

I asked him about the vaping crisis we face, the epidemic that we face. He readily concedes that this is something he feels very strongly about.

The latest disclosure from the youth tobacco report suggests that 28 percent or more of high school students across the United States are currently using e-cigarettes or vaping. Yesterday, I had a group of high school students from New York who asked to see me, and they said: Senator, you are wrong. It is over half.

A majority of the students in high school now are using JUUL devices, or vaping devices, and these flavors, and they have developed nicotine addictions, which have become controlling in their lives and it affects the way they feel and the way they perform as students.

That is why it is so important, from my point of view, for Dr. Hahn to make this a major priority. He assured me that he would. He reminded me that he is a lung cancer doctor, and we had a long conversation about my father, who died of that disease, and tobacco and the impact it had on his life. I felt sincerity on the part of the doctor when he was discussing this.

We talked about working with Dr. Azar, who has been an ally in this conversation about controlling vaping devices and cigarettes.

He said that regardless of how I voted for him, he would look forward to working with me. I am going to vote for him as the new FDA Commissioner. It is a leap of faith because I am not certain where the President of the United States is at this moment.

The Presiding Officer was at a meeting a couple of weeks ago in the White House, and I have commended him for the questions he asked there, hoping to hold the President and First Lady to their promise of September 15 to really take on this epidemic of vaping and e-cigarettes. I don't know at this moment whether he is going to continue in that effort or whether the vaping industry has diverted him to a different point of view.

Dr. Hahn may find himself in a compromised position soon, and I told him as much. If it comes to the point where the President has abandoned his effort against vaping and the industry is going to prevail, then, I am afraid that Dr. Hahn is going to be wearing the collar for some of the things that follow. Even though he may not even agree with the President's conclusion, he will be working for the President as part of his administration.

Dr. Hahn said to me: I don't want to be known in history as the head of the FDA who saw this epidemic grow dramatically when it comes to vaping by young people.

I am going to give him my vote, and I do it with the hope that he will have a persuasive voice with Dr. Azar and the administration to move in the right direction.

I applauded President Trump—which is unusual from my side of the aisle—

when he made his initial decision to take action against e-cigarettes, and I would like to applaud him again. I hope he will resume this effort. I hope the First Lady, who rarely gets engaged in issues but seems to feel very strongly about this, will join us in persuading the President to keep true to his promise of September 15.

I will be supporting Dr. Hahn's nomination for FDA Commissioner.

#### REMEMBERING THE REVEREND DR. CLAY EVANS

Mr. President, last Friday night was an amazing evening. I went to the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church on the South Side of Chicago, not too far from where the White Sox play baseball.

There was a Friday night memorial service for the longtime pastor of that church, the Reverend Clay Evans. He actually divided the service up and said, Friday night is for the politicians and government people; Saturday morning will be the memorial service for the members of the church. A lot of people showed up on Friday night because a lot of us considered Clay Evans to be a friend.

He was more than a friend. He was a legend. The Reverend Clay Evans died peacefully at his home the day before Thanksgiving at the age of 94. Let me tell you a little bit about him.

If you ever had the good fortune to witness the Reverend Dr. Clay Evans preach, you were lucky. With his rousing sermons, his soulful baritone voice and "the Ship," which is what he called the legendary Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church choir behind him, Reverend Evans was mesmerizing.

His sermons gave hope to the downhearted. His singing could bring you to your feet. His Sunday services were so moving and so uplifting that the legendary Sam Cooke used to come and attend for inspiration.

Even in Chicago, the birthplace of modern Black gospel music, the home of Mahalia Jackson, James Cleveland, Mavis Staples, and so many others, the Reverend Clay Evans stood out for the power of his preaching.

But it wasn't just his beautiful voice that drew people in. Clay Evans was a man of faith, integrity, and moral courage. In the 1960s, he helped persuade Dr. Martin Luther King to come to Chicago and use it as his base as Dr. King sought to expand the civil rights movement. It was not a popular position at the time, believe me.

Chicago power brokers, fearful of the unrest in the streets, warned Black ministers: Don't let Dr. King into your churches. Many of them listened to that warning and turned him away—not Clay Evans.

He invited Dr. King to speak at his church. He opened the doors of the "Ship" to Operation Breadbasket, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's economic justice project. Then, he persuaded other Chicago ministers and churches to join him.

He paid a price for it. Offers of construction loans he needed to build his

church were withdrawn when he made this controversial decision. Building permits were withheld for several years.

But Chicago, over time, became more just. Thanks to the work of Reverend Evans, Dr. Martin Luther King, and the man whom Evans ordained, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and many others, Operation Breadbasket helped to open up thousands of jobs for Black Chicagoans in previously all-White grocery chains and companies.

Years ago, Reverend Evans told a Chicago Tribune reporter: "I try to embody the principles of Christianity, and for me that means being dedicated to freedom and equality." For him, faith was not just what you believed; it was the way he lived.

Clay Evans was born in 1925 into a large, church-going family in Brownsville, TN. His family were sharecroppers. He was one of nine kids. At night, he liked to listen to jazz music on the radio.

He moved to Chicago in 1945, part of the Great Migration that has enriched that city in so many ways.

The most successful man he knew in Brownsville, TN, was an undertaker, and that is what Clay Evans thought he would become in Chicago, but he couldn't afford the tuition for mortuary school. He took jobs where he found them. He worked at a pickle factory, as a window washer. He drove a truck delivering pies. He was working at the Brass Rail cocktail lounge in downtown Chicago when they prompted him to join in song and marveled at his voice. He might have been a successful nightclub performer, but he felt called to the ministry.

He attended the Chicago Baptist Institute and was ordained a Baptist minister in 1950. He would later study at both the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago Divinity School.

He founded the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in 1958 and served as pastor for 42 years. He used radio and later TV to bring his ministry to homes throughout the Midwest and South and to introduce Black gospel music to the Nation.

Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, or "The Ship," as it is affectionately known, quickly became one of the most influential churches in Chicago.

He helped to launch the careers of nearly 90 up-and-coming young ministers, including Mother Consuella York, the first woman to be ordained a Baptist minister in the city of Chicago.

He ordained the Reverend Jesse Jackson, and, in 1971, the two ministers cofounded Operation PUSH to encourage African-American self-help.

Carved into his wooden pulpit was one of his favorite sayings: It is no secret what God can do. What God did through his servant Clay Evans helped to increase hope and justice in Chicago and far beyond.

I remember when, as a downstate Congressman, I made my early trips to

Chicago to meet the movers and the shakers. Reverend Clay Evans was high on that list, and, as luck would have it, at one of the dinners we were seated next to one another. He leaned over to me—I knew exactly who he was—and he said: Congressman, I am Reverend Clay Evans.

I said: That is not what I heard. I heard you are Reverend Chicago.

He laughed and he looked down. He said: Well, they call me that from time to time.

That is the kind of respect that he commanded, not just because of his ministry but also because he was such an integral part of the faith scene in that big city.

We got to be friends, and I was always looking forward to the times we could get together.

With a choir led by his sister, Lou Della Evans-Reid, Pastor Evans produced and recorded over 40 gospel albums—11 that charted on and 2 that topped the Billboard Gospel Albums Chart.

His first No. 1 gospel hit was called “I’m Going Through,” released in 1993. The title song talks about staying on the righteous road, no matter how steep the climb, how large the obstacles.

Reverend Evans would sing:

I’m going through. I’m going through no matter what they may do. The world behind, heaven in view, I’m going through.

The Reverend Clay Evans walked that righteous road. He overcame obstacles and widened the road so others could follow. He is certainly going to be missed, and the crowd of speakers Friday night is just evidence of the many lives that he touched.

My wife Loretta and I want to offer our condolences to his wife of nearly 74 years, Lutha Mae, their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren, and all of those in the family of Clay Evans who tried to maintain a warm smile at a time of sadness for many of them.

What he has left behind is something that we will all point to for years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on Monday I spoke at the annual meeting of the Missouri Farm Bureau, and, in our State, as in, frankly, almost every other State, the No. 1 economic activity in terms of value produced is agriculture.

Where we live in the middle of the country, we do better in an economy that focuses on growing things and making things than we do on an economy that focuses more on giving advice—not that we don’t want to give a lot of advice, but the truth is we don’t want to get a lot of advice, either.

So there is nothing wrong with a service-based economy, and there is nothing wrong with an important service sector in our economy, but Amer-

ica, in so many ways, was built on a productive economy, on an economy that produced something and something tangible. I think we have a chance to see those things happen again.

Where we are located, almost exactly in the middle of the country, the Mississippi River Valley is the biggest piece of contiguous agricultural land in the world. Compared to the near competitors in size, it is the only one of them that has its own built-in, natural transportation center.

In fact, there are more miles of navigable river in the Mississippi River Valley than in the rest of the world put together. I didn’t say more river than the rest of the world put together because that wouldn’t be true, but more miles of river that you can actually navigate—river you can use as an avenue of transportation and commerce than everywhere else in the world put together.

For an economy that is trying to reach out to the world or trying to efficiently compete, that is a big advantage.

So at the Farm Bureau meeting, at least three of the things the people I talked to were most interested in were regulation, transportation, and trade.

When it comes to regulation, Missouri farm families understand that many of the best things that have happened to them in the past 3 years have been the things that didn’t happen. There was a terrible regulation proposed—waters of the U.S.—in which the EPA was trying to decide that their authority over navigable water would be authority over all the water. Suddenly, navigable water had become, under the Obama EPA, any water that could run into any water that could run into any water that eventually would run into navigable water. If that is how we want to define it, the Congress should decide that, not the EPA.

I stood on this floor many times during that terrifying time when the EPA was about to take over anything that related to water, from the new sidewalk in front of your house to whether you pave your driveway to whether you could set a utility pole without EPA approval.

With the Farm Bureau map of Missouri, I think 99.7 percent of our State would have met the new EPA definition of the water the EPA would regulate. The other 0.3 percent, I think, were sinkholes that went directly back into the middle of the Earth. So virtually 100 percent of all Missourians would have been affected by that.

It would have slowed the economy in an incredible way because the EPA could never have exercised effectively the jurisdiction they were asking for. The good news is, it didn’t happen.

The Trump administration moved forward with a Clean Water Act that made more sense. They listened to rural America. They listened to the people who build houses, to the people

who provide power, and to the people who provide jobs, and they said: We are not going to go in that direction.

Then there was the Obama Clean Power Plan, which sounds like a good thing. Clean power—I am not opposed to that, and I don’t know anybody who is. We want power to be as clean as you can reasonably expect it to be. But the Obama Clean Power Plan was so aggressive in its approach that where I live, the average utility bill at home and at work would have doubled in about 10 years.

Well, lots of things work at today’s utility rate—or some gradual increase of today’s utility rate—that just frankly wouldn’t work if the utility bill doubled.

That didn’t happen either. In fact, we reversed course, and there is now an affordable clean energy rule making its way into law and regulation that really understands that.

Again, if you at home write your utility check and then write it out of your checkbook again, a lot of things that you would do at your house you wouldn’t be able to do if you had to pay your utility bill twice. Frankly, the job you may have may not be there if you had to pay your utility bill twice.

Also, when thinking about making something in America today—and I think there is a lot of interest in bringing manufacturing that has gone overseas back to this country for lots of reasons, but when you think about making something in America today, the first question you would ask yourself would be this: Can we do what we want to do and pay the utility bill? The second question would be this: Does the transportation work for what we want to do? If the answer to either of those questions is no, then there is no reason to ask a third question. There is no reason to talk about workforce. There is no reason to talk about tax structure in the place you are thinking about locating. There is no reason to ask any other question if you can’t do what you want to do, pay the utility bill, and still have some profit.

There is no reason to talk about—if you can’t do what you want to do—having a transportation system that allows you to do what you want to do. Those things are critically important, and they were critically important at the Farm Bureau meeting. They certainly understood it takes good highways, good State roads, and it takes a strong understanding of connecting highways, roads, railroads, and water together that will allow you to compete.

The last continuing resolution on this issue that we passed just a few weeks ago actually funded the fifth year of the highway bill that was passed 4 years ago. It provided for 5 years of authority but only 4 years of money.

That \$7.6 billion allows the transportation systems in our States and many things in our communities to happen. It allows county bridges to be built.