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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, May 8, 2020, at 10 a.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Master, You are our strength and song. We find sustenance in Your might and joy in Your creation. We praise You for the beauty of the Earth and the glories of the Heavens that bring blessings to our earthly pilgrimage.

Today, guide our lawmakers with Your glorious wisdom and the greatness of Your majesty. Fulfill Your purposes for their lives as You order their steps. Show them such unflinching love that they will walk before You in wholehearted devotion.

Lord, place Your healing hands upon our Nation and world, delivering us from this global health crisis.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 90 seconds.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, my Iowa offices are located in Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Sioux City, and Waterloo. My State staff serves as my eyes and ears in communities from one side of the State to the other. From the Mississippi to the Missouri Rivers, my staff has their fingers on the pulse of Iowans, and this pandemic is no exception. They are working tirelessly to troubleshoot problems Iowans are facing related to the public health emergency and the economic fallout. No matter the concern, the problem, or circumstance that is affecting a farm, a business, school, or local hospital, my staff is on the ground ready to help.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, they helped troubleshoot issues for Iowans who were overseas to get them back home to the United States. One example: In Peru, several young people were stranded and wanted to come home. They didn't get them home very fast, but they are home now.

Since Congress passed the CARES Act, my staff has answered countless questions from Iowans about the Paycheck Protection Program, economic injury disaster loans, and economic impact payments. Whatever the question or redtape may be, my staff goes the extra mile to serve Iowans. They do whatever it takes to track down an answer and help make government work for the people as the government should work for the people.

As always, they are in the trenches during this pandemic, working to help Iowans get through this and get through it together.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

DIRECTING THE REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM HOSTILITIES AGAINST THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN THAT HAVE NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS—VETO—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the veto message on S.J. Res. 68, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message, a joint resolution (S.J. Res. 68) to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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CORONAVIRUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the United States is battling the worst pandemic in 100 years. Our Nation has poured unprecedented resources into defending Americans' health and blunting the damage to our economy.

The Senate will continue to work on this front. We will find more ways to keep strengthening our healthcare response and pivot the Nation toward recovery. That will include strong legal protections to defend healthcare workers, small businesses, and other institutions against the trial lawyer feeding frenzy as they work hard to keep serving their neighbors.

FISA

But, Madam President, amid the pandemic, we cannot lose sight of the other threats we still face as well. The challenges that we faced before COVID-19 began to spread from Wuhan, China, are still with us today, alongside this awful virus. There are terror cells, hostile foreign intelligence services, and adversaries all over the world who would love nothing more than for the United States to apply social distancing to our presence on the world stage as well.

Iran has not let popular unrest, a mismanaged economy, or COVID-19 slow their meddling, from Yemen to the Mediterranean. Tehran and its proxies are undermining the sovereignty of Iraq and Lebanon, aiding and abetting Assad's mass murder in Syria, sowing regional unrest, threatening Israel, and targeting American troops and our interests.

A regime that chooses to spend its scant resources on exporting violence or a so-called space program does not need relief from sanctions. We must maintain the measure of deterrence we restored with the decisive strike on Soleimani. That starts today with upholding the President's rightful veto of a misguided War Powers Resolution.

Meanwhile, in apparent repudiation of the Trump administration's efforts to help end the civil war in Afghanistan, Taliban attacks against the country's government and its people have actually spiked. ISIS, al-Qaida, and Haqqani terrorists continue to operate from Afghan territory.

Over in Moscow, Putin's regime continues to threaten American interests along with international security—from bullying incursions in the free states it used to rule, to influence-peddling and mercenary adventurism in the power vacuums of Syria and Libya, to spreading disinformation and undermining democracies all across the globe.

Russian intelligence is not alone in targeting America. China's efforts to steal government industry secrets are unmatched.

Countering these kinds of hostile activities is a key job of our intelligence community, and so is stopping terrorist attacks against our homeland.

So next week, the Senate will turn back to reauthorizing the critical au-

thorities in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. The House-passed legislation we will take up is not a blanket reauthorization of FISA; it is a careful update designed to provide greater accountability for the way these authorities are exercised. It will increase transparency in the FISA process and respond to the shameful abuses of 2016 while preserving the toolbox that professionals use to defend us. I hope the Senate will pass it next week, free of amendments that would jeopardize important tools to keep America safe.

CHINA

Madam President, there is the matter of the People's Republic of China. This coronavirus pandemic originated in China. Whether the virus escaped from a lab or was transmitted at a so-called wet market, we do not yet know for sure, but China's Communist Party leaders probably do know, and they owe it to all the nations suffering from this virus to be truthful and to be transparent. The world deserves the facts—all of the facts.

Here is one fact we do know: The virus spread was exacerbated by China's unconscionable efforts to cover it up. The Communist Party reprimanded and threatened to jail Dr. Li Wenliang, the heroic whistleblower who tried to warn the world about COVID-19 and later died from it. Within hours of his death, by the way, a wave of outrage over CCP's treatment of Dr. Li spread over Chinese social media until the government censored that as well.

At the peak of the outbreak, the Chinese Communist Party was reportedly welding its own people inside their own houses. And today, you better believe the party commissars are training their sights on the Chinese survivors, activists, and lawyers who dare to seek the truth.

Outside the borders, China's leaders seem to think they could either charm, cajole, or threaten the world into submission. They supposedly donated medical supplies to foreign countries that quickly proved faulty and unusable. They threatened to boycott Australian beef. They even threatened to cut off pharmaceutical exports to the United States so that we would be "plunged into the mighty sea of coronavirus."

It is galling but not surprising. This is the same authoritarian regime that brutalized the Uighur people in modern-day gulags and that has spent years cheating its way through international commerce and stealing industrial secrets.

Now it is exploiting the global pandemic it helped exacerbate to further its crackdown on Hong Kong. A few weeks ago, the government arrested peaceful democracy activists, including my old friend of almost three decades, Martin Lee. I suppose they thought the rest of the world might be too distracted to notice. They were mistaken.

Alongside our friends and partners around the world, the United States is going to be asking tough questions

about our relationship with the Chinese Communist Party.

I expect the Senate will soon look to pass Senator RUBIO's Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, a bipartisan bill that will bring more attention to the plight of this mistreated minority and urge the President to use targeted sanctions against those responsible for the repression.

While we and our allies already saw the risks from letting critical supply chains become too dependent on China, the Chinese Communist Party's recent behavior has certainly hammered this home. I am confident that we here in Washington will be examining these strategic vulnerabilities as well.

We will be looking for the best ways to strengthen our dynamic and innovative private sector, keep America on the cutting edge, and work closely with friends who share our values and interests to build a fairer, more resilient international market.

Notice that China is not retrenching or drawing back within its borders—quite the opposite.

So if we want to preserve a world built on our democratic values and principles, if we want to protect American workers, American interests, and American national security, all of these things will take more global leadership and more coordination with our allies, not less.

Tomorrow, May 8, is the 75th anniversary of VE Day. If we ever needed a reminder that American strength is a force for good in the world, there it is. Thanks to the tireless work of our colleague, Senator PAT ROBERTS, tomorrow was meant to be the dedication of the new Eisenhower Memorial. It has been postponed due to the virus. It almost seems fitting that 75 years after World War II, the celebration of President Eisenhower would be delayed by a global crisis that will take American strength and American leadership to resolve. He certainly knew something about that kind of situation.

Now, as then, the American people do not want to retreat from the world, and they do not want to see us slide into second place. They want us to be smart and strong and safe, and they want the United States of America to lead.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, tomorrow, the Bureau of Labor will publish its monthly jobs report for April. Some experts are projecting that it could show well over 20 million job losses in the past 4 weeks. The preliminary report today suggests that there

will be over 30 million newly unemployed Americans over the past 7 weeks. That is a tenth—1 out of 10 people—losing their job. A tenth of our population.

We are looking at what seems to be the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Small businesses have shuttered. Some larger businesses have filed for bankruptcy. Millions of workers, through no fault of their own, are being laid off or furloughed or are losing their paychecks. They are worried about keeping their homes, feeding their kids, accessing healthcare.

Once this crisis is over, we can't snap our fingers and have everything return to normal. Twenty to 30 million newly unemployed Americans will not immediately return to their old jobs. Hopefully, many can, but many jobs just will not be there.

The disease has washed over our Nation like a flood. Once the waters have receded, there will be a great deal of damage left in its wake. We need a big, bold answer to this. We need to marshal a broader spirit of action. The American people need an active, engaged, and forceful government to lift them up and carry them through these dark times.

Speaker PELOSI and I are working on a big, bold plan that will deal with the magnitude of the problem.

So I am appalled today that Republican congressional leaders and President Trump are saying that we should delay more assistance to the American people.

A week ago, the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, said that we need "to push the pause button."

Tell that to someone who is losing his job. Tell that to someone who has worked so hard to create a small business over decades and sees it falling apart. Tell that to the family who has a member that is sick with COVID or something else and can't get adequate healthcare.

To say that we should wait and see what is happening, as Leader MCCONNELL has said, that maybe we don't need to do anything more is ignoring what is going on around us.

Over 30 million are unemployed, and certain Republican leaders are saying: Let's hit the pause button on future government support.

The Republican leader of this Chamber called us back into session, despite the obvious health risks, not to consider new relief or respond to the COVID pandemic but to process nominations. He has been coming to the floor, drawing redlines in the sand, pledging not to support another emergency relief bill unless it extends legal immunity to big corporations.

Today, he gave a very long speech on national security. Now, that is very important, but the No. 1 immediate crisis facing us is COVID, and this speech was sort of a metaphor for what Senate Republicans are doing this week on COVID—virtually nothing.

Senator CARDIN and I and Senator SHAHEEN went to the floor and simply

asked for a simple bill to pass that would require accountability in PPP, and it was blocked by the majority. So this is just amazing.

There has been large support in Congress to stabilize the big financial markets, support larger industries, and keep capital markets from crashing. There will be \$4 trillion available when the Fed and Treasury are through with it. We must do the same, if not more, for average people—workers, families. The contrast is glaring. The contrast is glaring.

Larger companies know they have a floor. The big markets know they have a floor. An unemployed worker has no floor until we do things for them like we did for pandemic unemployment insurance.

There are many more people, average Americans, who need the same kind of help or a greater degree of help, or a different kind of help, and many of these average folks are in worse shape.

Democrats have strived to make as much of our congressional relief effort flow to workers and average American families—as much as possible. It is still not enough. State and local governments—that means teachers, firefighters, police officers, and busdrivers who might be laid off—still need help. Our essential workers deserve hazard pay. Minority-owned and women-owned businesses still need more access to lending. Renters and homeowners need relief. And millions of working people need enhanced nutrition benefits, as thousands and thousands of people are overwhelming our local food banks.

But now that assistance to big industries has gone out the door, Republican leaders are saying: Let's wait and see.

The unemployed worker doesn't want to wait and see. The small business that might go under doesn't want to wait and see. The mom or dad who needs to feed their hungry children does not want to wait and see, like our Republican leaders seem to. Now is not the time to wait and see. Now is the time to move forward.

Our history is replete with examples of what happens when the Federal Government doesn't rise to the occasion in a time of national emergency. In the early days of the Great Depression, President Herbert Hoover was reluctant to use national resources to combat a national crisis. His failure to act contributed to the length and severity of the depression.

If our Republican colleagues, if President Trump, respond with the same timidity as President Hoover did, I fear the Nation could suffer the same consequences as it did in the past, and many economists agree. If we do nothing more, like some of our Republican colleagues seem to feel we should, a good number of economists believe we will have our second Great Depression—Herbert Hoover redux on the Republican side when President Trump, Leader MCCONNELL, and Leader MCCARTHY say: Let's wait and see.

Republicans weren't worried about the deficit when we spent billions to

keep big businesses from folding, but all of a sudden they are worried about it when we are talking about families keeping the roofs over their heads and putting food on the table. We need a fourth congressional relief bill that mirrors the size and ambition of our previous relief efforts. Working people and truly small businesses are taking the blunt effects of this crisis on the chin, and we cannot—cannot—and must not leave them behind.

Now, there are plenty of things the Federal Government can do in the interim, even before another round of legislation in Congress. I want to mention one idea this morning. There are many more.

Several big, publicly traded companies that have received small business loans have started sheepishly returning the money to the Treasury Department—rightly so. Many have much greater access to other capital than true small businesses, and they shouldn't crowd out the lending of those small businesses that truly need it. Secretary Mnuchin has told me that roughly \$10 billion in loans have been paid off or returned by these large companies. Ten billion dollars happens to be the same amount we have asked the Treasury Department to set aside exclusively for lending by community development financial institutions and minority deposit institutions.

So this morning I would like to urge the Treasury Department to immediately set aside the money being returned by big, publicly traded companies in the PPP for loans to businesses that are truly small—the very small businesses with under 10 employees and other underserved, rural, minority-owned and women-owned businesses. Too many big companies rushed in to secure small business lending in the early days of the PPP program, while smaller businesses were shut out. The administration should have been far more careful about who got the lending and put out much stronger guidance to the banks in the early days, something I believe they are trying to correct now.

We can begin to right those disparities if Treasury would simply redirect—redirect—the returned loans to truly small and underserved businesses using community-based lenders. I hope Secretary Mnuchin will agree to this.

Another issue that cannot wait for another bill, of course, is testing. Testing is the key to finally defeating this disease, and it is the key to safely reopening the country.

President Trump promised on March 6—his words: "Anybody that wants a test can get a test." That was President Trump 2 months ago. It is still not even close to being true. President Trump seems to think that by saying something, it happens. By saying it is a hoax, he thinks it was a hoax. By saying it is going to go away, he thinks it would go away. This COVID virus does not listen to President Trump's cheery and false words, unfortunately.

President Trump, when it comes to testing, what is the plan? Where are the tests?

Countries like South Korea and Germany, New Zealand and Australia were able to flatten the curve much more quickly than we have by rigorously testing their populations, contact tracing, and isolating confirmed cases.

But as the coronavirus spread initially, unfortunately, the United States lagged far behind these other countries. Some experts believe we need to have at least 2 million tests a day. Today we are testing less than 300,000.

For the administration to pressure States and businesses to reopen without a plan for a dramatic increase in testing is like sending them out of the door with a blindfold on. It is dangerous.

Congress has required the administration to produce a national strategy on testing by May 24. Instead of wasting energy praising his own performance and lashing out at supposed enemies, the President should roll up his sleeves and get to work on testing. The patience of the American people is wearing very, very thin.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we live in a dangerous world, and this morning we were reminded as the Republican leader came to the floor and spoke about foreign policy. Later on today, we will address the issue of a veto override on the War Powers Act, a measure which I cosponsored.

It may surprise some people that we are in the area of foreign policy on our Senate agenda this week, because in this dangerous world that we live in, we all know that the first thing we look for is the danger at the doorstep.

Our danger, of course, is a national emergency, as President Trump has characterized it, a public health crisis—the COVID-19 coronavirus threat to the United States and all of our families.

Many of us who came back to Washington this week were wary because we had been warned to stay in our homes as long as possible, to stay out of circulation, and not to gather in workplaces unless absolutely necessary. All of us thought if we were going to return, we hoped the priority would be this looming crisis in America, this public health crisis. But, sadly, as we bring this week's legislative activity to a close, little, if anything, has been said or done on the Senate floor or in committee to address the issue at the moment.

What are we going to do to protect Americans and their families?

Senator MCCONNELL brought us back for a hearing for one of his favorite judges—a Federal judge in Kentucky, a young man who was an intern in his office and whom he is now trying to promote to the second highest court in the land.

In the ordinary course of Senate business, this would not be unusual. It might have drawn some attention because of the qualifications of this individual, but attention has been given to it as people compare it to the real issues that we should be facing.

When you think about the issues before us, one of them is very imminent. Across the street from the U.S. Senate is the Supreme Court building. Pending before the Supreme Court at this moment is a lawsuit brought by President Trump and Republican attorneys general from across the United States to abolish the Affordable Care Act—to abolish an Affordable Care Act that provides health insurance for 20 million Americans and also provides protections in the health insurance policies for another 135 million Americans—a law which basically says if you have a preexisting condition, you can't be denied insurance coverage.

At this moment in our history, at this moment as we face this health crisis, it is unimaginable that the Republican position is to eliminate health insurance protection for 20 million Americans and to lessen the protections in health insurance policies for 135 million more. So far, 1.2 million Americans have been diagnosed as infected with the COVID-19 virus. Sadly, some 70,000 Americans have died. What is going to happen in the days and months and years ahead if the Republicans have their way and if preexisting conditions return to health insurance? Will there be a day when you or your spouse or your parent or your children will be asked if you were ever diagnosed positive for COVID-19? Will this be a disqualification in the future if we don't have the protection when it comes to preexisting conditions? That is not out of the realm of possibility.

How can the Republicans be thinking that this is the right moment in history to abolish the Affordable Care Act and the health insurance that 20 million Americans count on and 135 million Americans who have their own health insurance plans take advantage of? It is exactly the wrong moment.

There was an effort to abolish this Affordable Care Act—they like to call it ObamaCare—on the floor of the Senate in the last 2 years. I still remember the moment when Senator John McCain, the late Senator from Arizona, came to the floor in the early morning hours and gave the motion for a “no” vote, and that was the end of the story. The Republican abolition effort ended with that vote. You would think they learned their lesson.

Senator McCain and other Republicans said: We cannot eliminate this

unless we have something better to replace it with.

They didn't then. They don't now.

Attorney General Barr warned the Trump White House not to go forward with this lawsuit pending in the Supreme Court. He understood that it was unwise not only from a policy viewpoint, but it was unwise politically.

Imagine, if you will, in the weeks and months ahead, should this Court, this Roberts Court, decide to abolish the Affordable Care Act in the midst of this public health crisis—I can't think of anything more catastrophic when it comes to these 20 million families and their health insurance protection and the 100 million-plus who count on this protection against discrimination for preexisting conditions.

That is the reality we face, but it is not the only reality. A decision was made this week that is almost impossible to understand. There was a telephone conference call involving leaders from all around the world. These leaders came together to discuss something that we are all praying for—the discovery of a vaccine that will protect us from this coronavirus. They wanted money pledged, some \$8 billion. Norway pledged \$1 billion. The European Union pledged \$1 billion. When they went around the table, there was a chair that was empty. The United States of America wasn't at the conference. The President made a conscious decision that we would not engage in this conversation about the discovery of a lifesaving vaccine. Why? What was he possibly thinking?

This notion of America first, which we hear over and over again, has some value, of course, but when it comes to a global pandemic, when it comes to a global challenge, when it comes to the fact that over 90 countries around the world are searching for that vaccine, when it comes to the fact that most of us don't really care where it is found as long as it is found and the sooner the better and that we have access to it for Americans as well as everyone else—that is the bottom line. It isn't about America being first and only when it comes to the vaccine. Even the Senate Republican leader said this morning that we can't retreat from the world.

It is so appropriate to have this global vaccine conference. Two Americans were involved in this conference—in this virtual conference call—Bill and Melinda Gates. We know his background, his great success at Microsoft, and his commitment, with his wife, ever since to global health issues. They were at the table speaking for the United States, and I want to personally thank them for being there, but we should have been there as well. The President of the United States should have been on that conference call. He should have said: The United States is going to help find this vaccine wherever it is found in the world. We are going to be at the table when we talk about producing it in quantities that will make a difference for people living

everywhere in the world, including the United States, and we are going to be here as well when we apportion those vaccine doses so we make certain that Americans have their fair share and that we can protect our own country.

Do you want to reopen the economy, Mr. President? Do you want to liberate America from the CDC suggestion that we shelter in place? Do you want to liberate us truly? Then join in this conference and this conversation among leaders across the world to find this vaccine.

I hope we can find it in the United States. We have a lot of talented people searching, but if another country finds it, let's applaud that. If it is an effective and safe vaccine that protects us, let's applaud whatever country finds it—including the United States, of course, but if it is found in another country, we are not going to be part of the conversation as long as this President folds his arms, juts out his chin, and says: I am sorry, the WHO—the World Health Organization—is at the table, and we want no part of them, so we are staying away.

Pride cometh before the fall, Mr. President. You can't expect the American people to fall with you because of your own source of pride. We should deal with the reality of what we face in this world.

Let me say a word about the State and local governments because as we consider the next round of legislation to help this economy, we certainly want to make certain that unemployment insurance will be available for the millions of Americans—over 30 million Americans who are unemployed. The current round of unemployment insurance is set to expire around July 31. We want to make certain that small businesses that are receiving forgivable loans so they can be poised and ready to reopen and go into business, put people back to work—that is supposed to end around the end of June. I pray that this whole controversy and this crisis will be behind us by then, but we know better. We know it will take some time to get the economy back in gear. Let's make sure that we renew our commitment to the people in this country, the families in this country, the unemployed in this country, and the small business owners as well.

But don't forget the others who are counting on us. Don't forget our first responders. How often have we stood up and responded and praised police, firefighters, paramedics, medical professionals, and nurses who stepped up in the midst of this crisis and showed extraordinary courage, some giving their lives in the process? Well, part of their future depends on us in the next bill. Are we going to stand up to make sure that State and local governments, which have been hard hit by this crisis as well when it comes to their own revenue, will get a helping hand? God forbid we reach a point where, because of the shortcomings in the State and local revenue, we have to lay off police,

firefighters, healthcare workers, and teachers. Is that what we want to do in this moment?

A few weeks ago, when he was asked, Senator MCCONNELL said we should consider bankruptcy—bankruptcy for State and local governments that can't pay their bills. What a disaster that would be. You want to see America cartwheeled into a recession leading to a depression? Bankruptcies from one end of America to the other by State and local governments would do just that, and the damage it would do to first responders who would be laid off as a result of it, the police and the firefighters and the teachers, is incalculable. We can't let that happen to America.

A bankrupt America is an America headed for a depression, and when Senator MCCONNELL suggested that, I thought to myself, he hasn't thought this through. He cannot be saying that to the teachers of Kentucky and the police and the firefighters and the medical professionals who count so much on our support.

At this point, there are things we can do and must do. My checklist would include hazard pay for those I mentioned, including the healthcare workers, and most importantly, a dramatic increase in testing. We have about one-third of the test kits we need to put America back to work.

We look at situations like the ones facing us in meat-processing facilities. It has created a real hardship on consumers across America. But don't forget the producers of livestock in South Dakota and Illinois and Tennessee. They are producing pork and beef to be headed to the processing plants, and the plants are closed down. It is a downturn in demand for sure but also working conditions, which need to be addressed directly so there is safety in the workplace for all American workers.

When the Senate Republican leader comes to the floor and talks about how we don't want anybody held responsible or liable for their conduct or misconduct during the course of this, I think he is not thinking through clearly what he is talking about. In this situation, you certainly wouldn't want to deny to nurses, who were seeking protection with protective equipment—masks, gloves, and gowns—you wouldn't want to deny them a day in court, if necessary. You wouldn't want to say to workers who were in dangerous situations in the workplace that they can't collect workers' compensation even if they are injured or sick. But when I hear the Republican leader talk about COVID-19 lawsuits—both the lawsuits I just described relate to COVID-19, and both call for simple fairness when it comes to protecting workers and families over large corporations.

The Senate leader has come to the floor so many times and said that the real enemy here are the lawyers of America. Really? At this moment in

history, that is the fight we want to pick? It is time for us to come together, not to make something like that a redline against continued bipartisan cooperation.

I stand here today in the hopes that we will come back to session—if we do next week—to truly address the COVID-19 crisis. We have wasted a week here when it comes to that crisis. We could be doing so much more.

I hope the Senate Republican leader, who sets the agenda for the Senate, will go home to Kentucky, and as he goes home to Kentucky and talks to the families there—and I will in Illinois—we will both come back with the realization that the No. 1 priority in this dangerous world is the danger at our doorstep. Let's get this under control and protect the families and individuals across America so that we can resume the path to greatness this country has been on since the beginning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, a number of our Democratic colleagues have come to the floor and spoken here and elsewhere about the importance of providing assistance to State and local governments and that if that doesn't happen, there are going to be police officers and first responders and people who have essential jobs that we rely on every single day and for whom we are so grateful who wouldn't be able to get paid.

I would just point out that already, as part of the coronavirus relief measures that Congress has passed, there was \$150 billion sent to State and local governments, much of which has yet to be spent and, frankly, much of which we don't know what the actual need is out there until we have a better sense of what the revenue loss is to a lot of our State and local governments.

Clearly, they are sounding the alarm, and they are justifiably worried about what happens if the downturn in the economy continues and what that might mean to their revenues. They are looking to Washington, DC, for assistance.

I think that, as I said earlier, in the CARES package, there was \$150 billion that went out to State and local governments. There have been concerns about how those funds can be used. It was stipulated that they had to be used for COVID-related expenses, and many State and local leaders were concerned that that did not give them the flexibility that they needed to meet other types of needs.

Well, the Treasury Department has in the past few days come out with an interpretation that would allow those dollars—the \$150 billion already appropriated—to be used to pay firefighters, to pay police, to pay first responders, to help with unemployment insurance accounts at the State level, to help with healthcare costs—the people who lose healthcare at the State level—and

a range of other things. It dramatically broadened the eligibility of uses for the dollars that have already been allocated to State and local governments.

So I think it is important for us to make sure—as we look at any additional assistance that we might provide, to determine how well the dollars that are already out there have been used and to, in fact, see what the actual needs are before we add to that.

We had a number of pronouncements around here. The Speaker of the House, Speaker PELOSI, has come out and said: We need \$1 trillion in additional assistance for State and local governments. It is hard for me to see how you can make a statement like that not knowing what the original \$150 billion has been used for or whether it has been used at all in some cases.

The fact that we have \$150 billion in the pipeline, the eligibility and uses of which have been dramatically broadened by the Treasury Department to enable States to use it for the very things that many of the Democrats are coming down here saying: You know, if we don't help State and local governments, we won't pay essential workers—that just flat out isn't true. Those dollars can be used for that purpose.

It makes sense for us, as policy-makers and custodians and stewards of the people's tax dollars, to ensure that the tax dollars we have already put out there are having the desired effect and to figure out what is working and what is not working and to figure out, frankly, what the actual need is before we send more money out—and, by the way, more money that is all borrowed. Every dollar of the \$2.8 trillion that we have already distributed—and all for good reasons. Everybody here was supportive and agreed we needed to do it. We needed a dramatic, bold response to an extraordinary circumstance, so that was done. But every one of those dollars was borrowed. Any dollar we put out going forward will be borrowed, which means that at some point somebody has to pay for it, and it is going to be our children and our grandchildren.

There is an argument being made that, well, interest rates are low; this is a good time to borrow. Well, you want to borrow when interest rates are low if you have to borrow, but if we continue to borrow, there is a point at which interest rates, just by virtue of the laws of supply and demand, will start to go up, and when they do, you will see a dramatic increase in the amount of dollars we have to use here just to pay the interest on the debt, which, if interest rates ever normalize, will be north of about \$1 trillion a year and represent literally about 28 percent of all Federal spending.

So, point 1, every dollar we spend is a borrowed dollar. Point 2, I think it is important for us to see what the needs are to be able to put money out there. Point 3, there is already \$150 billion in the pipeline to State and local governments to help with many of the things

the Democrats have been complaining about. And Point 4, it seems to me, at least, that we ought to have a discussion about whether what we have done already is working before we decide to add to it and see if we are getting a good return on the tax dollars that have already been put out there.

I don't think there is any resistance here to giving States more flexibility with those dollars. I don't think there is any resistance to doing anything and everything we have to to make sure we get through this crisis. I think our Members certainly agree with that and are prepared to make the necessary votes and to do what is necessary to get us through it.

Remember also that there is no amount of money in Washington, DC, that can substitute for a dynamic, vibrant, active economy where jobs are being created and investments are being made. That is how you ultimately start to get things back on track in this country.

So, as we get ahead of the health emergency—and, of course, obviously this week we celebrate nurses week. I am so grateful for the many contributions they are making not only during the pandemic but year-round and the people who are on the frontlines of this emergency. To ensure that we are doing everything we can to support them, to beat this health emergency—when we do, as the economy starts to open up, that is when we will see the jobs come back, that is when we will see the growth come back, and that is when we will see the standard of living and the quality of life in this country that people have lost in the last few months start to return. That is the best way to get things back on track here.

I want to just make some comments this morning about another area of our economy and note that it has been an incredibly tough couple of months for American businesses and American workers.

Virtually every sector of our economy is suffering as a result of the coronavirus, and the ag industry is no exception. Farmers and ranchers have taken a huge hit. The coronavirus has caused significant market volatility, sending many commodity futures prices plummeting. Meanwhile, reduced capacity at U.S. meatpacking plants as a result of the virus has diminished the demand for livestock, depressing prices. This has aggravated an already difficult situation for farmers and ranchers.

Unlike the majority of the economy, which was thriving before the pandemic, the agricultural economy has been struggling now for a while. Low prices, extended trade disputes, and natural disasters have made a tough few years for farmers and ranchers even before the coronavirus hit. Now they are suffering even more.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of my State of South Dakota. So when Congress was considering coronavirus re-

lief legislation, support for farmers and ranchers was one of my top priorities. I fought to get agricultural relief money included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or the CARES Act, which was signed into law in late March. The final bill included \$14 billion to replenish the Commodity Credit Corporation to allow the Department of Agriculture to provide income and price support for farmers and ranchers, plus an additional \$9.5 billion in emergency support for agricultural producers affected by the pandemic.

Days after the bill passed, I led a bipartisan group of Senators and representatives in a letter to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, urging him to use a portion of the funds to provide support for hard-hit cattle producers. I am pleased that in mid-April the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that it would issue \$16 billion worth of payments to ag producers affected by the virus. Those payments are expected to reach farmers and ranchers in late May or early June. I have been monitoring the progress of this relief, and I will continue urging the USDA to issue these payments as soon as possible.

Agriculture producers can also take advantage of the Paycheck Protection Program included in the CARES Act. This program provides forgivable loans to small businesses, including self-employed producers, to help them cover payroll costs during this difficult time. Seventy-five percent of the loans must be used for workers' salaries and benefits, including the salaries of self-employed workers, while the remaining amount can be used for other qualifying expenses, like mortgage interest, rent, and utilities. The loan can be forgiven completely, as long as borrowers follow the requirement that at least 75 percent of the loan be used to cover workers' salaries and benefits and the remainder be spent on other qualifying expenses.

As of this week, farmers and ranchers can now take advantage of the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, thanks to legislation Congress passed 2 weeks ago.

I am continuing to monitor the cattle market. Livestock producers have taken a dramatic hit on the prices they are getting for their cattle. At the same time, however, the price of packaged meat has risen, and meat packers are seeing record profit margins. This raises real concerns about potential instances of price manipulation and other unfair practices within the beef industry, especially considering that four meat packing companies control more than 80 percent of the beef supplied in the United States.

In March, I called Secretary Perdue to urge the Department of Agriculture to take action to ensure the integrity of the cattle market during the coronavirus pandemic. I followed up with a letter requesting that the Agriculture Department's packers and

stockyard division look into the volatility in the cattle market, and Secretary Perdue has agreed to investigate.

I also sent a letter to Attorney General William Barr requesting an investigation into potential price manipulation or other anti-competitive activities in the beef market.

Our pork industry is also struggling due to the coronavirus pandemic. The temporary closure of the Smithfield plant in Sioux Falls created significant challenges for the 550 independent pork producers from South Dakota and surrounding States and for our Nation's food supply system.

In the wake of the Smithfield plant closure announcement, I wrote a letter to Secretary Perdue requesting financial assistance for pork producers, and I have been closely monitoring the situation.

I am pleased that the Smithfield plant is in compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Occupational Safety and Health Administration guidance and will gradually resume operation starting today.

No discussion of the challenges facing farmers right now would be complete without discussing biofuels. Ethanol and biodiesel producers buy up a significant amount of American corn and soy, which adds value to each bushel. As demand for fuel has decreased as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, ethanol and biodiesel operations have come offline and are no longer buying up their normal amounts of corn and soybean oil. This has significantly diminished a crucial market for our farmers.

There has rightfully been a lot of focus on the oil and gas companies that are facing record loss and demand because of the coronavirus and because of an equally difficult oversupply problem driven by the Saudi-Russian price war. Hard-working Americans at these companies who have helped usher in our modern energy renaissance are now in limbo, and Congress needs to make sure we preserve our energy dominance and security. But it is important to recognize that the ethanol industry, which provides over 10 percent of the Nation's gasoline content—the cleanest 10 percent, I might add—is a part of that.

Biofuels, too, have been a key part of America's energy renaissance and have also been hit hard by the sudden drop in demand, which has been a devastating blow for workers in the industry and for the farmers who supply them. Half—half—of the Nation's capacity has been idle. More than 70 plants have closed, and just as many have idled, directly harming their local economies and, again, drying up that essential market for our farmers.

This has brought a new problem. Many Americans may not know it, but a substantial quantity of food-grade carbon dioxide, the CO₂ used in carbonated beverages or to quickly chill meat products, is an ethanol by-product.

This means that not only is ethanol part of our energy security and a foundation of our ag economy, but it also plays an important role in our food supply.

The coronavirus is already straining our meat processing industry. We should not allow a CO₂ shortage to deepen the problem.

As Congress addresses the numerous challenges facing farmers and energy producers, we must make sure that ethanol relief is a part of that discussion. Whether it is through direct support or by advancing long-stalled corn fiber applications at the Environmental Protection Agency, we need to make sure that this American energy success story survives these challenging times.

As we move forward, I will continue talking to farmers and ranchers about their needs and what we can do to help them get through these difficult times. Supporting our Nation's farmers and ranchers will always be—always be—one of my top priorities here in Congress.

The coronavirus crisis has reminded us all just how much we depend on our agricultural producers, and I am grateful every day for the work they do to feed our Nation.

I will continue to do everything I can to strengthen our agricultural economy and to help our Nation's farmers and ranchers thrive.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from Oregon.

S.J. RES. 68

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to address the debate we are having today over whether to override the President's veto of the Kaine resolution that reminds the President of the United States about the fundamentals of the Constitution, about article I, section 8 of the Constitution, which gives the enumerated powers of Congress and says that Congress, and Congress alone, has the power to declare war.

No decision is tougher or more important than the decision to go to war. That is why the Founding Fathers never intended for a single person to be able to make that decision. They explicitly, after intense debate and consideration, gave that power solely to Congress, the people's branch of our government. They didn't want anyone—any one individual, even the President of the United States—to be able to drag our Nation to war for personal or political reasons or for misjudgments, inadequately vetted with the wisdom of the leaders of the country.

Since President Trump came into office, we have come within a hair's breadth of war with Iran on more than one occasion because of his words and his actions. It is why back in February and March, the Senate and the House debated this resolution, reinstructing the President on the fundamentals of

the Constitution, reminding him that he does not have the power to take us to war in Iran. It instructed him that any hostilities with Iran need to come in accordance with the Constitution.

But the President of the United States has responded to our clear declaration of the essence of the Constitution by tossing it aside, by vetoing that resolution. And so here we are debating whether to override that veto.

The Founding Fathers were adamant about not having anything resembling a King in the new country they were building. The President was given the power to lead the Nation's Armed Forces as Commander in Chief, but article I, section 8 of the Constitution stated: "The Congress shall have Power. . . . To declare war."

If there is any real doubt about the Founders' intent, well, let's return to the comments that they made at the time.

James Madison, father of the Constitution, said this:

The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war to the legislature.

He continued: "The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature . . . the executive has no right, in any case, to decide the question, whether there is or not cause for declaring war."

How about George Washington, commander of our forces in the Revolution, first President of the United States, father of our Nation? He said this: "The constitution vests the power of declaring war in Congress; therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they shall have deliberated upon the subject and authorized such a measure," referring to Congress.

How about George Mason of Virginia? George Mason remarked that he was "against giving the power of war to the executive" because the President "is not safely to be trusted with it."

There is more. How about Thomas Jefferson, one of the most brilliant minds our country has ever produced? He said this: "We have already given in example one effectual check to the dog of war by transferring the power of letting him"—the dog of war—"loose from the Executive to the Legislative body."

And Jefferson didn't just believe that these were important words in the Constitution. When he was President and when he was being pressured over a dispute with Spain over the boundaries of Louisiana and Florida, he wrote to Congress stating: "Considering that Congress alone is constitutionally invested with the power of changing our condition from peace to war, I have thought it my duty to await their authority for using force in any degree."

How about Alexander Hamilton, whom many Americans have been hearing so much about with the play "Hamilton" having been such a hit over the

last few years? What did Hamilton say about this? He said:

“The Congress shall have the power to declare war”; the plain meaning of which is, that it is the peculiar and exclusive duty of Congress . . . to change that state into a state of war.”

Abraham Lincoln was not a Founding Father, but he understood absolutely what the Founders were talking about, and he said this:

The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated . . . by the following reasons. Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the object. This, our Convention understood to be the most oppressive of all Kingly oppressions, and they resolved to frame the Constitution [so] that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.

But we are in a day and age where we have the President who does not respect the words of the Constitution, does not respect the vision of our Founders, does not understand the wisdom that the issue of war and the associated huge toll in blood and huge toll in treasure is absolutely too important a decision to be vested in a single person, that it must be a product—a decision to go to war must be the product—of a considered debate of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. That is why we proceeded to pass the resolution here in February and in March down the hall, because the President has been beating the drums of war since he came to office. He started up by tearing up the Iran nuclear agreement, after the United States had led the world in creating an effective strategy to end the nuclear programs of Iran. He followed it with an economic war against Iran that has inflicted great suffering on the people of that Nation, and, then, so many other escalatory provocations and responses, that without the considered response of Congress to remind him that he does not have the power to go to war, could take us into another Middle East war.

We here in the Senate must not allow that to happen. We saw the consequences of the last Middle East war and the toll of the blood of our sons and daughters and of our national treasure. We saw that toll, and we must not allow a war to occur because of a President who disregards the Constitution of the United States.

The resolution that the Senate and House passed, the Kaine resolution, says:

Congress hereby directs the President to terminate the use of United States Armed Forces for hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran or any part of its government or military, unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or specific authorization for the use of military force against Iran.

That, by the way, is exactly consistent with the War Powers Resolution, which is the law of the United States of America that notes that the power of the President as Commander

in Chief to involve the United States “in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, are exercised only pursuant to a (1) declaration of war, (2) specific statutory authorization, or (3) a national emergency created by attack upon the United States, its territories or possessions, or its Armed Forces.”

That is the law of the United States of America backing up the Constitution of the United States of America, founded on the wisdom of the Founders, as you heard one after another, all conveying that same message.

But what was the President’s response?

The President’s response in his veto message said that the resolution is insulting. Is it insulting to fight for our Constitution to be followed?

No, Mr. President, it is the responsibility of every Member here to fight for the Constitution to be followed, and the most important issue we ever consider on the floor of the Senate is the issue of whether or not we are going to war.

It is not insulting. It is essential—essential—to remind this President that the wisdom of the Constitution stands today as it has for more than 200 years.

The President also cited authorities he has under the 2002 authorization for the use of military force. Well, let’s see what that authorization actually said. It said this:

The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to—

(1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and

(2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.

Now, I know people get confused about Iraq and Iran, but, Mr. President—and I am speaking to the President of the United States—please, get out a map and understand that Iraq is not Iran, that this does not give you authority to go to war against Iran.

The President also cites article II of the Constitution, and he goes on at some length in his veto message saying what limited powers this gives him.

Well, Mr. President—and, again, I am speaking to the President of the United States—that is not what is written in the Constitution. That is not what is embodied in the War Powers Resolution. That is not what our law and international law provide as a basis for going to war—that the President has sole power—and it is absolutely contrary to the complete history and founding of the United States of America, giving the power of war to this body and the House that is down the hall.

In fact, international law and U.S. law refer to issues like force being used as necessary and proportionate, and for the President to be able to act when there is an imminent threat. And the President takes a shot at this in his Trump veto message, referring to the fact that he has powers that go far be-

yond to respond to an imminent attack, under article II of the Constitution. In other words, the President of the United States is saying that his powers are unlimited, as he asserted in so many other arenas—that his powers are unlimited to go to war.

No, Mr. President, they are not, and a bipartisan majority of this Senate has said that. A bipartisan majority of the House has said that. And even if your veto stands and we cannot override it today, it is the Constitution of the United States that says that. And that should be the final point that today, when we vote, let’s vote with the Constitution of the United States. Let’s vote with the Founders, who so explicitly gave that power to this Chamber and the Chamber down the hall. Let’s vote to say that the wisdom that has stood for more than 200 years should be the wisdom that prevails today when we vote to override the veto of the President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the coronavirus has challenged our country—indeed, the entire planet—like few crises before, certainly in my lifetime. I was part of the post World War II generation. No doubt, world war presented the preeminent crisis within memory. It was, I think, 1917 and 1918 when the Great Influenza hit the planet and tens of millions of people died in that.

When this virus began spreading, it became clear it would place a severe strain on our hospitals and healthcare providers. As businesses closed their doors and employees lost their jobs, it was obvious it would take a toll on the incredible economy we had in this country. It is like it fell off a cliff.

The combination of new stresses brought on by this virus have led to a range of lesser-known but no less severe consequences. Earlier this week, I spoke about the impact the coronavirus is having on our country’s mental health. As our lives have been flipped upside down, many Americans are facing financial struggles, isolation, and anxiety.

For those who have children at home, the challenges are compounded even further. A recent poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation disclosed that nearly half of Americans polled reported that the coronavirus was having a negative impact on their mental health. That is up from one-third in March, and it is not surprising.

When we talk about the resources that we need to overcome this crisis, the relationship between the coronavirus and America’s mental health cannot be ignored. Beyond the silent impact these stresses are having on individuals, they can quickly lead to violence in relationships. We have learned that, in a time of crisis, the frequency and severity of domestic violence incidents are likely to increase.

Texas experienced the heartbreaking reality of that trend in post Hurricane Harvey, and we are seeing it again now.

Last month, I participated in a virtual roundtable with representatives from the Texas Council on Family Violence, the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, and more than a dozen other organizations across my State that support survivors of domestic violence. We discussed these stresses and how they are impacting victims and the barriers that are being created that make it harder for these organizations and people of good will to provide support.

One of these representatives was the CEO of the Houston Area Women's Center, Emily Whitehurst. Houston is the hardest hit area in our State, with about 7,000 cases in Harris County alone. Emily said that, in the early stages of the virus spreading, they weren't sure whether they would see an increase in calls, given that stay-at-home orders meant people would be isolated with their abusers, but they soon found out the answer.

In early April, the Houston Area Women's Center saw a 40-percent increase in the daily calls to their hotline. Compared to the same time last year, there was nearly a 50-percent increase in requests for shelter. Many of these organizations are already operating on a tight budget and working to make sure every dollar goes as far as possible.

As the need goes up, the advocates and organizations who support survivors are trying to do more and more with less and less. I was able to discuss the provisions of the CARES Act that we passed on March 25, I believe it was, and that was signed into law shortly thereafter with the provisions we made to try to offer some assistance. For example, it provided \$45 million for programs funded by the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. These support a range of services, such as emergency housing for domestic violence survivors and their children. At a time when victims are isolated with their abuser and cut off from support that they may otherwise have, these services are essential.

Our legislation also sent more funding to the National Domestic Hotline, which is based in Austin, TX, so it can continue to provide support and resources to victims as the need expands. As good as this funding was, it was nothing but a start, and our efforts cannot end there.

One of the big needs that I discussed on my virtual meeting with various organizations was the need for flexibility for funding. Organizations are required to match Federal funds they receive with State or privately raised dollars, but during this time of increased need, that administrative barrier turned into a major roadblock.

In order to provide immediate relief so these groups can continue their life-saving work, last month, Governor Greg Abbott, the Governor of Texas,

waived this match requirement. This gives organizations the ability to use the funding that they have for other purposes to fulfill their greatest needs.

Right now, one of the most urgent needs is access to safe housing. If you think about it, if you are stuck in an apartment with somebody who has abused you in the past, perhaps the danger is greater because there is no money coming in the front door and maybe increased alcohol abuse. It is easy to see how the biggest need would be a safe place to go. Victims can't move on from their abusers without a safe alternative to turn to, so it is important that we make access to shelters and housing as easy as possible.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, I introduced a bipartisan bill called the HEALS Act to help improve victims' access to housing and the services they need. It prioritizes funding for transitional housing and increases the ability to stay in that housing for victims to get back on their feet. It also directs the Department of Housing and Urban Development to further plan on how best to support victims of domestic violence.

As the Senate considers additional legislation in response to the coronavirus, we cannot lose sight of these lesser-known consequences of the pandemic. We need to continue to support and prioritize resources for survivors, and one of the most critical ways we can do that is by taking action on another piece of legislation called the Violence Against Women Act.

For more than 25 years, VAWA, as it is known, has been at the forefront of our ability to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and until recently, it remained high above the political fray. The first three times the program came up for reauthorization, there were certainly some disagreements. That is normal, but we were able to finally pull together and reach a compromise.

Unfortunately, that did not prove to be the case this time. When the time came to once again reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act last year, our friends across the aisle attempted to use this must-pass piece of legislation to score some political points. Amid the gamesmanship, VAWA expired.

As someone who has been long interested in victims' rights, I am an ardent supporter of our efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, and I have constantly fought not only to continue but to strengthen this program. That is why I am proud to have cosponsored the reauthorization bill introduced by our friend and colleague, Senator ERNST from Iowa, which would provide greater funding and stability for this program at a time when both are desperately needed.

The Violence Against Women Act has guided our Nation's effort to confront domestic violence and sexual assault for more than a quarter of a century.

The current crisis has highlighted the serious need for additional support. I am proud of the fact that, despite some of the normal dust-ups and squabbles and disagreements here, we have largely been able to act as one with passing legislation unanimously here in the Senate—the CARES Act—and to pass other legislation to provide aid to small businesses by unanimous consent.

I would hope the spirit that moved us to act in unison before in response to this coronavirus would cause us to do the same when it comes to reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act. There is a time for politics. There is a time for policy debates and differences, but when it comes to reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act, this is not that time.

I can only hope that all of our colleagues will respond to the better angels of our nature, particularly this time of crisis when there are so many people in danger of domestic violence that we could pass the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization as soon as possible. I think there is more we can do and should be doing to support victims of domestic violence. I know our colleagues across the aisle feel the same way. This should be a nonpartisan endeavor.

In our efforts to strengthen our Nation's response to the coronavirus and support those harmed in its wake, as we are doing that, we cannot allow victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to be left behind.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VE DAY

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, 75 years ago, the scene across America and Europe was quite different than what we see today—thousands of people waving flags, dancing, hugging, kissing in the streets, all covered in confetti.

In the early morning hours of May 7, 1945, in the small town of Reims, France, the Supreme Allied Commander, Dwight David Eisenhower, signed Nazi Germany's surrender and sent a cable to Washington and to London stating that the mission of the Allied forces was fulfilled, thus ending the Nazi pandemic of tyranny and genocide. The surrender took effect on May 8, and for the first time since 1941, the U.S. Capitol was bathed again in light.

Most military historians now agree that it was Eisenhower's unique skill and persuasion that enabled the Allied effort to be successful. As Winston Churchill said, "There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies and that is fighting without them."

Simply put, Ike led the effort to preserve Western democracy and freedom, and later, as President in 1953, America experienced 8 years of peace and prosperity.

Tomorrow, on the 75th anniversary of the victory of Europe—what we call Victory in Europe Day, VE Day—the Eisenhower Memorial Commission was set to dedicate the long-awaited Presidential memorial to Dwight David Eisenhower right on the Mall in our Nation's Capital, just two blocks away.

Eisenhower once said: "Plans may end up as worthless, but planning is everything." How right he was. The Commission has set aside our plans for the dedication and is now planning a worthy ceremony in the fall. There is precedent for this delay. Just as America is pulling together to fight to defeat the COVID-19 virus, the Eisenhower administration was working with the public and the private sector until a vaccine was developed by Dr. Jonas Salk and disseminated all throughout our country. Shortly thereafter, an oral and more effective vaccine was developed by Dr. Albert Sabin. Today, polio is virtually eradicated. Today we face the same challenge.

The Eisenhower Memorial, which pays tribute to Ike's leadership as both the Supreme Allied Commander and the 34th President of the United States, is located on the National Mall and will not only honor an extraordinary man but will also be a symbol for all generations of the promise of America and what our values make possible within our Nation and all over the world.

I can personally attest to the impact Eisenhower had on my life. My dad, Wes Roberts, was the Citizens for Ike chairman during the 1952 campaign and instrumental in the first ballot victory over Senator Robert A. Taft from Ohio. He later—my dad—became national chairman of the Republican Party. So at 16 years old, I was a wide-eyed sergeant at arms during the Chicago Convention and later attended Ike's inaugural ceremonies in Washington, complete with white tie and tails. I met him both times.

When Ike came into a room, even if you had your back to him, you knew he was there. He had a ruddy complexion and a great and wonderful smile. Everyone he met liked Ike. As my lapel button indicates, we still like Ike.

I have now come full circle, serving as the chairman of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission. I know there will be dancing in the streets again, and we will be able to live our lives freely and safely, as Ike and the "greatest generation" fought to secure. We will dedicate the memorial to Kansas's favorite son and one of our greatest Presidents. After all, Ike never gave up, and neither will we.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S. J. RES. 68

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise to override the President's veto of S.J. Res. 68, which requires the removal of U.S. troops from hostilities against Iran that Congress may not have authorized.

It seems like ages ago that we were truly on the brink of a potentially devastating, costly, and unnecessary war against Iran, but it was actually just a few months ago.

Make no mistake—even as Iranians have suffered the worst outbreak of COVID-19 in the Middle East, we have witnessed Iran continue its support for terrorism, harassment of American naval vessels, and general malfeasance throughout the region. Indeed, it now seems that Iran may be principally responsible for driving the spread of COVID-19 throughout the region. I don't think there is any question about Iran's malign activity.

More to the point of the legislation at hand, I shed no tears for Qassem Soleimani, who left a legacy of terrorism, bloodshed, and American deaths. However, this body has a constitutional responsibility and prerogative to declare war, to make the decision about whether to send our sons and daughters into battlefields. We have the responsibility to ensure that the Executive is effectively deploying every diplomatic tool it can before rushing recklessly into battle, particularly one without clearly defined outcomes or clarity of purpose. We must exercise our check over the Executive, particularly when it comes to the life and death of Americans.

Yet this administration continues to test the strength of our system of checks and balances. We saw it with this strike against Soleimani. Then it played out several times last year regarding congressional prerogatives on arms sales.

This is not the first time the President has faced a vote to override his veto. Last year, the House and the Senate made overwhelmingly clear that we had concerns about sales of certain weapons to Saudi Arabia following its disastrous campaign in Yemen and the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

As the administration seeks to sell more weapons overseas, the Congress will continue to assert our prerogative when it comes to foreign policy and war-making. So, as I did earlier this year, I stand in strong support of S.J. Res. 68. This body must assert its constitutional and congressional prerogative.

Of course, the President has the right to take action to defend against imminent threats to the homeland and to Americans abroad. No one disputes that—no one. While the President has the right to take action to protect Americans from truly imminent

threats and dangers, and we must stand in support of our allies and partners, it is our responsibility to ensure that he is taking the right actions to protect Americans and our interests.

The President does not have the authority to undertake any kind of military action he likes, nor does he have the prerogative to sell weapons to any country he likes absent congressional consultation and approval. Unfortunately, as has become a pattern with this administration, the legal rationale it has offered for these attacks stretches the bounds of credibility.

Following a number of briefings from the administration, I found no compelling evidence as to what was the imminent threat or the clear and present danger to Americans. In fact, following the death of Soleimani, we saw even more attacks on American assets and interests.

Just a few weeks ago, Iran was harassing our ships in the Arabian Gulf, and Iran also claims to have launched a military satellite into orbit. It does not sound like the administration's actions have meaningfully "restored deterrence" of any kind against Iranian malign activity.

Additionally, let me reiterate that the idea that somehow the administration has the authority under the 2002 AUMF to attack Soleimani simply because he was in Iraq is completely ludicrous. As someone who voted against the war in Iraq when I was in the House of Representatives during the debate over whether to authorize military action, I can assure you that it was not its intention of that 2002 authorization for the use of military force, and it does not comport with the history, the use, or the plain reading of the text.

Colleagues, I urge you to stand up for our congressional prerogatives, our congressional responsibilities, and our constitutional responsibilities, and to make clear to the President that we are a coequal branch of government that will hold the Executive accountable.

I want to thank Senator Kaine for his dedication to this issue and to defending our constitutional rights.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I want to report on an important hearing the Senate HELP Committee just completed. Senator MURRAY and I organized it. We heard from Francis Collins, the distinguished scientist who is head of the National Institutes of Health, about his new program, funded by Congress, to spend \$1.5 billion, or \$2.5 billion if you include the money we gave to BARDA, to develop a new technology that will produce tens of millions of rapid diagnostic tests for COVID-19.

Mr. President, my opening statement at that hearing can be found online at [https://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=](https://www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=SpeechesFloor) SpeechesFloor

Statements&id=1AF0B54F-A9EC-4007-9146-E8D386531C4F.

I would like to refer to a speech made by the former majority leader of the Senate, Bill Frist, in 2005, which reminds us that we have been working on these programs for a long time and which can be found online at <https://asecondopinionpodcast.com/frist-predicts-global-pandemic/>. On April 13, "The American Mind" published Senator Frist's essay, "A Storm for Which We Were Unprepared," which can be found online at <https://americanmind.org/essays/a-storm-for-which-we-were-unprepared/>.

Senator Frist's speech, which was made at a time when we were dealing with 9/11 and before Ebola but SARS and other viruses, he predicted exactly what is happening—we are going to have a virus this year, and we will have another one, and then we will have another one.

Since that time, over the last 20 years, we have had three Presidents—a Bush, an Obama, and a Trump—several Congresses who passed seven big laws. We have created a stockpile, we have created an Assistant Secretary for Preparedness, and we have spent the last 5 years with record investments in the National Institutes of Health.

We were in a situation where, on March 1, the New York Times reported that "most experts agree," the Times reported on its front page, that the United States is better prepared than almost any country to deal with this epidemic. Yet we were not as well prepared as we would like to have been.

So we had a hearing today, one, to focus on this shark tank, as Senator BLUNT and I like to call it, where Dr. Collins is inviting the best ideas from around the country for new technologies.

That is not to say we haven't been testing. The United States, according to Johns Hopkins and President Trump, has tested 7 million Americans—more than any country; more per capita, for example, than South Korea, which we often admire for the way it has dealt with COVID-19. So we are testing a lot of people.

But if we want to go back to work and we want to go back to school, we are going to need to have quick, reliable tests for everybody in the nursing home, everybody in the meatpacking plant, everybody maybe on the college campus, everybody in a graded school. We are going to have such widespread testing that people will be willing to come out of their homes and go back to work. That is one reason we need the testing.

The second reason we need the testing is because it helps contain the disease. We know how to stop the spread of the disease. If every single one of us just stayed in our room, it wouldn't spread. We have come pretty close to doing that for the last 5 weeks and nearly destroyed our economy in the process, but we had to do it.

The other way to do it is have enough tests to identify the people who are

sick. We don't know exactly how many that is. I would guess—and I am no scientist, but just from the scientists I talk to, I am guessing that in Tennessee it is 3, 5, 7 percent of us who might have this virus, and maybe half of us or some of us have symptoms, and the rest of us don't. But what we need to do is identify who those people are and quarantine them for 2 weeks or help them in the hospital, and then the rest of us can go back to school and back to work. We can't do that without tens of millions of more tests, even though we are testing more people than any other country in the world.

That is what we are talking about, and we are so fortunate to have Dr. Francis Collins, who headed the Human Genome Project, to lead that effort. He has been at the National Institutes of Health for 27 years. He led it during President Obama's time and during President Trump's time. He has invited the best ideas from around the country and gotten more than 1,000 proposals. We call it a shark tank because there is a reality television show where entrepreneurs fight to see who can win. Well, all we need is one or two or three winners of the sharks swimming around in this tank, and then BARDA—our other agency that is involved—can go to work with manufacturers and begin to produce tens of millions of these tests. How quickly? We don't know, and we shouldn't predict things we don't know, but our goal is to produce millions more tests by August, when 100,000 public schools want to open and 5,000 colleges want to open, first, by accelerating all the known technologies, and second, by finding some mighty white shark in this shark tank that produces a new technology.

There is a lot of talk about antigen tests. There is one proposal that would have you take just a simple nose swab—not the kind of thing that goes all the way back into your throat but a simple nose swab, maybe even saliva. You take a picture of it with your cell phone, and if it is positive, it tells you and it sends that to your doctor. It is that simple. It is as simple as a pregnancy test. That would be a screening test, and you might need to take a second test to confirm it because some of these screening tests aren't 100 percent.

We had a very good hearing. We heard from Dr. Collins. We have exactly the right person. We have good cooperation with BARDA, the agency that has done so much good work, and I am looking forward to the results.

I would say to my colleagues, we have another hearing scheduled. We are doing our job of oversight. On next Tuesday, Senator MURRAY and I have scheduled a hearing on safely back to school and back to work. That will feature Dr. Fauci, who has become something of a television personality over the last 3 or 4 weeks, but he has appeared before our committee many times; Dr. Redfield, who is head of the Centers for Disease Control; Dr. Hahn,

who is head of the Food and Drug Administration, which has to approve the safety and effectiveness of all these ideas; and Admiral Giroir, who is coordinating testing.

Dr. Collins also said that we are making great strides in treatments and in vaccines. Congress has appropriated \$3 trillion—I see my friend from Oklahoma here, so I will come to a conclusion so he can have his time—Congress has appropriated \$3 trillion, but the most important money we have appropriated goes for tests, treatments, and vaccines.

Dr. Collins is leading the accelerated effort with nearly 1,000 proposals now that were set up in record time—sort of a mini-Manhattan Project—to take the brainpower of this country and see if we can find a new way to create these rapid tests and then work with BARDA and manufacturers to produce tens of millions of them so we can go back to school in August and millions more so that we can get ready for the flu season.

There are also promising treatments, medicines that will be ready by the summertime. As Senator KENNEDY from Louisiana observed in one of our meetings, what bothers most people about this disease is that they might die from it. There is no medicine to treat it. Well, now there is one approved by the FDA, and there should be more by the summer.

Finally, the administration has set as a very aggressive goal the only thing that will really put us back to anything approaching normal, which is a vaccine. Their goal is that we would produce 100 million doses by September and 300 million by the end of the year, which is much more rapid than we have ever done before. I have no idea whether it is possible, but I like the idea of the goal.

So the shark tank for the tests, the acceleration of treatments for the summer, the warp speed vaccination—all in a country that has everybody working hard on the problem. Yes, there was a bump in the CDC tests to start with, but today we have tested 7 million people—more than any other country. And I think it is important for the American people to know that on tests, treatments, and vaccines, we are all working as hard as we can.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

REMEMBERING THOMAS COBURN

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I rise to pause and remember March 28, 2020. It is a day that Oklahomans and the Nation lost a patriot and a friend to many.

I stand here at this desk that I have used for the past 5 years, but before it was my desk, it was the desk of Dr. Tom Coburn.

A few days after we gaveled out in March, Dr. Coburn took his first breath in Heaven, where he was finally cancer-free, finally pain-free, and living in the presence of Jesus, where there is no

government waste and no inefficiency, where there is no conflict, and liberty is absolutely eternal. We will miss his sage advice, his blunt perspective, and his steadfast wisdom.

Dr. Coburn served in this Chamber for 10 years, from 2005 to 2015, but he also served in the House of Representatives for 6 years, from 1995 to 2001. The one title he carried in both of those Chambers was “Doctor,” and that was his preferred term.

Thomas Allen Coburn was born in Casper, WY, on March 14, 1948. Dr. Coburn graduated from Central High School in 1966. In 1968, he married Carolyn Denton—by the way, the 1967 Miss Oklahoma. They had three daughters and nine grandchildren.

At Oklahoma State University, Dr. Coburn was an honor student and president of the student business council. He graduated in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in accounting.

After the family business he worked at was sold, he attended medical school at the University of Oklahoma and received his medical degree with honors in 1983. He interned at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City. In 1986, he founded the Muskogee Family Medicine practice, which is still in operation today.

His victory over melanoma as a young man inspired him to become a physician. He stated he wanted to give back because he had been given to. Unfortunately, that battle with melanoma when he was a young man was not his last battle with cancer.

As a physician, his dedication to his patients was inexhaustible. Over his career, he delivered 4,000 babies and would often see 30 patients a day in his office.

After his election to the House of Representatives in 1994, he would fly home from Washington, DC, so that he could continue to see his patients on weekends—a schedule he maintained for the entire 6 years he spent in the House. He was a doctor all the time.

It was not uncommon for him to be in a conversation with someone, and right in the middle of the conversation, he would ask them how they were feeling because he had picked up something in their demeanor that he thought was a little bit wrong.

Dr. Coburn was a deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

In all the story that I have told you, if you are looking for some element of politics in the background, you won't find it until 1994. His decision to run for Congress in 1994 was a long shot. He narrowly won, becoming the first Republican to represent Oklahoma's Second Congressional District in 73 years.

He went to Congress as a man on a mission. He was determined to help solve the Nation's problems. His focus was not Oklahoma; it was the Nation.

I remember asking him privately before I started serving in the House of Representatives how he made a difference. His answer was that there are two people who make a difference in

Congress—the person who studies and the committee chairman. Study more than anyone else, know the issue, and you can get it done.

His tenacity on every issue was legendary. POLITICO once summarized it well, saying: “A typical bill moving through the Senate has a number of institutional hurdles to clear: subcommittee, committee, leadership and Coburn. It's that last one that you won't find in a textbook.”

His staff were wholly devoted to the cause, not necessarily because of him but because of the mission. One of his former staffers wrote this after Dr. Coburn passed:

We blocked a lot of bills. We offered a lot of amendments. We lost a lot of votes. We highlighted a lot of wasteful spending. We irked a lot of people. And over time, we started changing how business was done. Bills that added new spending couldn't pass without offsets. Program duplication became part of the lexicon. The practice of earmarking went away. People started paying attention to government waste.

Doctor Coburn's annual “Wastebook” became one of the more high-profile reports coming out of Washington each year. Over the years, Dr. Coburn and his team highlighted trillions in questionable spending on low-priority items that taxpayers were unwittingly paying for. Any spending that proved to be classic Federal wastefulness, duplicative, fraudulent, or purely ineffective, likely made the list each year. The “Wastebook” became an annual rallying cry for taxpayers frustrated by Washington's spending habits. Phrases that are common in American political conversations today, like “the bridge to nowhere,” “shrimp on a treadmill,” “term limits,” and “earmarks,” were all battles that he fought to win.

In 2010, in a fight over the debt limit increase, Dr. Coburn created an annual report from the Government Accountability Office on government duplication. It seemed like just another government report, but that report—that report that he passed in 2010—has saved taxpayers \$262 billion dollars so far.

Dr. Coburn and his team were in the fights worth fighting, but they were battling on the playing field of ideas and policy proposals, not against people. In a town that wants to label everything left versus right, liberal versus conservative, Dr. Coburn and his team didn't have any criteria to meet for those who joined them in the fight; they were willing to pull together any ally. You didn't have to agree on everything, but as long as you agreed on a couple things in front of you, that is what mattered. The friendships that were forged in the fight were genuine, true, and certainly unique.

He was the chief sponsor of President Obama's USASpending.gov to increase transparency in government spending. He was a champion for HIV/AIDS patients and medical research to save lives. He was a tenacious fighter against Social Security disability fraud, eventually exposing a \$1 billion Social Security scam in West Virginia

run by a lawyer named Eric Conn, a Kentucky lawyer who filed thousands of bogus disability applications.

He was a master of Senate rules—his clay pigeon amendment is legendary in Senate procedure. He was one of the unlikeliest Members to vote for TARP in 2008. It was probably one of the hardest votes that he took, but when he looked at the facts in front of him, he saw that it was the right thing to do. That was ultimately what it boiled down to—he was willing to do the right thing, no matter what the cost. He opposed what needed opposition, but he would prefer to argue in private to resolve an issue rather than in public, although he was clearly not afraid to argue in public.

After years of serving families as their physician—a task he continued on weekends even when he was in the House of Representatives—the Senate Ethics Committee ruled that Dr. Coburn was violating conflict of interest rules by holding an outside job and prohibited him from practicing medicine as a Senator. Dr. Coburn then just stopped taking payment and did his work as a physician pro bono, and the Ethics Committee also rejected that plan and prohibited him from working pro bono, even as a physician.

Ironically, I am now the chairman of Ethics for the Senate. The last time I visited with Dr. Coburn at his house in February, in the middle of our long, great conversation, he said to me: Since you are the chairman of Ethics, why don't you get that rule changed and allow doctors to still practice medicine while they are in the Senate? That is wrong. That needs to be fixed.

Even in the end, he was still working to right what was wrong.

Many people know that when Dr. Coburn left the Senate, he spent his time trying to fix Congress—still working on term limits and a balanced budget amendment.

If you have not seen it, you should read some of the things his former staff wrote about Dr. Coburn after he passed away a few weeks ago. Any Senator in this Chamber could only wish that our staff looked up to us as much as his staff looked up to him.

I thought the best way to honor Dr. Coburn today, though, was to remind this body of what Dr. Coburn said as he walked out of this body—his farewell speech. Among the many things he said, he challenged the Senate and Senators by saying this:

The Senate was designed uniquely to force compromise, not to force gridlock—to force compromise. One Senator had the power to stop everything for the first 100 years but it didn't because compromise was the goal.

Our Founders understood there were many differences between the States in size, in geography, economy, and opinions. They united the States as one country based upon the premise that the many are more powerful than the one. As Senators, we have to follow this example.

Then, he said this:

I've not always done that—I admit that freely to you. I should have.

As Senators, we must follow the example and stand for our principles, but working to find those areas of agreement where compromise can be found to unite and move our country forward. Not all the powers of the Senators are exercised on the Senate floor. Each Member of the Senate has a unique role to participate and practice oversight and to hold the government accountable. That is part of our duties, except most often that is the part of our duties that is most ignored.

True debates about national priorities would come about if we did effective oversight. It is the Senate, once hailed as the world's greatest deliberative body, where these differences should be argued. Our differences should be resolved through civil discourse so they are not settled in the streets. Just as the Constitution provides for majority rule in our democracy, while protecting the rights of individuals, the Senate must return to principles to bring trust to the electorate, and it can.

The theme of his whole farewell speech centered around this one statement:

We do not have one problem we cannot solve. There is nothing too big for us. They are all solvable.

On this National Day of Prayer, I believe it is entirely appropriate that we pray for Dr. Coburn's family, friends, and former staff, who will miss his friendship and his counsel, and so will our Nation.

I pray that Carolyn, their daughters, and their families cherish the memories of a husband, dad, and grandfather. Our State and our Nation will be forever grateful for your sacrifice. I pray that the task Dr. Coburn began would be completed for the sake of our liberty and of our future, and I pray that this body will take up the challenge he left on this floor: to solve the hard problems we face as a nation together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSOR

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add my colleague, Senator BROWN from Ohio, as a cosponsor to S.J. Res. 68.

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

S.J. RES. 68

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about President Trump's veto of S.J. Res. 68, a veto that he communicated to the Senate by a statement yesterday afternoon. We debated this at length in February. So there is no need to spend too much time on the substance.

I was proud of the resolution, cosponsoring it in a bipartisan way, to assert the importance of the Senate. I very much appreciated hearing my colleague from Oklahoma talk about the importance of the Senate. The debate

that we had in February about S.J. Res. 68 was about the importance of Congress in one of the most important responsibilities we have, whether or not the Nation would go to war.

We specified in that resolution that except to defend the Nation against attack or imminent attack, the United States would not be engaged in war with the government of Iran absent a congressional vote. It passed this body by a healthy bipartisan margin and also passed the House by a bipartisan margin. The President has vetoed S.J. Res. 68, and the next vote at 1:30 will be on whether to override the veto. I know what the votes will be because we have already voted on this once.

I want to just focus for a minute on the President's veto statement, which I think is instructive. When he vetoed S.J. Res. 68, this was his primary reason—the first thing he said:

This was a very insulting resolution introduced by Democrats as part of a strategy to win an election on November 3 by dividing the Republican Party. The few Republicans who voted for it played right into their hands.

What I find so notable about that statement is that the President could not see Congress expressing an opinion about war through any lens other than himself and his reelection on November 3. As everyone in this Chamber knows, the bill was not a partisan bill. It was introduced with an even number of bipartisan Senators. It was not part of a strategy to hurt President Trump. I have advocated these same positions, as have other Members of this body, under Presidents who were both Democrat and Republican. The Republican Senators and Democratic Senators who voted for it and those who voted against it had particular views about the allocation of constitutional war powers, but in no way was this partisan, and in no way was it part of a strategy dealing with the November 3 election.

For President Trump to look at a matter of war and peace and the Constitutional obligations of Congress through the lens of the November election, frankly, shocked me.

The President, later in the statement, said:

The United States is not engaged in the use of force against Iran.

Let's be clear. The U.S. military engaged in military action that wiped out Iran's top military commander. If any other Nation did that to our Secretary of Defense or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would we call that a use of force against the United States? Of course we would. As for the strike against General Soleimani, you might say it was a great thing. The President advocated for it. No one is sad that General Soleimani does not exist. But rather than justifying it as a necessity, the President says it was not a use of force against Iran.

The President goes on to say that the strike was justified by law, citing article II of the Constitution—we had some

debates about that, obviously—but also citing the Iraq war resolution of 2002. I have not heard anyone assert that as a justification for killing an Iranian leader. That resolution, which is now essentially dead letter, was designed to topple the government of Saddam Hussein, and to use that as a resolution to attack members of the Iranian Government is a stretch.

Finally, the President says:

We live in a hostile world of evolving threats, and the Constitution recognizes that the President must be able to anticipate our adversary's next moves and take swift and decisive action and response.

He concludes:

Congress should not have passed this resolution.

You cannot tell the article I branch how to do its job. We can't tell the article II branch how to do its job. But for the President to say it is insulting for Congress to take up matters of war and peace and that we should not have passed the resolution, to me, demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the importance of the article I branch.

We are not an article 2½ branch, and we are not required to play "Mother May I" with the President. We have our own independent responsibilities that we swear to uphold.

S.J. Res. 68, in my view, was a great example of coming together in a bipartisan way to uphold those responsibilities. I urge my colleagues to vote to override President Trump's veto of the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are here today to ensure the Senate fulfills its constitutional duties in having the sole power to send U.S. troops to war.

Article 1, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution is explicit in saying the power to declare war is an explicit power of the Congress.

Congress overwhelming reaffirmed this Constitutional provision when it passed the War Powers law in 1973 over the veto of President Nixon after the American people were lied to by both political parties about that war.

Under the law, the President has the authority to approve military attacks as a response to an imminent threat or with the expressed authorization of Congress.

Neither of these was the case with President Trump's decision to kill Iranian General Soleimani in January, a decision that led to a horrific missile attack on U.S. forces in Iraq and only further added to ongoing tensions with Iran.

The majority leader has argued that the War Powers law is somehow only relevant to thousands of troops being deployed to a Vietnam type situation, not a military action the President argues is simply a deterrence.

Well, that is a dangerous rationale argument and exactly what this law had in mind, the reckless or creeping escalation to war without the authorization of Congress.

In fact, the recent briefing by the administration on Iran was filled with

echoes of the Gulf of Tonkin, vague assertions used to justify stunning military escalation in Vietnam.

It raised serious concerns about what we are being told about the justifications for the attack and showed little evidence of an imminent threat and this from an administration whose President has made more than 18,000 misleading or false statements already.

Certainly nothing in the briefings offered the Senate convinced me that the administration even thinks it needs congressional authorization for taking escalatory actions.

That is why I joined Senator Kaine in invoking the War Powers Act. This Senate should not allow the country to led into another Middle East war without its consent.

And the Constitution is clear on this; Article I section 8 states that the power to declare war is an explicit power of the Congress—as it should be, one should never send our sons and daughters into war without the consent of the people.

I have made this same argument regardless of who was in the White House, Republican or Democrat.

I urge my colleagues to join us in reaffirming this body's constitutional role in matters of war by overriding the President's veto.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, in February, a bipartisan majority of the Senate voted to affirm our constitutional authority to declare war and to prohibit the President from starting a war with Iran. In March, the House of Representatives also cast a bipartisan vote to affirm that Congress, and Congress alone, has the authority to declare war.

The President has vetoed that Iran War Powers resolution, rebuking the will of Congress, the will of the American people, and the directive of the U.S. Constitution.

It is now up to Congress to reassert our authority, to override this veto, and to make good on the words of article 2, section 8 of the Constitution that gives Congress the sole power to “declare War”—because the last thing we need right now, at this time of grave crisis for our Nation, is a crisis of our own making in the Middle East—a protracted, unconstitutional conflict with Iran.

Some would like to think that there is no chance that this President would begin a war with Iran in the middle of a global pandemic, a war that would kill Americans and Iranians alike.

Think again.

On March 11, a barrage of rockets hit an airbase north of Baghdad housing U.S. troops, and killing two. That day marked the birthday of Iran's General Suleimani, who was killed in January in an unprovoked attack ordered by the President.

The attack was launched by a Shiite military group, whose leader also had been killed during the January attack on Suleimani. However, the Pentagon did not have solid evidence that the at-

tack had been ordered by the Iranian Government.

But the President's advisers, who have supported a maximum pressure campaign that has risked military conflict with Iran, did not wait for clear-cut evidence of Iran's involvement to try to push us closer to war. Senior advisers to the President, including Secretary of State Pompeo, strongly argued that the U.S. should launch a direct attack upon Iran in retaliation.

Pentagon and military leaders pushed back against Secretary Pompeo's call for military action inside Iran, warning that a large-scale response within Iran's borders could draw us into a wider war with that country.

Thankfully, these cooler heads prevailed, and the President ended up ordering night airstrikes against the militia's outposts inside Iraq to limit the possible death toll.

But, not satisfied with that response, Pentagon officials have ordered the military to draw up a plan to destroy the responsible militia group inside Iran.

However, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, LTG Robert P. White, has reacted strongly to that directive, warning that any such campaign could be bloody and counterproductive and risk war with Iran. He warned any such escalation would require thousands more American troops be sent to Iraq.

So, since March, at least twice, high level Pentagon and military officials have warned that Trump administration officials' plans risk war with Iran.

And, most recently, President Trump tweeted out an order to rewrite the rules of engagement at sea to attack harassing Iranian ships. While we condemn such harassing conduct, this is conduct the U.S. and other nations have determined is not worth a widespread war.

With the advisers that the President surrounds himself with, like Secretary Pompeo and Special Advisor Brian Hook, the chilling fact is we are never far from war with Iran. The threat is ever-present, even as coronavirus ravages our country and spreads within the military and even when all resources of the Federal Government should be singularly focused on fighting this pandemic, keeping Americans safe, and keeping our economy going.

So since we are still at risk of war with Iran in the middle of this public health and economic crisis, it is more imperative than ever that we override the President's veto and pass the Iran War Powers resolution once and for all.

At this point in time, it would exponentially worsen the current disaster if we were to bungle our way into another Middle Eastern war with Iran.

The American people don't want war with Iran. They didn't want it before this terrible virus hit, and they certainly don't want it now while we are in the throes of this pandemic.

But Secretary Pompeo and his hawkish allies in the administration cannot be counted on to represent the will of the American people.

That is why we are here. And that is why the Framers of the Constitution vested the authority to go to war with the legislative branch and not the executive branch. They placed the authority to go to war squarely with the people's representatives.

At this point in time, all national resources must be directed toward the public health and economic crisis facing our Nation. Now is the time to send a message to this President and those in his administration who seem to be always itching to escalate the conflict, that initiating war against Iran is not this President's or any President's choice to make.

Mr. Kaine. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this is one of the rare places where you can be in an institution with someone you dearly love and yet disagree with so strongly. That is the relationship that we have. I have a lot of respect for my friend from Virginia, but I think this has been twisted around in a way to make the President look bad. In his heart, he knew what he was doing at the time.

You know, we have to keep in mind—and I would even suggest—that this is probably the boldest defense policy decision of his Presidency to date. He authorized an airstrike against the leader of Iran's Quds Force, Qasem Soleimani, in accordance with, I still believe, his privilege and responsibilities under article II of the Constitution.

Now, let's remember who Soleimani was. It has been awhile now and a lot has happened since then, but he was a terrorist. He was responsible for the training and funding of militias across the Middle East, the very militias that had targeted American personnel, facilities, and partners for decades. He was a monster—nothing less.

Some people out there want to believe that his action was a rush to war. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, looking at the facts, they pushed ahead with the War Powers Resolution, and instead of making war less likely, it made it more likely.

Let me tell you how.

The resolution was shortsighted and dangerous in February, but the 4 months since then have only confirmed that it was not necessary. We are clearly not at war. Not only that, but an airstrike is not war. Defending American lives is not war. The President has made it clear that he doesn't desire war. We all know that. Nobody here wants war.

At the same time, nobody should want a policy that would leave Americans vulnerable to the whims of Iran's terrorist-supporting regime. If we do that, if we tie the President's hands so that he cannot defend American lives, we leave ourselves more vulnerable and, therefore, make war infinitely more likely, and accordingly, we must all vote to sustain the President's veto.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the joint resolution pass, the objections of the President of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding?

The yeas and nays are required under the Constitution.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent; the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BARR) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 84 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Harris	Peters
Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Booker	Jones	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Sinema
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Cassidy	Lee	Van Hollen
Collins	Manchin	Warner
Coons	Markey	Warren
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Merkley	Wyden
Durbin	Murkowski	Young
Feinstein	Murphy	
Gillibrand	Paul	

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Gardner	Risch
Blackburn	Graham	Roberts
Blunt	Grassley	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeben	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cornyn	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Kennedy	Shelby
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Loeffler	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Enzi	McSally	Toomey
Ernst	Perdue	Wicker
Fischer	Portman	

NOT VOTING—7

Brown	Murray	Stabenow
Burr	Sanders	
Moran	Schatz	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 44.

Two-thirds of the Senators being duly chosen and sworn, a quorum being present and not having voted in the affirmative, the joint resolution on reconsideration fails to pass over the veto of the President of the United States.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 547.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian D. Montgomery, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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 Brian D. Montgomery, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Mitch McConnell, Jerry Moran, James Lankford, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, Cory Gardner, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Kevin Cramer, Tim Scott, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 339.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Troy D. Edgar, of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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 Troy D. Edgar, of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, Jerry Moran, James Lankford, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, Steve Daines, David Perdue, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, Cory Gardner, Shelley Moore Capito, Marsha Blackburn, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Mike Crapo.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Maryland.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to highlight the heroes of my home State of Maryland who are working on the frontlines to fight COVID-19.

On January 21, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the United States. Since then, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States has ballooned to over 1.2 million cases and over 72,000 Americans have died.

The CDC has designated the Baltimore-Washington corridor as a hotspot, as cases continue to rise in the region. As of May 6, there have been 28,163 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,290 confirmed deaths in the State of Maryland. These are trying, unprecedented times for all communities in America, and Maryland is no different in this regard.

Fred Rogers once said that in times of crisis, times like these, we should "look for the helpers." I would like to take this time to recognize some of the heroes who are helping communities in Maryland.

I am very proud of our State's hospitals, distilleries, manufacturers, and biomedical and pharmaceutical companies that have come together to perform their own testing, manufactured personal protective equipment and hand sanitizers, and are at the forefront of developing a vaccine.

Maryland is home to some of the world's premier academic medical systems, including the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins University, which have been critical in preparing our State for the pandemic.

I am particularly proud of Johns Hopkins' coronavirus tracking system, which public health officials worldwide have come to rely on for up-to-date, accurate information. I applaud Johns