

Today, following these remarks, I am dedicating the conference rooms in my Senate office to these two men who, through leadership and commitment, made a positive difference in the history of the State of Alabama, as well as in my life.

I am so happy that I am going to be joined by Judge Heflin's son Tom and his wife Cornelia, as well as numerous former Heflin staffers, including his longtime chief of staff, Mike House, who is the one who made that fateful call to me that summer as I was studying for the bar exam to offer me the job here on the Hill.

Also with us will be Drew Perkins and his wife Nelly. Drew is the brother of Giles. They will be here with us as we celebrate both Judge Heflin and Giles Perkins.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that in the corner of the Giles Perkins Conference Room will be the large Yoda doll that will be kept in his honor.

As for me, I will strive to continue the work that they began, to fulfill their vision, and to honor their memories as long as I have the privilege of serving here in the U.S. Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION EFFORTS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, recently I met with members of the American Legion of Arkansas during their annual convention. This year they celebrated 100 years of helping veterans. I was honored to join them on this occasion and share how proud we are of their efforts to serve their fellow veterans.

Since its founding, Legionnaires have been leading advocates for veterans and their families. They are committed to strengthening the policies, programs, and institutions to support those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

One of the ways they have been instrumental in achieving this is bringing Legionnaires from across the country to Washington to share the Legion's priorities with me and my colleagues. Members from Arkansas expressed that one of the top issues for the Legion this Congress, as has been the case for the past several years, is suicide prevention.

The American Legion and other VSOs like the VFW, AMVETS, IAVA, Wounded Warrior Project—and the list simply goes on and on—are pressing for action to improve access and treatment for veterans who are at risk of suicide. We all know there is room for improvement on this front.

Congress has provided significant funding increases to the Department of Veterans Affairs to decrease veteran suicide rates. In fiscal year 2010, the VA requested \$62 million for suicide prevention outreach. That number nearly quadrupled to \$222 million within 10 years. Despite the sharp increase in resources, sadly, 20 veterans commit

suicide each day. That number has, unfortunately, remained roughly unchanged throughout the years. Tellingly and sadly, only 6 of those 20 veterans are receiving healthcare services at the VA.

Veterans are particularly vulnerable to mental health struggles which, when untreated, can lead to increased risk of suicide. They suffer a disproportionately higher rate of suicide compared to the general population.

In Arkansas, veterans represent about 8 percent of the population, but, sadly, they account for one-fifth of the suicides in my State. So you have 8 percent of the population yet 20 percent of the suicides.

I have heard the anguish of family members and friends who miss the signs of mental health struggles in their loved ones. We have read and heard in the news about veterans who have taken their own lives on VA properties. They were so close to help yet felt that their situations were beyond repair. We need to close the loop to ensure that individuals at risk make contact with professionals trained to respond to address the needs of these vulnerable veterans.

Congress is actively engaged in fighting this public health crisis. In 2015, we passed and the President signed into law the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This was an important step to providing the VA with the tools and flexibility to get help for veterans living with mental illness. We knew this was just the start.

My colleagues and I on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee are continuing to build on that foundation. I am hopeful that we can advance the three particular pieces of legislation I am about to highlight so that we can give help to veterans at risk of suicide.

Senator WARNER and I recently introduced the IMPROVE Wellbeing for Veterans Act. This bill will enable the VA to harness the potential of what is already occurring in communities by allowing it to provide grant funding to nonprofits and local organizations for expanded outreach to veterans.

Our bill enhances coordination and planning of veteran mental health and suicide prevention services and will better measure the effectiveness of these programs in order to reduce the alarming number of veteran suicides.

We can work with veteran-serving nonprofits to create and use a standard measurement tool that helps us in this area.

Some nonprofit groups have implemented their own tools to track progress and monitor the results of their programs.

The VA should examine how it can work with partners to develop or adopt a measurement tool that will be used uniformly across all groups. This will allow the VA and its partners to identify which suicide prevention efforts are having the most impact so that resources can be concentrated appropriately.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie called the IMPROVE Wellbeing for Veterans Act "key" to unlocking the veterans suicide crisis.

I am pleased with the support we have received from the Secretary, members of the committee, and other colleagues, and I encourage other Senators to cosponsor this important legislation that will make a positive impact on our effort to reduce veteran suicides.

It is also important to make it easier for veterans in crisis to get the help they need. That is why I teamed up with Senator MANCHIN to introduce the SPEED Act. This legislation would establish a three-digit number that is easy for veterans to remember in order to reach the Veterans Crisis Line. In a crisis, time is of the essence. Providing a more direct line of communication will save lives.

Created in 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered over 3.5 million calls. This has been an essential tool to prevent veteran suicides. By taking an additional step to simplify the number, we can make further strides and expedite assistance to veterans in crisis.

The VA has indicated that suicide prevention is its highest clinical priority. To help improve its operation, oversight, and evaluations of its suicide prevention media outreach campaigns, we have partnered with Senator RICHARD BLUMENTHAL to introduce the Reach Every Veteran in Crisis Act. This bill supports recommendations by the Government Accountability Office study that found gaps in the VA's suicide prevention media outreach activities.

By delivering an action plan for the VA to follow, we can isolate meaningful suicide prevention programs and ensure resources are focused on efforts that save lives.

An important provision of the legislation requires establishing targets to evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach campaign. It is vital that we have metrics to measure the success of the VA's mental health and suicide prevention programs.

As the chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, I have been pushing the VA to incorporate measurement tools so that we can better evaluate the effectiveness of VA programs. That is why, in the subcommittee's fiscal year 2019 bill, we incorporated language requiring the VA to report to Congress the metrics it uses to evaluate the efficacy of all of its mental health and suicide prevention programs.

My colleagues and I are committed to upend the trend of veteran suicide. We are blessed to have many organizations devoted to this common goal.

Together, we can make a positive difference in the lives of veterans and their families and give them hope for a brighter tomorrow.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Daniel Aaron Bress, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Richard C. Shelby, Shelley Moore Capito, Roger F. Wicker, Johnny Isakson, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, John Thune, Steve Daines, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, John Hoeven, John Barrasso.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the debate on the nomination of Daniel Aaron Bress, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted “yea”.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 190 Ex.]

YEAS—50

| | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| Alexander | Cramer | Hoeven |
| Barrasso | Crapo | Hyde-Smith |
| Blackburn | Cruz | Inhofe |
| Blunt | Daines | Isakson |
| Boozman | Enzi | Johnson |
| Braun | Ernst | Kennedy |
| Burr | Fischer | Lankford |
| Capito | Gardner | Lee |
| Collins | Graham | McConnell |
| Cornyn | Grassley | McSally |
| Cotton | Hawley | Moran |

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|-----------|------------|----------|
| Murkowski | Romney | Sullivan |
| Paul | Rounds | Thune |
| Perdue | Sasse | Toomey |
| Portman | Scott (FL) | Wicker |
| Risch | Scott (SC) | Young |
| Roberts | Shelby | |

NAYS—42

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Baldwin | Hassan | Reed |
| Bennet | Heinrich | Rosen |
| Blumenthal | Hirono | Schatz |
| Booker | Jones | Schumer |
| Brown | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Cantwell | King | Sinema |
| Cardin | Klobuchar | Smith |
| Carper | Manchin | Stabenow |
| Casey | Markey | Tester |
| Coons | Menendez | Udall |
| Cortez Masto | Merkley | Van Hollen |
| Duckworth | Murphy | Warner |
| Durbin | Murray | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Peters | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—8

| | | |
|------------|---------|--------|
| Cassidy | Leahy | Tillis |
| Gillibrand | Rubio | Warren |
| Harris | Sanders | |

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii is recognized.

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

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

Mr. SCHATZ. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes, followed by Senators WHITEHOUSE and HEINRICH for 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I yield the floor to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the postcloture time on the Bress nomination expire at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9 and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action. I further ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the Bress nomination, the Senate vote on the pending cloture motions on the following nominations in the order listed: Executive Calendar Nos. 47, 51, and 52; that if cloture is invoked, the confirmation votes occur on Wednesday, July 10, at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY CARBON FEE ACT OF
2019

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, last year, the United States weathered 14 different disasters costing \$1 billion or more, including 2 hurricanes that cost more than \$25 billion in damages. Just in the past 3 years, the annual average

of billion-dollar disasters has doubled compared to what it has been over the long term. These numbers give us a sense of what extreme weather and climate inaction will cost us, but the hundreds of billions of dollars of damages we have seen from extreme weather over the past few years do not capture the full costs.

An economist named Gary Yohe recently pointed out in a Washington Post article that extreme weather doesn’t simply damage or destroy property. These events require people, businesses, and government to take money they would have spent elsewhere and put it toward rebuilding. So instead of promoting growth or investing in business or communities, we are treading water by putting billions of dollars into just rebuilding the status quo. Yohe calculates that if we have similar extreme weather events over the next 10 years, the U.S. GDP will be 3.6 percent lower. So, in 2029, our economy will be \$1 trillion poorer because of extreme weather and climate change. This is why actuaries have named climate change the No. 1 risk to North American insurers. This isn’t the Conservation Council for Hawai’i. This isn’t the Sierra Club. This is not the League of Conservation Voters. These are actuaries. They named climate change the No. 1 risk to North American insurers. That is why insurance executives are warning that the world will be uninsurable if climate change accelerates.

Risks that come with climate change—extreme fires and droughts, sea rise and hurricanes—threaten economic growth and financial instability across sectors. This is no longer in the future tense. This is no longer hypothetical. Climate change is happening right now and is forcing businesses to change their approach right now. In Europe and the United States, insurance companies have publicly announced they will no longer do business with mining and coal companies. Alliance, Chubb, AXA, Zurich, Swiss Re, and others have all decided they can’t insure coal anymore. They can’t underwrite or invest in the industry without taking on too much risk.

This is part of a trend across the private sector and across the world. Farmers, private equity groups, shareholders, and regulators are all looking at the economic risks of climate change and changing their strategies to mitigate these risks. They are worried about the cost of goods, the profitability of businesses, the stability of the market. They are worried about the new and growing risk of droughts, floods, storms, wildfires, and sea level rise because these events reduce the value of assets. They decrease investment income. They increase insured and uninsured losses. In other words, they are disrupting our financial institutions. The health of our financial system is at stake, and the cost of inaction is higher than the cost of action.