

auto safety—which is why it has been a major priority of mine over the past few years.

I am particularly motivated by the benefits that 5G could bring to my home State of South Dakota. The ability to deploy precision agriculture on a wide scale would have huge benefits for South Dakota farmers. Better access to telemedicine could bring better healthcare to thousands of residents in my home State and other rural areas. To get to these benefits, we have to ensure the telecommunications companies are able to find the workers they need.

I hope we can quickly advance this legislation so the United States can continue her march into the 5G future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH.) The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO LAURA DOVE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I come to the floor for two reasons. I am first going to recognize the good work that the Secretary for the Majority, Laura Dove, has done for the entire U.S. Senate, particularly for the majority but mostly for the smooth running of the Senate.

Before I speak on another issue, I want to associate myself with the great comments that Leader MCCONNELL made this morning about the work of the Secretary for the Majority, Laura Dove. Laura's work in the U.S. Senate has been tremendous, with over 20 years of service. Few know Senate procedures as well as Laura Dove. She keeps the Senate firing on all cylinders, working for the American people.

I am a Senator who hasn't missed a vote in almost 27 years. Laura Dove and the Republican cloakroom, partnering with her and with me in my commitment to not miss a vote—they ensure that I am here when I am needed for those votes. I thank Laura for helping me serve the people of Iowa effectively.

I wish Laura all the best in her next chapter. There is no doubt that we will miss her sharp intellect and warm smile here in the Senate Chamber.

MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, as Iowa farmers count down the days to get into the fields, baseball fans are counting down the days for that first pitch to cross the plate. As a farmer and also as a baseball fan, hope springs eternal.

However, we have gotten wind that Major League Baseball is throwing

local clubs a curve ball—a curve that would hurt baseball, hurt local economies, and the fields of dreams in my home State. That is three strikes right there.

I have got news. Don't count us baseball fans out. These local communities and this U.S. Senator aren't going to sit on the sidelines. Now, here is the news: Major League Baseball said that it may cut ties with as many as 42 Minor League clubs, including three historic affiliates in Iowa: The Burlington Bees, the Clinton LumberKings, and the Quad Cities River Bandits.

I have been in communication with the deputy commissioner of Major League Baseball, Dan Halem, both in letters and on the phone, about the importance of these teams to Iowa. I am sure a lot of my colleagues have made the same contacts.

I have also joined, with a bipartisan group of my colleagues, in introducing a resolution today supporting all Minor League Baseball teams across the country. For generations of Iowans, these ball clubs are a vibrant source of civic pride, a vibrant source of entertainment, and—would you believe it—also a vibrant source of economic development.

While I have been to just a handful of Major League Baseball games, I have fond, fond memories of going to Minor League Baseball games in Waterloo, IA. We call them the Waterloo White Hawks, a club team for the Chicago White Sox. I had an opportunity, as a young person, to see Luis Aparicio play there in Waterloo before he made it big in the majors as a shortstop for the Chicago White Sox.

You can see that I want Iowans to continue to have that same experience. For the record, I am and will always go to bat for Iowa. As Iowa's senior Senator, I will do what I can to "root, root, root for the home team."

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SCOTT of Florida.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Travis Greaves, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as the Democrats continue to scare the American public when it comes to their healthcare.

This week's Democratic Presidential debate the other night in South Carolina was a free-for-all. Their frontrunner, a man I believe to be a dangerous democratic Socialist, BERNIE SANDERS, is in the spotlight, and he seems to be in the lead. Socialist tax-and-spend policies remain on full display.

The top policy priority of the Democrats would destroy healthcare freedom in America. They are proposing a complete government takeover of our Nation's healthcare system—a complete government takeover. They call it Medicare for All, but let's take a look at what that actually means. It means that 180 million Americans who get their health insurance through work would lose that insurance. They would lose that health insurance. Washington bureaucrats would be in control of healthcare.

The Sanders proposal has a price tag of \$34 trillion—\$34 trillion with a "t." It would bankrupt the country and everyone in it. The only way to even try to pay for it is with massive, across-the-board tax hikes, and BERNIE SANDERS said he is willing to do it.

Do not be deceived when they first talk about targeting the rich because the tax increases would hit working families and even people making \$29,000 a year. That is according to BERNIE SANDERS' own math. And taxes are likely to double. Medicare for All would deliver a crushing blow not only to family budgets but I believe to the entire economy. It would end America's success story.

Thanks to Republican tax and regulatory relief, we have a record-setting economy, record low unemployment, record job growth—7 million new jobs. Wages are rising. Middle-class wages and blue-collar wages are going up. It is a worker windfall, a blue-collar boom. A record 61 percent of Americans say they are better off financially than when President Trump took office. People are confident about the future, and the President's job approval is at an alltime high.

Still, the 2020 Democrats don't seem to get it. You don't hear a positive word about the economy. Instead, Democrats seem to attack one another and try to move further and further to the Left. During the debate last week, the crowd actually booed a defense of free markets.

Some Democratic candidates are proposing a scaled-back version of Medicare for All that they call a "public option," but this proposal would create a

government health plan to compete with work-sponsored health insurance. Don't be fooled—that public option would hurt patients across the country, especially people living in rural areas. It would disrupt insurance coverage, slash funding for doctors and hospitals, and would force local hospitals and clinics to close. Simply put, a public option is a pit stop on the road to 100 percent government-run healthcare in America.

Clearly, Democrats are ignoring their own voters. Union workers across the country are telling Democrats: Don't touch our hard-earned healthcare benefits. People don't want radical healthcare schemes, which is what the Democrats are proposing. People care more about their pocketbooks. They want their own healthcare, but they want it at a lower cost. That is what I hear every weekend at home in Wyoming.

Americans are struggling to pay for insurance premiums for doctors, for hospitals, and for prescription drugs. According to a new POLITICO-Harvard poll, 8 in 10 Americans—89 percent of Democrats and 76 percent of Republicans—want us to lower their healthcare costs. Seventy-five percent say we must lower the costs of prescription drugs. I agree. The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that nearly one in four people is having trouble paying for their prescriptions. But Socialist policies are the wrong medicine. They will only worsen the problems.

Republicans are listening to people's concerns. We have commonsense solutions to lower out-of-pocket costs without lowering standards. I am a doctor, the husband of a breast cancer survivor, and the son of a 97-year-old mother. Let me assure you, Republicans will always protect vulnerable Americans, especially people with pre-existing conditions. The Republican healthcare agenda is about giving patients more choices and better healthcare. It is about improving healthcare access and affordability.

Working with President Trump, we are already providing much needed relief from costly ObamaCare taxes. These unfair taxes hurt working families, they hurt small businesses, they hurt seniors, and we have ended them.

Now we are working to drive down drug costs. As part of this effort, in December, I joined six Republican Senators to introduce the Lower Costs, More Cures Act. This legislation would limit out-of-pocket drug costs for people with Medicare Part D plans. We also ended the drug price gag rule to help patients find more affordable drugs. We are working to end surprise medical billings. These unexpected, unreasonable, and unaffordable bills undermine families' finances. It is an intolerable practice, and it must stop.

Republicans are delivering better healthcare. Still, to make more progress, we need Democrats to work with us. It is time to come together. It is time to cooperate. It is time to find

common ground. I will tell you, taking away health insurance from 180 million Americans who get it through work is not common ground. There is no common ground. That is the direction of the Democratic Party. We need to find common ground. Taking insurance away from 180 million Americans who get it from work and then giving free health insurance to illegal immigrants and raising taxes from Americans to pay for it is not common ground.

Let's work together to give patients the high-quality care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER EVAN GRILLS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as expected, it is time for our "Alaskan of the Week" speech. One of the most fulfilling things I get to do as Alaska's U.S. Senator is to come down to the floor of the Senate and talk about the people in my State who are making a difference in their communities, in the State, and in the country. It is a great opportunity in which to do that.

I always encourage people who are watching and listening to come to the great State of Alaska for a visit. You will love it. It will be the best trip you ever take. I guarantee it.

I know the pages enjoy this speech each week because it is a story of what real people are doing and, in many cases, of humble heroes. Usually, these are happy stories that I get to talk about, but sometimes they aren't happy. The story I am going to tell today is, in fact, a very, very tragic one, but it contains the kind of heroism and selflessness that can spring from a tragedy and literally inspire a State or a nation.

If you are listening, I think you are going to be inspired.

I have said on the floor before that we are a State—an enormous State, a big State in the country, by far—but that we are also a family and that, when something happens to members of our families, we all grieve. This is particularly true of the town of Kodiak, AK, and of the fishing community, both of which suffered a tremendous loss on New Year's Eve in the Gulf of Alaska when a crabbing boat, the *Scandies Rose*, sank into the freezing waters, taking with it five fishermen.

Of the five fishermen—including Seth Rousseau-Gano, Brock Rainey, and Arthur Ganacias—Captain Gary Cobban, Jr., and David, his son, were both from Kodiak and perished with the crew. Blessedly and remarkably, there were two survivors—John Lawler, of Anchorage, and Dean Gribble, of Washington State. I mention that almost as

a miracle. They were saved because of the bravery and the heroism of our Coast Guard rescuers, who flew through gale force winds and 30-foot-high swells to rescue these survivors. Credit goes to all of the Coast Guard members throughout the country but particularly to those in Kodiak and specifically to those who were on the flight—the pilot, LT Christopher Clark, the copilot, LT Jonathan Ardan, and the mechanic, Jacob Dillon.

As I said, they are all heroes in this story, but I want to specifically highlight the role of the rescue swimmer that evening of New Year's Eve—25-year-old PO Evan Grills. Now, Evan is a relative newcomer to the great State of Alaska, but his heroism in saving two lives more than qualifies him to be our Alaskan of the Week.

Before I get into the story of this perilous mission, let me tell you a little bit about the fishing community in Alaska and why our Coast Guard is so very valuable.

Alaska's seas are the most productive in the world and, by the way, the most sustainably managed in the world. More than 60 percent of all seafood harvested in the United States of America comes from Alaska's waters—6-0. I like to refer to our State as the superpower of seafood, which we clearly are, and our fishermen are probably the hardest working small business men and women around the world. They work hard. They take huge risks. And they produce a product that is second to none anywhere on the planet. They face brutal conditions at sea and sometimes very tough conditions in the market, but they love their work. They love the vital role they play in supplying the best tasting, most sustainable wild fish products to America and the globe—literally, the best.

The industry used to be incredibly dangerous, and it is still the Nation's second-most dangerous profession. I am sure a lot of the viewers have seen the show the "Deadliest Catch," but unlike in previous decades, the culture has trended more toward safety. Most Alaskan fishermen you will meet, though, will have a harrowing story of a time at sea, and, of course, they will have harrowing stories of rescues.

Kodiak, AK, where the *Scandies Rose* is home-ported, is at the center of our fishing community. Kodiak is one of the largest fishing ports in the entire United States, both in terms of value and in terms of quantity. For those who have never been there, they have to go to Kodiak, AK. It is a magical, beautiful place. It is an island—one of the biggest islands in America. It is about the size of New Jersey—with beautiful, wonderful people, with tough people. By the way, the biggest brown bears on the planet all reside in Kodiak. The heart of Kodiak beats fish, and when one of its own perishes at sea, the whole community mourns, as it is still doing for Gary, Jr., and David Cobban—two hard-working, fine fishermen from a great family.