

money being practically identical in the HEALS package and the Heroes Act that passed the House of Representatives. In fact, House Democrats provided around \$58 billion for K-12. The HEALS Act actually increases that to \$70 billion. There is actually more money in the HEALS legislation.

On the business front, both Democrats and Republicans have seen value in the Paycheck Protection Program we introduced in the CARES Act, which is why both bills seek to expand it. Albeit in somewhat different ways, but there is greater consensus here than one might think. We just need to sort out the details.

My colleague from Louisiana is here with me tonight in the Chamber. He has talked a lot about the need for us to improve the way we provide funding to local governments, municipalities, and to provide more flexibility. I don't think there is much disagreement about that on either side of the aisle. There may be a disagreement the numbers, the amount of funding, but, again, the HEALS package has funding. The Democrats have more funding. But flexibility—that is one where I think there is a lot of bipartisan consensus.

I know it is a popular right now to say that we are so far apart we can never get together, but as I look at this, when you actually look at the individual pieces of this, I see a lot of commonalities. The final one I want to mention is one where I would think all of us should be together. That is addressing the underlying health crisis we face.

Both the HEALS package and the Heroes Act provide increased funding for research into vaccines and antiviral treatments for this disease. Both acts also recognize the importance of increasing funding for testing, which is critical in making sure we can safely and sustainably reopen.

There are more points of commonality between the Republican and Democratic approaches that I could touch on, like providing another \$1,200 in stimulus checks for all Americans who make less than \$75,000 a year. That, I understand, is something that both Democrats and Republicans support. That would be a huge part of this new package.

The House-passed Heroes Act has, again, a pricetag that is just too high—\$3.5 trillion. I think most people would acknowledge that. I also know there is a big difference between that and the \$1 trillion that was in the proposal from Senator MCCONNELL—\$1 trillion. That used to be a lot of money.

Again, when you look at the actual details of this, when you look at what is actually in these two pieces of legislation, there is so much commonality. I think it is critical that we get this legislation right. We have time to do that. In the meantime, as Senator MCSALLY has proposed, let's continue the \$600 for the next week.

Let's be sure that we can build on these commonalities we see between

these two pieces of legislation. Retreating into partisan corners at this critical time doesn't benefit any of us. It certainly doesn't benefit the United States, and it doesn't benefit us as an institution. It certainly doesn't benefit the people I represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). The Senator from Louisiana.

AIR AMERICA

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise to speak of a largely unknown aspect of the Vietnam war and a too neglected aspect. I rise to highlight Air America and its role in military conflicts from the 1940s through the Cold War.

Air America, which was previously known as the Civil Air Transport, operated under a shroud of mystery, intrigue, and, at times, purposeful deceit to allow the organization to continue covert operations. Its members lived the motto "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Professionally."

Now, if you would look at this picture, you would think that this must be an Army helicopter pilot performing a rescue on an active battlefield. No, that pilot was a civilian. He was a contractor of sorts with the U.S. Government and was flying that helicopter to rescue that soldier or that marine, not an enlisted person. Its members, again, lived the motto "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Professionally," including rescuing those from battlefields.

They garnered respect as cargo and charter airline pilots during the Secret War in Laos in the 1960s and 1970s. As the war progressed, the U.S. Government increasingly relied on Air America pilots to conduct search-and-rescue missions of downed U.S. military pilots—often in heavy combat areas with no weapons of their own. The daily risks that they took to save others earned them the reputation as being the most shot at airline. I shouldn't laugh, but there is, I am sure, kind of a gallows humor they felt when they said that, "the most shot at airline."

Here is a depiction of a plaque in Richardson, TX, that President Reagan dedicated. On it are the names of those who died as Air America pilots.

At the plaque dedication in Dallas, President Ronald Reagan said: "Although free people everywhere owe you more than we can hope to repay, our greatest debt is to your companions who gave their last full measure of devotion."

While President Reagan recognized the contributions that these pilots made to the United States, Air America has received mixed support throughout its history. The Department of Defense and the CIA, among others, have argued that Air America pilots are not veterans, saying their heroic rescues of American soldiers were not part of their contracts or within the scope of their mission.

These sentiments have kept Air America pilots from receiving veteran

status and the benefits that come with the status. This needs to change. This need to change is based on declassified materials that show these pilots are deserving of such recognition for their exploits.

Who were these dedicated Americans serving in Air America?

Most crews had military training. Many bore the scars of fighting on the ground in Korea and Vietnam. They are former POWs and Special Forces—all tough as nails. They were also crop dusters and water bombers who fought forest fires. They were smoke jumpers and flight mechanics. Thousands of personnel were indigenous people, both male and female. Air America members came from all walks of life to answer the call to serve.

Military aircraft was provided to employees to conduct combat-related activity in areas where the U.S. Armed Forces could not go due to treaties. They served at considerable risk. Numerous employees died or were seriously injured. However, their sacrifices were not given the same recognition as military members.

Lowell Pirkle was killed when an RPG hit his helicopter, and it burned to the ground. Sadly, it took years for his remains to be repatriated and sent to Honolulu. When Deborah, Lowell's wife, insisted that he be buried in Arlington Cemetery, she was informed that Lowell was ineligible because he died not in the military but as part of Air America. He would eventually be buried in Arlington due to his previous military service, though the work in both engagements was essentially the same.

Let me just pause for a second. Let's look at this poster.

From 1962 to 1975, Air America inserted and extracted U.S. military personnel and provided combat support across the entire Vietnam field. Air America rescued hundreds of Americans and stranded Vietnamese, including the last out of Saigon in April 1975. Who can forget these dramatic photographs?

Air America pioneered remote landings during the Vietnam war to resupply U.S. troops and key allies, like the Hmong in Laos, and Air America pilots were the only known civilian employees to operate non-FAA-certified military aircraft in combat zones.

Lastly, as I previously mentioned, here is the memorial plaque in Richardson, TX, that honors the 146 Air America veterans who were killed. These men served "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime, Professionally." Again, it has been denied that they actually performed these military duties, but, once more, declassified documents show that the U.S. Government owes Air America and, therefore, its members status as veterans.

In August 1965, Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote: "Political factors require that Air America helicopters continue to assume responsibility for all search-and-rescue operations in Laos."

A year prior, Ambassador to Laos Leonard Unger said: "Search and rescue is a crucial factor in maintaining the morale of pilots, and there is no prospect at this juncture of establishing effective search-and-rescue procedures without the use of both civilian (Air America) and U.S. military personnel."

The stories go on, but I will add one more.

CIA Assistant General Counsel James Harris wrote to the Civil Service Commission: "In the case of Air America, it would have been virtually impossible to preserve the cover story had all the corporate employees been advised that they were really employees of the United States Government."

It is time for the U.S. Government to set the record straight about Air America. Their service is commended by all who served with them, especially by those servicemembers whose lives were saved by Air America. We owe them more than a debt of gratitude. I urge my colleagues to consider the story of these brave pilots and work toward providing the recognition they deserve as Federal employees, including granting veteran status and the associated benefits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 75 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

PROTESTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I want to start by doing something that has become a little controversial. It shouldn't be, and the fact that it is reflects a sad time in our Nation's history. Here it is:

To our Nation's police, sheriffs, and all other law enforcement officers out there—State and Federal—thank you. I appreciate you and am grateful for your service.

Why has that become controversial? Because all of a sudden, criticizing and demonizing our Nation's law enforcement has become the popular liberal thing to do.

Over the last few days, you have probably seen the liberal mainstream media making wild claims and accusations that President Trump has deployed so-called secret police to Portland. These allegations got even more attention over the last few weeks because some of my Democratic col-

leagues came down to the floor and made the wildest accusations about how the Federal officers were the worst in the world.

Some of the words they used were: "bold," "sadistic," "Gestapos," "storm troopers," "paramilitary"—words designed to stir the emotions of everyone watching. They were talking about the law enforcement community. They were talking about sheriffs and police. Rather than letting these wild allegations go unchecked, let's remember how we got here.

For over 60 days, violent demonstrators have laid siege on Portland. That is not an exaggeration. They have specifically and deliberately attacked a Federal courthouse, attempting to destroy it. Let's be clear: These are not peaceful protesters. Everyone agrees in the First Amendment and the support for peaceful demonstrations. We all agree on that. That is not what we are talking about here. That is not what happened when the anarchist groups co-opted the peaceful protests with the fires, the lasers, the bricks, the Molotov cocktails, the sledgehammers, and more.

See the chart. This chart we have here, the one on the right says:

Day 53. Federal facilities and law enforcement officials targeted and attacked overnight. One officer injured and 5 arrested.

The one on the left says:

Day 56. Last night six DHS law enforcement officers were injured in Portland. To be clear, criminals assaulted FEDERAL officers on FEDERAL property . . . and the city of Portland did nothing.

The response from local leaders? They have caved to the mob and will not allow local law enforcement to protect Federal property. In fact, they have demanded Federal law enforcement leave and surrender to the mob. Can you imagine? This is in America that this happened.

So that leaves us two options: One, completely give in to the mob and let them burn down the taxpayer-funded courthouse—and we all know that they will not stop there—or, two, send additional Federal resources to Portland.

We are a nation of law and order. Additional Federal resources is the only correct answer here. The Department of Homeland Security doesn't have a choice. They are legally required to protect these facilities.

Contrary to what has been reported in the media, these Federal officers are acting in accordance with the law. They have the legal authority and responsibility to protect Federal property, as well as detain, question, and arrest anyone in accordance with that. Specifically, that is found in 40 U.S. Code 1315. So they aren't some sort of secret police; they are legal law enforcement doing what local law enforcement wasn't being allowed to do locally there, so they took up their responsibilities and performed.

Last week, Governor Brown finally conceded. I guess he just got to the point where he was willing to be fearful

for the people and their injuries and the terrorist activity that was going on. But he conceded and allowed the Portland Police Bureau to clear out the downtown parks that were a base for the agitators and let the State police officers defend Federal properties.

That is the responsible thing to do, and it shows the President's commitment to working with State and local law enforcement when additional resources are needed.

It could be easy to think that this is an outlier, but, sadly, the national "defund the police" movement—it is a movement in this country now. Everyone is talking about it, defund law enforcement. The movement is having a real impact throughout America.

The result? Shootings have increased in New York by 277 percent this year; in Chicago, by 50 percent this year, and in May, they saw the most violent weekend in modern history; and in Minneapolis, the murder rate is expected to surpass an alltime high.

In fact, as President Trump mentioned recently, the 20-most dangerous cities in America are run by Democrats. I have to mention this because the Washington Post tried to fact check the President's statement. And do you know what? It is a good thing that they did. The result? The Post showed that, per capita, 19 of the 20 cities with the most violent crime per 10,000 residents were controlled by Democrats, and the one that wasn't controlled by Democrats was an Independent, but that Independent is a Democrat.

I guess they hoped we would only read the headline and not see the data that shows the impact of the lack of leadership. In case you can't tell watching at home, the blue lines on the chart that will go up here—what we have here is the claim "that the most dangerous cities in America all run by Democrats. They aren't." But then they found out that they are. Here they are. The blue lines are run by the Democrats; the red lines, Independents. So that is a problem.

Honorable, good law enforcement officers are enduring severe budget cuts from spineless politicians who want to concede to the far left "defund the police" movement. They are being over-stretched and overburdened.

That doesn't even get into the injuries law enforcement has endured during these violent protests recently. In Portland alone, three officers are facing possible permanent blindness after having high-intensity lasers shown in their eyes. Other officers have faced injuries from being hit with bricks and fireworks. They have endured verbal assaults, been spit on, and called the most offensive names. At least 30 officers have been victims of a doxing, where anarchists share where their families live online so they can have access to them. In fact, since July 4, over 245 Federal law enforcement officers have been injured in Portland.

Fortunately, President Trump is taking action, standing up for our police