

I have already read the national statistics. I am even prouder about this. Instead of being left behind, Kentucky is helping to lead the charge. The State's unemployment rate has hit and sustained its lowest level on record. Again, that is recordbreaking low unemployment.

Last year, Governor Bevin helped Kentucky to welcome more than \$5.3 billion of planned business investment. This new growth isn't just concentrated in urban areas. Rural communities in the Bluegrass are seeing more jobs, investment, and expansion as well.

Of course, it takes more than 2 years to unwind the mistakes of the past. Parts of Kentucky are still struggling from the effects of liberal policies, and this Republican Senate, the administration, and leaders in Frankfort are laser-focused on continuing to invest in and fight for recovery.

In many communities, particularly in rural Kentucky, the lingering pain has been hard to shake—the damage to the coal industry, the devastation caused by opioid and substance abuse. So more work is certainly needed, and I am honored to lead the charge in Washington to help Kentuckians confront these challenges.

Through programs like the Appalachian Regional Commission and the abandoned mine land pilot program, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars into struggling areas and out-of-work Americans. In Eastern Kentucky, Congressman HAL ROGERS and I have partnered with local organizations to secure Federal resources for everything from skills training to water infrastructure improvements.

I have helped to secure tens of millions of dollars to aid the retraining efforts of the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program and job-creating programs like the Kentucky Highlands Community Development Corporation. We have also secured grants to bolster good jobs, support the environment, attract tourism, and promote healthy lifestyles.

These are just a few examples from just one State. There are stories like this all over our country. While the previous administration left these men and women behind, Republicans recognize their skills and their drive. We are investing in their futures.

TREATIES

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, speaking of economic growth and development, the Senate will soon turn our attention to a number of bilateral tax treaties with important U.S. trading partners. We have these kinds of agreements in place to reduce tax evasion, tax avoidance, and unfair double taxation of U.S. citizens and businesses who conduct businesses overseas. The four we will consider this week are agreements with Spain, Switzerland, Japan, and Luxembourg.

The U.S. Government and each of these foreign governments have pains-

takingly negotiated updates to existing agreements about how certain kinds of commerce would be taxed and which country will tax them. In short, Senate ratification of these protocols would mean less confusion, more certainty, and, often, fewer taxes for U.S. job creators—and, by the way, a simpler rule book for overseas investors who want to invest their money here. Fairer treatment for our own American job creators and more enticement for foreign investment to head to our country—that is what we would call a win-win.

We are talking about a serious economic impact. In addition to the four countries we are tackling this week, there are three more nations with tax treaties pending which I know the administration is continuing to work on with the Foreign Relations and Finance Committees to finalize work on these remaining agreements.

Combined, these seven foreign countries invest more than \$1.2 trillion in the United States. That is more than \$1 trillion in foreign investment and, by some estimates, hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs are tied up, either directly or indirectly, in trade with these countries.

These trading relationships touch all 50 States. Every one of my colleagues is familiar with communities that benefit from the foreign investment. For my part, that includes thousands of workers in Kentucky.

One major manufacturer with ties to Spain employs 1,500 people in my State. It accounts for more than one third of all the stainless steel produced in the United States every year. Over the three decades it has operated in Carroll County, the surrounding communities benefited from more than \$60 million in tax revenue.

That is just one of many job creators in my home State, and it is far from the only one with a serious interest in seeing these measures get across the finish line. From consumer goods makers to industrial suppliers, Kentucky continues to welcome job-creating investment from around the world.

I think practically every American is familiar with Hot Pockets, a culinary staple of busy families, workers, and college students everywhere. But not everyone knows that, as of several years ago, every single Hot Pocket is cooked in Mount Sterling, KY. The facility employs more than 1,000 Kentuckians. The parent company is Nestle, based in Switzerland. So there are not only hard-working Kentuckians but also a lot of hungry consumers across the country who can understand why we need to keep our international trade in sync.

Passing these agreements will help every State to keep up the economic momentum. It will reinforce the international trade that is so essential to our economic success and help stave off further trade disruptions. I urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting for these this week.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Joseph Phipps, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I listened as the Republican leader came to the floor and announced the business of the Senate for this week. Highlighted in the business will be tax treaties—tax treaties with Spain, Switzerland, Japan, and Luxembourg. According to the Republican leader, these are critical to economic development in the United States. I don't question their importance, but I will tell you that, routinely, these are done by voice vote. We don't spend the time of the Senate to come to the floor and talk about our relationship with Luxembourg.

When you look at the issues that most American families expect us to address, I would say the tax treaty with Luxembourg would be low on the list. What might be high on the list and should be considered in the Senate this week is the No. 1 concern of families across America—Democrats and Republicans. The highest concern and the No. 1 issue when asked about the economy of the United States is the cost of prescription drugs.

The United States Senate has the authority to do something about the cost of prescription drugs. We will not be doing it this week. We will be dealing with a tax treaty with Luxembourg.

What kind of issues, when it comes to the cost of prescription drugs, might be important? Let's start with one that I have started focusing on back home.

Did you know that there are 30 million Americans who suffer from diabetes, type 1 and type 2 diabetes? Did you know that 7.5 million Americans use insulin every single day to stay alive? Four of them were in my office last week from Illinois. They were between the ages of 10 and 17. Talk about amazing young people. Three young women and a young boy talked about their lives and what had happened to them since it was discovered that they had juvenile diabetes.

Their lives have been changed a lot. Each one of them is hooked up to a CGM—I believe that is the proper term, a continuous glucose monitor—that measures whether they need additional insulin, which is pumped in another device on their arm. They talked about how this was a commitment around the clock to make sure their insulin levels were appropriate.

One little girl talked about what it meant to her family for her to be a type 1 diabetic. This beautiful young lady started talking about it. Then she got to the point where she said: It has changed our family; my diabetes has changed our family.

Then she started crying.

She said: We can't do things in our family that others do. We can't take the same vacations that my cousins take, and we can't rent that house out on the lake because of the cost of my drugs, the cost of my insulin.

I turned to her mother, and I said: Tell me, what does it come down to?

Her mom said: We are lucky. We have health insurance. Our health insurance covers prescription drugs. However, there is an \$8,000 deductible. So we start each year buying the insulin for our daughter until we have spent \$8,000 out of our savings. Then the health insurance kicks in. Usually it is about 3 months.

She is paying, or she is being charged, about \$3,000 a month for insulin.

Let's look into this for a minute as we consider why the U.S. Senate thinks a tax treaty with Luxembourg is more important than this issue. Let's look into the fact that insulin was discovered almost 100 years ago in Canada, and the researchers who discovered it came to the United States and said: We have the patent rights to this lifesaving drug for diabetics. We never want to see anybody make a profit at the expense of this lifesaving drug.

The Canadian researchers surrendered their patent rights to insulin for \$1—gave it up. I recall that when it came to the Salk vaccine for polio, he did the same thing. He said that no one should ever make a profit on a drug that eliminated polio. These two Canadian researchers felt the same about insulin.

What happened then? Insulin was produced in the earliest stages in a rather crude way but in an effective way to save the lives of people with diabetes. Over the years, that process was improved. There is no question about that.

Today there are three major pharmaceutical companies that make insulin products for the United States—Eli Lilly of Indianapolis, IN, is one of them; Novo Nordisk is another; Sanofi is another. I know a little bit about the Eli Lilly product. It is called Humalog. Humalog was introduced in the American market in 1996, an insulin product. The charge was about \$20 to \$30 for a dosage—a vial, I should say, and was

used as a dosage for those with type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes. It was about \$21.

Here we are 20 years later, and how much is that same vial? It is \$329. Remember, this was a drug discovered almost 100 years ago. Remember, those who could have capitalized and made a fortune off of it surrendered their patent rights.

How did we reach the point where this drug, in 20 years, is 10 times more than it cost when it was introduced? It is the same drug from the same company. Why has it gone up so much in price? Because they can do it, because these pharmaceutical companies have the power to raise their prices, and people like that little girl in my office from Jerseyville, IL, who broke down in tears, can't control how much that price would be. They need this to survive.

Now you must ask yourself: What are other countries paying for exactly the same drug made by the same American pharmaceutical company, Eli Lilly?

We don't have to go very far to find out. All we need to go to is Canada—Canada. The \$329 Humalog vial in Canada costs \$39. Why? It is exactly the same drug and is a fraction of the cost in Canada. It is because the Canadian Government stands up for the people of that country and says: You cannot gouge, you cannot overprice these drugs. You are going to be paid a reasonable amount so that you make a profit, but you aren't going to do it at the expense of our families in Canada.

They care. They have done something about it.

We care about a tax treaty with Luxembourg. I am sorry, but as important as that may be in that small part of the world, it is more important for us to deal with the issue of prescription drugs and to ask ourselves why this U.S. Senate, this empty Chamber, is not filled with Senators of both political parties doing something about the cost of prescription drugs.

There is one traffic cop in this Chamber. He just spoke. The Republican leader decides what comes to the floor of the Senate. He has decided we are not going to consider prescription drugs. Maybe he will change his mind, but I think he will need some persuading to reach that point.

What I am hoping is that the 30 million Americans and their families will speak up when it comes to the cost of lifesaving insulin for diabetes. I hope they will do the same when it comes to other drugs—so many of them.

Senator GRASSLEY of Iowa, a Republican, was just on the floor a few minutes ago when we opened the session. He and I are working on a bill, which is just a first step—and I underline, only a first step and not the answer to the problem. But it comes down to this: You can't turn on the television these days without seeing a drug ad. If you haven't seen drug ads on television, you must not own a television. They are on all the time. All of the informa-

tion we are given about drugs with long names that are hard to pronounce and remember—all of that information is given to us over and over again so that we know much more than we ever dreamed we would know about XARELTO. We can even spell it. We know what different drugs are supposed to do to improve the lives of individuals. Those ads are being thrown at us so that eventually we have that name in our head and take it into the doctor's office and ask for that expensive drug as opposed to a generic drug. That is running up the cost of healthcare.

Senator GRASSLEY and I put in a bill, and the bill is pretty basic. With all of the things they tell you on television about the drugs, it wasn't until just 2 weeks ago—the first time I have ever seen it—that one of these companies disclosed the cost of the drug.

You say to yourself, maybe that is an important part of speaking to consumers across America. Senator GRASSLEY and I have a bill that will require price disclosure on these pharmaceutical companies' advertising. It is not the total answer, but I am hoping it will in some way at least slow down, if not embarrass these companies from the runups in cost that these drugs are going through.

That is part of the answer, but it is not the total answer by any means. There is a long list of things we can do and should do that are a lot more important than a tax treaty with Luxembourg, which should pass by a voice vote without taking the time of the Senate.

HEALTHCARE

Madam President, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, 20 million Americans gained health insurance—including more than 1 million in Illinois. Thanks to the law, the uninsured rate in Illinois has been cut in half. People with preexisting conditions can no longer be denied health insurance coverage or be charged higher premiums. This protects 5 million people in Illinois with a preexisting condition. Insurance companies are no longer allowed to impose annual or lifetime caps on benefits or deny coverage for maternity care, mental health treatment, prescription drugs, or hospitalizations. Young people are allowed to stay on their parents' health plans until age 26 and seniors in the dreaded Medicare donut hole are saving money on their prescription drugs. Thanks to the law's Medicaid expansion, rural hospitals in Illinois have found a critical lifeline to help alleviate economic challenges. Yet, just last week, the Trump administration and 18 Republican-led States argued in a Federal court that the entire law should be thrown out—ruled unconstitutional. If President Trump is successful, more than 600,000 people in Illinois will lose their health insurance. Nearly 5 million Illinoisans with preexisting conditions will, once again, be at risk of discrimination.

Two years ago, President Trump tried to convince Congress to repeal