

strains they are feeling due to the ongoing pandemic, it can't come soon enough.

By way of background, public school districts on military installations, Tribal land, and other Federal public property, or with students living on these Federal properties, can participate in the Impact Aid Program, which includes nearly 40 school districts in the State of South Dakota.

This program is of vital importance to the financial well-being of these schools, as it reimburses them for revenue shortfalls due to the reduction or absence of a local tax base because of the presence of Federal property.

In order to determine grant awards through this program, school districts must annually calculate the number of federally connected students that they have enrolled. While generally a prudent exercise, during a pandemic, conducting this type of count has presented a new set of challenges for administrators.

The Impact Aid Coronavirus Relief Act is a commonsense, bipartisan approach that would not cost a dime yet would provide financial stability to school districts by allowing them to use last year's student headcounts on impact aid applications that they are completing this fall. Doing so would prevent the reporting of noticeable, but likely temporary, declines in student enrollment, which would lead to student reduced impact aid payments next year.

Distance learning has made collecting student data more challenging as well. Districts are also experiencing declines in student headcount due to parents choosing to temporarily homeschool their children during the pandemic.

Unless Congress allows these school districts to use last year's student headcounts on this year's impact aid applications, schools will have the undue burden of collecting this data during an otherwise challenging time and could very well experience a reduced impact aid payment next fall. Our legislation will ensure that they have certainty in the near term.

A companion of our bill passed the House by unanimous consent on October 2, and impact aid school districts are eager for the Senate to do the same. I hope we can get that done today.

I yield to the Senator from Minnesota for some comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise in support of my colleague Senator THUNE's request to pass the Impact Aid Coronavirus Relief Act, H.R. 8472, by unanimous consent.

As we continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, we need to support schools so that students can keep learning. In Congress, we have a special obligation to federally impacted schools. As my colleague Senator THUNE has said, these are schools that

are located in districts with a significant amount of nontaxable land, which puts them at a significant disadvantage for raising education revenue. And we make this right by providing direct Federal payments which are crucial for their operation.

What this bill does—what our bill does—is to provide a commonsense change. It allows school districts to use student counts from the previous academic year when they submit their impact aid applications. In light of the challenges of doing a safe and active count in the midst of this coronavirus pandemic, this only makes sense.

I thank my colleague from North Dakota, Senator THUNE. I have been so glad to work with him to support school districts that rely on Impact Aid Programs and to promote financial stability for these school districts during the pandemic.

I hope we can pass this bill today and get it signed into law.

I yield.

Mr. THUNE. I thank the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 8472, which was received from the House.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8472) to provide that, due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19, applications for impact aid funding for fiscal year 2022 may use certain data submitted in the fiscal year 2021 application.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding?

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 8472) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

##### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

##### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Aileen Mercedes Cannon, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Joni Ernst, Marsha Blackburn, Mike Crapo, James Lankford, Thom Tillis, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, John Cornyn, John

Hoeven, Jerry Moran, Lamar Alexander, Mike Braun, David Perdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Aileen Mercedes Cannon, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "yea."

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote or change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 57, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 227 Ex.]

#### YEAS—57

Barrasso	Feinstein	McSally
Blackburn	Fischer	Murkowski
Blunt	Gardner	Murphy
Boozman	Graham	Perdue
Burr	Grassley	Portman
Capito	Hassan	Roberts
Carper	Hawley	Romney
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rosen
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Coons	Inhofe	Rubio
Cornyn	Johnson	Sasse
Cortez Masto	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Kennedy	Shelby
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Leahy	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	Manchin	Warner
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker

#### NAYS—21

Baldwin	Brown	Duckworth
Bennet	Cardin	Gillibrand
Booker	Casey	Hirono

King  
Klobuchar  
Markey  
Merkley

Peters  
Reed  
Schumer  
Smith

Udall  
Van Hollen  
Warren  
Wyden

## NOT VOTING—22

Alexander  
Blumenthal  
Braun  
Cantwell  
Durbin  
Harris  
Heinrich  
Loeffler

Menendez  
Moran  
Murray  
Paul  
Risch  
Sanders  
Schatz  
Shaheen

Sinema  
Stabenow  
Sullivan  
Tester  
Whitehouse  
Young

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 57, the nays are 21.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

## APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am pleased to be here today to talk about the 2021 appropriations bill that we filed this week for Labor, for Health and Human Services, and for Education.

Obviously, with what we have gone through this year, those three agencies have all experienced dramatic challenges—labor challenges, health challenges, education challenges. And while this bill would not specifically be a COVID relief bill, it is a bill that funds these agencies so they can move forward with their normal work rather than have to, in some piecemeal way, try to deal with their normal work while they are trying to work with us on the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID bill.

This is the largest bill—Labor, Health, and Education is the largest nondefense bill on the discretionary side of the agenda. It is about 30 percent of all the money left when the Defense appropriations is taken off the table.

There are 11 bills left at that point, but this bill has about 30 percent of all the money. It has a lot of competing priorities, from apprenticeships to biomedical research, to public health and preparedness programs, to childcare and special education. National service and community service are all in this bill.

We received 8,352 requests from Senators of things they would like to see in the bill. They are not all in there, but we did all we could to take the money we had and move forward with priorities that make sense.

I am disappointed at this point that our Democratic colleagues on the Appropriations Committee were unable to support the bill right now, but we have worked together in the past. I hope we can continue to work together to find a way forward. And, frankly, my view is if appropriations bills appear to have a path to the President's desk, that is the thing that brings us together most quickly.

This bill continues in our sixth year of commitment to robustly and consistently funding medical research at the National Institutes of Health. We provided a \$2 billion increase on that research. We target funding toward Alzheimer's, toward precision medi-

cine, premature birth research, the BRAIN Initiative. In my time as chairman, we have actually increased NIH funding by 45 percent in budgets that often had virtually no increase at all. We truly had to work together to prioritize. We have done that.

My time as chairman is about 6 years, if you are wondering how long it took us to get that 45-percent increase. Six years ago, we hadn't had any increase for 12 years. NIH was about 22 percent behind in buying power where they had been a decade earlier. We made up that 22 percent. And actually, now, we are putting real money on the table in an environment that has never been better and never been more promising in the NIH research area.

We continue our focus of combating opioids. Between 1999 and 2018, nearly 450,000 people in the United States died from opioid overdose. These drug overdose deaths in 2018 were four times higher than in 1999. The bill provides money to deal with this. With the effort we made in this area over the last several years, we saw a consistent decrease in opioid overdoses until 2020.

Of course, the increase in 2020, in many ways, related to the pandemic and the isolation. The support structure that appeared to be working to move you from dependency was no longer there, and suddenly you are back where you were.

The bill provides a \$20 million increase for apprenticeship programs. This week, I joined the Missouri Chamber of Commerce in highlighting the importance of apprenticeships. Last year, Missouri was the second in the Nation in the number of new apprenticeships. First in the Nation is California. We are not a small State, but we are not nearly as big as California, so I think the leadership in our State—the business community, the employers, the Governor, and others—has made a real difference there. We fund both registered apprenticeship programs, and it allows for industry-recognized programs as well.

Fourth, the bill invests in education, from early childhood through college and career. It increases funding for high-quality early childcare and education by more than \$150 million. It increases funding for elementary and secondary education programs that provide the most flexibility to school districts to decide how to best use those limited resources. This also includes increased investments in title I; in IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the title IV student support and academic enrichment grants; charter schools; and Impact Aid. It increases the maximum Pell grant award by another \$150, or a 2.4-percent increase, at a time when the mandatory money is gone. To find that 2.4-percent increase, we have to find it in other programs, and some programs are just not able to fund it. If they are not working, we shouldn't fund them, and we have seen several years of growth in areas in which we have a pri-

ority like Pell grants. To do that, we had to look carefully at programs that just, frankly, were not working.

Fifth, we continue our focus on closing the care gap between mental health and physical health. Approximately one in five adults in America has a diagnosable and almost always treatable mental health problem. This bill provides an increase of almost \$200 million in the mental health area.

I would mention again the excellence of the mental health pilot. We have increased that pilot to eight States from two. We are seeing what happens in a positive way in people's other health issues when you deal with their mental health issues like it was any health issue, and it is making a difference. This year, it was reinforced again by understanding the need to address disparities in foster care, a greater diversity in healthcare, education, and the workforce.

Many populations across the country, whether defined by race, ethnicity, geography, experience higher rates of certain diseases and often lack the access to health services. This bill tries to look at that in a way that analyzes where those gaps are, and it has programs that encourage filling those gaps. Furthermore, the bill continues our efforts to ensure that these disparities are addressed through a number of programs, including workforce development programs, diverse medical community efforts, research initiatives that focus on underserved communities, programs that target health disparities, and education-workforce programs that create opportunity.

This bill prioritizes programs that provide the most benefit and greatest return for all Americans. The bill continues key program integrity activities that are aimed at reducing the waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars. These initiatives have proven to be a worthwhile investment in their returning billions of dollars to the Treasury and allowing us to look in other places as to how we could fund that money in programs that work better and work more transparently.

This bill eliminates eight programs equaling nearly \$115 million in spending reductions by focusing on programs that are the most efficient and cost-effective and with proven outcomes. We all know that budgets are tight, but making careful choices about health spending can be one of the most valuable investments we make in Congress.

You don't have to look any further than the recent announcements about the record progress we have made in finding a vaccine for COVID-19. Through the CARES Act and other legislation, Congress provided \$18 billion for research into therapeutics and vaccines, and \$12.5 billion went to vaccines. It did it in a way that is going to allow us to set a record in having a safe vaccine available that meets the highest standards. The vaccine that appears to be the first in line for approval is 90 percent effective.