

people like Alice count on and that thousands, millions across the country count on. In fact, the U.S. Department of Justice last month agreed with a Federal judge in Texas who said the entire Affordable Care Act must be struck down, and that includes coverage for those with preexisting conditions.

Not to be outdone, the Senate Republicans passed a budget resolution out of committee that includes repeal of the Affordable Care Act with no replacement. What would that mean for Michigan families? Our Healthy Michigan Program that provides healthcare to more than 650,000 Michiganders, gone. Children staying on their parents insurance until age 26, gone. Lower drug prices for seniors, gone. Protections for people with preexisting conditions, gone. That would be horrible news for Alice and every other Michigan child born with a heart condition or any other health challenge.

So what is the Republican alternative to the ACA? They don't have one, but don't worry. President Trump says Republicans will unveil a "really great" healthcare plan after the 2020 election—after the 2020 election.

In the meantime, the Affordable Care Act could be struck down in the courts, with the support of the Trump administration, and Alice and her mom could really be out of luck.

In honor of Mother's Day, here is what we should be doing together. We should reaffirm the Affordable Care Act's protections for Alice and all people with preexisting conditions. We should, once again, guarantee that every insurance plan covers prenatal and maternity care—by the way, instead of the junk plans the administration is approving right now that don't cover prenatal and maternity care. We should also strengthen healthcare for moms and babies through the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, which cover about half of the births in our country.

A few years ago, the Finance Committee reported out a bipartisan bill that I led with Senator GRASSLEY. It was called the Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act. This bill would create a set of maternal and infant quality care measures in the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid. The goal is simple: improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

It is amazing that we don't have uniform quality health standards across the country. The Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act will help make sure that every mom gets the best pregnancy care possible and every baby gets a healthy start. That is what we should be passing.

In America today, that is, unfortunately, not the case. Our maternal mortality rate is climbing. African-American women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than are other American women, and our infant mortality rate ranks a shameful 32 among the world's

35 wealthiest nations—32 out of 35 in our great country.

We need to change this so more moms and their children will enjoy a happy Mother's Day. Moms like Rachel shouldn't be spending their Mother's Day worrying about what will happen to their children if the Republicans succeed in undoing the Affordable Care Act.

In thinking back on Alice's diagnosis, Rachel said:

I cannot express how stressful and gut-wrenching a time this was for my family. I am thankful every day for the Affordable Care Act.

Moms deserve more than flowers and a card. They deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are born as healthy as possible and will have the healthcare coverage they need. Our moms gave us life. This Mother's Day, let's pay it forward.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING ELLIS "REED" PARLIER AND RILEY HOWELL

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come here with a heavy heart.

On April 30, at 4:40 p.m., a shooting occurred in the Kennedy Building on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. It is a college campus. It is only about 15 minutes from my house. The shooting occurred on the last day of classes. When a lot of family members and friends were thinking about graduation and thinking about what they were going to do over the summer, their lives were shattered. I am here to celebrate the lives of two of the victims.

Before I do that, I thank all of the first responders and the people on campus who did an extraordinary job. The first among them would be Chancellor Dubois, and there are so many more first responders.

What makes this particularly difficult for me is the loss of life of two young men—one who was 19, Ellis "Reed" Parlier, and Riley Howell, who was 21 years old. These kids were in school.

One, Ellis, enrolled in 2017. He loved video games. He wanted to be a video game developer. He was a volunteer. He actually tutored middle schoolers on computer programming. His professor described him as independent and motivated.

Another young man, Riley, who has an extraordinary story within this horrible act, enrolled in UNC Charlotte in 2018. He had gone to A-B Tech before that. He was in environmental studies. He loved the outdoors. He loved Star Wars. He loved pizza and playing soccer. He was just a normal kid who was

going to college. He was also enrolled in the ROTC at UNC Charlotte. What makes his story extraordinary are the accounts from police officers. If you understand the Kennedy Building, there are a lot of people around and a lot of classrooms. There are a lot of potential victims. This young man actually charged the gunman. Although he lost his own life, most police credit him with saving the lives of so many more.

So, on this sad day that we will never forget—the day of April 30—I come before this body to let them know and their families know that we are praying for them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, typically, when we talk about Federal employees or a Federal Agency, the story starts something like this. There was a mixup in paperwork for our constituent who had Social Security Administration retirement benefits. She ended up not having Part B Medicare coverage until later, and there was a lapse in coverage.

Everyone gets frustrated over the mixup, the dropped paperwork, the problem, and they never hear the story of Amber Craft, who works in the Tulsa Social Security office. She chased the whole issue down. She did everything possible with the payment center to get inputs switched on the Medicare application and ended up getting the constituent's coverage to begin in the desired month to be able to get them taken care of. They were taken care of on their medical bills because a Federal employee saw the gap, ran to the need, and helped somebody in our State.

This is Public Service Recognition Week, and I want to take a little bit of time because in this body, as with many people in the Nation, we catch ourselves at times complaining more than we praise. There are a lot of people who are scattered around the Nation right now serving their neighbors as Federal employees. We have a lot of those in Oklahoma, and there are some pretty remarkable folks who are my neighbors whom I get the opportunity to meet with.

There are over 93,000 Federal employees, both active and retired, both Federal and on the Postal Service side—93,000 just in my State in Oklahoma—and that doesn't include the many teachers, firefighters, first responders, and other folks who work with public agencies on the city, State, and county levels as well. We are grateful to those folks because they make an incredible difference.

There are folks like Martha Gibson, who works in the VA center in Muskogee. She works in the benefits office, taking care of trying to get benefits for our veterans when there are problems—and there have been problems at times. Martha works incredibly

well with our team. As we get a call from a constituent and try to chase down the issue to be able to help figure out how we can resolve it, Martha is typically the one we call in the Muskogee office, and Martha, quite frankly, pretty often gets it solved—not just helping us but helping other Oklahomans.

Alexandria Hyatt is another good one to be able to talk about. She works in the Enterprise Services Center at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center with the FAA in Oklahoma City. She is an exceptional example of a Federal employee who not only works incredibly hard—not just for the FAA but for other Agencies, as well, that the FAA serves through the Enterprise Services Center—but she is one of those folks who we are glad is our neighbor.

You see, she is a Federal employee, but she also, just last year, in 2018, gave 850 hours away of her volunteer time serving with welfare agencies, working on weekends, and using her own leave. She is a licensed journeyman for HVAC. So she finds places where she can use that skill to serve other people, including putting in duct work and insulation, working on mold remediation, first aid, and teaching.

After Hurricane Katrina, she spent 3 weeks roofing and providing mold remediation in the Hurricane Katrina area. In 2015, she spent 6 weeks in New York City insulating and inspecting HVAC supply vents on residency floors. After Hurricane Irma, she spent 2 weeks repairing and installing roofs.

She is a Federal employee. She gives away her time, not just in her day job but in serving people on nights and weekends and taking her own vacation on this.

We have Donald O'Connor, who spent 50 years as a civil servant. He also served Active Duty in the Air Force and in the Air National Guard for 30 years. He is a pretty remarkable servant with a pretty long legacy.

Bryan Whittle is another FAA employee and an Oklahoma National Guardsman. He served very faithfully both for the Oklahoma National Guard and the FAA. It was last year when he walked into a restaurant in Oklahoma City and heard and saw a gunman who was opening fire in a restaurant. Bryan was one of them who actually ran toward the shots, and in a heroic work and in a heroic act, he stopped a shooting at a restaurant in Oklahoma City, because this Federal employee and Guardsman actually engaged to be able to serve.

We have Lieutenant Wayland Cubit. He is from the Oklahoma City Police Department. He has a program that he actually works very actively in called the Family Awareness and Community Teamwork program, or FACT. He spends a lot of time working with students trying to help to engage people with police officers, because a lot of times kids grow up in neighborhoods and communities or maybe in families where they don't hear positive things

about their police departments. So he is constantly reaching out to help people. He is active in mentoring programs.

This statement was written about him:

On any given week, Cubit and fellow officers will work with up to 100 children. Once a week they hold a character-building night in northeast Oklahoma City. Another night they host the same program in south Oklahoma City. First-time offenders come for a juvenile intervention program one night a week. FACT hosts a youth leadership academy once a month.

He is a police officer, but he is also a mentor and an activist to help the next generation of people.

We have folks like Casey Farrar. He is a lead engineer on the B-2. Now, we don't think about the B-2, other than we are very grateful that we have the B-2. But here is what is interesting. Mr. Farrar was directly responsible for saving the U.S. Air Force—therefore, the U.S. taxpayers—\$63 million in 2018. His work on several projects, including replacement of electrical cables on the rotary launcher system, as well as upgrades to those rotary launchers, improves the B-2 capabilities way into the future and will make an incredible difference and save the taxpayers a lot of money. At times, we hear about things that actually waste dollars, and we lose track of folks like this, an engineer, who just saved the taxpayer \$63 million.

Matt Lehenbauer works as an emergency management director for the city of Woodward and Woodward County. He has been very influential working through the fire seasons that we have had in northwest Oklahoma. He is one of those folks who is actually helping to protect his neighbors by working with emergency management.

He has folks working alongside of him who are traveling down the roads, like Trooper Austin Ellis in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. He was on a routine patrol but was shot last August—just another day for him. He was able to withstand the bullets and recover, despite a fractured rib. And, by the way—as he would want me to say to you—they got the guy.

Tommie Nicholas works for USCIS, or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Ms. Nicholas reviews and makes case determinations, provides technical and administrative advice, and assigns work based on priorities. She has worked for USCIS for two decades and is one of those folks who is always ready to assist.

She has helped in situations where there is an individual with a pending immigration case who needs to travel to be with an ailing relative overseas or when someone who needs urgent proof of status to work for their family, and she is the one who steps up and goes above and beyond to help to take care of folks' immigration issues and needs.

You see, again, folks at times push back on people dealing with immigration issues, and they forget that there

are great folks who are out there serving their neighbors all the time.

Jim Lyall began his tenure with the Community Service Council in 1980 as a help line program director and became associate director in 1991. He created Oklahoma's first 2-1-1 call center, which allowed Oklahoma to be the first to achieve national accreditation, and helping 2-1-1 to become a statewide service. At the Community Service Council, his leadership in the creation of Tulsa's Heat Emergency Action Plan and the Tulsa Weather Coalition air conditioner loan program has contributed significantly to the health and well-being of many Tulsans. He is another one of those folks serving every single day.

We can't forget our teachers, who are out there constantly helping the kids in the next generation. Ms. Annette Cain teaches second grade at Spring Creek Elementary. On the second day of school, this past school year, she saw one of her students struggling to read. She quickly connected with the reading specialist, the principal, and the parents to discuss how to help this new second grader. Her concern was that he might need to go back to first grade or that he might be behind in second grade and was just going to need some additional help in reading. That little second grader is now caught up and has now had the "most improved reading" award. That is good for him, but it is good for Annette Cain, who saw the problem and who responded to the needs of that child.

It reminds me of stories, day after day after day, of folks like that who are in Elgin, OK, like Don Myers, and all the crew that is there doing special education and so much work to be able to help kids with the greatest amount of need in Elgin; just like in other programs around the State, where those teachers work with the parents, work with other educators, and work with a child to help that child way behind get caught up or to help them in their own development.

I am grateful that this week we get to honor public service because there are millions of public servants doing amazing work to help their neighbors all around the country.

Of all States and of all places, I remind this body often that Oklahomans pause every April 19 and remember a domestic terrorist that parked a truck bomb next to the Federal building and killed 168 people out of his hatred for public servants in the Federal Government. We in Oklahoma remember that public servants get up and go to work every day to be able to serve their neighbors, and we, as individuals, still push back against those who just blindly hate government and blindly hate people who serve in government and serve each other.

We don't blindly hate. We deeply appreciate and are grateful for what they do. We as a State will never forget the 168 lives that were lost 24 years ago of public servants taking care of their neighbors. We are grateful.

If you are a public servant and you hear this, please accept my thank you. Well done. I am proud to be your neighbor.

## EX-IM BANK

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we had three extremely well-qualified people come before this body this week who were nominated to the Board of the Ex-Im Bank, the Export-Import Bank. It is an entity that most individuals across the country don't even know about. They don't even know what the Ex-Im Bank does. But it gets caught up in a lot of politics here.

These extremely well-qualified people were confirmed, and they are now on their way to serve our Nation in that area. I had to vote against them, not because of who they are and their qualifications—they are clearly qualified—but because of my own frustration that this body has not been willing to take on the most basic element of reform of the Ex-Im Bank.

The charter of the Ex-Im Bank requires the Bank “to seek to reach international agreement to reduce government subsidized export financing.” That is in their charter. The problem is, that is not being fulfilled. There has been a push for a while to try to reform the Ex-Im Bank. That push to reform it has failed so far.

My encouragement to the new quorum that is in the leadership role at the Ex-Im Bank is to push to fulfill their requirements to reduce government-subsidized export financing, not expand it, and to take the actions necessary to do that—not only with our Ex-Im structure but working with other countries to reduce theirs. The common phrase is “We have an ex-im bank because other countries have an ex-im bank.” Well, you know what, other countries have a Communist structure—like China. We are not trying to model that either. Should we take on every single subsidy other governments do? Let's try to find a way for them to fulfill their charter.

In the meantime, I have proposed a set of reforms that can be done to the Ex-Im Bank to make it better. Some are fairly obvious.

One of them is reducing taxpayer exposure by prohibiting the Bank from issuing direct loans.

I have also pushed very hard to have this basic statement: a sense of the Senate that the Bank is a lender of last resort, not the first place to go to. That, again, should be a no-brainer for them.

Here is the clearest and easiest reform. Ex-Im Bank brags about how many small businesses use the Ex-Im Bank services, but the next question is not asked. How does Ex-Im Bank define a small business? With chagrin, they will say that their definition of a small business is any business with 1,500 employees or fewer. That is not a small business. So 1,500 employees or fewer is a small business, according to Ex-Im Bank. There are very few companies in America with 1,500 employees.

The most basic thing we can do is have Ex-Im Bank use the same definition the Small Business Administration uses for what a small business is and then put the same requirement on Ex-Im to also use small businesses and engage with them.

We should also prohibit the Bank from providing financing services to foreign and state-owned entities. Why are we financing another government in what they are doing? Why are we actually providing competition for our own companies, as Ex-Im does? They give loans and subsidies to countries and companies that compete against American companies.

All of these ideas are basic reforms.

My push is not to abolish Ex-Im; it is for Ex-Im to fulfill its charter and to do its basic responsibility and to have the most simple reforms that I think are needed.

This is not just talk for us; we have this legislation. We have pushed for this before, and we will continue to push for basic reforms at Ex-Im in the days ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

## OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today again to talk about the drug epidemic that continues to be such a big issue in my home State of Ohio and around our country. I am here now for my 56th floor speech, I am told, on this topic, sometimes talking about the opioid crisis that has gripped my State the way it has so many others in this Chamber but also talking about other issues that relate to the drug epidemic. It is not just about the prescription drugs, the heroin, the fentanyl, and the carfentanil that have impacted so many women and children and families and devastated so many communities; there are also other issues. The one I want to talk about today is what is happening with regard to crystal meth.

Methamphetamine is back with a vengeance, and we need to have a more effective response to it. Congress has done quite a bit in the last several years to push back against this drug epidemic.

New policies have been put in place at the Federal level for the past few years that are promoting better prevention, treatment, and recovery and helping our law enforcement respond with Narcan—that miracle drug that reverses the effects of overdoses—and helping to ensure that we have a prevention message out there that is more effective.

Congress has now spent more than \$3 billion in additional funding—taxpayer dollars—to support treatment and recovery programs, and it has been needed. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act has provided a lot of that, and so has the 21st Century Cures Act. That goes directly to the States.

The good news is that these efforts are actually starting to pay off. Drug

overdose deaths are still way too high. In Ohio, we started with a high-water mark, but after 8 years of more people dying every single year, finally, last year, we saw in Ohio and around the country a reduction in overdose deaths. That is great news. We peaked in 2017 at 72,000 Americans losing their lives. It is the No. 1 cause of death in my home State of Ohio and the No. 1 cause of death for all Americans under the age of 50.

The progress has been particularly encouraging in places like Ohio. We saw a 21.4-percent drop in overdose deaths in the first half of last year, 2018. Those are the last numbers we have and the most recent data we have. That was the biggest drop in the Nation, actually, between July of 2017 and June of 2018. So in that 1-year period, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, Ohio had the biggest drop in the country. Again, that was partly because Ohio's numbers were so high. We were second in the Nation in overdose deaths, from that data.

Nationally, we are seeing a more promising, if more modest, downturn in overdose deaths. Between September of 2017 and March of 2018, overdose deaths fell from about 72,000 to about 71,000. Overall, the overdose rate dropped in 21 States and nearly a full percentage point nationally. So at least we are seeing some progress finally, after 8 years of increases every year and more and more heartbreak. This is progress.

I think we would have been doing even better, frankly, if we hadn't seen the big influx of fentanyl over the last 3 or 4 years. Again, Congress has passed important legislation, but we are pushing up against more and more fentanyl coming into our communities. That is an incredibly powerful synthetic opioid—50 times more powerful than heroin—inexpensive, and it is coming primarily from China and primarily through the U.S. mail system.

Our pushback on that more recently that is starting to be effective is called the STOP Act. We just passed it in this body last year. What the STOP Act says is that the post office has to start screening packages, particularly from countries like China, from which we know fentanyl is coming in. They haven't done exactly what we asked them to do yet, but they are doing a better job of stopping the poison from coming in from China, which is where the vast majority comes from.

Today, even as we see progress on opioids and as we see somewhat less fentanyl coming in and therefore higher prices for fentanyl on the street, which is important—as we see this progress, we are also seeing something that is very discouraging. What I have been hearing now for over a year from law enforcement, treatment providers, social service providers, and community leaders back home is that there is a resurgence of methamphetamine—pure, powerful crystal meth—coming primarily from Mexico.