

of one of America's approximately 14,000 school districts, or the principal or headmaster of one of the 135,000 schools, or the president or chancellor of one of the 6,000 colleges, and help them answer the question of how to reopen schools safely.

So Dr. Fauci, I hope that in your opening statement or in answers to questions you will suggest the steps a superintendent might take to open school safely, and how not only to keep children safe but to keep safe the adults—teachers, parents and grandparents—with whom they come in contact.

Dr. Hahn—Will there be treatments or medicines this fall that will help speed recovery from COVID-19 or reduce the possibility of death? I believe the fear of going back to school—or going anywhere these days—is in large part because of the fear of severe illness. If that risk can be lessened by new treatments, it should increase confidence in going back to school.

I'd also like to commend Dr. Hahn and the work FDA did to get tests on the market as quickly as possible to help understand the spread of the virus. Since then, FDA has worked out which tests have not worked as well as they should, and taken steps to remove them from the market. That's what is supposed to happen during a pandemic.

Admiral Giroir—at our last hearing you said you expected there to be 40-50 million diagnostic tests available each month by September. Is that still true? And exactly how does a school district go about making sure it has those tests? And who pays for them? What are the prospects from the "shark tank" at NIH that there will be new fast, reliable and inexpensive tests available for more widespread testing?

Dr. Redfield—you are continuing to work on additional guidelines about going back to school and college safely. Are CDC employees available to help states work with school districts or college administrators to develop their plans? And what advice do you have about the arrival of the flu season this fall at the same time as COVID-19?

This is a lot to discuss but there will be time during the next two and half hours to answer most of those questions.

Let me highlight three areas that have come up in our four earlier hearings this month that I think need clarification.

First, contact tracing. There is no doubt contact tracing is crucially important to identify anyone who might have been exposed so that person doesn't, in turn, expose someone else. According to an NPR report on June 18, states already have hired at least 37,000 contract tracers. State health officials and Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security issued a report estimating a need for at least 100,000 contact tracers.

Several reports have suggested that the federal government should appropriate funds to pay for these contact tracers. The reality is: Congress already has.

On April 24, Congress appropriated \$11 billion, which has been sent to states and tribes for the expenses of testing. The legislation explicitly said that money could be used for contact tracing. This is in addition to the nearly \$755 million from the first emergency appropriations legislation signed into law March 6 that went out to states for coronavirus response and can be used by states for contact tracing.

This is also in addition to the March 27 legislation in which Congress provided at least \$1.5 billion in the CARES Act for states, territories, and tribes to use for COVID preparedness and response, some of which can be used for contact tracing. The CARES Act also included \$150 billion to states, but a significant amount of that \$150 billion has not been spent because it is restricted to expenses related to COVID-19.

For example, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee has told me that he is reserving as much as \$1 billion of what Tennessee received so he can determine what flexibility he has in spending the money. Washington state has not spent as much as \$1.2 billion. According to the Missouri State Treasurer, Governor Parsons has not spent about \$1 billion.

According to the report by state health officials and Johns Hopkins, an average salary for a contact tracer would be a little more than \$35,000. That adds up to about \$3.5 billion for 100,000 contact tracers. So Congress has already sent to states enough money to hire all the contact tracers that are needed.

Second, who pays for testing. In the CARES Act, Congress voted to make all COVID-19 tests available to patients at no cost. That meant insurers would cover diagnostic tests, which detect whether a person is currently infected with the virus, and also antibody tests, which indicate whether a person has had COVID-19 in the past and now may have immunity to future infection. Guidance from the Labor Department, the Treasury Department, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services last week said insurers are only required to pay for tests without patient cost sharing if a doctor orders it. I agree with that.

But given that the CDC specifically recommends doctors order tests in 2 situations—when a person has signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or recently had contact with someone known or suspected to have COVID-19—who pays for testing at other times?

I believe Congress will need to take further action. For example, if a school wants to test its students randomly, perhaps that school should coordinate with their state to become a part of the state testing plan, making all tests free to students and teachers. Congress may need to provide more money to states to cover that.

If an automaker wants to test all its employees at a plant every two weeks, perhaps the automaker should pay for that testing or become part of a state testing program using funds already provided by the federal government.

Third, flu shots. CDC has said more people need to get flu shots this fall so health care workers can better distinguish between COVID-19 and the flu. CDC says a priority is for all children over the age of 6 months be vaccinated for the flu so they don't become sick and pass it to more vulnerable populations who could have more severe consequences.

On January 24, Sen. Murray and I hosted our first bipartisan briefing on coronavirus at a time there were only 4 cases in the U.S. Since then this committee has held 4 more briefings. This is our 8th hearing on coronavirus and U.S. preparedness.

Last week's hearing was about steps to take this year, while our eye is on the ball, to better prepare for the next pandemic. I have issued a white paper outlining five recommendations for Congress to prepare Americans for the next pandemic, and that paper has received more than 350 substantive comments that are available to every member of the committee.

At the end of this hearing, I'm going to ask each witness what are the 2-3 actions that Congress could take this year to prepare for the next pandemic, some of which undoubtedly could help with this pandemic.

But this hearing is about what happens now as administrators prepare to reopen schools and colleges.

Experts underestimated this virus and there is still much we don't know about it. But we do know the basic steps to take to reopen schools and colleges in 2020 before there is a vaccine and those are: social distance, wear a mask, wash your hands, test, contact

trace, and isolate those exposed or sick. And hopefully by the fall there will be treatments to make the consequences of the disease less severe.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses how school leaders and college presidents can safely reopen 135,000 schools and 6,000 colleges, and also learning the latest developments on testing and treatments that we can expect during the year 2020 before vaccines arrive.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank Senator BLUNT and Senator MURRAY for their cooperation this month in this series of six hearings that we have had on COVID-19.

I think it is very important for the American people to know that while there is a vaccine down the road, the tests are coming, the fast tests, and the treatments are coming. They should be here by the fall. That is what the experts say. It is not what I say; that is what the experts who testified before us say.

The experts all said the following: If you want to contain the disease, if you want to go back to school and back to college and back to work and out to eat and maybe even see a little football, stay 6 feet apart, wash your hands, and wear a mask.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BRAUN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S. 4049

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to talk about the annual National Defense Authorization Act to support our servicemembers and their families. This is one of the few things that the Senate actually passes and does so on a bipartisan basis, and I am hopeful we will do that again. It is because Republicans and Democrats alike recognize it is imperative to give the men and women serving in our Armed Forces the resources and support they need to carry out their critical missions for all of us.

This year, I am pleased to recognize the importance of ensuring that our troops get compensated properly for the hard work and sacrifices they make. It has an across-the-board 3-percent pay increase in it. They deserve it. On July 4, as we celebrate 244 years of freedom, I think it is appropriate that we demonstrate our support for the brave men and women in uniform whose sacrifices have ensured the liberty we are celebrating.

I am also pleased that there is a lot in here that is really important to the people I represent in Ohio. At Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, which is our State's largest single-site employer, the bill authorizes \$23.5 million for important work on a new hydrant fuel system for the Defense Logistics Agency. It will make a big difference to our airmen and Air Force civilians and to the troops around the

world who rely on DLA for their equipment and resources.

There is also \$35 million for enhanced energy efficiency at Wright-Patterson's National Air and Space Intelligence Center, NASIC. We are so proud to have NASIC in Ohio, and we are happy to see this additional investment in infrastructure for NASIC. Hopefully, the Space Command will end up in Ohio as well.

There is also \$15 million in the bill for construction of a new Guard readiness center in Columbus, OH, which will serve as a staging area for the Ohio National Guard, which is increasingly being called upon to respond to crises. I will have a chance to visit with some of our Guard members next week in Ohio, and I look forward to it.

One of the bill's other important initiatives that has a big impact on my State is authorizing \$1.4 billion to upgrade and modify Abrams tanks. It authorizes about \$847 million to build and upgrade the Stryker armored fighting vehicles. There is also an additional \$378 million to produce 72 Stryker chassis to support the Army's Maneuver Short Range Air Defense Program. This is all really great news for our men and women in uniform. Why? Because they are going to get from Lima, OH, the best equipment in the world to be able to protect themselves and keep the peace. These Abrams and Stryker vehicles are the most advanced and lethal tanks and armored vehicles on the battlefield today.

Of course, this isn't just a big win for our military; it is also great for the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center, which I call the tank plant—always have. It is in Lima, OH, and it is the only facility in the world that can do what they do. It is certainly the only facility in the United States that has the capacity and the highly trained personnel capable of producing Abrams tanks and Stryker armored vehicles. It is a strategic asset for our country and a source of employment for some truly outstanding engineers, welders, and other technicians. I love going to the plant and talking to them about what they do. A lot of them are veterans, and all of them believe that they are part of the effort.

The Obama administration, by the way, 9 years ago, wanted to shutter this plant. They said that we wouldn't need tanks in the future and we should shut down the plant and shut down the line, which would have cost billions of dollars to mothball and then try to start it again. Thank goodness we didn't do that. We fought hard against it. I recognized it was the wrong decision and fought against it every step of the way. I remember, at the time, some of the taxpayer groups were saying: Oh, my gosh, this is somehow inappropriate to keep funding going when the Obama administration says it is not necessary. But it was necessary. It was necessary then, and, boy, it is certainly necessary now. We saved the taxpayers a lot of money by not shutting it down.

We provided enough funding to keep it open partly by bringing in foreign sales, and I helped in that, to try to get other countries to try to use our tank plant, which they have and still do. We also reversed years of backlogged maintenance recently, and we ensured our workers have a safe environment in which to work. So it is doing well now. The lines are humming. Thank goodness we kept it open.

In 2018, I had the opportunity to be the first Member of Congress to see the latest model of the Stryker Dragoon vehicles. They have a 30-millimeter turret—a cannon on top of an armored vehicle. This is a wheeled armored vehicle with a turret on top of it. That 30-millimeter cannon replaced the normal 50-caliber machine gun. The 50-caliber machine gun is effective in certain instances, but the 30-millimeter cannon is much more effective in many places on the battlefield, particularly in Europe, given the threat we face there.

So whether it is in Eastern Europe in the Baltic States or being prepositioned in Germany for the possibility of having to respond, this is what our military wants, what our Army wants, and we have to continue to provide our soldiers this Dragoon variant of the Stryker so that they can deter aggression from Russia and others and help keep our allies safe. This includes, by the way, Ukraine.

Talking about Ukraine, it has been in the headlines a lot over the last several months. I have been to Ukraine several times. I had the opportunity to be on the frontline in Ukraine at what is called the line of contact. Let me tell you, it is not a cold war; it is very much a hot war.

I know that here, on this side of the Atlantic, what is happening in Ukraine can sometimes seem like it is half a world away and maybe doesn't affect us, but it is not far away, and it does affect us. It is very relevant. In a sense, it is where the modern battle is taking place between two very different ideologies, one of freedom and democracy and wanting to connect to the West, and that is modern Ukraine. That is exactly what President Zelensky and the Parliament there and others want to do. The other would be the oligarchy and the corruption of Russia, which want to pull Ukraine back into their orbit.

In Ohio we have a large Ukrainian community, particularly in Northeast Ohio, and they certainly have a vested interest in seeing that their ancestral homeland can defend itself from Russian aggression as it works to align itself more with NATO and the West while promoting the platform of democracy, freedom, transparency, and free markets.

I have met with President Zelensky several times, and I am encouraged by his commitment and his passion to keeping Ukraine on the right track, including fighting corruption. We have to continue as a country to ensure that elimination of corruption continues in

Ukraine. I was pleased to see that Ukraine was very recently designated as a NATO Enhanced Opportunities Partner, and one day I hope to welcome them as a full member of NATO. We are passing, I hope, a unanimous consent resolution in this body with regard to this issue. We need to be sure and let Ukraine know we support them.

For the past 4 years, I have worked to include provisions in the NDAA, the Defense bill we are working on now, that help expand military assistance to Ukraine and build on the Ukraine military security assistance initiative. This year I was pleased that the bill again authorizes \$250 million in lethal and nonlethal aid to Ukraine. That includes \$125 million in lethal assistance that they need. That is an increase of \$75 million from last year's budget. So we are doing even more to help allow the Ukrainians to defend themselves.

New this year, this bill includes my proposal to require the Departments of State and Defense to develop a new multiyear strategy to support the development of Ukraine's military forces, increasing its capability and capacity and providing a resource plan for U.S. security assistance.

I had the opportunity to speak today to General Dayton, who will be nominated by the President to be the next Ambassador to Ukraine. This is a guy who has done a terrific job of working with the Ukrainian military to modernize the military, to ensure there is more transparency, civilian control, and to be sure they are following the model that will allow them to be successful in recruiting and in fighting against the Russian threat.

There is a lot to like in the NDAA, and I have introduced some amendments that I hope will be included as well. I will continue to advocate for Ohio and for the men and women who keep us safe every day.

I look forward to voting on the bill's passage in the Senate soon so that our troops, who give so much of themselves just to be able to keep us safe, have the resources they need, the best equipment, and the highest level of readiness to be able to fulfill that mission to keep the peace and to continue to secure our liberties.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. President, I am here on the floor today to talk about some recent troubling statistics that ought to serve as a call to action for every single one of us.

Last Friday, in observance of World Drug Day, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime released its annual world report detailing the impact of drug use and trafficking across the world. Frankly, the report paints a grim picture that reminds us that America has a unique addiction crisis, especially as it relates to opioids.

The report says that in recent years the United States has lost more men, women, and children to drug overdose deaths—60,000 to 70,000 per year—than the next 20 countries combined.

Let me say that again. The United States has lost more people to drug