

Recall that the opioid crisis is the worst drug epidemic we have ever faced in this country. In 2017, 72,000 Americans lost their lives to overdoses. That is more than we lost in the entire Vietnam war. Last year, we had a little better number. After 12 years of increases every year in overdose deaths, finally, last year, we had a slight decrease, and I think it is because of a lot of good work that has been done here, particularly with regard to the opioid crisis.

In Ohio, unfortunately, we have been in the center of the storm. We have been one of the top two or three States in the country in terms of overdose deaths.

Last year, in 2018, because of all the hard work we have done here at the Federal level, at the State level, and at the local level, we actually saw a decrease. We led the country with a 22-percent decrease in overdose deaths. So that is the good news, and it is because of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act, which is bipartisan and which is working to provide more treatment and recovery services, to provide better prevention, and to provide more Narcan to reverse the effects of overdoses. It is also because of the 21st Century Cures Act, which provides funding for evidence-based programs to the States and the States decide how it is spent.

I was back home just this past week meeting with people who are getting the benefit of those programs. On Monday, I was at a home in Dayton, OH, that provides residential treatment for women who are addicted and pregnant and helps their children to be able to overcome the neonatal abstinence syndrome when they are born to a mother who is using. It is beginning to work.

I met two mothers who have turned their lives around, and I saw a beautiful baby who, at 5 weeks old, is going into the world brighter, cheerier, and with more opportunity because of the work that we have done here to provide funding to help.

But I will say we have found, having made progress on opioids, that other drugs are starting to come into our communities. This is not just an opioid problem. This is an addiction problem, and addiction is a disease that must be treated like other diseases.

Although we have made progress, we can't rest on our laurels. When I talk to those on the frontlines, as I did on Monday in Dayton with law enforcement—the sheriff was there for Montgomery County—but also to treatment providers, to those who are in the trenches, and talking to those who are recovering addicts who were there, they tell me about what is happening, which is that, increasingly, other drugs, including psychostimulants like crystal meth and cocaine, are making a horrible comeback in those communities.

Crystal meth coming in from Mexico is more pure and less expensive than ever. In fact, law enforcement tells me

that on the streets of Columbus, Dayton, Cleveland, or Cincinnati, crystal meth is sometimes less expensive than marijuana and yet much more powerful and much more dangerous.

So it is important that here in Congress we focus on how to respond to that. Although we have some great legislation out there with regard to opioid addiction, treatment, recovery, and how to deal with this, we have not done as well with regard to these new drugs coming in.

Part of the solution, of course, is to build up our security at our southern border, where we have seen larger and larger quantities of crystal meth, manufactured in Mexico, being brought into our country by these cartels from super labs, as they call them, in Mexico.

By the way, there were crystal meth labs over the years, but the volume was not nearly as high, and the cost was much higher. Now that it is cheaper and there is higher volume, you see the meth labs in our communities closing down, but for the wrong reason. It is not being made here anymore because the stuff coming from Mexico is so much more pure, more powerful, more deadly, and less expensive.

So for the people already struggling with methamphetamine or cocaine addiction, it is important that they have access to treatment, too, so they can get help.

What I have heard at the local level is this: We appreciate the funding on opioids, but we want more flexibility now to be able to use this funding to combat what is, in many of our communities, in Ohio, even a bigger problem, which is crystal meth and sometimes cocaine.

So I am pleased to say that in the legislation that we just passed here this evening, legislation that provides appropriations to deal with this addiction issue, we have provided that flexibility. We have said: Yes, we are going to continue to provide grants to help with regard to prevention and treatment and recovery and help with regard to getting people back on their feet and helping law enforcement, but we are going to allow local communities to use this funding both for opioids and for crystal meth and other drugs.

So my hope is that what we will see is some of the same progress we have made in opioids now happen with regard to some of these other substances.

I have introduced a bill called the Combating Meth and Cocaine Act—I introduced it in June of this year—to allow this kind of flexibility. That is an authorization bill that has already been introduced, and we have good bipartisan support for that.

But we went ahead today in these appropriations bill and did it for this year. So for this fiscal year, essentially, that legislation will be in effect. So for 2020 we are going to provide that flexibility.

I applaud the Senate appropriators for doing that. Again, I am proud of

Congress showing that we can be flexible and continue to fight a many-front war on this issue. It is not just about opioids. It is about addiction.

We also need to pass the authorization bill, the Combating Meth and Cocaine Act, and I hope that we will be able to do that after the first of the year to ensure that we can continue to address these public health threats and we can continue to provide for those whose future is so dim because of the addiction, and instead they be able to achieve their God-given purpose in life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills and joint resolutions during today's session of Congress.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Majority Leader.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for the information of all of our colleagues, earlier this afternoon, my friend the Democratic leader and I had a cordial conversation. We discussed a potential path forward following the House Democrats' precedent-breaking impeachment of President Trump. Our conversation was cordial, but my friend from New York continues to insist on departing from the unanimous bipartisan precedent that 100 Senators approved before the beginning of President Clinton's trial.

Back in 1999, Senators recognized that there might well be disagreements about questions that would arise at the middle and end of the trial, such as witnesses. Here is what happened: All 100 Senators endorsed a commonsense solution. We divided the process into two stages. The first resolution passed unanimously before the trial began. It laid the groundwork, such as scheduling and structured early steps like opening arguments. Mid-trial questions such as witnesses were left until the middle of the trial when Senators could make a more informed judgment about that more contentious issue. All 100 Senators, including me, including Mr. SCHUMER, and a number of our colleagues on both sides who were here in 1999 endorsed the first resolution as a bipartisan, minimalist first step.

As of today, however, we remain at an impasse because my friend the Democratic leader continues to demand a new and different set of rules for President Trump. He wants to break from that unanimous bipartisan precedent and force an all-or-nothing approach. My colleague wants a special pretrial guarantee of certain witnesses whom the House Democrats themselves

did not bother to pursue as they assembled their case, or he wants to proceed without giving any organizational resolution whatsoever. As I said, we remain at an impasse on these logistics.

For myself, I continue to believe that the unanimous bipartisan precedent that was good enough for President Clinton ought to be good enough for President Trump. Fair is fair.

Now, of course, there is the matter of the Articles of Impeachment themselves. It is a highly unusual step. The House continues to hem and haw about whether and when she intends to take the normal next step and transmit the House's accusations over here to the Senate. Some House Democrats imply they are withholding the articles for some kind of leverage so they can dictate the Senate process to Senators.

I admit, I am not sure what leverage there is in refraining from sending us something we do not want; but, alas, if they can figure that out, they can explain it. Meanwhile, other House Democrats seem to be suggesting they prefer never to transmit the articles. That is fine with me, and the Speaker of the House herself has been unclear on this. Her message has been somewhat muddled.

So here is where we are, Mr. President. We have a curious situation where, following House Democrats' rush to impeachment, following weeks of pronouncement about the urgency of the situation, the prosecutors appear to have developed cold feet. The House Democrat prosecution seems to have gotten cold feet and to be unsure of whether they even want to proceed to the trial.

As I said, a very unusual spectacle and, in my view, certainly not one that reflects well on the House. So we will see whether House Democrats ever want to work up the courage to actually take their accusations to trial.

Let me close with this: I am proud that the Senate came together today to confirm more well-qualified nominees and to pass major legislation for the American people.

I wish all of my colleagues a merry Christmas, happy holidays, and a joyous new year. I hope everyone enjoys this important time with their families and loved ones. We will see you in 2020.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, finally, for the information of all of our colleagues, the Senate will convene on Friday, January 3, to kick off the 2nd session of the 116th Congress. However, no rollcall votes are expected that day, and Members should be prepared to be back and voting on Monday, January 6.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SECURING AMERICAN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST TERRORISM ACT OF 2019

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, as we all know, there have been increased incidents of violence and threats against some of our faith-based institutions over the past decade. The FBI has been able to monitor this and unfortunately tells us that these attacks are likely to continue. We need to do a better job of figuring out how to disrupt these attacks but also to harden these facilities.

When the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh was attacked, it was the worst anti-Semitic violence in the history of our country. Shortly after that, I went to Youngstown, OH, which is very near the Pittsburgh synagogue that was attacked. It was within the next week or two afterwards, and there were very raw feelings, as you can imagine. We talked about what was needed to provide better protection for houses of worship—our synagogues, our churches, our mosques—and we came up with an idea to provide for a grant program from the expertise of the Department of Homeland Security where they could provide best practices, consulting, placement of cameras, you know, where it is necessary to harden facilities, where it is necessary to have a door with locks—simple things that can save lives.

That program has now been appropriated. In the legislation we just passed, there was a \$90 million appropriation for this program. The Jewish community, the Christian community, the Muslim community, the Sikh community, the Hindu community, and others are very supportive of this program.

H.R. 2476 is the legislation I am talking about this evening, called the Securing American Nonprofit Organizations Against Terrorism Act. Tonight, I am hopeful that we can pass, by unanimous consent, this legislation. In the appropriations bill, there is a \$90 million appropriation from Congress for the program for this fiscal year. Our authorization bill is at \$75 million. Again, it is a very important program.

I am pleased that the Department of Homeland Security has recently changed its rules to allow these institutions to use the funds not just for cameras, locks, and other hardening but also for armed guards where necessary. Sadly, it is necessary to disrupt and stop some of these hate crimes that are occurring.

Senator MIKE LEE had some concerns about the cost. I understand his concern. We are going to keep the cost in an efficient and effective manner—going to the organizations that really need it. I appreciate his talking to me about that tonight and his willingness to allow us to move forward on this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2476 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2476) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide funding to secure nonprofit facilities from terrorist attacks, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PORTMAN. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 2476) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FALLEN WARRIOR BATTLEFIELD CROSS MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, another bill has been cleared tonight that I would like to ask the U.S. Senate to provide unanimous consent for. This is legislation called the Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act. This comes out of a situation in Ohio where some of our veterans were not permitted to have a battlefield cross at their grave site.

Senator BROWN, myself, and other Members have been supportive of this legislation, and tonight I am pleased to say that we now have unanimous consent from the other side of the aisle to proceed with it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1424 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1424) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure the Secretary of Veterans Affairs permits the display of Fallen Soldier Displays in national cemeteries.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 1424) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.