

country and it were to go back to the Taliban. Would it become a haven again? Almost certainly, I think it would.

We really need to think about a number of things. One is that so many people do so much to protect us all the time. We have thousands of Americans who are in uniform and in the intelligence community who spend their time every day being sure that we are as safe as we can be and that our freedoms are secure. They are deployed overseas. They are fighting terrorist groups like ISIS or the remnants of al-Qaida. They are working here to spot homegrown terrorists. They are doing what they can to find what somebody may be talking about or what somebody may be bringing across the border that would be of danger.

Senator CAPITO and I were just at the border last week. Some of the things we talked about were not only the drugs coming over the border but the other things coming over the border that are designed to harm us—who we are and how we live.

In St. Louis, MO, and Arnold, MO, we have the second biggest installation of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency constantly looking at the information that is out there. It looks all over the world to see if there is activity in places in which there wouldn't be activity. Yet, if there were activity, it would likely be activity that would be designed to harm us or others in the world. We need to understand that.

We also need to understand that in the society in which we live, there is never perfect security and perfect freedom at the same time. We have worked really hard not to allow ourselves to lose the freedoms we cherish in return for the security we would like to have.

We also need to remember those people who responded. As for the first responders who ran toward the tragedy on 9/11 as others were able to run away from the tragedy—passing each other—many of those first responders were numbered among the 3,000 Americans who died on that day.

Just last month, the President signed into law the National Urban Search and Rescue Parity Act, which allows Federal employees to be active participants on urban search and rescue teams whether the disaster is natural or man-made.

The third thing we need to keep in mind is how important it is to honor and care for the victims and heroes among us—those who ran toward the tragedy, those they left behind, and the people who still suffer today because of what happened to them on that day. As likely as not, those people to benefit from the Victim Compensation Fund are the people who stayed behind to help others or who rushed forward to help others.

We don't want to become afraid to be the great, diverse society we have become; we don't want to become a society in which we allow the terrorists to win by taking our freedoms away. Yet

this is an important time for us to think of those freedoms, of those who defend those freedoms, of those who rush to the scenes of danger when we have danger, and of those who try to do everything they can to minimize that.

We grieve, we pray, we remember, and we resolve today that we will continue to be vigilant against attack and unafraid of defending who we are.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote series begin following the remarks of Senators DAINES, COLLINS, LANKFORD, and COTTON.

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

#### REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, 18 years ago, on a bright, clear-skied, September morning, without warning, our Nation was attacked. Many of us probably remember where we were on that horrible day.

I had that morning off. I was at home with my nearly 2-year-old daughter. We didn't have the TV on. We had a couple of gentlemen at the house. I was getting a brandnew furnace on that day. What would normally be a couple-of-hours-long installation turned into an all-day event as those men would take time off from installing our new furnace to run into the other room so we could see what was going on on the television.

I had two phone calls that morning. The first was early. It was from a neighbor.

She said: JONI, do you have the TV on?

I said: Well, no, Wanda. I don't. What's going on?

She said: JONI, you just need to turn the TV on.

So I did, and I saw the horrible events unfolding right in front of us.

The second phone call I got was from my Iowa Army National Guard unit: Captain ERNST, we are doing a 100-percent accountability check. We need you to stay by the phone all day so we know how we can get ahold of you—100 percent accountability.

It was an experience many of us had never felt before—the terrifying shock of knowing that the country we love and our fellow Americans were under attack.

Our adversaries sought to tear us apart by their cowardly acts, but, instead, they brought us together as Americans, for in those terrible moments, we also saw the very, very best of our country—the firefighters, the police officers, the first responders, and the ordinary citizens who courageously put their lives on the line to save countless others.

On that day, as individuals and as a Nation, we came together in a unique way, and we also made a pledge to never forget—to never forget the nearly 3,000 victims and the families they

left behind, to never forget the heroism of both our first responders and those everyday men and women who selflessly acted to save lives, and to never forget the importance of defending our homeland and the great democratic principles that we stand for.

It is a pledge I personally take very seriously, and it is why I have organized this event for my colleagues to come to the floor today and to share their memories and thoughts on today, this eighteenth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

It is why I work so hard to make sure our Armed Forces have the technology, support, and resources they need to defend our Nation from threats both here at home and abroad.

It is why I cosponsored and helped to finally get signed into law a permanent reauthorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, keeping our Nation's promise to support the first responders who continue to sacrifice their health and even their lives from their work in the post-9/11 recovery efforts.

And it is why we should never ever take our Nation and our freedoms for granted.

I am one—just one—of the millions of Americans keeping that promise to never forget. In fact, today, back home in Iowa, there are countless folks who are honoring that vow in their own thoughtful way.

Many use today's anniversary as a day of service, performing acts of kindness throughout Iowa. Others come together with their communities to honor and remember those who were lost.

It is really wonderful to see all of the ways that folks are doing that, from walking in the 9/11 March to the Capitol in Des Moines to visiting the 9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit, currently at the Clay County Fair, to participating in the annual 9/11 Moment of Silence Motorcycle Ride in Mason City.

For some of our fellow Iowans, today will be spent remembering loved ones lost in the attack—folks like Newton's Jean Cleere's husband, Jim, a loving, good-natured, good-humored, and God-fearing giant of a man, who never came home from a fateful business trip to the World Trade Center 18 years ago.

For nearly two decades now, Jean has been on a crusade to keep Jim's memory alive and well. She helped to raise funds for Newton's very own 9/11 memorial. She speaks to local students, educating them about the events of that day 18 years ago, and she has given her testimony all over Iowa. For folks in Iowa, they have probably seen her driving across the State. She has a pretty special license plate, which reads "NVR4GT"—never forget.

Today and every day, Iowans are keeping that sacred promise. We will always remember Jim Cleere and the nearly 3,000 others who lost their lives that tragic day. We will always honor the heroes who selflessly sacrificed and saved countless lives. We will always

rise up to defend our Nation and its citizens. We will never forget. That is our sacred promise.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, 18 years ago today, Americans witnessed what evil looks like. Eighteen years ago today, Americans witnessed the loss of innocent life. Eighteen years ago today, Americans witnessed acts of cowardice.

Today, Montanans and Americans across our country are taking time to reflect upon the horrific acts of 9/11. Today, we take time to remember the thousands of lives lost on that horrible day. We remember the daughters who lost mothers, the sons who lost fathers, and the loved ones and friends and the communities that were broken by these tragedies.

I know I speak for most of us when I say that we remember that day like it was yesterday. That fateful morning, I was in Bozeman, MT. I typically like to get an earlier start at work. We are 2 hours behind eastern time. So it was early in the morning.

My wife Cindy called me. I was at my desk. I was working for a cloud-computing software company, just starting the day, and Cindy called me. She said: There is really strange news. There has been a plane that hit one of the World Trade Center towers.

I think many of us at that time thought it was maybe a small, private plane—sort of, kind of a strange bit of news coming out that morning. Then, as the minutes went by, we started finding out what was really going on, that it wasn't a small plane. It wasn't an accident. It was a 767 loaded with fuel because it was attempting to make a journey across our country from Boston out to the west coast.

The images of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers is one I will never forget, and it is one that will never stop hurting. I remember that after it was confirmed that it was a commercial aircraft, very quickly the speculation began that this was a premeditated terror attack. In moments like that you want to be with your loved ones. I quietly closed the door to my office, and I drove home to be with my wife and to be with family as we watched the rest of the horrible day unfold: 2,977 innocent Americans lost their lives, and 2,977 innocent Americans didn't return home that day.

I think it is important to think about every single human life that was lost and the pain of the families who remember that day today when they lost their loved ones. That pain is very real yet again today.

This was a slaughter of our fellow Americans that shook our Nation to its very core. Yet, in the face of extreme adversity, we are a nation that did come together and we carried on. I think about those moments when our churches and cathedrals were filled with Americans in prayer, reflecting upon what had happened.

Today, we honor and remember the almost 3,000 people who died that September morning. We remember the survivors, those first responders, the firefighters, and the friends and families of those we lost. While we take the time to remember today, we also reflect on who we are as a nation. As Americans, we are strong and resilient. After the 9/11 attacks, we responded with strength and we strengthened the homeland.

We are most grateful to those who served and to those who are serving today in our Armed Forces. Just recently, last December, I flew to Afghanistan. In fact, we carried 50 pounds of Montana beef jerky to deliver to the 495th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of the Montana Army National Guard, who are deployed over in Afghanistan protecting us. As I received the briefs that day, I was reminded yet again that this war that we have against terrorism exists this very moment, and I can tell you this because of the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces, in intelligence, and in law enforcement across our Nation. It is because of them that we are able to stand here today without another terror attack like we saw on 9/11.

When I received the brief in Afghanistan in December, I was reminded again of the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and that there are plots being created and attempts to hit the homeland again. There are many brave men and women there, many Special Forces.

I spent time with the four-star there, Scott Miller, who has had a career in Special Forces. He is overseeing the operations there. I am grateful that they continue to remain vigilant in this fight against global terrorism.

America's enemies want us to be afraid, but the thing is, here in America, we don't give up. When America is strong, so are our allies and so is the free world. We must remain vigilant to ensure that we maintain that Reagan doctrine of peace through strength.

The world will never forget what happened on this day 18 years ago, and despite the political differences and divisions that we have across our country and this city, we must always remember that we are all in this together, and Americans are strong when we are united.

There is no force of evil or terror that will ever overcome the will and the determination of a free and united people.

We ask that God continue to bless our fighting men and women, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, September 11 is a solemn anniversary. Eighteen years later, we still remember the toll from that terrible day. Nearly 3,000 Americans lost their lives in the attacks on the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and United Flight 93, but

every American experienced the pain of loss that day.

Just as we mourn the innocent lives lost, we also remember the heroism of our first responders who ran toward danger and death to help their fellow Americans.

Out of the ashes of that terrible tragedy arose a strength and unity that the whole world came to admire. September 11 altered the course of our Nation's history in a blaze of fire and smoke, and for so many Americans, it altered the course of our lives.

Our fighting men and women deployed overseas just weeks later and remain in the fight today. So many Americans joined them, enlisting to defend our Nation. Young kids who witnessed firefighters rushing into the burning towers grew up and themselves joined units with old-fashioned names like "engine" and "ladder." A generation of intelligence officers dedicated themselves to preventing another 9/11, and they have and still do.

Our lives continue to be altered because the consequences of September 11 are still with us. The attacks of 18 years ago continue to claim new victims, as first responders and others succumb to injuries and illnesses that trace back to that morning.

The al-Qaida terrorists who attacked us are bloodied, yet undefeated, while the Taliban terrorists who gave safe haven threaten to regain control in Afghanistan.

Most tragic of all, our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines continue to fall in the line of duty and defense of our country.

Just last week, Army SFC Elis A. Barreto Ortiz was killed on the battlefield in Afghanistan. September 11 is his story, too—the story of valor and sacrifice.

So the story of September 11 continues to unfold many years after the fact. May its memory strengthen our resolve to continue fighting the enemies of freedom, and may we never ever forget.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, 18 years ago today, in my office in Oklahoma City, a fellow staff member poked her head into the office and said to me: There is a freak accident that has happened in New York. A plane flew into the World Trade Center.

She went down the hallway and pulled in a rolling cart—the younger generation will have no idea what that is—but a rolling cart with a TV on top of it, and we plugged it in and watched it. As the second plane flew in, both of us stood there silently, thinking: That is no accident. That is murder on a massive scale and terror like I have never witnessed with my own eyes.

What I didn't know at that moment is how many thousands of lives would be affected and how much our Nation would be changed. That morning, 18 years ago, seven Oklahomans died, but

our Nation was forever changed. Common terms we think about today like “TSA,” or “terror watch list,” or “Department of Homeland Security,” or “Global Entry,” or “body scanners,” or “PATRIOT Act”—those didn’t exist on September 10, 2001. They have all come since then as our Nation learns how to do more security, learns how to engage, and has learned a painful lesson that what people think in an isolated village in a remote country—what they think matters to us because what they may carry out, if left alone and ignored, could kill our family members and our fellow Americans.

Almost 3,000 Americans died that day, but since that time period, we have pushed back not against the people of Afghanistan or the people of Iraq, not against Muslims or a faith but against a specific ideology that intensely hates the freedom of America and who intentionally plans to kill Americans they have never met.

We learned a new ideology as a nation that day; that we have to not only take it seriously but that we must not wait until they carry out a fight. If they are planning it, if they are preparing it, if they have the capability, we should assume they are actually going to do it.

Since that time period, American men and women have taken the fight to people who want to come and kill more Americans, but it has also been at a great cost of American blood and treasure: 4,432 Americans have died in Iraq; 2,353 Americans have died in Afghanistan. Fifty-one of those are my fellow Oklahomans in Afghanistan; 72 of those are my fellow Oklahomans in Iraq.

Today, I pulled out of my closet a specific tie that I rarely wear. It was a tie given to me by a Gold Star Wife who never ever wanted to be a Gold Star Wife. She just wanted to be the wife of Chris Horton, whom she intensely loved, who went to Afghanistan to serve his country in the Oklahoma National Guard and died for our freedom. Two years later, she handed me this tie and said: He hated wearing ties, but you have to wear them all the time. Just remember him.

We, as Americans, will not forget, and we have not forgotten. There are flags out all over America today just to remember. There are moms and dads who really hugged their kids tight this morning before they left for school, and the kids didn’t even know why. They just did. There are places where people are gathering to pray for peace because as a nation we are a nation of peace, and we have no desire for war. In fact, we detest the pain and penalty and blood and loss of war, and we have no desire to be at war across the world, but it came to us, and we look forward to the day when guns are silent again and this finally concludes and a time of peace can be restored again.

Today, though, we are just a nation remembering and praying for that time of peace that will come, and we are

telling Gold Star families and families who have sent their loved ones around the world to places they had never seen before: We have not forgotten, and we are grateful that we serve together as a nation.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset, I join with the sentiments expressed by the Senator from Oklahoma and our colleagues on the floor, starting with a moment of silence until this last speech, in remembering the historic American significance of September 11.

The fact that both political parties came together shows there is hope that when it comes to this Nation and its values, what brings us together is a powerful force. Today it is the force of memory, the force of promise, and the force of the future of this country. I want to salute my colleagues, particularly my friend from Oklahoma for his moving statement about families in his State touched by this tragedy.

#### E-CIGARETTES

Mr. President, I would like to change topics for just a moment to another important issue that has risen today and I believe is worthy of comment.

Just a few hours ago, the White House, the President, the First Lady, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration made a historic announcement when it comes to vaping and e-cigarettes.

They just finished the 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey. What they have found is that in a 1-year period of time, the number of our kids who are using these vaping products and e-cigarette products has gone up from 20 percent to 27.5 percent. In the previous year, it had gone up by 80 percent, and it is continuing to skyrocket because it is an addiction which is so popular with children.

Our kids don’t know any better. They are being told by JUUL and other companies that somehow this vaping is really a healthy alternative to tobacco cigarettes. That has yet to be proven, and the Food and Drug Administration challenged JUUL and the other companies to come up with clinical proof of that statement before they repeat it again and again and again.

In the course of the last several years, the sale of these e-cigarettes and vaping products has mushroomed dramatically in the United States. Just ask any school principal, teacher, and many parents, and they will tell you what is happening. Kids don’t understand that these flavors they are buying—flavor pods like Unicorn Milk, Gummy Bears, Bubble Gum—sound like some sweet candy treat, but when you inhale it into your lungs, you run the risk of real damage.

So far, over 450 American kids have been admitted to hospitals because of lung problems from vaping. Six have died. These young people do not understand how risky this is.

Have you walked down the street and seen somebody with a big cloud of white smoke over their head as they exhale from one of these vaping devices? They don’t realize that what they are ingesting in their lungs could be deadly.

The Food and Drug Administration and the Secretary of Health and Human Services made an announcement today that is significant. They announced that the e-cigarette device and flavors that are now being sold are going to be taken off the market, out of retail stores, off of online sales. Then, come May of next year, those who want to bring these flavors back have to justify them as being consistent with being good for public health.

I ask that the RECORD note that Senator MURKOWSKI and I have joined in a bill we introduced last year, a bill which went after these flavor pods. I want to thank her. There weren’t a lot of Senators who were willing to step up, and she did. On a bipartisan basis, we set out to ban any of these flavor pods that were dangerous to children and couldn’t be proven to be harmless. I thank her for that leadership. I believe our legislation and our constant pressure on this administration came to this moment today where we are stepping forward.

We are making it clear in the United States of America that we know vaping targets kids. We know these targeted kids are risking their health and their life by continuing to use e-cigarettes and vaping. With this administration today, on a bipartisan basis, we are banning these flavor pods once and for all. We are going to try to move forward.

The last thing I will say is this: I hope the Surgeon General or one of the other leaders in public health in our government will step up now and notify every school principal in America to call an assembly, to gather the parents, and let them know about this danger. There are 5 million kids in this country vaping today. Let’s hope they can stop, and stop soon, before they harm themselves.

I salute the administration for its leadership on this matter. I worked on it for quite a few years. It is a good moment in our history that we are moving together on a bipartisan basis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Maine.

#### REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, earlier today we paused and commemorated those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

Eighteen years have passed, but the memory of that day remains as vivid as if it were yesterday. We each have our own recollections of where we were and what we were doing as the horrifying terrorist attacks on our country began to unfold.

I remember having the television on and watching a report that a plane—