

heard about tianeptine—maybe that could help her—so she tried it. She became hooked and dangerously ill, ending up in the hospital with a dangerous infection called sepsis.

One doctor said to her: “I don’t know if I can save your limbs, but I’ll try.” Another doctor told her she came within a day or two of dying.

She was lucky. She survived. She now speaks publicly about the dangers of the product that nearly killed her. In her words, “This is heroin times 1,000, and it’s very devastating. It’s life-destroying. I don’t really know how to put into words how horrible this substance is.”

In the midst of a deadly opioid epidemic and a COVID pandemic, some unscrupulous characters are hustling to make a buck off of people’s pain by selling them an unregulated product that might make them sick or even kill them. And the Food and Drug Administration lacks the basic knowledge, the basic information it needs to go after the people who are peddling these dangerous, life-threatening products.

When asked about the situation, a Food and Drug Administration spokesman said the Agency has “no systematic way of knowing what dietary supplement products are on the market.”

Think of that. The No. 1 Agency in the Federal Government, which you assume is taking a look at these products that you are buying at the vitamins and minerals store, has no way of knowing what is even for sale. As a result, the FDA, she said, is “left trying to play catch-up” after the bad results occur.

This week, Senator BRAUN of Indiana and I are introducing a bipartisan bill to protect Americans by requiring supplement manufacturers to register their products with the Food and Drug Administration. Our bill would require dietary supplement manufacturers to provide the FDA—listen to the information we are asking—the names of their products, the ingredients they contain, an electronic copy of the label, a list of any health claims that they have made, and more. All of this information would be available to consumers—so Americans have the right to know.

If there is a problem with a supplement, the FDA could quickly check the database to see what other products might contain the same ingredients and warn innocent consumers.

Dietary supplement makers who refuse to register with the FDA would see their products misbranded, and FDA should be given the appropriate authority to take action against them.

Now, I have been down this road before. I wanted to make sure that the dietary supplement manufacturers, when we had a report of an adverse event—somebody took their pill, thinking it was a harmless vitamin or mineral that might help them; it turned out to be dangerous; they got really sick or died—they had to report it.

I worked on the floor for years to get that passed into law. My nemesis, my challenger on the whole issue, was the late Senator from Utah, Orrin Hatch. Eventually, we worked out an agreement. Adverse event reporting was required.

Now, I might argue that it never worked quite as we expected it to, but at least it was an effort to alert people that sometimes what looks like an innocent vitamin or mineral can be dangerous. And the notion that the government has already checked it out is just plain wrong, as I have said here. But that was then.

I will tell you what happened. I went into vitamin stores in the State of Illinois and saw my picture on every cash register. I was enemy No. 1 because I asked that dangerous supplements be reported to the government if somebody got sick when they took them. But having said that, I want to make something very clear about the difference the legislation Senator BRAUN and I have introduced will face. I have been through this, as I said. I proposed a change about 10 years ago, and the dietary supplement industry hated me. They fought me tooth and nail. They hated my idea like the devil hates holy water.

In the year since Senator BRAUN and I started talking to them about this new bill, there has been a significant change, and I want to salute the industry for this change. A strong majority of the dietary supplement industry now supports responsible reporting requirements and stronger protections. Hats off to them.

The industry’s largest trade association, the Council for Responsible Nutrition, has endorsed our bill. Other trade associations support enhanced reporting requirements, generally. We hope these groups will join us in the effort.

Responsible dietary supplement manufacturers should welcome this because the people who are abusing the market and endangering consumers are giving them a bad name. We are also glad for the support of Pew Charitable Trusts, which has worked diligently for years to protect consumers.

Our bill will give the FDA what they must have: the information to protect Americans from dangerous products being sold as health supplements. Our bill will give them the information and the power.

We urge our colleagues to join us in passing it as soon as possible. It is a commonsense, bipartisan compromise that will protect consumers’ health and save lives.

The bottom line is, I am willing to fight to protect every Americans’ right to buy safe dietary supplements. It may help them; it may not. That is not my judgment. Each individual consumer should make that choice. As long as that dietary supplement is not dangerous to you or to Americans, as long as we know that it is for sale, who made it, what is in it, I think that basic information is what the government should gather.

The vast majority of these supplements will not harm people, and the dietary supplement manufacturers know that, and that is why they are supporting our effort. I hope that more of my colleagues will join this bipartisan undertaking.

ARMY HUMVEE SAFETY AND TRAINING

Mr. President, I watched a troubling program on “60 Minutes” back in February. It detailed military tactical vehicle accidents. The report highlighted a terrible problem that has resulted in rollovers and other serious accidents involving the Army’s most ubiquitous vehicle, the humvee.

Some of the safety upgrades, such as armor kits and other upgrades, that are designed to protect our warfighters in humvees during combat from IEDs or other threats can, in fact, make the humvees less stable and more prone to rollovers. Here is what it boiled down to.

When we went into Iraq with our humvees, we ran into these IEDs, these explosive devices that were set on the side of the road. They were triggered when humvees came by. They blew up these humvees and killed the occupants—military personnel from the United States—and they also maimed many of them as well.

The first soldier I visited, after our invasion of Iraq, out at Walter Reed was a sergeant from the Ohio National Guard who had lost half of one leg as a result of one of these IED explosions while he drove a humvee. So we decided to do something about it.

It was a dramatic emergency undertaking to put armored plating on the sides of these humvees so as they went down the road when these explosive devices went off, it would protect the people sitting inside. I know that it was an effort to do this as quickly as possible because the Rock Iron Arsenal in the State of Illinois jumped to the challenge and really responded in a matter of weeks, putting armored plating on the humvees.

Now, what happened, of course, is when we put that weighted plating on the sides to protect the occupants, it changed the camber and the balance of these vehicles, and many of them started being involved in rollover accidents. So by solving one problem, we introduced instability into the vehicle that haunted us and created more problems and even deaths.

In fact, just last year, the GAO reported that more than 3,750 noncombat accidents as a result of tactical vehicle accidents in the Army and Marine Corps occurred between fiscal years 2010 and 2019. At least 123 servicemembers died as a result of such accidents during the same timeframe.

Since then, the Army has pursued a number of improvements, including training for safety officers and inspections as part of their tactical vehicle driver’s training. That has helped the situation.

The Army is also working to incorporate a variety of safe upgrades to

both brandnew and recently produced humvees, including anti-lock brake and electronic stability control safe kits to help prevent rollovers and accidents.

In fact, since 2017, all new Army humvees already have these safety kits installed. This includes humvees procured as part of our partnership at Rock Island Arsenal, where the safety kits are actually part of the integrated chassis system delivered to the arsenal.

As the Army continues its joint light tactical vehicle procurement strategy, the humvee will continue to be the workhorse of the future—the Army tactical wheeled vehicle fleet is led by these units with over 50,000 in service—for decades to come. As such, we owe it to the fighting forces to give them newer, safer humvees. And we must ensure that recently produced humvees currently in the fleet, those used across combat and training and other operational capabilities, are updated with safety kits.

The Army is also reviewing additional safety upgrades—such as airbags and restraint systems—that can help save lives as well.

All of these critical investments must be made in parallel. The “60 Minutes” piece has made clear the risks and costs. This is a clear call to action for all of us in Congress. The FY22 omnibus included \$183 million for more safety kits on existing humvees. I look forward to continuing to work with the Army on further efforts to make the humvee safer and to keep our promise to protect the lives of our men and women in uniform.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING ORRIN G. HATCH

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Saturday, we lost a remarkable former colleague: Senator Orrin Hatch.

Orrin rose from poverty to become one of the longest serving Senators in U.S. history and the longest serving Republican Senator ever. During his more than 40-year Senate career, he built a record of accomplishment that included landmark legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act; and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which he authored with his close friend from across the aisle, Senator Ted Kennedy. At the time of Orrin's retirement, no Senator alive had had as many pieces of legislation signed into law.

I was privileged to serve under Orrin's leadership at the Senate Finance Committee, one of three influential Senate committees that he chaired during his tenure in the Senate. In addition to being an outstanding legis-

lator and a principled conservative, Orrin Hatch was also a cherished and good-humored colleague and a deeply kind human being. It is no surprise that his friendships spanned both sides of the aisle or that both the Democrat and Republican leaders paid tribute to him yesterday.

Mr. President, I know I speak for more than myself when I say that I have missed his presence in the Senate. His death is a loss for our country and especially for his beloved State of Utah, which he served so faithfully and so well during his long career.

My thoughts and prayers this week are with Orrin's wife of more than 64 years, Elaine, with Orrin's six children, and with his dozens of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, the first year of Democratic governance in Washington has produced surging inflation, a disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, and a massive border crisis. And, unfortunately, so far 2022 isn't looking much better. Our inflation crisis keeps getting worse, energy prices are soaring, and the Biden border crisis is reaching new heights.

When President Biden took office, inflation was 1.4 percent, well within the Federal Reserve's target inflation rate of 2 percent; and it might have remained there had Democrats not decided to pass a \$1.9 trillion partisan spending spree under the guise of COVID relief—mere weeks, I might add, after Congress had approved a fifth bipartisan COVID relief bill that met essentially all current pressing COVID needs.

The Democrats' decision to flood the economy with unnecessary government money set off an inflation crisis that shows little sign of stopping. March saw inflation hit 8.5 percent, a 40-year high. Everywhere Americans look, they are paying more: more for groceries, more for gas, more for utilities, more for furniture, more for used cars and trucks—and the list goes on.

While wages increased in 2021, inflation outstripped wage growth, which means that instead of a pay increase, many Americans saw a de facto pay cut. Needless to say, inflation is having the biggest impact on those who can least afford it.

The President likes to tout job creation and economic growth—although most of what he takes credit for is the natural consequence of economic recovery after the pandemic—but his claims mean little to families who are wondering how they will be able to pay their soaring grocery bills or whether they can afford the gas that they need for the rest of the month.

And speaking of affording gas, thanks to Democrats, we are also rapidly approaching a full-blown energy crisis. Gas prices increased on average to an all-time high in March, according to AAA, and that is on top of the soaring inflationary costs of electricity and home gas services, among other energy

commodities. As of yesterday, gas was \$4.12 a gallon, up from \$2.39 a gallon when President Biden took office. The administration, of course, has attempted to blame this hike on Putin, but the vast majority of the 72-percent increase in gas prices since President Biden took office predates the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia.

Every gallon of gas purchased at current prices hits family budgets hard, especially in rural States like South Dakota where driving long distances is the norm. Diesel averaged \$2.68 a gallon in January of 2021. As of yesterday, it was \$5.07. That not only hits our transportation sector and truckers but farmers across the country as they plant their fields this spring.

There is no easy solution on inflation, but the first imperative is to do no more harm. Once Democrats saw the inflationary effects of their \$1.9 trillion spending bill, they should have instantly resolved to refrain from any more unnecessary government spending. Big spending, however, is a way of life for Democrats. So instead of committing to spending restraint, they spent last fall pushing for a second massive spending spree that would have made our inflation situation that much worse. And while that reckless tax-and-spending spree was mercifully halted in the Senate last December, the President's recent budget request made clear that Democrats are still intent on implementing many of their tax-and-spending spree's measures.

That is right. Democrats unleashed the worst inflation in 40 years by flooding the economy with unnecessary government money, and they still want to double down on that strategy. If Democrats have their way on government spending, our inflation crisis could last for years to come.

Mr. President, while there are few things the President and Democrats can do to speed up the end of their self-inflicted inflation crisis other than not making it worse, there are actions that Democrats can take to address the high energy costs that Americans are facing, and chief among those things is unleashing American energy production of both alternative and conventional energy. Unfortunately, the President seems pretty committed to doing the opposite when it comes to conventional energy. He has asked other countries to increase their conventional energy production, but he has made it clear that he is not interested in seeing the United States do the same.

While his administration is finally conducting sales for new onshore oil and gas leases, it has reduced the land available for such leases and substantially increased the royalty rate, sending a clear signal to American energy producers that the administration is reluctant to collaborate with it. Meanwhile, the Securities and Exchange Commission has proposed requiring costly new financial disclosures that would discourage investment in conventional energy production.