

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. CASSIDY). 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

professional shortage, but the benefit comes tax-free.

I have spoken to rural communities all across my State. I know Senator DURBIN has talked across the State of Illinois. I will tell you that these bills don't simply address a matter of convenience. My fellow Tennesseans want my colleagues to know they aren't just frustrated with the long drives and unanswered questions. They are worried that their child's cough will turn into pneumonia before they are allowed a full day off from work to drive to a pediatrician. They have no idea what they would do if they were diagnosed with an illness that requires continuous care.

They do, however, know what would probably happen if someone they love suffered a heart attack or had another major emergency. They are very fearful.

If these bills pass, they will no longer have to live with the knowledge that they have been abandoned by our healthcare system. They will have access to healthcare in their communities.

I ask my colleagues to let these people know that yes, indeed, somebody is listening, and I ask them to do so by cosponsoring Senate bills 2406, 2408, and 2411.

I yield the floor.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if the Tapp nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Tapp nomination?

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

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 North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), 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 85, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 344 Ex.] YEAS—85

Alexander	Feinstein	Portman
Baldwin	Fischer	Reed
Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Bennet	Graham	Roberts
Blackburn	Grassley	Romney
Blumenthal	Hassan	Rosen
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Heinrich	Rubio
Braun	Hoeven	Sasse
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cantwell	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Capito	Johnson	Shaheen
Cardin	Jones	Shelby
Carper	Kaine	Sinema
Casey	Kennedy	Smith
Cassidy	King	Sullivan
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Tillis
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Toomey
Cotton	McConnell	Udall
Cramer	McSally	Moran
Crapo		Van Hollen
Cruz	Murkowski	Warner
Daines	Murphy	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Murray	Wicker
Durbin	Paul	Wyden
Enzi	Perdue	Young
Ernst	Peters	

NAYS—8

Gillibrand	Menendez	Schumer
Hirono	Merkley	Stabenow
Markey	Schatz	

NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Isakson	Warren
Burr	Klobuchar	
Harris	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 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 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 Danielle J. Hunsaker, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

John Thune, Thom Tillis, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Mike Rounds, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, Jerry Moran, Mitch McConnell.

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 Danielle J. Hunsaker, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 18, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 345 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Fischer	Peters
Baldwin	Gardner	Portman
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Bennet	Grassley	Roberts
Blackburn	Hassan	Romney
Blumenthal	Hawley	Rounds
Blunt	Hoeven	Sasse
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Braun	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Brown	Johnson	Shaheen
Cantwell	Jones	Shelby
Capito	Kaine	Sinema
Cardin	Kennedy	Smith
Carper	King	Sullivan
Casey	Leahy	Tester
Cassidy	Lee	Thune
Collins	Manchin	Tillis
Coons	McConnell	Toomey
Cornyn	McSally	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Moran	Warner
Cotton	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Cramer	Murphy	Wicker
Crapo	Paul	Wyden
Cruz	Perdue	Young
Daines	Peters	

NAYS—18

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Markey	Schumer
Duckworth	Menendez	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Gillibrand	Murray	Udall

NOT VOTING—7

Booker	Isakson	Warren
Burr	Klobuchar	
Harris	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 75, the nays are 18.

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 Danielle J. Hunsaker, of Oregon, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

HEALTHCARE

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Thank you, Madam President.

This weekend, thousands of Tennesseans and, of course, millions across this Nation are going to pause and give thanks for our veterans. Quite frankly, this is something we should be doing every single day.