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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal King, unto whom all hearts are open, come to us in the purity of Your presence, and make us what we ought to be.

Guide our lawmakers. Show them what needs to be changed, and give them the courage and wisdom to make the appropriate adjustments. Lord, in all their labors, help them to yield themselves to Your will so that this legislative branch may fulfill Your purposes for humanity. Quicken their thinking and reinforce their judgment until their decisions bring glory to Your Name. May Your grace be sufficient for all their needs.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. McCONNELL and Mr. KAINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1541 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

With that, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak about two different subjects. One of them will be just 1 minute, and that deals with the fact that May is National Foster Care Month. I want to mention a couple of things about foster care because of my work in that area for the last 25 years.

I have often heard from young people that they wish someone had helped their parents so that they could have stayed together as a family. We can work in Congress to improve the foster care system, but, ultimately, kids need a family.

That is why I was proud to support the Family First Prevention Services Act. This bill will help families to stay together by funding proven services and support for parents. As the implementation process continues on this new piece of legislation, I will work to ensure that this legislation succeeds for families across the country, because for two-and-a-half decades I have been hearing from these young people in foster care: I would like to have a home, and I would like to have a mom and dad.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, besides May being National Foster Care

Month, it is also Mental Health Awareness Month. This month of May gives us an opportunity to increase public awareness about the challenges faced by those struggling with mental illness. It also encourages us to consider reforms to policies that affect these individuals as well as their friends and family members.

Almost one in five adults in the United States copes with mental illness in any given year, and roughly 20 million Americans struggle with substance abuse disorder, and less than half will get the treatment that they need.

In the 114th Congress, the previous one, I cosponsored and led the Judiciary Committee in approving legislation to update and extend the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act. Up to half of our Nation's prison population may suffer from mental illness. Jails and prisons hold 10 times as many people with mental illness than hospitals do, according to the National Sheriffs' Association.

In the 115th Congress, I introduced and led the Senate in adopting reforms to tackle substance abuse, mental health, and other issues that may drive children and teenagers into the juvenile justice system. These reforms, which recently were enacted as part of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, encourages States to devote Federal grants to improving treatment of juvenile offenders with mental illness and substance abuse. The enactment of these two measures is very important, but even saying that, we still have lots of work to do in the area of substance abuse and mental illness.

First, lack of mental health resources poses a huge challenge. Now I am chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. I intend to be committed to this area and explore new options for increasing access to quality mental healthcare.

Second, we still have a long way to go to promote parity in mental health

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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and substance abuse treatment. I am committed to building upon existing efforts and finding new ways to end the stigma attached to mental health diseases.

Third, experts tell us that it is important to standardize care for behavioral health and addiction medicines.

Fourth, we may need to equip doctors with more tools to respond to the opioid epidemic that has gripped the Nation and takes the lives of 130 Americans every day. For example, Federal regulations prevent a patient's doctor from reviewing that patient's substance abuse records. This policy is intended, appropriately, to protect patient privacy, and that is a very important goal, but if it hinders coordination of care, we may have reasons to be concerned. In some cases, doctors must have access to a patient's entire medical history in order to adequately recognize, respond to, and treat the symptoms of addiction.

I hope my colleagues in the Senate will join me in identifying bipartisan solutions to these issues. Doing so will help to improve the lives of many Americans who struggle with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

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

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

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Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, one of the favorite parts of my job is welcoming Texans to Washington to talk about issues that they care passionately about. Something I have noticed, though, is that it doesn't matter if they are here to talk about healthcare, taxes, infrastructure, or fever ticks. The same question always seems to come up. They say: Judging by what I see in the news, it looks like nothing ever gets done around here; is that true?

I always remind them that compromise and agreement is not exactly clickbait. So while some of the bills we are working on may not consume Twitter feeds, there is a lot of great work being done here on a daily basis.

One example of that great work came last Thursday when the Senate passed the Debbie Smith Act of 2019, a major bipartisan achievement that would support victims of sexual assault across the country.

I would be negligent if I didn't acknowledge the Presiding Officer's contribution to that great effort in the Senate Judiciary Committee, for which I am grateful.

The namesake of this bill is an incredibly brave woman whom I have had the pleasure of getting to know over

the years, and I admire her tremendously. Debbie Smith is a fierce advocate for survivors of sexual assault and a champion for victims' rights, and she has become one of the most prominent voices in the fight to eliminate the rape kit backlog.

Sadly, Debbie's advocacy was born from a personal tragedy. In 1989, she was at home doing laundry when a stranger broke into her home. He blindfolded her, abducted her, and took her to a wooded area behind her home where he robbed and repeatedly raped her.

She reported the crime to the police and went to the emergency room for a forensic exam, but as days, months, and years passed, no answers came. She anxiously waited for her attacker to be identified and brought to justice, but it would end up being years before she saw that justice being done. Like millions of others across the country, Debbie's case became part of the long list of those frozen in time because of the debilitating rape kit backlog.

Though exact numbers are difficult to estimate, some experts estimate that hundreds of thousands of rape kits remain untested in the United States—a fact that should upset each and every one of us. Each of those untested rape kits represents a victim who is waiting for answers, who has to wonder each day who their attacker was, when will they show up again, and where are they now. Each piece of DNA evidence holds the key to apprehending a violent criminal and finally providing victims with some peace of mind.

For Debbie, it took 6½ years before the identity of her attacker was discovered. She has made it her mission in life to ensure that no other woman has to agonize for that long. The Debbie Smith Act was originally signed into law in 2004 to provide State and local crime labs the resources they need to end the backlog of these unsolved crimes. Because of Debbie Smith and the Debbie Smith Act, more than 860,000 DNA cases have been processed and 360,000 DNA profiles have been uploaded into the FBI's database. This accounts for 43 percent of all forensic profiles in the FBI's database.

While the original purpose for this legislation was to reduce the rape kit backlog, this DNA evidence can help to identify and to convict people who commit other types of crimes and to take more criminals off the street. By the way, we should note that if somebody has been falsely accused, this DNA evidence can exclude them as a potential perpetrator of a crime. It really works to benefit those falsely accused as well.

All in all, more than \$1 billion has been provided to forensic labs because of this law. The legislation passed by the Senate last week will provide even greater resources for this vital program.

The Debbie Smith Act of 2019 will reauthorize the important funding that supports testing DNA evidence so we

can eliminate the rape kit backlog in the future and someday ensure that it will not grow again.

This reauthorization also reauthorizes important training for law enforcement, correctional personnel, forensic nurses, and other professionals who assist victims of sexual assault. This bill is not controversial, not partisan, and not divisive. In fact, not a single Senator voted against it. It is exactly the type of legislation that should get more attention here in Washington.

I thank Senator FEINSTEIN of California, who cosponsored this bill, for working with me to get it over this first hurdle. I now hope that the House of Representatives will take up the Debbie Smith Act so we can get the legislation to the President's desk to provide even more victims with answers and, hopefully, some peace of mind.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SETH PRINGLE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a member of my staff, Seth Pringle, who has dedicated his life to serving his country and the people of Ohio. Not only does Seth serve the people of Ohio each day on our staff, helping Ohio servicemembers and veterans, but he also serves in uniform himself as a member of the Army National Guard.

This past week was his last in our office for a year. He is heading out soon to deploy with his unit to defend our country overseas.

Seth earned both a master's and a bachelor's degree from Kent State University. He didn't stop there. He is currently pursuing a master's in national security from the University of Akron while also working for our State and serving his country.

Seth has worked in our office since 2015. He joined our team as an intern in the Cleveland office. He impressed all of us. He was hired first part time and then as a full-time staff member, serving as a constituent advocate on veterans and military issues.

Seth has helped hundreds of Ohio servicemembers and veterans navigate the military and the VA's bureaucracy so that they can receive the medals and timely medical care and benefits they earn.

About a year and a half ago, I joined Seth and members in the community in Cleveland to present long-overdue medals to George Burrell, a Vietnam veteran who served as an Army infantryman and earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, as well as five other