

been a mark of success in terms of being able to identify and then isolate and then keep the virus from transmitting.

She is now very, very focused on how we safely return our kids back to school. I had a long conversation with her a few days back. She says that this is the ultimate challenge in that it is not just how we reopen schools but how we keep our schools open after that. That is our challenge.

She shared with me—she said: I thought that putting together the plans and the protocols for the seafood processors was going to be challenging and difficult in these very remote communities where they have limited healthcare in the event that you have the virus spread. That was difficult, but getting our schools open and keeping them open safely—this is the biggest challenge.

She said that schools are now her new seafood processors. So she is taking up the challenge aggressively.

Dr. Zink reminds us that at the end of the day, what we have to stay focused on is keeping people safe, keeping our families and our workers safe. This is a moment about all of us and how we respond during this great time of need.

I am extraordinarily thankful for Dr. Zink's leadership, both out in front and behind the scenes as she works with the many extraordinary Alaskans who are seeking to make a difference as we take on the daily challenges and battles that face us with the COVID-19 response.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

COVID-19 HEROES

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in honoring those who have helped their communities to overcome challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many everyday heroes who deserve recognition. We have seen the efforts of our first responders, law enforcement, teachers, postal and delivery employees, and store workers, among others, who have continued providing essential services in spite of the challenges brought on by the coronavirus.

As the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, I have spoken many times about the critically important work of our farmers and our ranchers.

I see I am joined here on the floor by our Agriculture Committee chairman. I know he has been down here as well pointing out how our farmers and ranchers are continuing to provide food, fuel, and fiber for our Nation even during this pandemic. We are working to help and support them during this challenging time. Every American benefits every day from the work of those farmers and ranchers, who provide the highest quality and lowest cost food

supply in the world in tough times and even in times when we face something like a pandemic.

Today, I would like to recognize the valiant efforts of the healthcare professionals in my State and across this country and highlight some of the work our North Dakotans are doing—doctors, nurses, and many others working in hospitals and clinics across our State.

North Dakota's healthcare professionals have been working around the clock to prevent the spread of this virus and to treat those affected by COVID-19.

One example is Dr. Chris Pribula, a graduate of the University of North Dakota Medical School, who worked with a team to set up the COVID Care Unit at Sanford Hospital in Fargo. He was on duty when the first COVID patient arrived at the hospital and remained on duty for the next 18 days straight to make sure that staff and patients had everything they needed.

Over the past several months, I have held a number of roundtables with healthcare professionals in North Dakota. As we have discussed issues and challenges, one thing is clear: Our healthcare providers are diligent and dedicated in their efforts to prepare for and prevent the spread of coronavirus and to provide patients with the best possible care.

Another individual highlighted by his colleagues is Dr. Kremens, a critical care physician at Essentia Health who intubated and managed multiple critically ill patients at once. Dr. Kremens is a good example of the many intensive care and emergency department physicians and nurses who have fought on the frontlines of the pandemic and continue to do so.

We are grateful for the dedicated service of the many healthcare professionals in North Dakota and recognize that they and their loved ones have made many sacrifices during this health emergency.

We worked to provide our health providers with much needed support in the first three phases of the coronavirus relief legislation. For example, under the CARES Act, North Dakota rural hospitals and providers have received \$135 million to help with their efforts to combat COVID-19. As negotiations continue on the next phase of relief, healthcare remains a top priority.

While our healthcare providers have been working diligently, I would also like to recognize how members of our communities have stepped up to help our medical professionals as well.

An example of the community stepping up to meet the challenge during the pandemic is Proof Artisan Distillers, a small craft distillery in Fargo, ND. Back in March, Proof Artisan Distillery responded to the community need. Working with Tharaldson Ethanol in Casselton, ND, they began producing sanitizer for healthcare, assisted living facilities, first responders, Tribal and municipal entities, and

highway patrols from four neighboring States.

Proof Artisan Distillery's president, Joel Kath, relayed this story:

During our second day of production, I answered a frantic call from a supply director of a large memory care group. They were virtually out of sanitizer and would not be resupplied through their normal channels for many weeks. The caller broke down with emotion when I confirmed that we could easily supply their needs. It's a response I will never forget, and a constant reminder of the importance of our task at hand.

Another example from my home State is Infinite Leap, a company founded by Air Force veteran Mark Rheault that is using technology to help healthcare providers offer virtual waiting rooms. Infinite Leap's technology helps eliminate registration lines, reduce congestion in waiting areas, and decrease patient waiting times. Not only is this technology being utilized by healthcare providers to help maintain social distancing, the technology is also helping other industries, including restaurants and manufacturing plants, to safely reopen.

These are just a few examples of the individuals and organizations that have stepped up and helped their communities to meet the challenges during this health emergency.

Again, I thank our healthcare providers for their dedicated effort to fight this virus. We recognize the challenges they face, and we are truly grateful for their hard work. They are, in fact, truly everyday heroes.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

COVID-19 HEROES

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise today to join my many colleagues familiar with agriculture—the farmers, ranchers, growers, everybody in the food chain—and my thanks to Senator ERNST for really starting this, making a great speech last week. We are all trying to follow up with the same message to shine a spotlight on our Nation's COVID-19 heroes.

We have heard the term “hero” a lot during this pandemic. I believe the title is warranted to describe the many Kansans and, for that matter, all Americans who are doing extraordinary work and making great sacrifices to make this country safer and healthier.

Today, I want to talk about the heroes—the special heroes in agriculture: our farmers, our ranchers, our growers. The Sun comes out every day. A lot of us are in safe places. We have decided that is the best alternative for us, and so we have a lot of shutdowns.

Not farm country. The farmers, ranchers, and growers, they don't have that option. They have to do what they have to do in terms of planting their crops, harvesting their crops, taking care of their crops. They work long hours, day in and day out, to produce

the food on our dinner tables and make sure our supermarket shelves are stocked.

These producers are facing low prices, regulatory overreach, a challenging trade environment, and drastic and sudden changes in demand for their crops and animals. To top it off, net farm income is estimated to drop by nearly \$20 billion as of this year. Despite all these challenges, they have continued to produce even more with less.

American farmers and ranchers are so efficient at their jobs that we are able to enjoy the most affordable food of any country in the world—and the most safe. We also have the safest and most ample food supply.

That is why I consider—as well as all of my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee and others who are privileged to represent farmers, ranchers, and growers—that they are true heroes.

Producing food for a troubled and hungry world is what farmers do day in and day out, but especially at times like this, it is nothing short of heroic. We have taken steps to address the needs of our Nation's farmers and ranchers, and in recent months—in March—unanimously, we passed the CARES Act.

I would say that would be a goal we might want to achieve with the Heroes Act scaled down to whatever we want to call it—and also the HEALS Act. At any rate, it was unanimous back then, and that funded the Department of Agriculture to address the needs related to the pandemic, among a lot of other things.

We included \$9.5 billion for Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to deliver emergency support for those in agriculture and the food industry who suffered losses due to the pandemic, and we included \$14 billion partial replenishment for the Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation to provide additional assistance to affected producers. This legislation ensured the continued implementation of our 2018 farm bill programs, which do provide certainty and predictability at a time when both are scarce.

We also provided additional resources for telemedicine, broadband connectivity, as well as business and industry loans. The CARES Act also supplied the Department with the resources to continue mandatory inspection services to ensure our food safety and minimize potential interruption in the food supply chain.

COVID-19 created a ripple effect that has been felt from the farm to the supermarket. The agriculture and food sector, along with the administration, the CDC, and OSHA have all implemented practices and policies that address worker health and safety in our processing plants. Keeping America's meat and poultry processing system functional was imperative—it was difficult, but we are making progress—as was boosting worker safety and protection in these plants.

Now we must take what lessons we have learned in the past few months and build upon this progress.

I am privileged to be the chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. I have worked on the role of addressing rural America's priorities as part of a fourth COVID-19 relief package, as have all members of the committee, both Democrat and Republican.

This week, we are considering legislation with the hopes of a bipartisan solution. We all know and we anticipate this process will go through several twists and turns before a final agreement is reached, but we must provide solutions. The entire country is truly counting on us.

In closing, I want to again thank our farmers, our ranchers, and our growers all across the country who have continued to do their job during these very difficult times, and I want them to know that we are continuing to work to make sure they have the tools needed to continue to feed not only our country but a very troubled and hungry world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, as we debate the need for additional coronavirus relief funding, I am pleased to join my colleagues in commending the millions of Americans who have gone above and beyond to help others during this pandemic.

Throughout our Nation's history, everyday heroes emerge in times of turmoil to aid their neighbors in so many ways. The COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. In every corner of my State, Mississippi's first responders and healthcare providers are historically stepping into harm's way to provide care to patients affected by the virus.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM DAVID MARTIN

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, let me first honor the life of William David Martin, a paramedic with American Medical Response of Southwest Mississippi, serving on the frontlines of Mississippi's healthcare as COVID-19 began to spread.

Sadly, in April, he passed away from complications due to the virus. Mr. Martin is a true hero and one example of the extent to which first responders and healthcare workers are working to overcome this national emergency.

COVID-19 HEROES

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, rural hospitals like King's Daughters Medical Center in my hometown of Brookhaven have always been the backbone of healthcare in Mississippi. The work of the staff at these rural hospitals during the pandemic has been remarkable.

Dedicated nurses like my friends Larue Lambert, Tammy Livingston, Misty Britt, Christina Miller, and their

coworkers—which are so many—toil every day under heavy stress and heart-wrenching situations to care for patients and their families. They are lifesavers, and they are best friends to total strangers. They take on extra shifts and duties while doing what they can to keep morale up. They are healthcare heroes who are enduring extreme conditions.

Doctors like Dr. Jeff Ross are working through both physical and mental exhaustion. Yet they continue to do their job, selflessly managing the care of their fellow Mississippians.

In the heavily affected Jackson metropolitan area, the University of Mississippi Medical Center has brought its unique capabilities to bear. In the early days of the pandemic, its research labs rushed to create its own in-house COVID test. And the UMC National Telehealth Center of Excellence quickly ramped up technology to triage patients for testing and provide socially distanced care.

I greatly admire UMC's work with the Federal Government on best telehealth practices during a pandemic. As potential treatments have emerged, UMC researchers and healthcare providers have stood up eight cutting-edge COVID clinical trials in their new clinical trials unit.

Our healthcare providers aren't the only ones who have been working to protect the health of Mississippians. Industries across the State have quickly pivoted to provide needed supplies to fight COVID-19. For example, distilleries like Wonderbird Spirits in Taylor, Cathead Distillery in Jackson, and Lazy Magnolia Brewery in Kiln made the quick decision to begin producing hand sanitizer early in the pandemic. Furniture companies, like Confortaire in Tupelo, stepped up to produce needed PPE for the North Mississippi Medical Center and our local schools. And Mississippi Prison Industries, a nonprofit that gives incarcerated individuals the opportunity to be employed and gain work experience, is producing up to 15,000 masks and 7,000 isolation gowns per day.

Since the start of this pandemic, I recognized that we are dealing with two emergencies. There is the healthcare emergency and the economic emergency. I am proud of the many ways in which Mississippians are helping each other weather these difficult economic times.

Mississippi bankers worked around the clock, 7 days a week, to help small businesses access the Paycheck Protection Program loans. Our friend Brad Jones at the Bank of Franklin in Meadville, MS, was so helpful in keeping me abreast of the needs of our local business owners. Because of their efforts, Mississippi ranked No. 1 in the entire Nation in PPP loans, with nearly 50,000 loans processed. This tireless work is helping small businesses stay open with their employees at work.

Ensuring Mississippians have access to food has been a challenge. A Mississippian who has been a godsend to