisdiction over appalling crimes that occur on Tribal land. For many years, Tribal governments were unable to prosecute crimes committed by non-Indians on Tribal lands. Thankfully, that changed when Congress reauthorized VAWA in 2013.

The 2013 reauthorization of VAWA allowed Tribes to exercise their sovereign powers to prosecute, convict, and sentence both Indians and non-Indians who assault Indian spouses or dating partners. In other words, Tribes were finally able to prosecute anyone who committed domestic violence against an Indian on Indian land. These measures were not only necessary; they worked.

In just 5 years, under these new laws, there were 142 arrests, 74 convictions, and 24 more cases pending. These charges were processed through Tribal courts that provided the requisite due process protections under our Constitution. In fact, not a single conviction was overturned because of a lack of due process. We must now build on that success.

The VAWA reauthorization the House passed is a strong bill. I would note that it passed on a significant bipartisan basis, with a vote of 263–158 and 33 Republicans supporting it. This was even in the face of an active opposition campaign conducted by the National Rifle Association.

But importantly, one of the reasons the House bill is a strong bill is because of its Tribal protections. For example, the House bill expands jurisdiction over non-Indians for crimes against children, elders, and law enforcement.

We have a duty to prevent child abuse and elder abuse wherever they occur. It is also only right that Tribes be able to prosecute attacks on law enforcement officers. The people who protect the public deserve protection as well.

These advancements ensure that Tribes are able to address acts of violence, while respecting Tribal sovereignty. We should welcome the opportunity to continue to build on our past successes. I look forward to working with my colleague Senator ERNST on these provisions and hope other Senators with significant stake in this area will join us.

There are several other provisions that I believe should be included in a VAWA reauthorization. Chief among those is keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. I plan to speak about those provisions at a later date, but I mention them now because I believe that we must have a comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence in this country.

Simply put, all of the different parts of VAWA are linked. For instance, ensuring Tribal governments can prosecute domestic violence committed on Tribal lands is important, but keeping guns out of the hands of domestic abusers will help protect victims on Tribal lands as well.

The bill passed by the House takes this sort of comprehensive approach by, for example, improving the law in the areas of housing, Tribal protections, and gun safety.

I believe the Senate must do the same. There is no simple way to stop domestic violence, but we have a duty to do all that we can. Thank you.

NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, today I wish to speak on the nomination of Janet Dhillon, who is nominated to be Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC plays an important role in protecting American workers. I am deeply concerned that Ms. Dhillon will put the interests of corporations over those of employees, which is antithetical to the mission of the EEOC.

The EEOC is charged with ''enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.'' It also investigates claims of individuals who are retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. Needless to say, the EEOC plays a critical role in protecting American workers and ensuring that our Federal antidiscrimination laws are enforced and not disregarded by unscrupulous employers.

In choosing someone to sit on the Commission, it is critical that the administration select someone with a history of working to advance civil rights and workers' rights. Ms. Dhillon clearly does not have that background.

Ms. Dhillon has spent the vast majority of her career working for and representing the interests of large corporations. Notably, while she was employed at JC Penney, the company was harshly criticized for its handling of a garment factory accident in Bangladesh that killed more than 1,000 people. She also worked at the Retail Litigation Center, an entity that works to limit employees' and consumers' access to justice. These experiences stand in direct opposition to the mission of the EEOC.

Additionally, during her confirmation hearing, she would not commit to maintaining the EEOC's current position that title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects LGBT people from discrimination. As one of the main authors of the Equality Act in the Senate, which clarifies that existing civil rights law forbids discrimination of LGBT people, I am deeply concerned Ms. Dhillon would not make that commitment at her hearing.

If the United States is going to be a beacon of liberty and freedom, we must not allow discrimination of any kind to continue. The EEOC plays an essential role in fulfilling that promise of eradicating discrimination and creating a workplace that reflects the best of American values: hard work, ingenuity, decency, and respect.

It is clear to me that Ms. Dhillon is not the right person for the job, and I urge my colleagues to vote against her nomination.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my opening statement at the Senate Health Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Mr. ALEXANDER. In 1991, the National Academies urged the adoption of electronic health records to improve patients' care. However, for many patients and for many doctors, electronic health records have made care more complicated.

No one knows this better than Dr. Kelly Aldrich, who is the Chief Clinical Transformation Officer at the Center for Medical Interoperability in Nashville and whose husband, Eric, experienced a life-threatening emergency that could have been prevented if his electronic health records had been interoperable.

Eric woke up one morning with a splitting headache and went to see his primary care doctor, who sent Eric to the hospital for a CT scan, the results of which prompted an MRI. Usually, the hospital's electronic medical records system sends the results of the MRI directly to Eric's primary care doctor.

But in this case the results were never sent, so 12 hours after the test, Eric's doctor called the hospital and learned that Eric had a tumor so large it was causing his brain to swell and shift, putting him at risk of seizures, permanent brain damage, and possibly death.

Eric, however, assuming no news was good news, was already 500 miles away, on his way to a fishing trip in Louisiana. Eric went to Tulane Medical Center, which had to do another MRI because they could not obtain Eric's original test results because the two hospitals used different electronic medical records systems. Eric flew back to Nashville, where he had to have yet another MRI before entering surgery. Eric later spent several weeks recovering in the ICU.

At multiple points during this traumatic experience, a lack of interoperability between electronic health records caused a life threatening delay of care, redundant tests, higher costs, and additional pain.

This is the second hearing on the proposed rules implementing the electronic health information provisions in the 21st Century Cures Act. Improving electronic health records is important to this committee.

In 2015, while working on Cures, we realized that our electronic health records system was in a ditch.

This committee held six bipartisan hearings on how to improve interoperability, and formed a working group that recommended provisions in Cures to ban information blocking—which is when some obstacle is in the way of a patient's information being sent from one doctor to another.

And this year, this committee is working on legislation to lower the cost of health care.

50 percent of what we spend on health care is unnecessary, according to Dr. Brent James of the National Academics. Electronic health records that are interoperable can prevent duplicative tests —like Eric's repeated MRIs—and reduce what doctors and hospitals spend on administrative tasks.

In March, the Office of the National Coordinator and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued two rules to implement the electronic health records provisions in Cures:

First the rules define information blocking—so it is more precisely clear what we mean when one system, hospital, doctor, vendor, or insurer is purposefully not sharing information with another;

Second, the rules require that by January 1, 2020, for the first time, insurers must share a patient's health care data with the patient so their health information follows them as they see different doctors; and

Third, all electronic health records must adopt publicly available standards for data elements, known as Application Programming Interfaces, or APIs, two years after these rules are completed.

Last month, we heard from those who use electronic health records, and here is what they have to say about the rules. First, I asked our witnesses if these were good rules—and all four said yes, the intent and the goal of the rules were correct.

Mary Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council said: ''Interoperability is not simply desirable, it is absolutely necessary . . . These rules represent an important and perhaps groundbreaking first step for true national interoperability.''

I also asked our witnesses what one change they would make to improve these rules. Mary cautioned about not rushing implementation, saying, ''We don't want to prevent moving ahead, or progress, but I think we also have to be very cognizant of the challenges that providers and others are facing trying to do this complex work.''

In 2015, I urged the Obama Administration to slow down Stage 3 of the Meaningful Use program, which incentivized doctors and hospitals to adopt electronic health records. The Obama Administration did not slow down implementation, and looking back, the results would have been better if they had.

The best way to get to where you want to go is not by going too far, too fast.

I want to make sure we learn lessons from implementing Meaningful Use Stage 3, which was, in the words of one major hospital, ''terrifying.''

I am especially interested in getting where we want to go with the involvement of doctors, hospitals, vendors, and insurers, with the fewest possible mistakes and the least confusion.

We don't need to set a record time to get there with an unrealistic timeline. Because these are complex rules, I asked CMS and ONC to extend the comment period, and I am glad to see they have done so and want to thank our witnesses for allowing more time for comment.

We also heard concerns about ensuring patient privacy. lf the 21st Century Cures Act is successfully implemented, patients should be able to get their own health data more easily and send it to their health care providers.

Patients may also choose to send that data to third parties—like an exercise tracking app on their smart phone—but this raises new questions about privacy. Lucia Savage, Chief Privacy and Regulatory Officer at Omada Health said, ''I think the committee . . . is rightfully concerned about privacy and security . . . None of this will matter if the consumers don't have confidence, and their doctors don't have confidence that the consumers have confidence.''

Dr. Christopher Rehm, Chief Medical Informatics Officer at Lifepoint Health in Brentwood, Tennessee reminded us at the hearing that these rules are ''not about the technology, it's about the patient, their care and their outcomes.''

I am looking forward to hearing from the Administration today about how they plan to implement these rules.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS POSTAGE STAMP

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, on May 21, 2019, the U.S. Postal Service will release a series of postage stamps commemorating America's Wild and Scenic River system. These are America's remarkable rivers and streams unique for their free-flowing beauty, along with their contribution to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and countless other important benefits.

As we recognize the 50th anniversary of this landmark conservation law, I want to make a point that Oregon has always been a leader in protecting rivers and just this year added more than 250 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers designations, increasing our miles of protected rivers from 1,916 to a grand total of over 2,170 miles. That gives Oregon the State with the most miles of Wild and Scenic River designations in the contiguous United States.

Three Oregon rivers are being recognized by the U.S. Postal Service in this commemorative stamp edition: the Deschutes, the Owyhee, and the Snake Rivers. Each is remarkable and unique in its own way, and together, these rivers embody Oregon's tradition of providing habitat for endangered salmon and steelhead, clean drinking water, and recreation opportunities for countless outdoor enthusiasts from all over the United States and the world.

One of these rivers, the Owyhee, carves its way through some of the harshest and most arid and remote landscape of Oregon's high desert in the easternmost parts of our State. The Owyhee River flows through a steep, eroded canyon with cliffs towering hundreds of feet above. Added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers system in 1984, this river is revered for its remarkable cultural, geologic, recreational, and scenic values. It is of particular historical significance to Tribes across Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada. Beyond its significance as a Wild and Scenic River, the Owyhee region is a critical lifeline to the rural economy of eastern Oregon and the local ranching community.

Moving westward to central Oregon, the Deschutes River is an oasis that winds through sandy, pumice-filled soils and sloping plateaus. A Wild and Scenic River since 1988, the Deschutes is world renowned for its fly fishing, rafting, and hiking opportunities. For centuries, Native Americans have honored the cultural and fishing uses of the river and venerated its historical value.

The final Oregon river honored in this series is back to the east in Oregon but north of the Owyhee: the mighty Snake River. It flows through Hells Canyon—the deepest gorge in North America—on the border between Idaho and Oregon. First designated a Wild and Scenic River in 1975, the Snake River holds significant cultural value for the people of the Shoshone and Nez