

Vermonters are going to do everything they possibly can. The Governor's response and the legislative response is important, and there is public and private activity that is going on to help Vermonters get back on their feet, but we in the Federal Government have to do our part.

Vermonters have always, always been there to help other parts of our country that have suffered natural disasters, which is through no fault of anyone's, but for the folks who are on the receiving end—in this case a flood, in another case a hurricane, in another case a wildfire—we have to help each other, and Vermonters have always helped others.

My hope—and I am confident on the basis of the very supportive comments that my colleagues have made to Senator SANDERS and to me—is that we will get the help that we need for Vermonters. I am inspired by how Vermonters have helped each other, and my hope is that we will help them get back, fully recovered as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. COONS assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. WELCH assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Washington.

FEND OFF FENTANYL ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about important legislation that was included in the National Defense Authorization Act tonight and something that will help us fight the scourge of illicit fentanyl in the United States of America.

An urgent public health crisis is gripping our State and many other parts of the United States. I want to thank my colleagues Senator SCOTT from South Carolina and Senator BROWN from Ohio for their leadership on the bipartisan legislation known as the FEND Act that was included in tonight's legislation.

The fentanyl crisis is having a direct and dire impact on families in the State of Washington and all throughout the United States. In the past 12 months, more than 65,000 Americans have died by overdosing on synthetic opioids like fentanyl. That is why it is so important that, tonight, included in this legislation is the FEND Act, and that is part of a response that we need to have to take this national crisis seriously.

This legislation declares the international trafficking of fentanyl, and its precursors needed to make it, a national emergency. This gives the President and us the focus that we need to fight, as it says in the legislation, "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States."

Mr. President, a crisis of this magnitude demands a robust Federal response, and that is why this legislation provides the President with new tools to stop the illicit fentanyl flooding our

borders and those who are trying to transport it into our country.

First, the new tools in this legislation are sanctions targeting transnational criminal organizations and foreigners engaged in international fentanyl trafficking. The bill specifically calls out eight known cartels in Mexico, which means that Treasury can investigate suspicious activities involved here and declare sanctions. It recognizes that these traffickers, once identified, can have sanctions imposed and can have forfeiture of their property.

Recognizing that fentanyl production is not simply these entities but also diverse networks of players, this legislation helps us go after those. Sanctions will enable the U.S. Government to try to disrupt the flow of this product: the distributors, the brokers, the wholesalers, the retailers, the sellers of precursors—anyone who is involved in trafficking these deadly pills can now be targeted.

Second, the Senate-passed legislation goes after financial institutions that participate in fentanyl-related money laundering. Once caught, property forfeited by international fentanyl traffickers can be used by the Department of Justice and State and local law enforcement to help participate in additional investigations, and this legislation also empowers Treasury to use special measures to pursue fentanyl-related and other types of drug laundering activity. For example, a foreign financial institution engaged in fentanyl-related money laundering, it can impose restrictions on those banks and U.S. banks doing business with those foreign entities.

So the bottom line is there are new tools. Once this legislation makes it to the President's desk and through the finish of our colleagues working together on a final House and Senate NDAA package, it will give the U.S. Government Agencies more tools to disrupt the illicit fentanyl trafficking and the supply chains that exist internationally.

Severely penalizing those engaged in fentanyl trafficking is just one step. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, my State, Washington, experienced the single highest increase among U.S. States in reported drug overdoses last year—an increase of more than 21 percent.

Hundreds of traumatized families that will never be the same, thousands of first responders struggling to cope with this daily tragedy that they respond to—the statistics are stunning, but they are also just very tragic. Sometimes it is hard to even listen to the stories, but I have been going around my State listening to people affected by this crisis and talking to those in my State about the opportunities to do something—the heart-wrenching stories of individuals who have been impacted by this: a mother whose son went off to college and just simply didn't come home; a beloved

brother who fought addiction for years and who got help to kick heroin, got sober, and got his life back but then, sadly, succumbed to fentanyl; a woman struggling with addiction who realized she needed help but then couldn't find a bed available for detox, only to hear, time and time again, that such a bed did not exist; a young man who took a single pill he thought was Percocet who died from an illicit counterfeit pill laced with fentanyl.

That is why we need legislation. In addition to the FEND Off Fentanyl Act, we need to do more with just the supply. In the Tri-Cities, a police officer told me that their local task force has already seized over 200,000 fentanyl pills this year. Statewide, we have already surpassed the number of fentanyl seizures in all of last year. Law enforcement in Washington has already seized more than 1.6 million fentanyl pills this year compared to a total of 1.3 million in all of last year.

So the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has seized over 379 million deadly doses of fentanyl. That was last year. That is more than enough supply in the United States. We need to do something now to also aid in the stopping and obstruction to make sure that we are preventing this from happening in the rest of the United States and to stop it in my State of Washington.

I plan to work with TSA and DEA to make sure that we strengthen the laws that allow for the investigation of fentanyl distribution at our airports, to make sure that we are tracking the supply and investigating and giving our law enforcement any tool that they can use to help stop the movement of this product.

I am also grateful that our colleagues tonight acted in a bipartisan way, and I hope they will act in a bipartisan way in the future. There are other things that we need to do to stop the cycle of addiction.

As one doctor told me: We could have access to recovery be as easy as access to the drug, but it is not.

We have heard from people all over the State—from our firefighters, from our police officers, from our courts, to our healthcare treatment centers—and we have seen unbelievable pilot programs that are being used to try to tackle this problem. We have seen fire stations use new equipment and first responders so they can quickly get to the scene and have the tools in place.

We have heard from our State and from our healthcare officials like Dr. Banta-Green from the University of Washington, who has helped to understand and pioneer a program so that people can just walk into a facility that is community-based and get access to care and treatment immediately. So no more trying to respond every day of where to go or having a first responder having to go back to the same place, but giving people a place that they can go.

I hope our colleagues will look at some of these innovative prevention

measures that my State is trying to undertake. I hope that we can work in a bipartisan effort to give more tools to DEA, but I hope tonight we will be happy that we are now declaring this a national emergency, that we have given the President and Treasury and our officials new tools to stop the trafficking of this product and to pursue those who are involved in it in an aggressive way around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 256.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Philip Nathan Jefferson, of North Carolina, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 256, Philip Nathan Jefferson, of North Carolina, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Edward J. Markey, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 260.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Gwynne A. Wilcox, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2028. (Reappointment)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 260, Gwynne A. Wilcox, of New York, to be a Member of the National Labor Relations Board for the term of five years expiring August 27, 2028. (Reappointment)

Charles E. Schumer, Bernard Sanders, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, Ron Wyden, John W. Hickenlooper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Edward J. Markey, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 255.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Lisa DeNell Cook, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of fourteen years from February 1, 2024. (Reappointment)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 255, Lisa DeNell Cook, of Michigan, to be a Member of

the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of fourteen years from February 1, 2024. (Reappointment)

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Edward J. Markey, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 257.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Adriana Debora Kugler, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative 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 Executive Calendar No. 257, Adriana Debora Kugler, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for the unexpired term of fourteen years from February 1, 2012.

Charles E. Schumer, Sherrod Brown, Margaret Wood Hassan, Mark Kelly, Jack Reed, John W. Hickenlooper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Duckworth, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Jeanne Shaheen, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie K. Hirono, Tina Smith, Edward J. Markey, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 253.