

way, it is going to strengthen individuals. Go engage with that.

That is in this bill, and it is important that we continue to walk alongside them and all of those not-for-profits to make sure they thrive because we need them thriving, not just surviving in this moment.

There is one other thing that I want to identify. There are a lot of things that are in this bill. It is liability protections. Businesses and universities in my State said: We desperately need the Federal Government to clarify liability protections.

Now, there have been individuals on the other side of the aisle that have said: We don't want to do that. We want to just leave that up to the lawyers in the days ahead who have lawsuits. What is occurring is there are many businesses in my State that are holding back and many schools in my State that are holding back trying to figure out what happens next for fear of what could be a series of lawsuits. They just want clarity. They want to do business where they can protect their employees, protect the customers or individuals or students that are there that are around them, but they also want to be able to operate and function again, and they don't feel like they can do that without basic liability protections and liability definitions. This bill provides that.

Now, I have heard some in the media and some even in this building who have said this is a pared-down skinny bill. Only in Washington, DC, is a \$300 billion piece of legislation considered skinny—only here. Over and over again at home, when I talk to people across the State of Oklahoma and I would present what has already been done in the previous acts—the \$3 trillion that have already been spent on COVID in the months before and the proposals that we have now—they would quietly pull me aside at the end of the meeting and they would say almost exactly the same thing: Where is this money coming from?

People are worried about the virus, but they are also worried about what is coming next. People are used to taking out a loan if there is a major storm or a major life event, knowing I have to take this loan out to get through it, but they also realize that for every loan they take out, they have to pay that back. The people in my State are saying the same thing: Where is this money coming from? How are we ever going to pay it back? And they are shocked that the House of Representatives and many in this room are pushing a bill that is \$3.5 trillion in spending on top of the \$3 trillion that was already spent earlier this year, and they just gasp when they think about an additional \$6.5 trillion of deficit in a single year. They wonder what happens with that, and I respond to them: So do I. That is why we are trying to be as tailored and as focused as we can possibly be to meet the needs that need to be done but to not just throw a big

number out and to say we have to go big. We already have gone big earlier this year.

Now, it is not just “can we throw money out the door from Washington, DC,” but it is “what do we have to do to get to the other side of this for our health, for our students, for the basic operations of our economy and survival to be able to get on the other side of this,” because on the other side of this is a bill that has to be paid.

We, in this body, should pay attention to that because, certainly, the people in Oklahoma are paying attention to that and so should we. There are things that need to be done, and I look forward to bringing this up to be able to focus on the essential things that need to be done for our economy right now and be able to keep moving from there.

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.

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

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

COVID-19 VACCINE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, this morning, our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee had a hearing, and one of the members came up to me on the floor and said: That was the most civil hearing I have attended in the Senate in a while. The truth is that most of our hearings in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee are civil. We have Senators of widely different points of view.

I thank Senator MURRAY, the Senator from Washington State, who is the ranking member of our committee and a member of the Democratic leadership, for the way that she and the Democratic members of the committee worked with the Republican members so that we can have the Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Adams, and Dr. Francis Collins, the head of the National Institutes of Health, who is one of our country's most esteemed scientists and the man who headed the human genome project, there for 3 hours and we can ask questions. Virtually every Senator participated, and we got some good answers.

I would like to report to the other members of the Senate about that hearing. I began it by saying: I have been rereading the book “Guns, Germs, and Steel,” a book by Jared Diamond, written in 1997, which is as relevant today—maybe more relevant today—than it was when he wrote it.

Mr. Diamond, who won the Pulitzer Prize and is a professor of geography in California, said: There is nothing new about mass epidemics that causes deaths and social upheaval that we are witnessing today, and there is nothing new about where most of those

epidemics in history have come from. Diseases that caused those deaths for the last 10,000 years, he says, have come mostly from animals that transmit them to humans, and during most of history, there were three ways to deal with these epidemics.

One was to isolate the infected, as in, for example, leper colonies to deal with leprosy. One was, according to Mr. Diamond, that over thousands of years, there have been genetic changes in the human population in response to the infectious diseases that have gone through those populations, and they have produced a resistance to the infectious diseases, as in the case of smallpox. Of course, that didn't do much to help the Native Americans in this country when European settlers, who had some resistance to smallpox, arrived here and gave blankets to the Native Americans that were infected with smallpox or contained smallpox and wiped out 90 percent of the tribes who received them because they didn't have that resistance.

There is a third way of dealing with epidemics. Throughout most of history, the most common way was to let the epidemic run through the population until everyone had been either killed or recovered and developed some resistance to the disease. Diamond says that the Black Death killed about one-third of Europe's population between 1347 and 1351 as it ran through the population killing people.

Now, what is new about dealing with epidemics is modern medicine. Modern medicine has given us ways to diagnose these diseases and to create treatments to make it easier to recover from these diseases, but the true miracle of modern medicine is the vaccine—a vaccine that can prevent humans from acquiring the disease at all. The Senator from Tennessee and I have actually worked together on that issue 2 or 3 years ago to encourage people, and, in her words, talk to your doctor if you have a concern about a vaccine. That is what we want to talk about today.

Today, in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, school children are required to take vaccinations for a series of diseases—diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, rubella, and chicken pox—before entering school.

That vaccination will protect the child from getting the disease, which in turn prevents the child from infecting someone else—a pattern that eventually causes these diseases to disappear.

Americans of my generation remember how polio terrified our parents in the early 1940s and into the 1950s. Many saw their children die of polio. When I was very young, I can remember classmates who were strapped into iron lungs so they could breathe and were destined to stay there for the rest of their lives. The lucky ones were like Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, who was left only with a limp after having polio in the 1940s.

The disease terrified Americans until Dr. Jonas Salk discovered the polio

vaccine in 1955. After the vaccine was developed, the United States undertook a large-scale vaccination campaign, and polio was declared eradicated from the United States by 1979.

The purpose of the hearing we had this morning was to explore the remarkable progression that science is making toward a COVID-19 vaccine and to remind parents to have their children get their childhood vaccinations and to encourage as many Americans as possible to take the flu vaccine this fall.

First, the progress toward the COVID-19 vaccination—Dr. Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, talked about that. He talked about the vaccine research and development, including Operation Warp Speed, which is working to develop, manufacture, and distribute safe and effective vaccines as rapidly as possible.

He told us there are six vaccines currently under development. He reminded us that the Federal Government, using taxpayers' money, has helped accelerate this by providing money to manufacture these vaccines before they are deemed safe and effective and that he does not necessarily expect all of the vaccines to work. And if they don't work or if they are not safe, they will be thrown in the dumpster. They will not be distributed to anyone to use.

He pointed out that AstraZeneca announced today that 1 person in its clinical trial—which probably has 30,000 people in the UK—had developed an illness and they had paused the trial. In other words, they stopped giving shots to the volunteers in the clinical trial until they could see whether the illness is related to the vaccine.

Some people believe that Operation Warp Speed means cutting corners, but it does not. It refers to the extraordinary investment in research, development, and manufacturing scale-up for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Perhaps most significantly, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority—we call it BARDA—has taken the unprecedented step, as I mentioned earlier, to speed up manufacturing for hundreds of millions of doses early in the process by buying those doses in advance so they can be ready to distribute as soon as the vaccines are approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Several of our Senators on both sides of the aisle asked Dr. Collins and Dr. Adams, the Surgeon General, whether they intended to let politics play a role in the decision about whether a vaccine is safe and effective and ready for distribution. They answered absolutely no, that they would be no part of such a decision.

The same has been said by Dr. Stephen Hahn, who is the Commissioner of the FDA charged with making that judgement. "This is going to be a science, medicine, data decision," he said. It "is not going to be a political decision." That means if it is not safe, it will not be distributed.

At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control is working on a plan to distribute the vaccine as soon as they are authorized or approved, prioritizing vaccines for healthcare workers and vulnerable populations. The CDC says its plan will be a fair system informed by nonpartisan health experts from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and others.

Some have suggested—of course, this is a political season; we have an election in 2 months—that the reason we are rushing, as a government, to create the vaccine is so it will help President Trump before the election in November, or that the reason the Centers for Disease Control said to the States: Get ready now to distribute the vaccine when it is effective and safe—that that is a political move.

Of course, I said that if Dr. Collins and Dr. Adams had come in and said it would be 5 years before we had a vaccine, we would probably ask the President to fire them, because people are dying, and we need vaccines. We don't want the alternative, which is to run the disease through millions of Americans until everybody either dies or is infected and recovers, and we don't want to have happen again what happened before with the H1N1 virus, where the vaccine was ready, but the States weren't ready to distribute it. So we were pleased to see what the response was.

Americans are saying that they might not take the vaccine. The first question people ask is, Are they safe? They are safe because they are reviewed by the FDA, which is the gold standard for safety. Vaccines are routinely given to children. They are specifically recommended by an advisory commission that looks at it carefully, consisting of doctors and physicians and scientists.

In a 2015 article for the *Scientific American*, a distinguished scientist wrote:

By age two, most children will receive almost 30 shots designed to boost a child's natural defenses against disease. Yet at the same time, parents who take their children for those recommended vaccinations might be inundated with Web site and celebrity-espoused rumors making false claims that shots are not necessary or cause autism.

This distinguished scientist wrote:

At best, navigating this landscape can be confusing. But when weighing the risks of encountering life-threatening disease against the benefits of receiving a vaccine there's no contest. The vast majority of children do not experience anything worse than short-lived redness or itching at the spot of the injection.

I asked Dr. Collins this question, which I think is confusing to some people: When you take the COVID vaccine, you don't get COVID? There was a time in the old days when to get a smallpox vaccine, you, in fact, got a little smallpox. But that is not what happens. As Dr. Collins explained it, he said the vaccine creates a sort of machine within your body and your immune system to fight the COVID. It doesn't infect you with the disease.

Then there is the question about whether the vaccines are effective. I talked about how polio is now eradicated. The number of polio cases since the vaccines has fallen rapidly to less than 100 in the 1960s and less than 10 in the 1970s thanks to the successful vaccination program. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the United States has been polio-free since 1979. Diphtheria was a terrifying prospect for parents in the 1920s, but according to the scientific agencies and the government, there are only a few of those a year.

Then there is the concern about whether the doctor's office is safe. I have heard that from people, but the studies have shown that the pediatricians—and we heard that testimony today—have made great efforts to try to make their offices the safest places that a parent can go with their child in order to get a vaccination.

Finally, I started my comments this morning with comments from Jared Diamond, and I concluded with a warning he wrote for the *Wall Street Journal*. He said in effect that the main thing that is different about this disease, COVID-19, is not that it is more infectious; the main thing that is different is the jet plane—the plane that can carry people all over the world, all over our country, spreading whatever the infection is. He said that as a result of that, the next pandemic could be next year.

That is why I have introduced in the Senate legislation that would help prepare for the next pandemic. It has support on all sides. Senator Frist from Tennessee, the former majority leader; Senator Daschle, the former majority leader on the Democratic side; many experts—all say we have a problem in this country going from panic to neglect to panic. While we have taken some important steps, as Senator BARR pointed out today, to create the authority for the government to build manufacturing plants, to manage stockpiles better, to be prepared for pandemics, as soon as the epidemic is over, we move on to something else. So the time to deal with the next pandemic is now.

There is specific legislation to make sure that we sustain funding for on-shore manufacturing so we are not relying on China, India, and other countries to make our vaccines for the next pandemic. There is money to make sure that the stockpiles are filled with protective equipment so we don't have the kinds of delays that some people experienced in this pandemic.

Former Governor Mike Leavitt said to our committee that we have underfunded public health for the last 30 to 40 years, and when we underfund public health and the next pandemic comes, we are not as ready for it as we should be.

Fortunately, thanks to an unprecedented effort by scientists around the world, preparation by Republican and Democratic administrations over the

last 20 years and several Congresses, we have done a lot to be well prepared for this pandemic, and we are moving more rapidly than we ever have to create new diagnostic tests, new treatments, and new vaccines. Some of the challenges that remain are how to distribute them, to whom they should go first, and how to persuade Americans they are safe to take.

But while we are in the midst of dealing with all of this, it would be wise to remember that any legislation that we pass in Congress this year dealing with this pandemic should also take steps to make sure that our stockpiles are filled, that our manufacturing plants can stay functioning, and that public health State by State is well funded, because, as Jared Diamond said, the reason to do that now, while our eye is on the ball, is because the next pandemic could be next year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

(The remarks of Mr. HAWLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 4543 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HAWLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 685

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am proud to support the resolution by the Senator from Illinois, and we will hear from her shortly. I very much appreciate her work.

Now, in his famous letter to Lydia Bixby, mother of five sons who all died in the Civil War, President Lincoln prayed that our Heavenly Father would assuage her grief, noting the "solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of Freedom."

According to a recent report in the Atlantic, President Trump complained about visiting a World War I military cemetery in France because Americans who died there were "suckers" and "losers."

Over the past 4 years, President Trump has achieved some remarkable lows in the annals of Presidential conduct and character, but every so often we are jolted by the sheer depravity of his comments. This President's insults about our fallen servicemembers and the nature of military service in general fall into that category—the lowest of the low.

There is no greater sacrifice an American can make than to lay down their life for our country, no greater sorrow than the sorrow felt by parents who bury their children wrapped in the American flag. Everyone who has the privilege of working in public office knows this deep truth in their bones but not the current President of the United States; not President Trump; not this man who dodged the Vietnam war with bone spurs; not this man who insulted Gold Star families, who looked at our former colleague John

McCain, a man who was tortured in a POW camp for 5 years, and said, "I prefer people who weren't captured"; not this President, who doesn't understand one iota of the word "sacrifice" and cannot even comprehend why someone might give themselves for a larger cause.

According to these reports, when President Trump went to Arlington National Cemetery, which included a visit to the grave of General Kelly's son, he turned to him and said: I don't get it. What was in it for them?

Everyone—everyone—ought to be appalled. What the Commander in Chief says about our servicemembers and our veterans matters a great deal. It affects the morale of our military, our standing on the world stage, and it reveals the character of the man who has to make life-and-death decisions involving our Armed Forces.

We have heard the President and his team try to deny that the President ever made those comments. I mean, come on. The President is on video saying nearly the same thing, out loud, on several occasions—about one of our former colleagues, no less.

In a short time, Senator DUCKWORTH will ask this Chamber to condemn the President's remarks and reaffirm our Nation's steadfast and unwavering commitment to the individuals serving in the U.S. armed services. I want to thank the Senator from Illinois for leading this resolution. More importantly, I want to thank her for her service, both to the people of Illinois and to our country, as an Army aviation officer.

I hope, I pray, I plead with our Republican friends not to block this resolution. I am already disappointed at how few of them have spoken out to criticize President Trump for his remarks. Are they really so afraid to say anything against this President that they would give him a pass when he disparages our own military? Will they really block a resolution condemning the unequivocally disgusting comments, a resolution that reaffirms our support for the military?

I certainly hope not. If you can't stand up and say the President was wrong to say these things, then what can you criticize this President or any President for? When comments like this are made about the sacrifices of our Armed Forces, every single elected official should understand instinctively that they are wrong, especially—especially—when they come from the Commander in Chief. Let's have the entire Senate—Democrats and Republicans—stand together and say so with this resolution.

I yield to my colleague from Illinois. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as a Senator, a veteran, and apparently, according to Donald Trump, a "sucker" and a "loser." Perhaps my presence here is uncomfortable for him. After all, ac-

cording to a number of reports, he thinks nobody wants to see wounded warriors like me who have lost limbs fighting to keep other Americans safe.

Unfortunately for him, I am here, and I am here because the ethos of the U.S. military is the exact opposite of the selfish, craven, "me first" mentality that Trump has shown every hour of every day of his life.

In the Army, part of our soldiers' creed was to never leave a fallen comrade behind, and the only reason I am speaking today, the only reason I am breathing today—alive today—is that, on November 12, 2004, after Iraqi insurgents fired an RPG through the Black Hawk I was copiloting, my buddies embodied that creed.

They thought I was dead, yet they risked their own safety to bring my body back home to my family, only realizing I was still breathing when they got me to the rescue aircraft. Then these heroes, wounded themselves, refused care until the medic attended to me first.

If it had been Donald Trump in that dusty field with me, or in any other battlefield, our wounded like me would have never made it home at all. But he never would have been in Iraq that day because Trump fundamentally cannot understand the notion of sacrificing for your Nation. He can't comprehend the true meaning of courage, the idea of fighting for something greater than yourself, greater than your bank account or your poll numbers.

He doesn't understand service, so he doesn't understand America's servicemembers, the heroes—most of them anonymous to all but those who love them, who have allowed him to sleep soundly in his gold-plated Fifth Avenue Tower throughout his privileged, gilded life. Instead, Trump has reportedly called those who have died or have been wounded in battle "suckers" and "losers," while just today it was reported that he used the most demeaning of terms to refer to the military leaders he thinks of as his generals, echoing comments he has made publicly time after time when he slandered war heroes like John McCain and Gold Star families like the Khans, acting, yet again, as if bleeding to defend your Nation is something to be ashamed of rather than a badge of honor, too ignorant to understand that he is the one who should be ashamed.

I spent this weekend reflecting on the words of another Republican President, who in the midst of crisis reminded those sitting before him at Gettysburg the duty our Nation has to those killed serving our country. In that address we all know so well, he declared that it is for us, the living, to dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced; that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.

That cause was a new birth of freedom in this Nation, the bettering of our democracy, bringing our Union