

you, it is funny. The price of electric vehicles rose by \$8,000 per vehicle just recently, just a couple of weeks ago, just as soon as the Democrats crammed through their new giveaway.

And what was the giveaway—7,500? And the price of electric vehicles went up by \$8,000? Do you think that is a coincidence? I ask the body. Is that a coincidence, that the price goes up by 8,000 the day that government passes a bill to give a \$7,500 subsidy?

And, of course, to make matters worse, there is a shortage of batteries that are needed to kind of produce the electric vehicles to receive the subsidy. There aren't enough charging stations.

Electric vehicle technology is not ready for prime time. The only reason electric vehicles are on the road today is because of massive government giveaways. Otherwise, they wouldn't be able to compete.

Sometimes it is said a picture is worth 1,000 words. Here is a picture of West Virginia coal miners. West Virginia coal miners right here. What are they doing? They are pushing an electric vehicle that has run out of power. They have run out of electricity, and they are trying to push an electric vehicle. These coal miners, with coal under attack by this administration, they are pushing the electric vehicle to a place the vehicle can plug in.

Well, you know, the people of West Virginia say: How did they get there? Well, you might see down here that this is a Washington, DC, license plate.

The vehicle being pushed by the coal miners were tourists from Washington, DC, and they ran out of power on the road in West Virginia. Fortunately, there were still some West Virginia coal miners nearby who were willing to lend a helping hand.

This electric vehicle was pushed by coal miners and then recharged by electricity generated by West Virginia coal—coal, public enemy No. 1, according to the Democrats.

Where do Democrats believe the electricity comes from to power electric vehicles? Electric vehicles are charged on the power grid. Nearly two-thirds of that energy is still fossil fuels. It is still traditional energy.

The extreme climate policies the Democrats are pushing are delusional. Yet Democrats are imposing these delusions on tens of millions of people.

Last month, the State of California announced a couple things. It announced that it is going to require all new cars sold in the State to be electric by 2035. Secretary of Energy Granholm gave it a big stamp of approval. She said it is the model for the rest of the country.

Just days later, California began experiencing blackouts. This is what Secretary Granholm says is the model for the rest of the Nation. This is the path to the future, she says.

Joe Biden is giving a speech tomorrow on electric vehicles. I am sure he is going to endorse what they did in California. No matter what Joe Biden says,

the painful truth is this: California is mandating electric vehicles when their electric grid already can't keep up today.

In California, gas costs more than \$5 a gallon. Meanwhile, you are not even allowed to charge your electric vehicle for much of the day—not allowed to charge it. You have got to buy one, but you can't charge it—what a solution.

Oh, and you can't turn your thermostat below 78 degrees in a heat wave.

The mandates are coming out for people who live in this mandate society, where California is leading the way and the Democrat Secretary of Energy says is the future we should look forward to. If the Democrats remain in charge, I believe this is an ugly glimpse at America's energy future.

Now, maybe Governor Newsom thinks he can run a modern economy this way in California, but it takes energy to run a modern economy. It takes affordable energy, reliable energy, available energy, and that means traditional forms of energy.

Now, Warren Buffet is known as one of the best investors in history. So what is he investing in today? Well, he is buying an American oil company. Why? Because in contrast to the left-wing fantasies, oil isn't going away anytime soon.

Renewable energy cannot yet meet demand. Only traditional energy can. It is simply a fact. Whether the environmental extremists partying at the White House today like it or not, these are the facts of life. There is still an enormous difference between renewable energy and reliable energy. There simply is no renewable energy that, all in, is cost competitive with oil, gas, or coal.

But Democrats are doubling down on expensive energy and waging war on affordable energy at a time when inflation continues to soar—record high inflation, 40-year highs—and the impacts on American families have been punishing and painful.

In Colorado, the local utility company actually took control over people's thermostats. You wouldn't think they could do that? The capacity is there to do it today. And why? Because of what they describe as an energy emergency. It was an unprecedented intrusion into the homes of 22,000 people.

If Democrats remain in charge, this is another glimpse of our energy future and of our freedom and independence—more blackouts, more restrictions on energy production, more restrictions on energy use, more price hikes, all in service of their climate religion.

And as one of the headlines in the New York Times said last week, "California muddles through another day."

Joe Biden needs to reverse course. We are a country that doesn't want to muddle through anything.

The Democratic Party needs to reverse course unless we are looking at that kind of a future. This energy crisis is a crisis of Joe Biden's choosing. We have plenty of American energy.

We have it in the ground. The Democrats won't let us get it out. All we need is for Democrats to get out of the way and let us use American energy.

America's energy future must be powered by American producers. If we want available, affordable, reliable, secure energy, we need more American energy.

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

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

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I understand that there is a lot that is going on in the world today. We are worried about climate change and what that is doing to our planet. We are worried about the terrible war in Ukraine and all of the destruction taking place there. We are worried about inflation and the fact that wages are not keeping up with the prices that people are paying. We are worried about the massive level of income and wealth inequality that exists in our country and the increased concentration of ownership that we see in the United States, among many, many other things that are on people's minds. But to my mind, Madam President, the American people remain and always are deeply concerned about an issue that, by definition, touches each and every one of us, and that is our collapsing and dysfunctional healthcare system.

While it is not discussed much in the corporate media or here in the Halls of Congress, we have today in the United States the most inefficient, bureaucratic, and expensive healthcare system in the world. And that is not just what I believe; that is what the American people know to be true because of their lived experience with the healthcare system.

Madam President, I would hope that all Members of Congress take a hard look at a poll that was published yesterday by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, and this is some of what the poll disclosed.

At a time when I hear many of my colleagues tell us that we have the best healthcare system in the world, it turns out that, according to this poll, just 12 percent of the American people believe that healthcare in general is handled very well or extremely well in the United States. Twelve percent.

At a time when we pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, only 6 percent of the American people believe that prescription drug costs in the United States are being handled well or extremely well. Six percent.

At a time when COVID has exacerbated the crisis, only 5 percent of the American people believe that the mental health care system in the United

States is being handled well or extremely well. Five percent.

When so many older Americans have died unnecessarily in nursing homes and when so many cannot even find the nursing home bed that they need, just 6 percent of Americans believe that the quality of care at nursing homes in the United States is very good or exceptional. Six percent.

Madam President, the American people increasingly understand, as I do, that healthcare is a human right, not a privilege, and that we must end the international embarrassment of the United States of America being the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee healthcare to all of its citizens. Again, that is not just BERNIE SANDERS talking; that is what the overwhelming majority of the American people believe.

According to yesterday's AP poll, 66 percent of the American people believe it is the Federal Government's responsibility to make sure that all Americans have health insurance coverage. Sixty-six percent.

Over 86 percent of the American people believe that it is absurd that millions of senior citizens lack dental care, hearing aids, and vision care, and they believe that Medicare should be expanded to cover these basic healthcare needs. It happens to be an issue I have been working on for several years. Eighty-six percent of the American people believe that Medicare should cover dental care, hearing aids, and vision care. Eighty-six percent.

At a time when our long-term healthcare system is in shambles, 81 percent of the American people believe that Medicare should cover the outrageous cost of long-term healthcare for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Eighty-one percent.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this AP-NORC poll.

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

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[Sept. 12, 2022]

AMERICANS GIVE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
FAILING MARK: AP-NORC POLL  
(By Amanda Seitz)

WASHINGTON (AP)—When Emmanuel Obeng-Dankwa is worried about making rent on his New York City apartment, he sometimes holds off on filling his blood pressure medication.

"If there's no money, I prefer to skip the medication to being homeless," said Obeng-Dankwa, a 58-year-old security guard.

He is among a majority of adults in the U.S. who say that health care is not handled well in the country, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The poll reveals that public satisfaction with the U.S. health care system is remarkably low, with fewer than half of Americans saying it is generally handled well. Only 12% say it is handled extremely or very well. Americans have similar views about health care for older adults.

Overall, the public gives even lower marks for how prescription drug costs, the quality

of care at nursing homes and mental health care are being handled, with just 6% or less saying those health services are done very well in the country.

"Navigating the American health care system is exceedingly frustrating," said A. Mark Fendrick, the director of the University of Michigan Center for Value-Based Insurance Design. "The COVID pandemic has only made it worse."

More than two years after the pandemic's start, health care worker burnout and staffing shortages are plaguing hospitals around the country. And Americans are still having trouble getting in-person medical care after health centers introduced restrictions as COVID-19 killed and sickened millions of people around the country, Fendrick said.

In fact, the poll shows an overwhelming majority of Americans, nearly 8 in 10, say they are at least moderately concerned about getting access to quality health care when they need it.

Black and Hispanic adults in particular are resoundingly worried about health care access, with nearly 6 in 10 saying they are very or extremely concerned about getting good care. Fewer than half of white adults, 44%, expressed the same level of worry.

Racial disparities have long troubled America's health care system. They have been abundantly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Black and Hispanic people dying disproportionately from the virus. Black and Hispanic men also make up a disproportionately high rate of recent monkeypox infections.

Fifty-three percent of women said they are extremely or very concerned about obtaining quality care, compared to 42% of men.

While Americans are united in their dissatisfaction with the health care system, that agreement dissolves when it comes to solutions to fix it.

About two-thirds of adults think it is the federal government's responsibility to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, with adults ages 18 to 49 more likely than those over 50 to hold that view. The percentage of people who believe health care coverage is a government responsibility has risen in recent years, ticking up from 57% in 2019 and 62% in 2017.

Still, there's not consensus on how that coverage might be delivered.

About 4 in 10 Americans say they support a single-payer health care system that would require Americans to get their health insurance from a government plan. More, 58%, say they favor a government health insurance plan that anyone can purchase.

There also is broad support for policies that would help Americans pay for the costs of long-term care, including a government-administered insurance plan similar to Medicare, the federal government's health insurance for people 65 or older.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, it is hard for me to imagine how anyone could defend a healthcare system in which over 70 million people today are either uninsured or underinsured. As we speak, this moment, there are millions of Americans who would like to go to a doctor, who need to go to a doctor, but cannot afford to go to a doctor because of the outrageous cost of medical care in this country.

Frankly, I am tired of talking to physicians who tell me about the patients who died—who died—because they were uninsured or underinsured and who walked into the doctor's office when it was too late. Time and time again, I hear from doctors who tell me

about a patient who walked in, and they said to the patient: Why didn't you come in when you first noticed your symptoms?

The patient responded: I don't have the money; I can't afford the copayment; or I have no insurance at all.

Madam President, we are talking about—and I know we don't talk about it much, and maybe we should—we are talking about some 68,000 Americans who die every single year because they are uninsured or underinsured and don't get the medical care that they need. This is the United States, the wealthiest country in the history of the world; 68,000 Americans should not die every year unnecessarily.

I am tired of seeing working-class families and small businesses pay far more for healthcare than they can afford, which results in more than 500,000 Americans every year declaring bankruptcy because of medically related expenses. Half a million Americans declare bankruptcy because of outrageous healthcare bills they simply cannot afford to pay. Families in America should not be driven into financial ruin because someone in that family became seriously ill. Sickness should not be a cause of financial ruin.

I am tired of hearing from Americans who lost loved ones because they could not afford the unbelievably high cost of prescription drugs, and I am tired of hearing from constituents who are forced to cut their pills in half due to the cost. Today, unbelievably, almost one out of four patients cannot afford the prescription drugs their doctors prescribe.

When you want to talk about an irrational and dysfunctional healthcare system, think about a system in which people go to a doctor, they get diagnosed as to their healthcare problem, they get a prescription drug prescribed to them, but they can't afford to buy the drug the doctor prescribes. So what ends up happening? They end up getting sicker. Maybe they end up in the emergency room at an outrageous cost. Maybe because they couldn't afford the prescription drugs in the first place, they end up in the hospital at a very high cost. Maybe they die. That is an irrational and absurd healthcare system.

I am tired of talking to people and families of people who are struggling with mental illness but cannot afford the mental health counseling they desperately need. Last year, as you know, a recordbreaking 100,000 Americans died of drug overdoses. And I will tell you that in my office—and I am sure that in every other Senate office—we get desperate calls from family members looking for affordable mental health counseling. Far too often, that care simply is not there in the community.

People are struggling with husbands, wives, kids who are on the verge of doing something terrible to themselves, to others, and yet, in this country, despite spending far more for

healthcare than any other country, we don't have the capability of helping those people. It is not there. The mental health counseling, the help that people need is not there because in this system, geared toward the profits of the insurance companies rather than the needs of the American people, we don't have enough psychologists, counselors, or social workers.

Unbelievably, despite spending far more per capita on healthcare than any other nation, we don't even have enough doctors. We are facing a major doctor shortage in America now, which will only get worse in the years to come if we don't address it. We don't have enough nurses. We don't have enough dentists. We don't have enough medical providers in general. We have, however, more than enough people who bill us and more than enough debt collectors who hound us to pay for a bill we cannot afford, but we just don't have enough people to provide the healthcare that we desperately need.

By the way, the crisis of lack of healthcare providers is only going to get worse as our society continues to age.

At a time of declining life expectancy in the wealthiest country on Earth, your health and your longevity should not be dependent on the amount of money you have. It is an absolute outrage and grossly un-American that the number of years we live in this country is dependent upon our income. Studies have shown that the top 1 percent of Americans live 15 years longer than the poorest people in our society. It is not only the very top as opposed to the very bottom; it is wealthy people in general versus working-class people. If you got the money, you are going to live longer in this country than if you do not have the money.

In my view, healthcare is a human right that all Americans, regardless of income, are entitled to, and all Americans deserve the best quality healthcare that our country can provide.

Further, as chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, it is not acceptable to me that we end up spending over twice as much as virtually every other major country on Earth per capita—twice as much per capita—while our life expectancy and other healthcare outcomes lag behind most other countries. This is really quite an amazing thing. We spend more; yet our results are worse than in other countries, unbelievably.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, we are now spending \$12,530 per capita on healthcare. Imagine that—over \$12,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. This is, frankly, an outrageous and unsustainable sum of money. In comparison, the United Kingdom spends just \$5,300; France spends \$5,400; Canada, \$5,900; Germany, \$7,300. We spend over \$12,000 per year.

The question that everyone should be asking is, How does it happen that we

spend so much money for healthcare, but we get so little in return?

Let's be clear. The current debate over healthcare in the United States really has nothing to do with healthcare. Frankly, it is hard to defend this dysfunctional system. The healthcare debate has everything to do with the unquenchable greed of the healthcare industry and their desire to maintain a system which fails the average American but which makes the industry huge profits every single year. While ordinary Americans struggled to pay for healthcare during this pandemic, the six largest health insurance companies in our country made over \$60 billion in profits last year, led by UnitedHealth Group, which made \$24 billion in 2021.

While millions of Americans cannot afford soaring healthcare costs, the top executives in the insurance industry receive huge amounts of compensation. In 2020—remember, 70 million uninsured and underinsured and 68,000 dying every year because they don't get to a doctor on time—the CEOs of 178 major healthcare companies collectively made \$3.2 billion in total compensation—up 31 percent from the previous year—all in the midst of the pandemic. People were dying every single day, and the cost of healthcare was soaring; yet the CEOs saw a 31-percent increase in their compensation. According to Axios, in 2020, the CEO of Cigna, David Cordani, took home \$79 million in compensation. The CEO of Centene, Mr. Neidorff, made \$59 million. The CEO of UnitedHealth Group, Mr. Wichmann, received \$42 million in total compensation.

But it is not just the health insurance companies that are ripping off the American people; it is the drug companies as well. In terms of the pharmaceutical industry, last year, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and AbbVie—three giant pharmaceutical companies—increased their profits by over 90 percent to \$54 billion. How is it that, in the midst of a pandemic, during which we lost over a million people and millions and millions of people have become sick, the profits of the major drug companies went up by over 90 percent?

The CEO of Moderna got a \$926 million golden parachute after his company received \$2.5 billion in taxpayer dollars to develop the vaccine. We all appreciate the development of the vaccine, which is saving lives every day. But, really, does the CEO of the company that received \$2.5 billion of taxpayer money deserve a \$926 million golden parachute? That is an indication, a manifestation, of a sick and broken healthcare system. And while over 330,000 Americans died during the pandemic because they could not afford to go to a doctor on time, the CEO of Regeneron Pharmaceuticals made over \$450 million in total compensation.

The current system is failing the American people, and the American people want change—real change.

In March, a few months ago, I was pleased to introduce Medicare for All

legislation, with 15 Senate cosponsors. Companion legislation in the House now has 122 cosponsors. This legislation would improve and expand Medicare to cover, over a 4-year period, healthcare to every man, woman, and child in this country. In other words, what this legislation finally does is make sure that the United States joins every other major country and that we guarantee healthcare to all of our people.

This legislation is comprehensive, and it would end out-of-pocket expenses. Unlike the current system, it would provide full freedom of choice regarding healthcare providers. In other words, under Medicare for All, there would no longer be insurance premiums, deductibles, or copayments, and no more networks which deny you your choice of doctors. And, when I talk about Medicare for All being comprehensive, it would cover dental care, vision, hearing aids, prescription drugs, and home- and community-based care. In other words, it would do precisely what the American people want us to do.

Would a Medicare for All system be expensive? Yes, but while providing comprehensive care for all, it would be significantly less expensive than our current dysfunctional system because it would eliminate an enormous amount of the bureaucracy, profiteering, administrative costs, and misplaced priorities inherent in our current for-profit system.

Remember, we currently pay twice as much for healthcare as do the people of virtually any other country, and all of those countries manage to provide universal healthcare. So, yes, we can provide quality care for all at a much, much lower cost per person.

Under Medicare for All, there would no longer be armies of people billing us, telling us what is covered and what is not covered, and hounding us to pay our hospital bills. This not only saves substantial sums of money but will make life a lot easier for the American people, who would never again have to fight their way through the nightmare of insurance company bureaucracy. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO, estimated that Medicare for All would save Americans \$650 billion a year.

Now, trust me. I do know the 30-second ads from the insurance and drug companies that have told us that if Medicare for All becomes law, your taxes will go up. What they forgot to tell you is that, under Medicare for All, you will no longer be paying premiums, deductibles, copayments, and out-of-pocket expenses to private health insurance companies. What they certainly won't tell you is that Medicare for All will save—save—the average American family thousands of dollars a year. In fact, a study by RAND found that moving to a Medicare for All system would save a family with an income of less than \$185,000 about \$3,000 a year on average.

Now, one might ask, fair enough: If Medicare for All is so good, if it has so many advantages, if it is what the American people want, why hasn't it been enacted by now? Why hasn't the United States joined every other major country in guaranteeing healthcare for all?

That takes us to our corrupt political system and the outrageous way we fund campaigns. So I would suggest if you want to know why we are stuck with a dysfunctional healthcare system that fails the American people but that makes the drug companies and the insurance companies wildly profitable, follow the money. Follow the money.

Since 1998, in our corrupt political system, the private healthcare sector has spent more than \$10 billion on lobbying. Got that? More than \$10 billion on lobbying since 1998. Over the last 30 years, it has spent more than \$1.7 billion on campaign contributions to maintain the status quo.

In terms of their lobbying efforts, let's be clear. They are very, very bipartisan. There are former Democratic Party leaders and former Republican Party leaders who are working together to represent the insurance companies and the drug companies.

And, by the way, of course, in terms of the campaign contributions, the insurance companies and the drug companies are also very bipartisan. In fact, their contributions go to many Members of both the Democratic and Republican Parties. It doesn't really matter if you are a Democrat or a Republican; what matters is you protect the interests of the drug companies and the insurance companies.

But, you know, what I believe is that maybe, just maybe, now is the time for Congress to do what the American people want—not what the lobbyists want, not what the drug companies want, not what the insurance companies want. And maybe, just maybe, we should have the courage to take on the powerful special interests that dominate healthcare in the United States. And maybe, just maybe, now is the time to provide healthcare to every man, woman, and child as a human right by passing a Medicare for All, single-payer program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, agriculture is a critical part of Nebraska's economy. It accounts for, roughly, \$25.7 billion of Nebraska's gross State product. That is a little less than a quarter of our State's overall GDP. Nearly one in four jobs in the State is tied to agriculture.

That economic output is important because, thanks to States like Nebraska, hard-working family farmers and ranchers produce a wide variety of products that keep our grocery stores stocked and help to feed the world. But our Nation's agricultural bounty doesn't do anyone much good if it can't

get to market, and that is where our complex transportation and infrastructure system comes into play.

The railroad industry, in particular, has a big role in bringing agricultural products to locations across the United States. That includes ports, where they can then be shipped to locations around the world. Whether it is grain or soybeans, railroads provide the means to affordably move thousands of tons of goods where they need to go. It is estimated that rail delivers 1.6 million carloads of agricultural products a year. That is why I am deeply concerned about the potential for a rail shutdown later this week.

I think it is very important that people understand what kind of economic impact such as a shutdown would have and how it would upend our Nation's agricultural sector. The consequences would be devastating. When agricultural products can't be transported, there will be price hikes, and there will be shortages. Our international exports of commodities like corn, soy, wheat, of which a large share moves by rail, will fall dramatically.

Fertilizer prices—an already expensive input due to inflation—will further skyrocket. The mere prospect of a shutdown on Friday means fertilizer and other hazardous materials have already started being removed from the rail networks on September 12. Biofuel plants could be forced to scale down operations or completely shut down.

I would also point out that we have harvest coming up in Nebraska. Family farmers in my State, many of whom are grappling with rapidly rising input costs, need a good harvest season. And if rail service isn't feasible, that possibility could go out the window.

Grain elevators, for example, could run out of storage and be unable to accept additional commodities. Family farmers and ranchers will lose critical revenue streams.

The bottom line is, if rail shuts down, our entire agricultural system shuts down. It is that simple.

All of this economic chaos would come on top of extreme inflation. Today's numbers put grocery prices up 13.5 percent over last year. Think about the toll this out-of-control inflation is taking on our working-class families.

Then there is the international turmoil. Russia's horrific invasion of Ukraine has dramatically curtailed the flow of grain, which, in turn, has exacerbated food insecurity in Africa and the Middle East. And the war has also further strained the fertilizer supply chain. All of this is to say that the stakes of these rail negotiations couldn't be higher.

Nine of the twelve labor unions in the rail sector have been able to utilize the Presidential Emergency Board recommendations to come to an agreement. I note that the Board is composed of neutral, impartial individuals appointed by President Biden. Their recommendations are widely seen as

benefiting all parties. It is critical that the remaining labor unions and the rail industry use those recommendations to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

Our entire agricultural system is at stake here, the economic welfare of the American people is at stake here, and the global food security is also at stake here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, there are a lot of important things that we do here in the U.S. Senate, hopefully, every day; certainly, every week, month, and over the year. But there are a couple of pieces of legislation which are literally must-pass pieces of legislation. They deserve an even higher priority than our day-to-day work here. These must-pass pieces of legislation are critical to the function of our government.

First, for example, government funding is critical so we can keep the lights on and keep the government working on behalf of the American people. If Congress fails to pass an appropriations bill, the government will literally shut down and millions of government workers will be left without a paycheck and the American people will be left without the services that those government employees would otherwise provide.

The good news is, at this moment, there appears to be little appetite for a funding fiasco at the end of this fiscal year at the end of this month. In a couple of weeks, I expect we will vote on a stopgap funding bill to keep the lights on and the trains moving until the end of the year.

Continuing resolutions like this, leading up to an end-of-the-year omnibus appropriations bill, are never my first choice. My hope would be that we would take up and pass each of the individual appropriations bills on a timely basis and then bring them across the floor of the U.S. Senate, pass them, and get them to the President for his signature. But, unfortunately, that hasn't happened under the current management.

There are other bills that receive the "must-pass" label. These could be anything from farm bills to disaster relief. Each of these are important. But, in my view, the ultimate must-pass piece of legislation is the National Defense Authorization Act.

Each year, this is how we make sure that our men and women in uniform have the support and the tools and the training they need and the pay to compensate them for their service as well as the support their families deserve, which is particularly important in an All-Volunteer military. This is how we maintain our military bases, modernize our weapons systems, and invest in the next generation of weapons.

It is how we take stock of the global threat landscape, which always seems