

times. It is called Haymarket. It was started many years ago by a Catholic priest who took on a ministry that nobody else wanted. He was the one who prowled every night along skid row and helped those who were addicted to drugs and alcohol turn their lives around. He started this Haymarket House as a refuge for them in an attempt to get them some help in escaping their addictions and being rehabbed.

Can you imagine what it is like today?

Today, sadly, he is gone, but they continue the Haymarket House. Imagine what they face in trying to deal with a combination of addiction to drugs and alcohol and mental illness on top of it. They are dramatically understaffed. They don't have the necessary bed space for people who need a helping hand—for folks who realize they need a helping hand.

Should there be a successful outcome of this Cleveland lawsuit, wouldn't it be best if some of the resources would be dedicated to places just like that all over the United States?

I can tell you, in the city of Chicago, there are many more options than there are in the more sparsely populated downstate areas from which I hail. There are some counties in which people wait 6 months—once they have realized their need for help—for any kind of treatment whatsoever, and then they have to travel great distances for that to happen.

Senator SHERROD BROWN and I recently wrote an opinion piece that was published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. I confess publicly that I hope those who are party to this lawsuit in Cleveland will read it, which is where the consolidated court case is taking place. In it, we outlined what we thought should happen if we were to have any input in a settlement agreement.

We need to make sure that the money is spent for addiction; treatment; medication; residential and community treatment services; mental health counseling, which is a necessary adjunct to this effort; building on a behavioral health workforce and naloxone distribution; and addressing childhood trauma, which is often the root of addiction.

Wouldn't it be great if there were to be a settlement here that would be dedicated to ending this drug epidemic, turning lives around, and saving people from addiction and death?

The diversion of tobacco's settlement money should be a cautionary tale that guides our efforts to heal from the opioid epidemic. If Big Pharma is held to account for fueling this crisis, its restitution should be devoted to helping our Nation heal.

This chart shows the dramatic increase in the production of two of the most popular opioid products. I will never be able to explain how the agency of the U.S. Federal Government, which is dedicated to protecting us from drug crime and drug addiction,

ended up authorizing these enormous quotas of the production of opioid pills. Yet we know what happened. In tiny Hardin County in southern Illinois, as well as on the streets of Chicago, they were flooded with opioid pills. When the opioid pills became too expensive, they turned to a cheaper alternative—heroin. Heroin was then being laced with fentanyl, and we have today this deadly epidemic that is almost out of control.

I can't understand what pharma was thinking except for its just looking at the profits and the bottom line that would justify the production of that level of opioid pills into the United States of America. All I can promise is that a number of us—myself included—will be holding the Drug Enforcement Administration accountable in order to make certain that this is not duplicated again in the years to come.

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

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

#### NOMINATION OF CLIFTON L. CORKER

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, within a few minutes, the Senate will be voting on President Trump's nomination of Cliff Corker to be the U.S. Federal District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee. I am here to strongly urge my colleagues to support Cliff Corker.

Cliff Corker has the respect of the people who know him best. He was selected to serve as a magistrate judge by the district court judges of the Eastern District of Tennessee—a very high testament to his qualifications.

When Cliff Corker was appointed magistrate judge, this is what he said:

It's a tougher job to be the decision maker rather than the advocate. There's so much more responsibility in making the decision than advocating for the client because you really want to see justice done.

Prior to his nomination to be magistrate in 2015, Judge Corker had his own law firm in Johnston City, TN. He handled a wide range of cases, from civil litigation to capital murder.

He graduated from James Madison University and received his J.D. from the William & Mary Law School.

The American Bar Association rated Judge Corker as unanimously "well qualified," the highest ranking a nominee can receive. I am sure that is because of his judicial and litigation experience.

Judge Corker has big shoes to fill. He is taking over for Judge Ronnie Greer, a very well respected Tennessean, a friend of mine for many years, who has served as a judge in Tennessee's Eastern District for the last 15 years. Prior to that, he was a State senator in Tennessee.

Cliff Corker demonstrates the qualities that I look for in a judge: good character, good temperament, high intelligence, respect for the law, and respect for those who come before the court.

Tennessee is fortunate that President Trump chose to nominate such a well-qualified candidate.

I urge my colleagues to support Judge Corker's nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

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

#### NOMINATION OF LYNDY BLANCHARD

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I regret that I come to the floor to announce my opposition to one of President Trump's political nominees, Ms. Lynda Blanchard. To be honest, I cannot even believe that we are considering her nomination on the floor of the Senate.

U.S. Ambassadors are supposed to represent the best of America to nations around the world, and I challenge my colleagues, Republican and Democrat alike, to look at this nominee's record and tell me with a straight face that Lynda Blanchard should represent the United States anywhere.

Look, I have made a good-faith effort to work with this administration to confirm a number of well-qualified individuals to State Department positions that are vital to advancing America's interests around the world. I don't think anyone can deny that.

But there are some nominees who just raise too many red flags, and I raised this to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in a letter I sent in June of 2018, shortly after his confirmation.

I explained that a number of nominees before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had demonstrated histories of questionable temperament and judgement, of questionable conduct, of #MeToo issues, just to mention a few, and I expressed my hope that we could work together to find qualified nominees to the U.S. Department of State. I am disappointed that that effort went unheeded.

Ms. Blanchard has a history of using Facebook as a platform to post incendiary, false articles and disturbing statements. For example, she once shared an article titled "The Clinton 'Body Count' EXPANDS—5 Mysterious DEATHS in the Last 6 Weeks," resurrecting the vicious lie and preposterous conspiracy theory that President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have systematically murdered political opponents and associates.

Then, on election day of 2016, she posted on Facebook "Make God our Father paint this country Red with the Blood of Jesus!"—inappropriately using religion as a blunt instrument in a political campaign.

She has also shared articles by the far-right Conservative Tribune, some of

which were taken down for failing to meet its “editorial standards”—quite literally, fake news.

What is perhaps most disappointing to me is that 2½ years into the Trump administration, none of this is particularly new. We have had Trump diplomatic appointments call for putting political opponents in prison, such as Kyle McCarter, President Trump’s Ambassador to Kenya, who tweeted on election night of 2016: “Hillary for prison. No, really!”

We have had Trump diplomatic appointments, already at their posts, make totally inappropriate and inflammatory forays into American politics, which is taboo for the Foreign Service, such as in June of this year, when Carla Sands, President Trump’s Ambassador to Denmark, appeared to accuse former President Obama of an “attempted coup d’etat in America”—the U.S. Ambassador in Denmark, June of 2019.

And we have had Trump diplomatic appointments embarrass the country by making false claims and then failing to take responsibility for them.

Pete Hoekstra, appointed by President Trump as Ambassador to the Netherlands, has claimed that there were “no-go zones” too dangerous to enter due to Muslim migration. When asked about these statements, Ambassador Hoekstra claimed they were “fake news” until he was confronted with footage of his own words.

This is not normal. We cannot grow accustomed to this kind of disgraceful behavior. We cannot look at the poor behavior of already-confirmed nominees and conclude that we should lower our standards when it comes to Ms. Blanchard’s nomination.

This is the U.S. Senate—supposedly, the world’s greatest deliberative body. We should examine the fitness and qualifications of every single individual nominated to be the face of America in nations across the world. We should expect our Ambassadors to represent the United States with dignity, respect, and sound judgment, and we should remember that America’s role as a leader of nations rests on our moral standards and greatest values.

Something is wrong if we willingly confirm people to these positions who repeatedly spread fake news, baseless slander, and the most despicable of conspiracy mongering.

For these reasons, I will be opposing the nomination of Lynda Blanchard and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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 Clifton L. Corker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

Mitch McConnell, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Chuck Grassley, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, David Perdue, Ron Johnson, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Martha McSally, John Boozman, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Clifton L. Corker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 213 Ex.]

#### YEAS—55

Alexander	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hooven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Jones	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sinema
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Perdue	

#### NAYS—41

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

#### NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Isakson
Harris	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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 Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Mitch McConnell, Ron Johnson, Steve Daines, John Kennedy, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Cory Gardner, Johnny Isakson, Pat Roberts, John Thune, John Hoeven, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Bill Cassidy.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Lynda Blanchard, of Alabama, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Ex.]

#### YEAS—55

Alexander	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hooven	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Jones	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sinema
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Cramer	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	McConnell	Tillis
Cruz	McSally	
Daines	Moran	Toomey
Enzi	Murkowski	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Perdue	

#### NAYS—41

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