

emergency aid for badly overstretched agencies. In that time, partisan resistance has blocked progress. At least one House Democrat from a border State has publicly admitted that the left flank inside his own caucus has been the obstacle here. Yet, here in the Senate, I think many of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, hope and expect that we can do better than that. This body can take the lead, set a better standard, and deliver a clear message.

If the Appropriations Committee can approve this legislation today across party lines, it will be a big sign of progress. A big bipartisan vote will be a big step toward the Senate's forging a real consensus, where House Democrats have failed, and finally getting this urgently needed funding moving.

I am grateful to Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member LEAHY for finding common ground and generating this progress.

I urge my fellow committee members on the Democratic side to finally put partisanship aside and vote to advance the kind of targeted, bipartisan solution that this crisis has needed for weeks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I will yield when the minority leader, Senator SCHUMER, comes to the floor.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, a recent briefing told us a story that most Americans can, certainly, understand. People are saying: I can't afford to have cancer. What does that mean? It means the obvious—that 40 percent of Americans lose their entire life savings in 2 years or less after having a cancer diagnosis. The cost of healthcare, particularly for a serious illness, is so high that if you don't have a really good health insurance plan, it will wipe you out. That is the reality.

So is it any wonder that we are concerned about the lawsuit filed by the Trump administration and supported by Republican State attorneys general that would remove the guarantee in the law that reads that people with preexisting conditions can have health insurance? That, to me, is fundamental.

Over a majority of Americans either have a preexisting condition or have someone in the family with such a condition. Without the protection of health insurance, people can find themselves literally wiped out. When we hear that fewer than 50 percent of the people in this country have \$1,000 in savings, we can understand that even a trip to an emergency room can wipe out the meager savings people have been able to put together during the course of their lifetimes.

Why do Republicans and this President still seem determined to lessen

the coverage of health insurance for an American population that is so vulnerable to the high cost of healthcare?

When you ask the major insurance companies what is driving up the cost of health insurance premiums, they tell you it is pretty obvious. More than anything, it is the cost of prescription drugs.

Last night, in Florida, President Trump announced his plans for reelection. I guess my first question to him is this: Will you finish what you promised 4 years ago? On two of the things he promised—infrastructure and doing something about prescription drugs—he has done nothing.

How bad is the prescription drug situation in this country? As I said, it is the biggest driver of the increase in health insurance premiums. When you look at the specifics, you can see it.

Take a look at America's insulin scandal. Insulin was discovered almost 100 years ago by two Canadian researchers who surrendered the U.S. patent rights for \$1 and said at the time that no one should ever get rich on this lifesaving drug. Now look at what we are faced with—Humalog, made by Eli Lilly, a common insulin product. Humalog cost \$21 a vial in 1996. That same vial of Humalog today costs \$275—\$21 to \$275 unless you live in Canada. If you live in Canada, the exact drug, made by the same company, sells for \$39. It costs \$39 just across the border in Canada and \$275 here in the United States.

Is it any wonder that people with diabetes are rationing their insulin and, in doing so, endangering their health, with, sadly, many losing their lives because of that decision?

Why aren't we taking this on? The American people identify this as one of their major concerns when it comes to their economic vulnerability.

We are not taking it on because of the political muscle of PhRMA and the pharmaceutical companies. Sadly, they have this Chamber in a position where we are not entertaining legislation that would control prescription drug pricing, and, frankly, we have no legislative proposal coming forward by the Trump administration.

There are many good ideas out there. For example, do you ever see an ad for a pharmaceutical drug on television? If you don't, then you don't own a television. You can barely turn them on now without some ad for pharma drugs. It reaches the point where people learn how to pronounce and even spell Xarelto, having watched the ad so many times, and they can recite back to you what is said about various drugs that are advertised over and over.

The problem is, of course, that all of the information they give you, as fast as they can talk in 60 or 90 seconds, never includes the price. It never includes the price. HUMIRA, the most heavily advertised drug on television today—how much does it cost for this drug to treat psoriatic arthritis and to clear up the little red spot of psoriasis

on your elbow? It costs \$5,000 a month—\$5,000 a month.

If they were forced to advertise the price of the drug, with all of the claims that they make for the drugs, Americans would at least be notified about what they are getting into if they go to a doctor and ask for HUMIRA, but they will not. They refuse to disclose it.

So in fairness, the Trump administration's Dr. Azar, the head of HHS, called me last year and said he supported the bill that I had introduced calling for price disclosure. The administration is trying to do this by regulation, and I applaud them for that. There is so much more we can do, but I applaud them for that.

Who turned around to sue them in court to stop the requirement of price disclosure on ads? The pharmaceutical companies, including Eli Lilly, the one I just mentioned that has the scandalous pricing of insulin. They don't want Americans to know what they are charging for these drugs. They would rather fight this out over emails between insurance companies and prescription benefit managers and the like.

Well, it is time for us as a Congress, Democrats and Republicans, to acknowledge that we have had enough of this. We want pharma to be profitable so that they engage in more research for more cures, of course, but we can't stand by idly and watch this price gouging at the expense of American patients, those with diabetes and other serious conditions. We should insist, when it comes to pharma, that they have actual price competition.

They can have a patent period where they have exclusive rights to sell a drug. That is the incentive for them to discover these drugs. But there comes a point when there are supposed to be other drugs on the market—generic drugs—that offer the same benefits as the original brand-name drugs but at a much lower price. That was the design of the system. It has fallen apart.

The major drugs for sale in the United States today are going up precipitously in price. In the first 2 years of the Trump administration, 2,500 major drugs in this country saw their cost increase by double digits. That is what we are faced with while the Senate does nothing.

Senator MCCONNELL was here today speaking about the agenda and what we need to do. Well, I certainly agree with him. The situation at our border needs to be addressed, and it should be quickly. We are going to take it up this morning in the Appropriations Committee. But beyond that, we need to take a step to deal with the issues that people really care about, issues that affect their daily lives, and No. 1 on that list—and they tell us No. 1 on their own list—is the cost of prescription drugs.

Now is the time for this Congress and Senate to act. You see this empty Chamber? It should be filled with Members of the Senate debating bills to

bring down the high cost of prescription drugs. Instead, it is silent, and the best we can do is to get a speech from a Senator from Illinois.

So I hope someone is listening, and I certainly hope Senator MCCONNELL's office is listening.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, thank you to Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED and their staff for their work to produce the Fiscal Year 2020 defense authorization bill. The Senate has spent very little time actually working on legislation this Congress so I look forward to considering this bipartisan bill and debating amendments.

This bill that the Senate is expected to consider soon authorizes \$750 billion for defense—far higher than last year's amount of \$716 billion, and far higher than the House version of \$733 billion. This is because we are all committed to a strong national defense and for the protection of our men and women in uniform. But we also must make critical investments in other parts of the federal government that also contribute to a strong national defense.

Before becoming Secretary of Defense, then-General Mattis was fond of noting that if Congress doesn't fund the State Department then he'd need to buy more bullets.

We cannot hope to compete against China and Russia if we are not making critical federal investments here at home in everything from medical and science research to affordable, quality education.

So while this defense authorization bill is an important step, we must reach an agreement on budget negotiations so that we can begin working on appropriations bills as soon as possible.

Now let me mention a few key issues in this bill.

There is widespread agreement about the importance of space and the seriousness of the threats posed to our assets in space. We also all agree that the Defense Department needs to ensure that it prioritizes space personnel and equipment so that the issue doesn't get lost among many important defense concerns. But many of us were openly skeptical about the Department's proposal for a significant \$2 billion "Space Force" bureaucracy.

Should we spend \$2 billion on bureaucracy, or should we invest it in new, real space capabilities? The NDAA reaches a reasonable compromise on this subject. It elevates U.S. Space Command as a co-equal combatant command. It places more focus on space at the Secretary of Defense level, and it does not impose a large bureaucracy on the Air Force.

I appreciate this compromise, and I look forward to continuing to work with the chairman and ranking member to ensure that we are focused on providing clear organization and emphasizing real capabilities over more bureaucracy.

Another area we need to focus on is the process—the painfully long proc-

ess—that the Department of Defense has for developing and fielding new weapons systems.

One of the most illuminating—and frustrating—hearings this year in the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee was with DOD's head of research, Dr. Griffin.

It is clear from our conversation that the Pentagon is not moving at the speed of relevance in terms of deciding on new weapons systems and delivering them in reasonable timeframes. Dr. Griffin noted that the most advanced aircraft ever built—the SR-71 Blackbird—was designed, built, and flown in less time than it takes some parts of the bureaucracy these days to decide what to do next.

This has to improve. So I thank the chairman and ranking member for incorporating a reform I have proposed to speed up the process that the Pentagon goes through to conduct its initial analysis of alternatives. We know that this analysis of alternatives has dragged on for 18 months . . . 24 months . . . 27 months, in some cases. It is unconscionable. I hope this amendment can limit this nonsense and get the Department moving again.

I also appreciate the chairman and ranking member working with me to extend lease authorities for depots and arsenals such as Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois and on the honorary promotion of Tuskegee Airman Colonel Charles McGee, a true American hero.

I also hope that we can debate two other amendments I have introduced, which go to the heart of Congress's constitutional duties.

The first is the need for Congress to stop abdicating its responsibility on matters of war and peace. Article I of the Constitution gives Congress the sole authority to declare war. I voted for the war in Afghanistan, but I never imagined that we would still be there 18 years later, or that the bill I voted for back in 2001 would still be on the books, unchanged.

My amendment would sunset all authorizations for the use of force after 10 years so that Congress can take up the issue and engage in its constitutional duties.

I have also cosponsored an amendment led by Senator UDALL making clear that Congress has not given the executive branch any authority whatsoever to go to war against Iran.

These are matters of war and peace which demand this Chamber's attention. Think of the places around the globe currently justified under the 2001 AUMF voted on 18 years ago. Think of how dangerous and destabilizing a third war in the Middle East would be. I fear that we are drifting in that direction. Congress must step in.

My other amendment deals with this President's unbelievable decision to take money from our military so that our servicemembers could pay for his medieval wall on the southwest border.

It used to be that Mexico was going to pay for the wall. Remember that?

The President boasted about that more than 200 times on the campaign trail and in the Oval Office. But in February, he announced instead that he would take \$6.1 billion from the troops and put it toward building a wall.

We need a robust debate on the proper, effective way to respond to the humanitarian crisis at our border. But taking money from our men and women in uniform is not the way to do it. I hope we can debate this more.

Madam President, I hope that we may be able to debate these issues during floor consideration of this authorization bill. In the meantime, I reiterate my thanks to Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for their work on this bill.

MR. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, this week we will begin consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act, the annual legislation to authorize funding for our military and national defense. This year's legislation builds on last year's bill, with its emphasis on restoring military readiness and ensuring that we are prepared to meet threats from major powers like China and Russia.

Some may take it for granted that we have the strongest military in the world, but our military strength, built on the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, requires sustained investment. In recent years, budgetary impasses paired with increased operational demands have left our Armed Forces with manpower deficits and under-equipped for confronting the threats of the 21st century. Given the multitude of threats around the world, we cannot afford to become complacent or ease our preparedness. The truth is, the last time our military underwent a comprehensive modernization, Ronald Reagan was President.

In November 2018, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission released a report warning that our readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win a war against a major power like Russia or China. The Commission noted that we would be especially vulnerable if we were ever called on to fight a war on two fronts. Repairing this readiness deficit has to be one of Congress's most important priorities.

Last year's National Defense Authorization Act took major steps forward on modernization, making significant and targeted investments in the research, manpower, and materiel needed to equip our military to face 21st-century threats. We have made real