

power around the world. We are gifting them—gifting them—an advancement of their power and influence through our refusal to take part in WHO, our refusal to lead the effort to reform it, and our refusal as called upon in this resolution that was objected to earlier today offered by Senator DURBIN to be part of the global effort to try to find a vaccine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I was sitting through the last two speakers and listening to them. You can tell that it is an election year. The Democrats want to defeat President Trump, and I think sometimes a tactic to use is to get someone's strongest point and try to turn it into his weakest point. In this case, we have heard in just the last few minutes that the President is handling the coronavirus completely wrong, that he is critical of and then he was friendly to—I couldn't quite figure out the relationship with China. I know the Democrats in this Chamber are generally perceived as the close friends of China and President Xi and the rest of them.

Also, to talk about what Speaker PELOSI has done in terms of the bill that was passed in the House and the criticism that we are not taking up that bill, well, all that bill is—we are not supposed to be talking about anything in all of this heavy spending except doing something about coronavirus. This is something that no one had anything to do with. We didn't know it was going to happen. We had no preparation for it. I have never experienced it in my life. Yet I do remember so well when this body, this Senate, was working on a coronavirus bill and we were to be voting on it on a Sunday at 6 o'clock in the evening, and the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, came dancing in. It was the first time I even knew she was in town because the House wasn't in session, and she stopped it. She used her influence to try to stop it and successfully did stop it. The vote was taking place at 6 p.m. on a Sunday night, and nothing happened except a stall from then until 6 p.m. on Thursday night, when we finally did vote on it. In the meantime, how many days passed? How many people died in the meantime?

Then, when they come up in the House and they come up with a bill that is supposedly their answer to the coronavirus, it has nothing to do with coronavirus. It has to do with the very liberal Democratic agenda taking advantage of the fact that this crisis is on us in order to use this to try to get things passed. I am talking about—now, I don't have any notes down here with me. I don't know whether she is using gun control or what other efforts they were using in that bill, but it is one that has no place in the discussion when we are talking about coronavirus.

The tragedy there, the people dying—and to credit this President, I have to

say, he has done a great job in addressing this. He is the one who, every single day, is there with top medical people and afterward, at the end of the day, having a news conference and getting from the public what can we do better that we haven't been doing. He has handled it in a very, very effective way. But that is not why I am here on the floor.

TRIBUTE TO TOM COBURN

Madam President, I would like to read into the RECORD a speech I made here on the Senate floor on December 11, 2014, about another Senator from Oklahoma. I am here with something that is very sensitive to me that I want to share.

I wish to make some unscripted comments, but sincere and from the heart. I hope I am accurate when I say this, that I think in some respect I discovered Tom Coburn. I suspect that Tom and I are the only two who have ever had a major, high level national political discussion in Adair, OK. I remember hearing that there was a very conservative doctor from Muskogee. I remember calling him up at that time and asking him to run for the House of Representatives, which he did. He kept his commitments and did everything that he was supposed to do. I always remember that day.

As Senator Coburn knows, we have a place my wife and I built on a big lake in Oklahoma back in 1962.

A lot of people outside of Oklahoma don't realize that Oklahoma has more miles of freshwater shoreline than any of the 50 States. It is a big lake State. She and I built our place way back a long time ago.

When I drive up there, I go through Adair, and I go through that little sheltered area that is half torn down now. They tore down the biggest bank in town. Every time I go by there, I have to say I recall meeting for the first time with a young doctor named Tom Coburn.

I regret to say that there are times in our service together when we have not been in agreement on specific issues, and I think we have a characteristic in common. I think we are both kind of bullheaded, which has created some temporary hard feelings, but there is one thing that overshadows that. Jesus has a family, and His family has a lot of people in it. Some are here in this room. Tom Coburn and I are brothers.

In the 20 years I have been here in the Senate, I don't believe I heard a speech that was as touching and sincere as the speech I heard from my junior Senator a [short time] ago.

I really believe that in spite of all the things that have happened—and there were some differences, but they were minor—that he never ceased to be my brother, and I want to ask the Senator right now to forgive me for the times I have perhaps said something unintentionally that was not always right and was not always from the heart. But I want my junior Senator to know that I sincerely love him and am going to be hurting with him with the troubles he has right now, or might have in the future, and will sorely miss him in this body.

I ask that the RECORD show that I sincerely love my brother, Senator Coburn.

Madam President, that was a speech I made on December 11, 2014, and it sounded funny because, after the disagreement that we had, he and I were talking just a short time ago, and that was well after this speech I made in

2014, and neither one of us could remember what issue it was that we disagreed on, but we knew there was one there.

Here is the truth. There was no one like Dr. Tom Coburn. There was no one like him in Oklahoma. He was a simple country doctor from Muskogee. He was a family doctor. He delivered thousands of babies in Northeastern Oklahoma. I told him when he was running for the first time: You don't have any problems. All you have to do is get all the babies you delivered and have them bring their families along, and it will be an overwhelming victory.

There was no one like him. He was a true fiscal conservative who stayed true to his purposes. He had skills that made him arguably the most thoughtful adviser in the Republican conference.

I think this is somewhat characteristic of doctors. It is part of their culture. They advise people. People listen to them. And that was Tom. Tom was always an adviser to everyone. In every policy decision, Tom sought to be a faithful steward of the taxpayers' money and a dedicated public servant to Oklahoma.

He had an impressive record of service in the House of Representatives, as well as serving in the Senate with me, but nothing about that legacy would have mattered to Tom. Tom knew what mattered in life. What mattered in life was his family—Carolyn and his three daughters.

Carolyn, I suspect you may probably even be watching right now, and I want you to know how many people in this body—Tom is not here anymore, but how many people love you and Tom. Tom knew what was important in life and in Jesus. He is a brother in the Lord. He is my brother.

He will always be a Member of this institution, but we need to make it official.

So, Madam President, in honor of his life and legacy, I would like to ask unanimous consent that the Senate approve a resolution in honor of the life and legacy of Tom Coburn, a doctor from Muskogee.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR THOMAS ALLEN COBURN

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 583, submitted earlier today.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 583) honoring the life and achievements of former United States Senator Thomas Allen Coburn and expressing condolences to the family of Thomas Allen Coburn on his passing.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 583) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, President Eisenhower once said: "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles [away] from the corn field." Those are wise words from a wise man.

If you are trying to get a view of what is happening across America, you certainly can't get a comprehensive picture staying here in Washington, DC, or even listening to the national media. That is why, whether working on a farm bill, a highway bill, or a coronavirus recovery bill, I look to my constituents for feedback. I know we all do the same.

Since we first learned that evacuees from China would be headed to Joint Base San Antonio for a 14-day quarantine, I have been in close contact with the folks in Texas—starting in San Antonio—about the coronavirus. I have joined dozens, if not 100 or more, videoconferences with groups covering every industry that have shared honest perspectives about how things are going, what is working, and what more is needed from Congress.

I have spoken with nurses and hospital administrators about the need for additional PPE to protect our healthcare heroes. I have spoken with researchers and scientists, even as recently as today, about the ongoing quest to develop vaccines and treatments and, of course, with farmers and ranchers and producers about their struggle to cope with a glut of supply and reduced demand.

I have spoken with small business owners about the impact of this virus on their businesses, their workforce, and their communities. Their feedback has been invaluable to the work of the Senate as we continue our mission to lead America through and eventually out of this crisis.

As States across the country begin to reopen their economies, the light at

the end of the tunnel is getting a little bit brighter, but there is still a whole lot of work that needs to be done. Yesterday, I spoke with some of my friends at Texans for Lawsuit Reform, the Texas Civil Justice League, and a number of other business stakeholders about the critical need for liability protection in our next piece of coronavirus legislation.

We are already seeing that, across America, there is a wave of COVID-19-related lawsuits rolling in. Without action on our part, there is genuine fear that these lawsuits could hurt the very people we need to be helping right now get through this weakened economy.

One of the Texans on the call talked about the vast challenges our healthcare workers have faced over the last several weeks. As hospital beds began filling up, the strain on healthcare workers became a serious problem.

Many States loosened restrictions to allow out-of-State or retired physicians to join the fight on the frontlines, and countless healthcare workers are being cross-trained or redeployed to help fill personnel shortages. You may see pediatricians caring for adults or anesthesiologists working in the ICU.

On top of that, these men and women are forced to make tough, almost impossible decisions every day. They may have half a dozen patients who desperately need a ventilator but only two machines available.

We should not put our healthcare workers in an impossible situation where we ask them to do everything they can to help, and then we punish them by subjecting them to litigation when somebody claims that they could or should have done better.

It is not just healthcare workers, though, who could emerge from this crisis only to be greeted by an avalanche of lawsuits. As our economy begins to reopen, businesses are dusting off their tables, barber chairs, gym equipment—whatever the case may be—and preparing to welcome customers back through their doors.

They are following the guidance from the State and the Centers for Disease Control and taking every precaution they recommend to protect both their employees and their customers. However, despite their best efforts, there is nothing stopping someone who contracts the virus from saying it happened at that particular business and then suing.

One of the people on our call yesterday said his business has faced many lawsuits before, and he knows that, even if you have done absolutely nothing wrong, defending these lawsuits can be a huge, huge expense. He pointed out that causation is of particular concern when you talk about a virus. We are still learning about it, but we know that the incubation period could last up to 14 days, making it nearly impossible to prove when and where the virus was contracted.

While ordinarily it would be the burden of the person bringing the suit to

prove causation, we know that, in jury trials, anything can happen and that this is not enough to stop opportunistic litigation from trying to either get a successful jury verdict and judgment or just a nuisance settlement because of the cost of defense.

Across the country, we are already seeing coronavirus lawsuits rolling in, targeting not only our healthcare workers and businesses but nursing homes, assisted living facilities, universities, governments—you name it.

Without action from Congress, the litigation epidemic will be a big one and will add insult to injury from this pandemic. We simply cannot allow this tidal wave of lawsuits to sweep away our healthcare workers, nonprofits, and businesses who followed the guidelines and acted in good faith. Congress needs to put in place commonsense reforms to protect those who have helped the American people get through this crisis and who will help lead us out of it.

I am working with my colleagues on a proposal that would achieve this goal through temporary and targeted protections related to COVID-19 lawsuits. That includes our healthcare workers who have been on the frontlines battling this pandemic, the businesses that are going to great lengths to safely reopen their doors, and the nonprofits helping their communities during a time of unprecedented need.

Despite what some of the folks on the left try to claim, this isn't a ban on lawsuits. Nobody is suggesting we have blanket immunity. No one wants to let bad actors get away with their bad behavior and to reward it. However, as my constituents told me yesterday, the fear of unrestrained litigation could be the boot on the neck of our economy and add insult to injury for our healthcare workers and others who, in good faith, did precisely what they were asked to do during this time of crisis.

We need to put commonsense safeguards in place to ensure that those operating in good faith and following all the relevant guidelines cannot be sued into oblivion because of a particular outcome when people are doing the best they know how to do during a time of crisis—in good faith—and doing exactly what the public health officials and their government officials are telling them to do.

This is going to be a critical aspect to our recovery, not only in Texas but in every State across the Nation. We have counted on all of these people, from our healthcare workers to local businesses, to help get us through this crisis. We can't let them down now.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.