

Forest, Jr., who had served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war.

As one member of Isaiah's family noted, "It was the worst day in our family's history."

Isaiah was raised by his mother and grandparents in Chatham, which is on the South Side of Chicago. He attended college in Florida. After 2 years, he insisted to his mother that he wanted to join the Army. He wanted to continue his family's tradition of military service not only as his great-grandfather had but also as several members of his family still do in the Chicago Police Department.

He told his mother he wanted to pursue his dream. He promised her that after it was over, he would finish his degree. Shortly after enlisting, he completed basic training and earned his wings at the Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA. He became an Automatic Rifleman who was assigned to Company B, First Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the storied 82nd Airborne Division.

The motto of the 82nd Airborne is "Airborne all the way." Isaiah lived every bit of this motto in his faithful service to America and with his family and friends. He enjoyed wrestling, traveling the world, and cheering for his beloved Chicago White Sox. He was a foodie. He loved good soul food. Perhaps, most especially, he loved spending time with his younger brother.

As a member of his family noted, he was "energetic, athletic, funny, humble"—all of the things you would want your kid to be.

Every Member of the Senate would be proud to have a son like Isaiah. All of the Members join me in expressing their condolences to his family at this painful moment and in grieving with them over Isaiah's bright light—ended all too soon.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, we just had our last vote here in the Senate before going into the August recess, and I am looking forward to being home in Ohio during the week. I come here during the week and go home on the weekends, but during this August recess period, it gives me a chance to get all around the State because we are home during the workweek.

I will be in a few dozen counties by the end of the recess, but I am going to start by being at the Ohio State Fair tomorrow. Tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m., we have the biggest ag event in the State, which is our annual ag

breakfast. I will be hearing from farmers from all over the State.

It has been a tough year for us in Ohio. Because of all the water, we have had lots of farmers who weren't able to plant their crops, and, therefore, there are some fields that are bare. Others who did plant their crops have found that their crops aren't doing very well because of all of the water damage early in the year.

So it has been a hard year, and, frankly, it has been a hard few years in terms of the price, particularly, of corn and soybeans. On top of that, we have less exports of soybeans, which I hope is now being addressed with the new agreements being made with relation to China in particular, but that has put pressure on price, because without having those additional overseas markets, it has had the effect of lowering the price, particularly for soybeans and corn. On top of that, it has just been generally a tough time in farm country in terms of the price of inputs going up and the price of the product being flat.

So my hope is that tomorrow I will get more input from farmers all across the State, and we will be able to continue to talk about the things we are doing.

I supported the U.S. Department of Agriculture providing some emergency loans and grants to Ohio farmers to get us through this season to avoid bankruptcies and to get people back on their feet. That money is now beginning to flow, I am happy to say. We are beginning to see some progress. The new farm bill is helping.

So my hope is that we will see better weather here going into the end of the season for these crops, that the harvest season will be better, and that we will be able to get back on our feet.

Also tomorrow, after touring the fair, I will be having some meetings with the business community, talking about what is working and what is not working in terms of regulations and taxes.

I will also be meeting with business leadership about how to get these new opportunity zones in the tax bill up and going. At those meetings, we will have community leaders and we will have people from neighborhoods that have had a tough time. Even during the economic growth, we have seen that some neighborhoods have been left behind. They still have relatively high unemployment, and they still have real problems of stubborn poverty. These opportunity zones are a perfect example there. This actually puts money into these communities by lowering and sometimes removing altogether the capital gains taxes for people if they agree to invest.

I will be talking to small businesses and housing advocates who are excited about this and see how this is working in Columbus, OH.

I will also be in Youngstown, OH, early next week, talking about this same topic, as well as some other economic development issues we have

there in terms of how we deal with the Lordstown plant, the plant that General Motors, unfortunately, has chosen to walk away from, which is very discouraging.

So we will be all over the State.

On Saturday, I will be at the largest gathering in the country of watercraft, which is the annual Paddlefest, with more kayaks and canoes on the Ohio River than any other event in the country. I will be participating in a charity race—I think this is an 11-mile race this year—with my son, going down the Ohio River, all for a good cause. I look forward to that as well.

I will be all over the State. It is an opportunity to visit the State, talk to constituents, hear what is going on, and try to be more helpful here in Washington to address the real concerns we have in Ohio.

One of the things I will be doing next weekend is visiting the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. I will be touring the park, looking at what some of their maintenance needs are, and talking to the Park Rangers.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is actually the 13th most visited national park in America. You probably haven't heard of it, unless you are from Ohio. But if you are from Akron or Cleveland, you certainly know about it because it is nestled right in between these two big cities, and it gets a lot of visitors and a lot of school kids. It is an incredible park because it is really a suburban and urban, as well as rural, park all at once. There is a lot of outdoor education going on there. There is a beautiful river that runs through it, the Cuyahoga River. There is also a train that can commute you back and forth. I will be there with Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, doing a kayak trip down the river, again looking at some of the needs the park has.

This leads me to a topic I had hoped to discuss on the floor yesterday, but because of a string of votes we were unable to do so. I was going to be out here on the floor giving a colloquy with some of my colleagues—Senator ALEXANDER, Senator WARNER, Senator KING, and others. We were going to talk about the need for us to provide more repairs in our national parks.

Unfortunately, Cuyahoga Valley National Park is one of those parks badly in need of it. We have about a \$48 million maintenance backlog. What does that mean? It means that every year we do fund the parks, but we don't fund these capital expenses that are needed. In the case of Cuyahoga Valley, as an example, there is an old railroad bridge they use for pedestrian traffic that is falling apart, and they may have to close it off soon. For every year that you don't attend to this deferred maintenance, things get worse and worse. Think about your own home. If you stop taking care of the roof, what happens? You get a leak, and then you have drywall damage. Then, you have paint damage. So the Federal Government over time has not taken care of

the parks and not provided the right stewardship in terms of these longer term deferred maintenance projects. Yes, we fund the naturalist programs and we fund the immediate needs of the park, but these, frankly, more expensive items, like deferred maintenance, do not get funded. My hope is that we will pass legislation to do that.

For more than a century, we have been blessed as Americans to have these National Parks. They are amazing. Some of you have experienced the majesty of the Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Tetons of the world. They are amazing. There are some more modest ones, like the boyhood home of William Howard Taft in Ohio, that maybe you don't know as well, but they are all important. A lot of them are focused on history, in terms of the historic homes. There are now 84 million acres of national parks and historical sites. They attract over 330 million visitors every year. Think about that. That is more than the population of our country.

Again, we have eight of those parks in Ohio. We are proud of those. And 2.7 million visitors go to Ohio's National Parks every year. They are part of our history and part of our culture. This \$12 billion backlog of long-delayed maintenance needs is a real concern, though. It is \$12 billion now. These parks are treasures, but they have unfortunately been allowed to deteriorate to the point that some of the assets in these parks are totally unusable.

If you go to a park today, you might find out that a trail is closed or a visitors center can't be visited. We have a visitors center in Ohio that had to be closed down because the roof was leaking. They didn't have the funds to replace the roof. They had funds to run the programs within the visitors center, but these long-term maintenance problems are a real problem. You may find that some of the overnight lodging facilities are not available.

In a way, our parks are crumbling from within. They may look good on the outside, but they have serious problems.

I mentioned the fact that we have long-term maintenance problems at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. We also have that at others, to the point of about \$100 million in backlogs.

Last August, I visited Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial on the shores of Lake Erie, which was established on Lake Erie to honor those who fought in the famous Battle of Lake Erie during the war of 1812, as well as to celebrate the now long-standing peace we have had between Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. There, I saw \$48 million in long-delayed maintenance needs at the site, primarily a seawall. There is a seawall on Lake Erie to keep Lake Erie from destroying the park, and it is cracking. There are actually sinkholes around it. So you can't walk near the seawall for fear of falling into a sinkhole. This is something that needs attention, and it

needs it now. Yet think of the expense of replacing a huge seawall, about a \$48 billion project, when you add to that the need to make the visitors center accessible under the ADA, or the Americans with Disabilities Act. That is an example.

I mentioned President Taft's first place. The house was in pretty good condition, and, unfortunately, it now has some problems. It has roofing problems, and about \$2 million worth of repairs are necessary and needed there.

I also visited Hopewell Culture National Historical Park in Chillicothe. There you see millennia-old burial sites from pre-Columbian times. Again, there are about \$3.5 million in unmet maintenance needs at the site, including repairs to the exterior of the visitors center that was absolutely needed. You can see why when you go there, because there are construction signs in front of it. You can go in the Visitors Center, but pretty soon you will not be able to at all.

Our parks have had a lot of issues that have built up over time. This deferred maintenance is really important. So we have legislation to address that. It is important that we do it now because if we don't, the costs just go higher. For taxpayers, it is a good deal to move now to make these improvements so that the costs don't compound and you make the situation even worse.

This is at a time when more and more people want to go to our parks. Visitation over the last 10 years has increased by about 58 million people. That is putting a lot of pressure on the parks, of course. But it is good that people want to go to our parks. Our national treasures are a great place to go with your family, but we can't keep the parks healthy through bandaids alone. We need this legislation.

Along with my colleagues Senators MARK WARNER, LAMAR ALEXANDER, and ANGUS KING, about whom I spoke earlier—two Republicans, one Democrat, and one Independent—we have proposed what is called the Restore Our Parks Act. It is a commonsense solution.

Specifically, the legislation creates what is called a legacy restoration fund, which will get half of all the annual energy revenues over the next 5 years that are not otherwise allocated to be used for these priority deferred maintenance projects. This money would come from royalties from our offshore and onshore energy projects.

By the way, the Trump administration is doing more energy exploration and development. So there is actually more funding coming out of here. The funding and the royalty would go to this purpose to the extent it is not being used for other purposes. The bill caps deposits into the fund at \$1.3 billion annually, which would provide a total of \$6.5 billion for deferred maintenance over the next 5 years.

You might notice that \$6.5 is not the \$12 billion we need, but, No. 1, it is a

great start. No. 2, we have asked the Park Service to give us a specific list of what are the most urgent problems, and that is about \$6.5 billion. We will continue to work on this, but right now we need that funding badly because, again, if we don't provide it, not only will the parks not be there for people to enjoy, with certain assets off limits, but also the costs only get higher and higher. It is a historic step in the right direction.

Last Congress, we proposed this legislation and we got a lot of support. We had a total of 40 cosponsors here in the Senate, more than one-third of this Chamber. There was a House bill also offered, companion legislation in the House, that actually got 302 Members supporting it. So these are totally bipartisan approaches. That is two-thirds of the House of Representatives.

We also got it through our committee here in the Senate last year. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed a bill on a bipartisan basis by a vote of 19 to 4.

Importantly, we also received support from all over the country. As people found out about this legislation, people who love the parks stepped forward. It includes the Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Parks Conservation Association, the Outdoor Industry Alliance, the National Trust for Public Land, and others. During the legislation hearing last year, the director of the Pew Charitable Trusts agreed, saying: "Supporting this bipartisan bill is a wise investment for our National Parks System and has overwhelming support from the American public, generates hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars for the economy each year and provides access to world class recreation opportunities and helps preserve our nation's history." That is all true.

This is a critical piece of legislation that we can actually all agree on here on a bipartisan basis. We urge that it be moved quickly.

As we enter the August recess, a lot of my colleagues are going to go to one of our national parks or more. Some of them live, as one told me recently, in the shadow of one of our national parks. Folks who live in places like Montana and Wyoming see the parks all the time. As I said, I will be at our largest park, Cuyahoga Valley National Park. This is a time for us to see the parks, tour the parks, find out what the needs are, and, hopefully, come back here to Congress in September and do something about this deferred maintenance.

I urge my colleagues, first, on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, to take this bill up. Let's mark it up, again, as soon as possible after the recess. Let's not wait any longer until things get worse. I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this legislation on the floor of the Senate, to get it voted on, and to have a companion bill that is still being worked on in the House voted on as

well. Let's get something done and send it to the President for his signature so we can ensure that these treasures, our national parks, are there for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The Senator from New Jersey.

#### EBOLA ERADICATION ACT OF 2019

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to draw attention to the growing risks of an Ebola epidemic in Central Africa and to urge the Senate to take up and pass S. 1340, my bipartisan bill authorizing USAID to combat the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This legislation passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June, and it is time for the full Senate to act.

On July 17, the World Health Organization declared this Ebola outbreak a "public health emergency of international concern," with experts predicting the outbreak will last well into 2020.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the DRC, as it is known, has been battling an Ebola outbreak for exactly 1 year as of today. Despite the best efforts of the Congolese, the World Health Organization, and international partners, this outbreak is now the second worst in history. More than 1,800 people are dead and more than 2,600 confirmed and probable cases have been identified.

It took just over 7 months to reach 1,000 cases of Ebola, but only 2 months to reach 2,000. According to the World Health Organization, up to 25 percent of all infections may be going unreported.

The scope of the outbreak continues to grow. Just today, press reports indicate that there is a third case in the city of Goma, home to over 1 million people.

Imagine the consequences of an unrestrained outbreak in a city of over 1 million people. Under the best of circumstances, it would be difficult, but not impossible, to control the outbreak. However, we are not dealing with ideal circumstances. Today's Ebola outbreak is unfolding amid a noxious mix of political mistrust and overall insecurity.

Consider that eastern Congo has been plagued for years by armed opposition groups and militias. Dozens of armed groups opposed to the government operate in the areas most affected by Ebola, periodically preventing health officials from reaching communities in need of treatment and prevention. Likewise, criminal gangs operating with near impunity have made it dangerous for healthcare workers to travel to Ebola-affected villages without security.

To complicate things further, we have witnessed community resistance specifically to the Ebola response. Long marginalized by the capital of the DRC, Kinshasa, communities in east-

ern Congo remain skeptical that the crisis is real. They fear the government is using the disease as another tool of disenfranchising them, especially after the former government canceled elections. Some actors even oppose medical interventions and promote disinformation and conspiracy theories questioning the existence of the Ebola outbreak.

To date, there have been more than 100 attacks on health facilities, severely hampering the response of the DRC and the international community. Misinformation, mistrust of the government, and fear of violence at health centers has resulted in between 25 and 50 percent of new Ebola deaths taking place outside treatment facilities. This means infectious patients are less likely to receive lifesaving treatment and more likely to infect others.

We no longer have the luxury of half-hearted international engagement. We need a multifaceted, multisectoral, international response to get this under control. We know all too well that infectious diseases have no borders. It is one airplane flight away from coming to our own country. That has happened in the past.

It is in our national and international interest to ensure the United States uses every resource available to get this outbreak under control. To date, however, the White House response has not only been inadequate but downright counterproductive.

In early May, USAID developed a new strategy focusing on basic assistance for disenfranchised communities to help build trust and improve access for healthcare workers. This strategy would, for example, support health interventions for anyone who comes to a healthcare center in need of care, even if not totally related to Ebola.

USAID also proposed new programs to increase education, provide clean water and sanitation in communities, and improve conditions in Ebola-affected communities. These programs were designed to build trust and promote resilience in at-risk communities so that health workers can better stop the spread of the disease.

These were good ideas. Instead of embracing them, the administration has effectively tied its own hands in promoting a sensible, sustainable response to the Ebola crisis.

As we all know, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which I have been a champion of on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, having worked with the former chairman, Bob Corker, who felt passionately about these issues, railed against the administration when they didn't put countries in tier 3, the most significant consequence under our law, because they were playing politics with that country for other reasons and not observing the essence of the law, and made sure that the TIP Report was transparent and honest in its assessments. So I am supportive of the harsh sanctions for countries that fail to adequately combat human trafficking.

As a tier 3 country under the law, the DRC is therefore severely restricted from receiving U.S. aid. But let's use some common sense here. This legislation was never, never intended to hurt the most vulnerable in society or to be used as an excuse to ignore a deadly epidemic with international implications. In fact, Congress foresaw the need for exceptions to these sanctions in extraordinary cases in 22 USC, chapter 78, section 4 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. This language that I just cited allows the United States to waive sanctions and provide assistance when it is in our national interest to do so. Indeed, the law specifically says: "The President shall exercise the authority"—"under section (4) when necessary to avoid significant adverse effects on vulnerable populations, including women and children."

According to the World Health Organization, the Ebola virus disease has a 50-percent mortality rate. No one can deny its effects on vulnerable populations. If the people of eastern Congo, including women and children, are not vulnerable, then I don't know who is.

Yet the White House has refused to exercise the waiver. That is why we need the Ebola Eradication Act. This simple legislation directs the USAID Administrator to immediately provide assistance, including multisectoral, nonhumanitarian, and nontrade related foreign assistance, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other vulnerable countries to effectively combat the Ebola outbreak, notwithstanding the sanctions required by the Trafficking and Victims Protection Act.

Make no mistake, President Trump could have done this himself months ago. But as a Bloomberg editorial published today points out, President Trump has failed to respond with urgency. As a result, needless delays and inaction have hampered our response.

In mid-June, the administration had granted exceptions for all Ebola-related activities proposed under USAID's new plan, but they have yet to be launched. To make matters worse, those exceptions were granted only for fiscal year 2018 money.

Finally, the exception is not a country waiver, creating loads of redtape for future activities related to combating Ebola. In other words, we are shooting ourselves in the foot with unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles that serve no purpose and slow down our response even as the disease continues to kill more and more people.

Fortunately, the DRC and bordering countries, together with the World Health Organization, have lessened the overall impact by successfully vaccinating more than 120,000 people. They have also administered experimental treatment regimens to over 300 people, which, if caught in time, can save more lives. But this is a case where, in fact, America can and must do more.

While there is no magic wand we can wave to change the security situation,