

there were no natural events before 2011 that could have caused these changes.

I reiterate—life safety and property should be the No. 1 priority of the Corps in its management of the Missouri River.

My colleagues and I have also heard complaints about the unresponsive Corps and the lack of communication with local residents about the floods. After the 2011 floods, some communications were enhanced; however, a lack of updated data and communication was still one of the most common complaints.

As a direct result of meetings with local levee sponsors, homeowners, small businesses, farmers, and other stakeholders, a group of 10 Senators requested that the Corps begin sending email updates to all local sponsors on a weekly basis starting within 30 days. These updates should include snowpack levels, available flood control storage in the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System, cubic feet per second release rates at the system's dams, and flow rates to key tributaries, as well as current National Weather Service precipitation forecasts and the spring flood outlook.

Today, the Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on oversight of the Public Works Program. My colleagues on the committee are asking Corps leadership about flood control on the Missouri River and what emergency resources are necessary to help the Corps with the recovery process.

With over 100 miles of levees needing repair, we know that additional resources will be needed. We also know that the State of Iowa, Iowa communities, and individual Iowans will need assistance from programs such as the community development block grant and Economic Development Administration disaster accounts.

I have been working with my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure that critical funding for Iowa is provided through the emergency supplemental appropriations. I filed an amendment to the disaster bill, along with my colleagues from the Midwest, to help farmers who have lost an estimated \$17.3 million to \$34 million of their on-farm stored corn and soybeans. My amendment would allow impacted midwestern farmers to address agricultural losses not covered by crop insurance or other programs. I will continue to provide the Appropriations Committee with damage and need assessments for recovery in Iowa as we get further clarity on the actual numbers.

Furthermore, several Midwest Senators and I introduced the Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2019. This bill includes a series of disaster tax relief provisions that will help American families and businesses recover from the terrible disasters that have occurred so far in 2019, including the Midwest flooding.

The disaster tax relief provisions we have worked on will reduce penalties

and make it easier for people to access retirement funds so that individuals and families can get back on their feet faster and rebuild their lives. They also make it easier for disaster victims to claim personal casualty losses, and they suspend certain limitations on charitable contributions to encourage more donations for disaster relief. For businesses affected by the disasters, this tax relief is available to help them retain employees while the businesses get back up and running.

Iowa Governor Reynolds and her administration are working closely with FEMA on adding Scott County to the existing disaster declaration and on other key needs, such as housing assistance for communities in southwest Iowa that have very few existing options for people to return to or stay in those communities.

I have talked to Acting Administrator Gaynor of FEMA about this matter and urged him to promptly work on getting this much needed assistance to those in need.

Governor Reynolds has also established a flood recovery advisory board to coordinate flood recovery and rebuilding efforts across Federal, State, and local levels of government. As an ex-officio member, I am looking forward to participating in these meetings to ensure that the Federal Government is offering needed assistance to Iowans affected by the flooding.

This isn't a case of our doing something new through the Federal Government for people hurt by natural disasters; this is a case of following policy that has been part of the Federal Government for several decades that the Federal Government is an insurer of last resort for natural disasters that can't be anticipated and appropriate insurance provided in advance.

So I expect that the Federal Government will do exactly what we have done for decades and do it in a non-partisan way, almost in a consensus way, as we have in the past, and replenish these funds that provide the money for this disaster.

I happen to appreciate the stamina and determination of Iowans in fighting these natural disasters. Many of these people I am referring to have a long recovery ahead of them. This Iowa spirit will help us pull through these difficult times stronger and better, just as we have in the past.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, on another matter—relatively shorter compared to what I just said about flooding—millions of Americans rely on lifesaving prescription medicine.

I am here to report to my colleagues what Secretary Azar announced earlier today about making available information on the price of drugs on television advertising that you see so often about drugs—all kinds of information but not much information about what a drug costs, and the public ought to know that.

Americans across the country expect and depend upon breakthrough drugs

to live longer, healthier lives; however, these miracle medicines won't save lives if people can't afford to take them.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I have been taking a close look at the drug supply chain in the United States. I am working to lower drug prices.

By the way, this is being handled in not only a bipartisan way in our committee, but I believe this will also end up being very bicameral. The Finance Committee has held a series of hearings on this issue. So far, we have heard from economists, executives from the pharmaceutical industry, and pharmacy benefit managers. I have also introduced a handful of bipartisan bills to increase competition. These bills are bipartisan, and now we are finding they are even bicameral. In fact, the House of Representatives tends to be ahead of us here in the Senate on these issues, so there is bipartisan momentum going to help us accomplish our goals.

Perhaps more importantly—and I don't think he gets enough credit for this—we also have President Trump leading the battle from the White House, based on a speech he made in June last year and based on several steps Secretary Azar has taken to carry out the edict from President Trump to lower the prices of prescription drugs. What was announced today is the most recent step in that direction. I am going to get to that in just a minute.

There is one common denominator contributing to the high prices Americans pay for prescription drugs. It boils down to one word—secrecy. What Secretary Azar did today is attacking that secrecy. There is zero price transparency in the U.S. healthcare system.

In our system of free enterprise, competition and transparency drives innovation. It drives higher quality, and it lowers costs. Americans have to hunt for a good bargain. You can bet your bottom dollar, Iowans know where to fill up their gasoline tanks, and they do it, in most instances, I will bet, at the most affordable place. When there is no transparency, there is no price comparison. That is a big reason there is sticker shock at the pharmacy counter, and American consumers and taxpayers are of course paying the price.

The pharmaceutical industry spends a boatload on direct-to-consumer advertising, which is to the tune of \$6 billion a year. That is probably why the average American today sees nine prescription drug ads every day. The Food and Drug Administration regulates these ads for truthfulness and requires the disclosure of side effects, but the industry however is not required to disclose to consumers how much drugs cost. Now that is about to change, and that happened this morning.

I am glad Secretary Azar is making good on President Trump's commitment to lower drug prices for Americans that he announced in a speech last

June. Health and Human Services has finalized its rule to require price disclosure on TV ads for prescription drugs. Price transparency is a critical remedy to help cure the high cost of prescription drugs in America. These regulations will help toward that. It is not a final solution.

Final solutions are going to come in bipartisan and bicameral legislation that we are going to consider later this year. Just to throw out a compliment to Senator DURBIN of Illinois, because he and I worked on this very subject that Senator Azar announced a solution for by regulation, we tried to get this in a requirement in legislation that went to the President last year. We did get it through the U.S. Senate. It did not get through the House of Representatives. Secretary Azar found, through reading laws we passed many years ago, that he had the authority to do what the House of Representatives a year ago didn't have guts enough to do—take on the pharmaceutical companies—because they opposed the Durbin-Grassley amendment. Now it has been done as a result of regulation by Secretary Azar, which is the direct result of instructions given to Secretary Azar by President Trump back in June of last year that we have to do something to reduce drug prices.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, as Mother's Day approaches, I rise to join my Democratic colleagues in sharing our constituents' stories about the importance of protecting women's access to healthcare.

No matter where they live and no matter their economic status, women in our country deserve access to comprehensive preventive care and family planning services that will enable them to stay healthy and to thrive. We know centers like Planned Parenthood have made a huge difference in the lives of the women they serve. My office recently heard from a woman named Ashley from Hooksett, who said:

I am safe, healthy, and educated thanks to Planned Parenthood.

She continues speaking about Planned Parenthood:

When I was fifteen, they were there to help me understand the changes that my body was going through and provide me with the information I needed to keep myself healthy and protected.

Throughout the rest of my teenage years, I have trusted Planned Parenthood to provide me with all of my routine healthcare procedures.

Ashley continues:

In more desperate times, they were there to explain my options and support my decisions with anonymity and compassion.

Ashley goes on to say:

I am deeply concerned about the Title 10 gag rule and the implications it may have on my getting the care I need.

I'm thankful for elected officials who are fighting back and speaking out for me and

the thousands of people like me who deserve access to quality, affordable care, no matter their income or zip code.

Ashley's story is one of thousands that speak to the importance of title X-supported health centers, including Planned Parenthood, which are a major source of preventive care and reproductive health services, including cancer screenings, birth control, HIV and STI tests, and counseling services.

In New Hampshire, title X-funded centers deliver care to nearly 18,000 Granite Staters annually, and title X-supported Planned Parenthood centers serve 60 percent of those 18,000 Granite Staters. This is why the Trump administration's actions to discriminate against providers and to cut investments in family planning clinics are so dangerous, and it is why we have to keep fighting for women like Ashley, who are rightfully concerned about this constant barrage of attacks on healthcare.

I am going to continue standing with my Democratic colleagues on behalf of women's constitutionally protected rights and against the Trump administration's partisan attacks on women's access to healthcare.

#### NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. President, I rise to express my disappointment about the confirmation earlier today of Janet Dhillon to the position of Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, EEOC.

In December, I joined Senator MURRAY on the floor to express my concern about the fact that Republicans were blocking a well-qualified nominee, Chai Feldblum, to the EEOC.

The EEOC is a vital and bipartisan agency that enforces workers' civil rights and helps protect them from harassment and discrimination while they are on the job. The EEOC has long operated with bipartisan support and requires a quorum of its five members to decide the cases before the agency, cases which include racial discrimination, gender discrimination, age discrimination, and the discrimination against people who experience disabilities.

The partisan obstruction of the Feldblum nomination marked a significant break in precedent for how we nominate members to this Board, and the administration still has not nominated a replacement for Ms. Feldblum. The Senate should not have moved forward until that happened.

It is also clear that Ms. Dhillon would not fulfill the duties that the EEOC is entrusted with, particularly with protecting workers and ensuring that members of the LGBTQ community are not discriminated against. Ms. Dhillon has served as a leader of the Retail Litigation Center, which has long opposed pro-consumer and pro-employee policies.

Additionally, during her nomination hearing before the HELP Committee, Ms. Dhillon would not commit to maintaining the current EEOC position that the Civil Rights Act forbids employ-

ment discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, saying "that current law is in flux."

For a Commission that is tasked with enhancing workers' rights and protections, we cannot have a nominee with a record of putting corporations first and who is unwilling to ensure that LGBTQ people are not discriminated against in the workplace.

I oppose this nomination, and I am disappointed that more of my colleagues did not do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this coming Sunday, mothers and other special women who are mother figures and caregivers for our children across the country will be honored for the important work they do to nurture the next generation.

Many moms will receive cards and flowers. Some will enjoy breakfast in bed or dinner out. A few lucky ones might get plaster handprints or handmade mugs—I love those. These gifts, no matter what they are, will be treasured because when it comes right down to it, all moms really want are a couple of things. They want their children to be happy, and they want their children to be healthy.

Unfortunately, thanks to this administration's continuing attacks on our healthcare, a lot of mothers can no longer count on that. Just ask Rachel whose daughter Alice was born in Detroit with a heart condition called Shone's complex. When Alice was only 1 day old, she had her first open heart surgery. Think about that. She was 1 day old. Four years later, she has an artificial heart valve, a love of dancing, and the biggest grin you have ever seen. She also has what the insurance companies call a preexisting condition. She will have to take heart medication for the rest of her life.

Alice's mom, Rachel, writes:

Her hospital stays and medications cost well over a million dollars—closer to two million. Without the (Affordable Care Act), our family would be bankrupt, worrying about how to pay for her life-saving medications.

No mom should have to worry about going bankrupt because her child was born with a heart condition. It could happen to any of us. No family should go broke paying for the medication that is keeping their child alive. Alice deserves better, and Alice's mom deserves better too.

I have said it before, and I will say it over and over again: Healthcare is personal. It is not political. We should be working across the aisle to expand access to care, improve quality, reduce costs, and we should be doing something to resolve the maternal and infant mortality crisis that is happening right now in the United States of America so Mother's Day is a day of joy instead of a day of sorrow.

Instead, we find ourselves fighting an administration that will not stop trying to take away the protections that