

it. They are fighting us in court. Do you know why they won't do it? Greed. They figure people will never go claim their money. They are just going to keep it. You can't do that if you are a business. If you are a business in America and you have somebody's money, you have to go look for them—it is a law in every State—and if you can't find them, you have to turn the money over to the State treasurer, and the State treasurer gives it back. Not the Federal Government. Not the Department of Treasury. We are talking real money here.

I am going to give an example. I see my good friend Senator CORNYN over here. He works hard for the people of Texas. They love him. I just came back from San Antonio. They love Senator CORNYN. Do you know how much the U.S. Department of Treasury owes Senator CORNYN's people just in Texas? They are owed \$2.1 billion. This money isn't lost; the Department of Treasury has it. They have the names, and they have the addresses.

Now, as we went along in our lawsuit—and the lawsuit is still pending. It is not mine anymore. I am no longer State treasurer. One of the statements that the Department of Treasury filed in court—I almost laughed. If I had been in court, I would have laughed. They said: Yeah, we have the names and we have the addresses, but it would cost \$128 million to organize the records. That was one of the excuses they gave to the judge. Give me a break. If you believe that, you will never own your own home. If you and I lie to the government, we can go to jail, but if the government lies to us—"Oh, it will take \$128 million to organize the records"—that is called politics. Oklahoma, which is next door to Texas, is owed \$312 million. As far as Michigan, the U.S. Department of Treasury is holding \$773 million in fully redeemed—they are not paying interest anymore—but unclaimed savings bonds from the people of Michigan. Do you think some of those folks in Michigan could use that money right now to maybe save for retirement or maybe to educate their children? Idaho is not very big. It has a bunch of lakes, and it is a great State. It is owed \$128 million. Tennessee is owed \$480 million; Wyoming, \$45 million; and New York, \$1.5 billion.

I am just beside myself. Do you wonder why people hate government? Here it is. We have to pay our taxes in the right amount and on time. If we don't do it, they come and take our first-born, and if we are late, they fine us. This is the IRS under the Department of Treasury. But here they have \$26 billion, and they have the names and they have the addresses, and they won't give it back. It is an embarrassment. It is a disgrace. They should hide their heads in a bag.

Now, I have a bill. I am hoping my colleagues will support it. It is called the Unclaimed Savings Bond Act of 2019, S. 2417. It is a very simple bill. It

would just tell the U.S. Department of Treasury to do its job. It doesn't own this money. It doesn't own this money, it is not theirs, and they need to give it back. And they don't have to spend a lot of time on it. All they have to do is give the names and the addresses to every State treasurer. I will give them their cell numbers if they want it. Just give the names and the addresses to the State treasurers.

I would like to get our Senators involved in Florida, where our Presiding Officer and Senator RUBIO are from. I would like them to have the names. Maybe they could go out—we used to do this when we had unclaimed property in Louisiana. You can go advertise in the paper or on the radio or on television or on the internet and say: I am going to be out at the so-and-so mall this Saturday from 10 to 12 with my computers and my team's computers. Come on out and check your name and see if you have unredeemed savings bonds.

People come out, and you would be surprised, they find their name, and you say: OK. We will get your current address, and we will get you a check in 2 weeks. People say: Gosh, the last time the government gave me any money was never. But they feel a little bit better about their government.

This bill will work. I can't imagine who would oppose this bill except my friends at the Department of Treasury, and they don't have a good reason for opposing it. They just want to keep the money.

I am going to be talking about this a lot because the money is important. People have worked hard for this. But I will tell you what is more important—the principle. We have to pay our taxes in the right amount and on time. When the government has our money, they ought to give it back to us in the right amount and on time.

Thank you for your attention and your time.

I yield to Senator CORNYN, who has over \$2 billion of uncashed savings bonds in his State, thanks to our Department of Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, let me begin my remarks by thanking my friend for, No. 1, visiting Texas this past weekend. We are next-door neighbors. We share a lot in common. But, particularly, I want to thank him for highlighting this injustice. It is shocking to me that a U.S. Senator would have to introduce legislation to pass both Houses and get the President's signature for people to get their money back from the Federal Government. It is shocking, and I didn't know anything about it until the Senator from Louisiana highlighted it, so I thank him for that.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of the bill and would encourage all of our colleagues to join. I can't imagine why it couldn't pass by unanimous consent. I don't even know why we need to pro-

cess this through the normal regular order, as we call it around here, but I wish him good luck and certainly my constituents would like to see that \$2.1 billion back in their pockets instead of the Federal Treasury. So I thank him.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. President, on another matter, during the August break back home, I heard from a startling number of my constituents about their increasing struggles to deal with the cost of their prescription medications. This included stories about skipping their blood pressure medication or diabetics rationing their insulin and people traveling across the border, going to Mexico—to the farmacias in Mexico—to get inhalers at a lower price. Of course, the problem is, you don't know when you go to another country whether it is as advertised, whether it is counterfeit, or whether it is genuine. So there are risks associated with that. But my point is that people are struggling to deal with their drug costs, and they are going to extraordinary means, some of which are potentially dangerous to their health.

I know my constituents back home are frustrated by confusing price hikes. They don't understand the dramatic price differences from one pharmacy to the next. They are terrified about what will happen if the price gets so high that they will have to give up taking their prescriptions altogether.

It is no surprise that a recent Gallup poll found that Americans view the pharmaceutical industry more negatively than any other industry. A whopping 58 percent said that they have a negative view of the pharmaceutical industry, and 48 percent have a negative view of the healthcare industry as a whole. Congress's numbers are much worse than that, but the point is, people are concerned, and they want us to do something about it.

When the products and services these groups provide mean the difference between life and death—which they do—that lack of trust is a bad sign, to be sure. I believe, along with many of my colleagues, that it is time to get to the bottom of these rising costs and provide the American people with some transparency, some clarity, some peace of mind, and hopefully a break in their out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs.

In the Senate we have taken a bipartisan approach that reaches across several of our standing committees, and we have made some serious progress. I would like to remind anybody who is listening what we have done so far and what we need to do next.

Earlier this summer, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee passed a package to end surprise billing to create more transparency and create more competition. The Senate Finance Committee on which I sit passed a package of bills designed to reduce prescription drug prices for seniors and children, and the Judiciary Committee, on which I also

sit, has passed several bills to lower the cost of prescription drugs and stop bad actors from gaming the system.

We have talked to every major player in the supply chain and have asked questions about the confusing practices that are driving up costs. Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the Presiding Officer's leadership when it comes to this topic, knowledgeable as he is about the healthcare industry, beyond the average Senator.

One example of the problem is the anti-competitive behavior of drug manufacturers. Companies pour extensive time and money into research and development of new medications, and that is good. What they get in return is the ability to recover their costs and earn a profit under a patent. These patents justifiably protect the intellectual property of these drugs for a time and are a key driver behind the incredible innovation that occurs here in the United States.

The United States discovers and manufactures more innovative and life-saving drugs than any other country in the world, but we are increasingly seeing companies using the patent system as a shield for competition beyond the life of a patent, and it is time we put that to a stop.

One of the bills in the Judiciary Committee that I introduced is called the Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act, which would address two circumstances that lead to higher drug costs. First is something called product hopping, which occurs when a company develops a reformulation of a product that is about to lose its patent and pulls the original product from the market. This is done not because the new formula is more effective, necessarily, but because it prevents generic competitors from competing with the original product.

One example is a drug called Namenda, which is used by patients with Alzheimer's disease, a terrible, devastating disease. Near the end of the exclusivity period, the manufacturers switched from a twice-daily drug to a once-daily drug. That move, under the current law, prevented pharmacists from being able to switch patients to a lower cost generic—even though it is just as effective—so the company could continue to earn a profit under this exclusivity provision under the patent laws. By defining these types of anti-competitive behaviors, the Federal Trade Commission would be able to bring antitrust suits against the bad actors who deliberately game the system.

Secondly, the bill disarms patent thickets, which occur when an innovator uses multiple overlapping patents or patents with identical claims to make it harder for competitors to enter the field. One example is the drug HUMIRA, which is commonly used to treat arthritis and a number of other conditions. AbbVie, the manufacturer of HUMIRA, has 136 patents and 247 patent applications on that drug,

which has been available for more than 15 years. This type of behavior makes it very difficult for biosimilar manufacturers to bring a product to market—competition. While the patent on the actual drug formula may have expired, there are still, in this case, hundreds of other patents to sort through. Litigating all of these extraneous patents is expensive, difficult, and unnecessary. This artificial structure denies market entry for competitors years beyond the exclusivity period that the law intends to grant. Today, there are five competitors of HUMIRA that are available in Europe, but they are blocked from being sold in the United States until 2023.

This bill will not stifle innovation or punish those who use the patent system as it is intended; it simply stops the bad guys from profiting off the backs of patients. This is a critical component of our efforts to bring down drug costs, and I am glad this proposal received unanimous support in the Judiciary Committee.

Later this week, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee is holding a hearing about pharmaceutical companies gaming the system, and I am eager to see what kinds of proposals our friends in the House introduce as part of this effort.

I think it is fair to say that we have done some serious work here in the Senate when it comes to reducing prescription drug costs, but we have work ahead of us to do. In other words, we have to bring them to the floor for a vote, and I hope we do so soon.

I appreciate the countless Texans who have reached out and communicated with me and who continue to reach out to share their concerns and their stories about unnecessarily high out-of-pocket drug costs. I am committed to working with all of our colleagues across the aisle to address these rising healthcare costs generally and to ensure that drug companies put patients before profits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

NOMINATION OF JOHN RAKOLTA, JR.

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of the nomination of Mr. John Rakolta to become the Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Rakolta is the owner of a construction company that builds major projects like factories, churches, hospitals, and airports. His firm guides the work of thousands of workers here in the United States and in countries around the globe. With revenues of approximately \$1.7 billion annually, he has built one of the largest and most successful general contractors in the Nation.

I presume this success has made him a prosperous person, but he is also a person who is actively engaged in his community. He has served on the boards of numerous organizations, several of which have focused on the rejuvenation of his city of Detroit and its less advantaged citizens. He has also received so many awards that it would be impractical to list them all here today, but I note that he has been honored by such groups as United Way, the Michigan Black Chamber of Commerce, the Urban League of Detroit, the Boy Scouts of America, and New Detroit.

Of course, my friends on the other side of the aisle are dutiful in their examination of any possible flaw. I am convinced that the concerns they may have raised are not well-founded, and he is, in fact, entirely qualified and appropriately nominated to this important position.

I note that I am biased in favor of Mr. Rakolta because I have known him personally for more than 30 years. He and his family have spent dozens of evenings in the home of my parents, studying the teachings of their faith. He is a man who makes commitments only after a great deal of thought, and when they are made, he is fully loyal to them in his business, in his community, in his Nation, in his faith, and in his marriage and family of 4 children and 11 grandchildren.

I know John Rakolta as a man of honor and integrity, and I am convinced that he will serve the country well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rakolta nomination?

Mr. ROMNEY. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 283 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Barrasso	Coons	Fischer
Blackburn	Cornyn	Gardner
Blunt	Cotton	Graham
Boozman	Cramer	Grassley
Braun	Crapo	Hassan
Burr	Cruz	Hawley
Capito	Daines	Hoeven
Cassidy	Enzi	Hyde-Smith
Collins	Ernst	Inhofe

Isakson	Murphy	Shaheen
Johnson	Paul	Shelby
Jones	Perdue	Sinema
Kennedy	Peters	Stabenow
King	Portman	Sullivan
Lankford	Risch	Tester
Lee	Romney	Thune
Manchin	Rounds	Tillis
McConnell	Rubio	Toomey
McSally	Sasse	Van Hollen
Moran	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Murkowski	Scott (SC)	Young

NAYS—30

Baldwin	Feinstein	Murray
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Reed
Brown	Heinrich	Rosen
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander	Harris	Warren
Bennet	Roberts	
Booker	Sanders	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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 senior assistant legislative 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 Kenneth A. Howery, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Sweden.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally.

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 Kenneth A. Howery, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Sweden, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET),

the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 63, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 284 Ex.]

YEAS—63

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

NAYS—29

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Rosen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schatz
Brown	Hirono	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Udall
Duckworth	Murray	Van Hollen
Durbin	Peters	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Reed	

NOT VOTING—8

Alexander	Harris	Warren
Bennet	Roberts	Wyden
Booker	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 63, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kenneth A. Howery, of Texas, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Sweden.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:20 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY ISAKSON

Mr. PERDUE. Madam President, I rise today with mixed emotions. I rise

to recognize an incredible Georgian, a true statesman, a titan of the United States Senate, and, maybe most important, a friend to me and many people here in this town and back home in Georgia: Senator JOHNNY ISAKSON.

Like everyone, I was surprised and saddened to hear of JOHNNY's upcoming retirement. Since my very first day in the Senate walking through this door back here to be sworn in with JOHNNY escorting me, I have come to revere this guy. He has been a mentor that I have looked up to. He has been a great leader for our State for many years. He has been a reliable and effective colleague. Most of all, he has been a friend whom I deeply cherish.

It will be hard to see him go, but the reality is he won't go. He will still be involved here. I am sure I will get the phone calls about when we might have disagreed on a vote or why didn't I think about this. He has been a tremendous partner for me these last 4 years.

However, JOHNNY has left a profound legacy that is worth celebrating. It is one that we should all strive to follow here in this body. He epitomizes the best of this body, the United States Senate.

His legacy can be summed up in one word: service. No matter what he does, JOHNNY puts other people before himself, and this has continued since the first day I knew him back when he was running a real estate company in Atlanta, GA. JOHNNY puts other people first before himself. He doesn't do it for recognition or fame. Many times, he does it when people don't even notice or know he did it. He does it because it is the right thing to do.

He served his country as a member of the Georgia Air National Guard. He served his community as a Sunday schoolteacher for 30 years. I have done that, and I know that is a labor of love. That takes a lot of work.

He served the people of Georgia in the statehouse and the State senate and later in both houses of the U.S. Congress. In fact, he is the only Georgian to ever have done that. No matter what role JOHNNY has been in, he is always focused on helping others.

His dedication to service is even more impressive because it has produced incredible results for our country. This town has a lot of activity, but it is short on results. JOHNNY knew the difference. For example, one of JOHNNY's top priorities in Congress had been to take care of our country's veterans. Georgia is home to over 700,000 veterans today. As a veteran himself, JOHNNY treats each one of them as his own sister or brother. When JOHNNY saw the shameful conditions and mismanagement happening at the VA, he immediately sprang into action.

Fixing the VA seemed impossible, but no challenge was too large for JOHNNY ISAKSON. Thanks to him, as chairman of the Senate Veterans Administration Committee, we have made incredible progress on this and many