

for a new President. They voted against the President who treated workers as expendable. They voted for the candidate who put workers at the center of his campaign.

Joe Biden had the most pro-worker campaign in a generation, and in January we get to work to deliver results. The new President, right now, on January 20 can immediately issue an OSHA emergency temporary standard forcing corporations to take important, critical, decisive steps to protect their workers from contracting or spreading the virus in their workplaces.

What is more important than protecting workers, especially essential workers who deliver our food, who prepare food, who do custodial work, who do security work, who are helping people in our country live every day?

With cases rising and hospitals filling up all over the country, the end of January isn't soon enough. Workers put themselves at risk in nursing homes and hospitals. They deliver packages of holiday gifts. They stock supermarket shelves with supplies for holiday meals.

Some of those workers are going to get sick. Some of them are going to die. They are going to die because they are essential workers, but we don't treat them like essential workers. We can do something about it now. We could pass a real plan that invests in protective equipment for them. We can pass a real plan of testing and contact tracing. We could get money to small businesses like Liz Valenti's business in Dayton, OH, so they can protect their workers—her two restaurants in Dayton.

Well, what is Leader McCONNELL doing? Ramming through more Trump nominees like Mr. Hauptman and Mr. Waller, who keep stacking the deck in favor of their Wall Street friends, trying to hold on to their power even after Americans said: No, we want something different—80 million of them.

MITCH McCONNELL needs to stop letting Donald Trump sabotage our economic recovery on his way out the door and get to work for the people he serves.

It is time to remember what makes this country great. If you love this country, you fight for people who make it work—our workers who organized in union halls and church basements and fought for workers' rights, women's rights, and civil rights.

In closing—I know that Senator LEE wants to speak. I have worn for my time in the Senate and before that, I wore this pin on my lapel. It is a depiction of a canary in a birdcage. You may remember the old labor story of the worker, the coal miner who took the canary down into the mines. If the canary died by suffocation or lack of oxygen or some contaminant in the air, the mine worker got out of the mines. He had no union in those days to protect himself, and he had no government that cared enough, that was strong enough to protect him, and he had no government that cared enough to pro-

tect him. He was essentially on his own.

This pin was given to me at a workers' Memorial Day rally by a steelworker who told me about this pin and what it stood for. He knows that the labor movement changed this country for the better. It created the greatest economy and the strongest middle class on Earth. It said the opposite of what MITCH McCONNELL says to workers all over the country: Sorry. You are on your own. What this canary pin represents is, we are all in this together. It means we fight for the dignity of work. It means if you love your country, you fight for the people who make it work. We can do that again. We can protect workers from this virus. We can build a better system centered on the dignity of work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ALS DISABILITY INSURANCE ACCESS ACT OF 2019

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, it is nothing short of a tragedy when anyone suffers from ALS. This is a progressive neurodegenerative disease, one that attacks the nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord of its victims and eventually affects control of the muscles, even the muscles that are needed to move, to speak, eat, breathe, and otherwise live.

Sadly, this is a disease that is always fatal. The average life expectancy is only 2 to 5 years following diagnosis. Not only are the people who suffer from ALS robbed of time but also their ability to work, imposing great hardships on them and on their families.

The bill that we had before us today to help these victims by reforming our Social Security Disability Insurance Program is a good cause, and it is one that I think we all support, but I think it goes about the job in the wrong way. It sets bad precedent, and it fails to include other needed reform.

We must remember that ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease, is one of many similarly debilitating and deadly diseases that Americans are suffering from today. While not as well known, all of these victims are also deserving of the same kind of special attention and accommodation in Federal policy.

Let's review some of the background of the program. The Social Security Disability Insurance Program, or SSDI, was created, in part, to help people who suffer from conditions like ALS, providing monthly cash benefits to those who become disabled and therefore unable to work.

One challenge with a program like this is that the agency administering the program, that is, the Social Security Administration, has to verify an applicant's eligibility for benefits before they can start sending out the checks. Today, eligibility determination takes an average of 3½ months. For some people and for some diseases, including ALS, 3½ months can be a dangerously long time.

So, in 2018, the SSA established a new policy to fast track the applica-

tion process for those with serious and urgent medical conditions. Under this Compassionate Allowance Initiative, more than 200 diseases now automatically make applicants eligible for expedited review.

But while the Compassionate Allowance Initiative shortens the determination process from an average of several months to an average of 39 days, there is still a lengthy 5-month waiting period to actually start receiving the benefits, and in the case of urgent, fatal diseases, that is still too long of a wait.

The bill that we have before us today seeks to address this problem but only for the victims of ALS. Now, obviously, we should try and help the victims of this tragic disease to the very best of our ability. They are not, however, the only ones who need to be helped. Of the list of compassionate allowance conditions, some are just as urgent as ALS and some are even worse. There are, sadly, several for which there is no known cure and that have life expectancies that are terribly short.

I want to cite some examples. For instance, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a degenerative brain disorder, is among these. This particular disease leads to dementia and most often results in death within 6 to 12 months. Tragically, there is no cure, and around 1,000 Americans are diagnosed with it every single year, including a dear friend of mine in Utah who a couple of years ago passed away from this ailment.

Another is cardiac amyloidosis, also known as stiff heart syndrome. This disease affects the way electrical signals move through the heart, leading to abnormal heartbeats and faulty heart signals. For those diagnosed, there is no known cure, and they typically face a life expectancy of only about 6 months after the onset of congestive heart failure. About 4,000 people develop this condition each year.

Take peritoneal mesothelioma, this disease is a cancer that develops in the lining of the abdomen, usually leading to death within 12 months of the first signs of illness. Around 600 cases are diagnosed every year in the United States.

That is why I have been working for the past year with my colleagues to broaden the scope of this legislation, so that Congress doesn't waive the SSDI waiting period one disease at a time. It should not matter which fatal, rapidly progressing and debilitating disease an American is suffering from—all fatal diseases with no known cure should have access to disability benefits after their Social Security Administration determination.

The men and women who suffer from those conditions and the family members affected by their ailments have precious little time left, and they are just as worthy of help. They are certainly no less worthy of help than those with ALS. There is always hope that a cure can be found for them or

that, at the very least, a new treatment can further extend the life of these men and women. Rather than removing the waiting period for those with one specific disease, we should remove the waiting period for those who suffer from any of a small select group of conditions that have no cure and have the shortest life expectancies. There is no reason we cannot help those who suffer from ALS and these other conditions. We can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can protect victims of ALS and these other conditions as well.

The bill, as written, sets the stage for only those diseases that have the most recognition and, to put it bluntly, the most fundraising backing to fund bill sponsors, and it would set at a disadvantage the conditions that are far more rare and underfunded. Who will be the voice for the men and women who suffer from those diseases? Who will fight for them? Adding similarly cruel maladies to this list takes nothing away from ALS, and it can make all the difference in the world for Americans suffering from similar disabilities.

I had hoped to offer my broader approach as an amendment, but after months and months of working with the Social Security Administration and with the Congressional Budget Office, I was, unfortunately, given incomplete information at the time an agreement was reached on scheduling a vote on this bill. I appreciate Senator CORTON's and Senator BRAUN's patience in allowing me to work towards a fix while they remain committed to advancing their legislation, for which I commend them.

Additionally, while I would have hoped that my work with the Social Security Administration and the Congressional Budget Office could have gone more quickly, I do appreciate their efforts to address my questions and compile the necessary information and tools to estimate my amendment's fiscal impact.

While I was pleased to see Senator GRASSLEY's amendment, which at least would have paid for the removal of the waiting period for ALS, I will continue to work on legislation that will remove the waiting period for diseases that meet a set of criteria—no known cure with a life expectancy of less than 5 years—while not further jeopardizing the solvency of the disability insurance program. It will be ready for introduction soon.

My concerns and efforts have not been about waiving the SSDI waiting period for those who tragically suffer from ALS. I certainly agree that we ought to improve the time that they have left. But picking and choosing favorites among those with comparable conditions is not the right way to go about it. The lives of the men and women who suffer from other very similar conditions are just as valuable, and we should be a voice for them, too.

FAIRNESS FOR HIGH-SKILLED IMMIGRANTS ACT OF 2019

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1044 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1044) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the per-country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrants, to increase the per-country numerical limitation for family-sponsored immigrants, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Lee substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2690) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. LEE. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 1044), as amended, was passed.

Mr. LEE. I ask unanimous consent 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.

TRIBUTE TO ROB BISHOP

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor my friend and colleague, Congressman ROB BISHOP. After 18 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives, he has decided to hang up his gloves and embark on his well-deserved retirement.

ROB BISHOP has served Utah's First Congressional District with integrity, tenacity, humility, and humor, and it is my high privilege to have worked with him over the last 10 years and, in the process, to have become his friend.

Born and raised in Kaysville, UT, ROB has been a lifelong resident of Utah's First Congressional District, with the exception of the 2-year mission where he lived in Germany while representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He graduated from Davis High School with high honors and later graduated magna

cum laude from the University of Utah with a degree in political science.

The embodiment of a public servant, ROB began his career as a high school teacher at Ben Lomond High School and Box Elder High School, teaching courses in German, AP U.S. history and government, and coaching debate. He notoriously had one rule in the classroom: I am never wrong. That might tell you something about ROB BISHOP.

An avid lover of musicals, he was active in community theater, where he happened to have met his wife Jeralynn. They first met on the production of "South Pacific" at the Palace Playhouse, and they later starred together as the prince and princess in a production of "Once Upon a Mattress." In their real-life love story, they have five children—Shule, Jarom, Zenock, Maren, and Jashon, with spouses Melissa, Kristin, Shalise, and Courtney, as well as nine grandchildren.

Inspired in his public service by Barry Goldwater, he was also involved in local politics from a young age, working at various levels of government and of the Republican Party. He has gone from being a precinct chair to a member of the Republican National Committee and from being vice chair of the Davis County Teenage Republican Club to the adviser to the Utah Teenage Republicans in 1996. Starting in 1997, he served two terms as chairman of the Utah Republican Party.

At just 25, he was elected to the Utah House of Representatives when he was known for always wearing sweaters and no socks. He served in the State legislature for 16 years and, during the last 2 years, having been unanimously elected, served as speaker of the house of representatives.

In 2002, after serving in the State legislature and having spent 28 years of teaching, he decided to serve at the national level. As ROB BISHOP said in one of his most popular campaign slogans: "Utah has plenty of Bishops—send this one to Washington!"

ROB has faithfully devoted his life to representing Utah's First Congressional District, and he has been doing that ever since making that critical decision to run for Congress.

I remember one of the first times I worked with him when ROB was a relatively new Member of Congress and I was serving at the time as general counsel to then-Governor Jon Huntsman. At the time, a private fuel storage organization was trying to store spent nuclear fuel rods in above-ground storage casks along the Wasatch Front corridor, just miles from Utah's major metropolitan area and just under the low-altitude flight path of fighter jets flying between Hill Air Force Base to the Utah Test and Training Range.

Out of all of the Members of Utah's congressional delegation at the time, all of whom, I would adhere, were similarly opposed to this proposal to store spent nuclear fuel in this particular place in this particular way—our congressional delegation was united in