

have to step in on behalf of families and consumers in America and speak up on their behalf. Watch closely to see if that happens.

The gentleman who was on the floor, my colleague from Kentucky, will be the person who will decide that. Senator MCCONNELL will decide whether we are going to challenge the pharmaceutical companies this year.

Do you remember how I started? It is the No. 1 issue that American families volunteer to us. So is it important? Yes. Secondly, will it make a difference? You bet—not just in Illinois but I bet in Kentucky as well. Many a family can step forward and talk about how tough it is to pay for these prescription drugs.

Do we have a chance to do it? You bet we do. There is a series of bills coming out of committee in the next couple of weeks. We could bring this to the floor of the Senate. Wouldn't that be amazing if the U.S. Senate, instead of doing a handful of nominations of people you have never heard of, ended up actually passing a bill, making a law that addresses the issue of prescription drug pricing in America? That, to me, is a reason we were sent here.

What I would like to see and hope to see is a bipartisan effort. We Democrats are ready to stand up, but there are certain things we believe in. First, we believe in keeping the Affordable Care Act on the books. People with preexisting conditions shouldn't be discriminated against. Families ought to be able to keep their kids on their health insurance plans until kids reach the age of 26. We are willing to fight for that even though this week there is a lawsuit by the Trump administration to do away with it.

Secondly, we believe we should negotiate prices under Medicare so that seniors get the price breaks that our veterans get today and many others do too.

Third, we need to do something about the overpricing by these drug companies, not just price disclosure on the ads but changing the patent laws to give American consumers a fighting chance. Canada is fighting for Canadians. When is America going to fight for Americans?

When it comes to pharmaceutical prices, this is our chance to do it, and we can get it done in the next 2 weeks. Who will decide that? The majority leader from Kentucky, MITCH MCCONNELL. He will decide whether this comes to the floor, whether it is important enough to the people living in Kentucky, Illinois, New York, Mississippi, or wherever. It is his choice. It is in his power to make that decision. I hope the American people will reach out to him to encourage him to do that.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

U.S. WOMEN'S WORLD CUP VICTORY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, I sent a letter to U.S. soccer that officially invited the U.S. women's soccer team to come to the Senate to celebrate their outstanding World Cup victory. Happily, I heard last night that Megan Rapinoe, one of the team's cocaptains and stars of the tournament, has accepted our invitation. I greatly look forward to scheduling a time when these inspiring women can come to the Nation's Capital.

What they have accomplished on and off the pitch is a credit to our Nation. Millions of young girls and young boys look up to these players. Millions of women, sports fans or not, admire the light they have shown on the disparities between the men's and women's game—part of a broader fight for equal treatment and fair pay in the workplace for all women.

I believe it would be a fitting tribute to this great women's soccer team to bring legislation to the Senate floor that would make it easier for women to get equal pay in the workplace. The House has already passed a bill to do just that. I call on Leader MCCONNELL, again, to bring that bill to the floor of the Senate, particularly in light of the great victory of the women's team and the knowledge that they get paid much less than the men, even though they work just as hard and bring, at least in recent years, even greater glory to the United States.

Wouldn't it be great if we could pass that bill while the women's national team is visiting the Chamber? Wouldn't that send a powerful message of our commitment to rooting out discrimination everywhere?

I urge Leader MCCONNELL to consider it. Right now that bill lies in Leader MCCONNELL's all-too-full legislative graveyard. Perhaps this great victory might spring it free so that we could do something for women's equality.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN

Madam President, on a much less happy note, this week, billionaire Jeffrey Epstein was indicted in New York on Federal sex trafficking charges. The newly released evidence of Epstein's behavior involving dozens of children is sickening, is appalling, is despicable.

Epstein should have been behind bars years ago, but, unfortunately, the Secretary of Labor, Alex Acosta, cut Epstein a sweetheart deal while Acosta was a U.S. attorney in Florida in 2008. While a Federal prosecutor, Acosta signed a nonprosecution agreement that allowed Epstein and his co-conspirators to remain free and evade justice, despite overwhelming evidence.

Mr. Acosta hid this agreement from Epstein's victims. No one can figure out why Mr. Epstein was able to persuade U.S. Attorney Acosta not to prosecute, other than that Epstein could afford high-powered, high-priced attorneys. As the Miami Herald editorial board wrote this morning, it was not just that Acosta failed to get it right in 2008; the evidence suggests "he didn't care to."

Accordingly, I am asking three things. First, I am calling on Secretary Acosta to resign. It is now impossible for anyone to have confidence in Secretary Acosta's ability to lead the Department of Labor. If he refuses to resign, President Trump should fire him. Instead of prosecuting a predator and serial sex trafficker of children, Acosta chose to let him off easy.

This is not acceptable. We cannot have as one of the leading appointed officials in America someone who has done this—plain and simple.

Second, I am calling on the Department of Justice's Office of Professional Responsibility to make public the results of its review of Acosta's handling of the Epstein case. Senators MURRAY and KAINE have called for these findings, but the Justice Department so far has stonewalled, has refused to make them public. This rebuke cannot be kept in the dark, and there should be hearings.

Third, the President needs to answer for the statements he has made about his relationship with Mr. Epstein. In 2002, he said he had known Epstein for 15 years and that he was a "terrific guy" who enjoyed women "on the younger side." Epstein was also reportedly a regular at the Mar-a-Lago Club for years. The President needs to answer for this, and "I don't recall" is not an acceptable answer in this case, particularly since President Trump appointed Mr. Acosta to such a powerful position.

HEALTHCARE

Madam President, on healthcare, today oral arguments begin in *Texas v. United States*, and the fate of our entire healthcare system hangs in the balance due to this nasty, cruel lawsuit led by President Trump's Department of Justice. If the courts ultimately strike down the law, the healthcare of tens of millions of Americans would be gone—gone. Prescription drug costs, high enough as they are, would go up even further. Protections for preexisting conditions that affect more than 100 million Americans would be eliminated. A mother or father whose child had cancer would have to watch them suffer because the insurance company could cut them off and say: We are not paying for this anymore.

We cannot tolerate that. Yet President Trump and his administration and 19 Republican attorneys general filed a suit that would do just that.

The case reveals the depth of the hypocrisy and cruelty of the Republican position on healthcare. Senate Republicans, come campaign season, express unequivocal support for protections for preexisting conditions, but they have repeatedly blocked our attempts to have the Senate intervene in this lawsuit and fight back against the Trump administration's position, which threatens to eliminate these very same protections.

I say to my Republican friends: You can't have it both ways. You can't say "Oh, I want to protect people with preexisting conditions," and then prevent

us from doing something to actually protect them. Instead, they are going along, knees shaking, with President Trump's cruel lawsuit, and that is what every Republican in this Chamber—just about every Republican—has done.

President Trump has himself issued—also totally hypocritical—a laundry list of quotes in support of protections for preexisting conditions. He talks all the time about bringing down prescription drug costs while his administration actively pursues this lawsuit, which would raise the cost of drugs and eliminate protections for preexisting conditions.

How much hypocrisy can America tolerate? It is mind-bending. The hypocrisy is patently obvious. I don't care if you love President Trump. You should be calling him out for this hypocrisy, which will affect the vitality—God's most precious gift to us—the ability to live long and healthy and well. President Trump is trying to take it away, despite what he says to you, Trump supporters.

Senate Democrats will head to the steps of the Capitol to highlight what this lawsuit could mean to average Americans. My Republican friends should take note. The American people are keenly aware of which party is trying to take away their healthcare. Even if it happens through the courts in this Trump-supported lawsuit, they will know that congressional Republicans, by their silence—their meek, supine acquiescence—are complicit in the unraveling of our healthcare system. I believe the American people will hold them accountable at the ballot box if they don't change.

ELECTION SECURITY

Madam President, on election security, tomorrow the Senate will gather for a briefing by senior officials of the defense, law enforcement, and intelligence community on the threats facing our elections in 2020.

Russia has interfered in our elections. Everyone agrees with that. Our administration is doing nothing to stop it from occurring again in 2020, so we need a briefing by law enforcement on how serious the threat is—they have said “serious” in public statements—and what we are doing to stop it.

I am glad that Leader McConnell agreed to my request and has worked with us to schedule a briefing. It should dispel all doubt in this Chamber about the need to take action ahead of next year's Presidential elections.

I would say this: A briefing is important; a briefing is necessary, but it is by no means sufficient. We must then debate and adopt measures to protect our democracy and preserve the sanctity of our elections. Even though Leader McConnell has finally agreed to have this hearing, he has so far been content—once again, a legislative graveyard—to have the Senate do nothing—do nothing—when it comes to one of the greatest threats to our democracy, that a foreign power will reach in and interfere for its own purposes, not to help Americans.

Bipartisan bills exist. We could put them on the floor right now. This is not a partisan issue. Senators Rubio and Van Hollen have the DETER Act. Senators Menendez and Graham have the Russia sanctions bill. But all of these bills have languished, victims of Leader McConnell's legislative graveyard. We have many more options when it comes to election security—legislation from Senators Klobuchar and Warner, Feinstein and Wyden, Blumenthal and many others. It is time we move on these bills. As we continue to negotiate appropriations bills, we should include significant resources for election security. Nothing less than the vitality of and faith in our democracy is at stake.

There are not two sides to this issue. A foreign adversary attacked our democracy. I expect that Special Counsel Mueller's testimony next week will highlight once again that Russia's efforts to interfere in our democracy were sweeping and systematic.

What are we waiting for? What are we waiting for—for them to interfere again and for more Americans, whether they be Republican or Democrat or Independent, left, right, or center, to no longer believe this democracy is legit? For 243 years, since the Declaration of Independence and certainly since the signing of the Constitution a few years later, we have had faith in this democracy, even when the outcome isn't what we want. But that faith is already eroding in good part because foreign powers can interfere in our elections. We cannot—we cannot—let that happen, no matter who you are, what your politics are. But Leader McConnell is standing in the way of what could eat at the roots of our democracy and eventually make this mighty oak, the American experiment, fall. We don't want that to happen.

The briefing tomorrow is a good step, but it is only one step. We need to take more. We need to act, to prepare our democracy for the challenges ahead.

FOX NEWS

Madam President, I felt it was important to point this one out: President Trump amazingly attacked FOX News in the last few days in a series of tweets for coverage he viewed as unfavorable to his administration. This is FOX News, a news outlet that, frankly, is 90 percent or more on the President's side. Their most popular shows seem to just be cheerleaders for President Trump. To me, it is the most biased newscast there is of the major news stations, not that any of them are free of any bias. Yet when President Trump hears a small, dissident tweet, dissident note, from FOX News, and now he attacks it—what kind of thin skin does this man have? What kind of thin skin? But it is worse than his thin skin—when a President can attack a news organization that is overwhelmingly friendly to him, with some of his leading advocates getting prime time space, some of them going to his rallies, it shows he really doesn't believe

in freedom of the press. Dictators—dictators—shut down the press and try to shame the press when they speak truth to power, which is what our President has done in all the years of this Republic.

When President Trump can even attack FOX News because once in a blue moon it says something he doesn't like, that shows he doesn't really deserve to be President because a President must protect our liberties whether or not he is under fire.

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. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING RIVER NIMMO

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I want to call your attention to a story that is tragic but also heartwarming and uplifting.

Honorary Colonel River “Oakley” Nimmo of Camden, AR, passed away last month at the age of 5 after a protracted struggle with his enemy, a rare form of cancer called neuroblastoma. Oakley's family remembers him as a “sweet, brave boy” who liked to play with power wheels and toy guns, but all those who knew him or who have learned about him will remember Oakley for an act of service that perhaps only a child could perform.

Oakley wanted to be an Army man when he grew up. Even in the advanced stages of his fight with cancer, you would find him at the hospital wearing camouflage fatigues and a helmet, with his trusty rifle by his side and a smile on his face.

Oakley fought his cancer valiantly, going above and beyond the call of duty. He was strengthened along the way by his Arkansas neighbors, who held yard sales and sold bracelets to help the Nimmo family pay for his care. He was also supported by 20,000 prayer warriors on a Facebook page entitled “Prayers for Oakley Nimmo.” But ultimately it was God's will that Oakley should return home to him. He passed away on the 20th of June.

In light of Oakley's heroic struggle, as well as his dream of becoming an Army man, Oakley was named an honorary colonel in the Arkansas National Guard. In the days leading up to his funeral, his family made a simple request: that veterans and servicemembers show up at the funeral in their uniform to give Oakley the proper sendoff. Word got around, and dozens came. Some traveled from nearby towns. Most had never even met this little boy, but it didn't matter—he was a soldier like one of them. Soldiers from the Arkansas National Guard provided funeral honors for Oakley. They presented Oakley's mother, Shelby, with the flag and a special ID tag with