

proceedings so the workers are the first priority, not the executive bonuses and legal fees.

What we are doing for the first time is making sure the wage earner, the worker, is in the front of the line, not the back of the line. Right now if a bankruptcy occurs, I guarantee, all of the different reorganization groups that come in, all the different financial groups will be in the front of the line, and the workers are left with nothing. This reverses that procedure.

It is a sad day when American workers across the country pour decades of their life into a company and are denied their pensions due to corporate greed.

I keep hearing CEOs talk about corporate responsibility. Well, I am so thankful to hear those words, "corporate responsibility." This is a step toward putting those words into action. I would like to see the responsible corporate heads of American industry step forward and help us with this needed change. We have to put our workers at the front of the line, and I would like to see that done sooner than later.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL JEFFERSON S. BURTON

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I rise to honor Utah's valiant citizen, MG Jeff Burton, adjutant general of the Utah National Guard, and to pay tribute to him for his many years of devoted service to our Nation and to the great State of Utah.

As General Burton closes a long chapter of 37 years of military service, he leaves behind a tremendous legacy as an American patriot and as a true servant-leader. So I would like to take a moment to talk about General Burton today.

From a young age, General Burton knew that he wanted to follow in the footsteps of a number of his family members by serving both his faith and his country. He served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on a Canadian Indian reservation, braving harsh conditions that would well prepare him for his future of military service.

As soon as he returned home, he enrolled at Brigham Young University, where he enlisted in the National Guard as an artillery field soldier. He joined BYU's ROTC Program, receiving a commission as second lieutenant in 1984.

He completed tours with the U.S. Army Military Police Corps in Alabama; with the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Carson, CO; and with the 7th U.S. Corps in Germany, where he witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In 1991, General Burton left the Army and returned home to join the Utah National Guard, where he served in a variety of distinguished leadership positions over the next decade. Chief among them was a position that in-

volved commanding the 1457th Engineer Combat Battalion during Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the initial ground war in that conflict.

He and his troops were tasked with searching for and eliminating explosive devices, improving Embassy security, and improvising whenever necessary to strengthen security in and around the U.S. Embassy, and of course responding to bombings and other acts of terror. They were often the first ones on the scene of an explosion. In honor of his heroic service there, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

General Burton was appointed assistant adjutant general of the Utah National Guard in 2008, promoted to brigadier general just a few months later, and then made major general and adjutant general in 2012. In this role, General Burton has trained and equipped over 7,000 soldiers under his command and helped them to prepare to respond to challenges in both military life and in their personal lives.

He has prepared them not only to fight our Nation's wars and provide military support to our troops throughout the world but to combat wildfires, respond to natural disasters, and ensure law and order in our communities. Under his leadership, they have performed at an absolutely remarkable and, indeed, exceptional caliber.

When the 100,000-soldier surge in Afghanistan ended in 2012, General Burton was also responsible for overseeing the needs of the soldiers returning home from war. He rose to the challenge, tending to both the physical and emotional needs of those warriors and their families with the utmost care. As he himself has once said, "May we make a silent promise to keep the faith with our battle buddies and wingmen. . . . May we be strong for one another, and unashamedly rush to the aid of those in need. May we remember those who have suffered grievous physical wounds in the defense of liberty, and may we never forget those who have given the ultimate sacrifice within our formations so that we might live in freedom."

General Burton has lived by these words over his long and dedicated career. Every day he keeps a note tucked in the band of his hat. That note contains the list of the soldiers who were killed in combat or during 9/11 under his command. He has led by example, never asking of his soldiers something that he himself has not done. He has led in order to serve, striving always to protect the welfare of his command, of our country, of the U.S. Constitution, and of the freedoms it protects.

So it is only fitting that we honor him today. On behalf of our Nation and all Utahns, I thank MG Jeff Burton for the sacrifices he and his family have made to secure the freedoms we hold dear. I congratulate him on this occasion and wish him many happy years ahead with his wife, Charn, and their children.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ATTACK IN SONORA, MEXICO

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I now wish to speak briefly regarding a tragedy that occurred just in the last 48 hours—a tragedy that occurred in the northern Mexican state of Sonora, a tragedy in which a handful of U.S. citizens—the precise number of victims still not known—but a number of U.S. citizens were murdered in cold blood. This attack was inflicted in a most gruesome manner and was carried out against a group which included men, women, and children.

My thoughts and prayers go out to the families and loved ones of the victims. My thoughts and prayers are also extended to the administration of President Lopez Obrador in Mexico, whose inauguration I attended just a few months ago.

This is a sobering task to have to identify the source of such a heinous and barbaric crime. I have every expectation, every hope, and every confidence in those who are assigned on both sides of the border to investigate this crime, figure out who did it, and to bring those responsible to justice.

Mexico is a good neighbor to us. We have about \$1.6 billion or \$1.7 billion every single day that crosses over our shared southern border. Mexico has been a good neighbor, a solid trade partner, and a country with which we share many interests. It is a country that desperately needs our prayers right now and our help and assistance.

It has been publicly reported that President Trump and his administration are eager to help President Lopez Obrador in combating and detecting whoever was responsible for this heinous crime and bringing them to justice. I hope and implore the Lopez Obrador administration to accept President Trump's generous offer to help.

This is not an easy task. If, in fact, this was an act, as it appears quite possible to have been, of a Mexican-based drug cartel, this is a big problem. It is a big problem either way. These drug cartels are no small threat to the safety and security of not only the people of Mexico but also the people of the United States.

Think about it. Imagine someone sees in their next-door neighbor's backyard a poisonous snake—a poisonous snake that is big and that is headed toward his property. Is that neighbor going to stop and ignore that snake? In many circumstances, that neighbor is going to take action. He might not wait until his neighbor comes home to give the go-ahead to take care of that snake. Why? Because that snake is headed toward his own backyard where his own children are playing.

This is not something we can trifle with. This is a matter of utmost seriousness for the safety and security of the Mexican people and also the people of the United States.

I applaud the Lopez Obrador administration for its efforts to root out corruption and to bring justice to the drug cartels. This brazen attack within the last 48 hours signals a need to do more. This is why I am so grateful to President Trump that he was willing to reach out and offer the assistance that can be provided by the United States. I urge President Lopez Obrador to accept it and to do so very soon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President. First of all, I have never come to the floor of the Senate—and previously of the House—as ill-prepared as today, but I want to follow up on something my friend from Utah just spoke about, and that is the attack on the innocent people in the last 48 hours. When I learned of it last night, I was stunned.

I just got off the phone a few minutes ago with the brother and sister of one of the victims. A young mother, Anita Miller, was killed along with her four children. They were in the first SUV that was shot up and burnt. They were on their way to Phoenix to pick up their dad from North Dakota—Howard—who was working on an oil rig as this occurred. I just talked to Howard's brother Kenny and his sister Heather.

All of the Millers and the LeBarons who are victims of this have many, many family members in North Dakota. They have lots of businesses in the State of North Dakota. They are hard-working, faithful people.

It was a hard phone call to make. This was a hard message to deliver. And I didn't really know what to deliver except that I wanted them to know that the people of their country and the United States are hugging the people of their country, Mexico, and that what they have experienced is certainly the personification of evil in the form of these thugs from this cartel, for sure. They are people who kill with reckless abandon. They have no regard for life, even the life of innocent children. But we serve a God who personifies pure good, and the greatest response to pure evil is pure good.

Kenny and I had a particularly long talk regarding his family—what they are experiencing and what is going on. They wanted me to know that they support the United States as well as their country. They wanted me to tell the President that they support what he is doing and appreciate his offer of help to the Mexican Government.

I told them that there is lots of time for talking about the response of one government working with another but that, right now, grief is sort of the emotion of the moment, and remembering their loved ones is important, and we would be doing it as a Congress, as an administration, as a country, and as the State of North Dakota, which embraces these people we know and love so much. We will do what needs to be done, and we stand ready, first of all, to hold them up in prayer and to share their burden with them.

I wanted to express as much as anything that their burden is ours today and that, to the degree we can share a burden like this, we are sharing it. We will react. We will respond in whatever way is appropriate and whatever way we can.

I join Senator LEE in gratitude to President Trump for his reaching out and his offer of assistance. It can't be easy to live in a country or even to rule a country where the cartels are so powerful, where their weapons are as good as, if not better than, the weapons of the police and maybe even the military. It can't be easy to stand up to that, but with good friends and allies and neighbors, perhaps now, perhaps this event and perhaps the grief of these families will be the things that bring two countries together to fight this evil.

I will end as I began and look forward to future days when we speak more thoroughly about it and there is more information on it, but to remind perhaps ourselves as much as anything, the only effective response to pure evil is pure love. As people of faith, we know pure love is personified in our Lord. So tonight, my message to the families in Mexico, North Dakota, and Utah is that we love them. We love them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### HEALTHCARE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I wanted to speak for a few minutes today to talk a little bit about rural healthcare and to ask my colleagues for help in protecting the 20 percent of Americans who live in rural areas who are in danger of losing—or may have lost entirely—access to healthcare in their communities.

Since 2010, 118 rural hospitals have shut their doors. Fourteen of those facilities are in my State of Tennessee. Medical practitioners are paying attention to this trend and, more often than not, choose stability in the cities and suburbs over the uphill battle that comes with practicing medicine without access to the funding and modern resources many clinics now take for granted. As a result, rural patients are left to suffer through illnesses or emergencies or sacrifice time, money, and mileage for even the chance of a diagnosis. This system is broken, but this year, I have been able, by working with my colleagues on each side of the aisle, to kind of pick up the pieces around this.

I have a three-bill rural health agenda, which comes at the direct request of smalltown mayors and local leaders who are struggling in my State to keep

these communities afloat. Last week, my fellow Tennesseans, Congressmen KUSTOFF and ROE, introduced House companions to all three pieces of legislation.

I will tell you, I have been talking to Tennesseans, and they want my colleagues in the Senate to know what we should do about this issue. If you have never lived in a rural area, hearing someone talk about driving 20 or 30 minutes to the nearest doctor probably really doesn't seem like a problem to you. But in the country, 30 minutes away translates into miles of driving through isolated areas. Chances are good that you will not even have cell service for part of that drive. There are no EMTs or rapid response teams. And if there is a local doctor, he or she may not have any specialized expertise, which could spell disaster for patients dealing with a complicated diagnosis.

The first component of the agenda is the Telehealth Across State Lines Act, which would lead to the creation of uniform, national best practices for the provision of telemedicine across State lines and set up a grant program to expand existing telehealth programs and incentivize the adoption of telehealth by Medicare and Medicaid Programs. But implementation of telehealth will not eliminate the need for face-to-face interactions between patients and doctors.

This leads us to another problem. Rural communities keep themselves afloat on strapped budgets, which means that plans to open as much as a bare-bones urgent care facility can be derailed by all the startup costs. The Rural Health Innovation Act—the second part of the agenda—features two grant programs. The first one will fund the expansion of existing healthcare centers—such as local nursing homes—into urgent care walk-in clinics. Facilities will be able to use grant money to purchase equipment, hire physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other essential staff.

A second grant program will expand rural health departments to meet urgent care and triage needs. This is using programs that already exist, tailoring them to the needs of rural America.

Of course, this points out the third issue: Expanded facilities are useless if there are no medical personnel. I have been working on this problem with my friend from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, and he spoke about this on the floor a few minutes ago. We recognized from the beginning that throwing money and equipment at an updated facility will not convince medical professionals to establish a rural practice, so we wrote the Rural America Health Corps Act to encourage practitioners to set up shop in rural areas. The bill creates a new student loan repayment program that doctors and other medical professionals can take advantage of. In exchange for those loan payments, they will have to agree to serve for at least 5 years in a rural area with a health