

So I hope this resolution that the Senate has passed and adopted honoring Sam and his platoon—I hope that maybe one day, he will be able to show that to his kids and say “Well, here, you can read about what we did all those years ago” and that his parents, Chris and Anne, will be able to hang that up and say “This is what my son did for our country, proudly serving, this young man from Missouri who represents, frankly, the best of who we are and who we can be.”

So it is a privilege to get to honor Sam, to congratulate him on his service to our country, to the Marine Corps, to congratulate him on his service, his leadership of that platoon not just on that fateful day but for all of the days he was commander, and the leadership, the courage, and the bravery he has shown ever since.

I will just end with this. Let's take the opportunity to honor the sacrifice of those marines and sailors. They truly embody the motto “Semper Fidelis,” always faithful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

IRAN

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, since Joe Biden took office, Iran and its proxies have attacked American troops in the Middle East at least 135 times. Let me say that again: 135 attacks on American troops since January 2021. What is worse is that 52 of those attacks have happened in the last month since Hamas conducted its murderous rampage in its ongoing war against Israel. These rocket and drone attacks against American bases in Iraq and Syria have caused at least 56 service-member injuries, 25 traumatic brain injuries, and 2 Americans have died because of these attacks.

Just like they have been for years, these attacks are financed by Iran, Israel's greatest enemy. These attacks—let's be clear—are meant to kill Americans and to increase the conflict and the violence in the Middle East.

So what has President Biden done in response to these attacks? Has he punished Iran and its proxies for killing Americans? Has he made it clear that the United States will not tolerate these attacks in the future? No, not even close.

Consider the Biden administration has also failed to enforce oil sanctions on Iran, giving them over \$90 billion, and now President Biden is, reportedly, once again, considering the release of the remaining \$10 billion Iran is owed as part of its hostage exchange. What kind of message does it send to the people attacking our troops to give them another \$10 billion more to fund their activities against the United States and Israel?

In fact, since the terrible atrocity of October 7, Joe Biden has not changed his Iran policy in a single way. Of the 135 attacks on Americans, the Biden

administration has hit back fewer than 10 times. Think about that; 135 times they hit us, fewer than 10 times did we hit them back. When the attacks against Americans increased in October, President Biden didn't even authorize a response for 9 days. It took at least 13 attacks on Americans for President Biden to finally react. And what did he do? The bare minimum, striking empty weapons storage facilities in eastern Syria.

After these strikes, Secretary Blinken said:

My warning to the Ayatollah was that if they continue to move against those troops, we will respond, and he should be prepared.

Well, it is not surprising that shooting a bunch of empty warehouses doesn't scare Iran. In fact, it emboldened them in the form of 22 more attacks. That is right. Proxies attacked American troops' positions 22 more times after that initial pathetic response.

When Secretary Austin announced those strikes, he said:

The United States does not seek conflict and has no intention nor desire to engage in further hostilities.

Well, Lloyd Austin and Joe Biden may not seek conflict, but Iran does. And it will continue to try to kill our troops until they face real consequences, until they are scared straight.

On Sunday, we finally did hit back again, but, again, we didn't even try to hold the real bad guys accountable; instead, the administration, once again, shot only at expendable proxies. Iran obviously was not deterred by this latest pathetic response. How do we know that? Once again, these proxies have committed four more attacks against Americans since Sunday.

Iran has had a proxy strategy for decades. It uses groups like Hamas and Hezbollah and militias in Iraq and Syria to deny responsibility for its campaign of terror against Israel and the United States. When we kill their proxies, all we do is validate their proxy strategy.

Iran will fight to the last Arab, but Iran will not fight if we hold the things at risk that they hold most dear: their shock troops in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, their Quds Force or, if necessary, sites and facilities in Iran itself.

The United States needs Iran to know that we will not tolerate these attacks. We need to make sure Iran knows that we will not tolerate these attacks and that any attacks by Iran's proxies will be treated as an attack by Iran on the United States and be met with devastating consequences.

That is one reason I will be introducing legislation later this week that would strengthen sanctions against the Iranian transfer of missiles and drone technologies to terrorists and even other nations like Russia, which uses them in its war against Ukraine.

It will also stop Iran from developing the kind of long-range missiles that

can threaten the U.S. homeland because, again, if we let Iran continue to shoot at American troops in the Middle East without shooting back at the Iranians who are directing those attacks, what will they do if they get their hands on missiles that can target America? What will they do if they get their hands on a nuclear weapon?

It is time, today, to make Iran, once again, fear the United States before more Americans die.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. REED assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. SMITH assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The Senator from Nebraska.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, well, here we are again. I am looking at a floor where there is nobody on it. In fact, we haven't even taken a vote today. It has been 7 weeks since our last government shutdown face-off, and nobody is here.

Folks, we have very serious problems facing our country. We have an open border. It is a humanitarian and security crisis. We have \$34 trillion in debt. Let me put that in perspective. That is about \$256,000 for everybody in this country. And that is roughly the cost of a second mortgage for people in Nebraska. So it is like you own your own home, and now you have another home on top of that—only it is not a home; it is your Federal debt. And, of course, we are facing another government shutdown because we have not passed a budget.

When I was Governor of Nebraska, one of the things I told my team is that passing a budget is our most important thing we do: We fund the government. We would get involved 6 months before. We would give our budget to the legislature to start working on that budget.

Now, let me tell you how it is supposed to work here in the U.S. Senate. We are supposed to pass 12 appropriations bills. For the first time in 5 years, the Senate Appropriations Committee indeed passed 12 appropriations bills before the August recess—first time in 5 years before the August recess. Two came out June 22. The other 10 came out in July.

And yet, for months, our leader sat on those appropriations bills. We did not vote on them. We did nothing. We should have been amending, debating, and voting on those bills, and we did nothing. And here we are again, facing a government shutdown.

Now, it is a little different this time around because we have actually voted on 3 of those 12 appropriations bills. They were crammed together in what is called a minibus. And since that minibus has been voted on and passed, we have done nothing again, which means we have done 25 percent of our work—25 percent.

Now, to most people, 25 percent is a failing grade. Leading up to the September 30 deadline to pass the budget,

our majority leader had kept us in recess 5 of 7 weeks. We, typically, come in on Tuesday and leave on Thursday—or come in on Monday and leave on Thursday.

Do you know what most people in my State do? They work Monday through Friday. And when they have to get the job done, guess what they will also do? They will work weekends.

The House, in October, canceled their State home period. We didn't. The House has passed 7 of those 12 appropriations bills. Now, that is only 58 percent, but that is still more than twice as many as we have passed.

Why aren't we working? Why aren't we working on the people's business here?

We should be in session every day to get our work done. So far this year, we have voted 307 times—307. That is less than one a day. Only 35 percent of those votes have been on legislation. The other 65 percent have been on judicial candidates and nominations and so forth.

We can work harder. Our constituents work hard every day. Nebraskans work hard every day. We need to be here working on the people's business. I am ready to work each and every day until we pass these appropriations bills. We should get all 12 of them passed. We should work with the House to pass theirs, send them to the President, and it all should be done before September 30. And yet here we are, approaching November 17, and yet another deadline, another threatened government shutdown, another continuing resolution. I am ready to work. I know my colleagues are ready to work.

Mr. Leader, let us work. Call us together. Let us vote. Let's get the people's business done. Let's pass a budget. We should have an open government and a closed border. We need to control our spending and our debt. These are serious issues. Please, let us work.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, there are several important domestic and international matters before us that require our urgent attention, not least of which is the need to find a bipartisan path to keep the Federal Government open and fund it within the next 3 days to prevent a national economic calamity.

We have a lot of work to do. A lot of priorities vie for our attention. But today, on World Diabetes Day, I rise to address another pressing issue that I believe also requires our timely action.

I want to uplift the findings of my new bipartisan white paper, released today on this World Diabetes Day. It shines a light on the urgent need for Congress to finally address the high costs of insulin and pass Federal legislation to cap the costs of insulin for every American who needs it.

This report is issued jointly today from my office in collaboration with my partner in this work, my friend the Republican Senator from Louisiana, JOHN KENNEDY. Senator KENNEDY and I have been working to address the high costs of insulin because this is a problem that is particularly acute in our States.

Over 12 percent of adults in my home State of Georgia—12 percent—are diabetic, but in Louisiana, that number climbs to over 14 percent, and many of these are people who cannot afford access to this lifesaving drug.

This is what we hear from the people in our States, but this new report, for the first time, takes a comprehensive look to learn more about who and where these people are. And what we found in our original analysis is that there are more than 800 counties across the country where you see the tragic convergence of high rates of diabetics coupled with high rates of uninsured people—high levels of diabetes, high levels of uninsured people. And we call these insulin deserts. These insulin deserts—some 813 counties across our country—are in the top half of counties across the country for both their percentage of individuals who are uninsured and who have diabetes—over 800 counties. And over 100 of these insulin desert counties are in my home State of Georgia.

Over 75 million nonelderly people live in insulin deserts. That includes more than 12 million Americans who are uninsured. In fact, among nonelderly individuals, insulin deserts have nearly double the percentage of uninsured residents as those who live in nondeserts.

So our analysis shows these insulin deserts are concentrated in the South and the Southeast. But it also shows that there are insulin deserts all over the country, concentrated in the South and in the Southeast, but you see them from Washington State to Texas, to North Dakota, to Florida, to New Jersey. In other words, this is a national problem.

And who are the people in these insulin deserts? Well, as compared to uninsured folks in other parts of the country, uninsured Americans who live in these places are, one, more likely to fall under the Federal poverty line than their counterparts. They are less likely to be college graduates than uninsured Americans in nondeserts. They are more likely to be people of color than uninsured Americans in nondeserts. In fact, in 2019, Black Americans were twice as likely as non-Hispanic White Americans to die from diabetes.

And uninsured Americans in insulin deserts are less likely to have access to sufficient internet service than uninsured Americans. And why does this matter? One of the reasons it matters is because it means that they have less access to patient assistance programs offered online by insulin manufacturers, and we know the challenges that

uninsured people experience when it comes to accessing healthcare.

This report deals with the uninsured people who are diabetics and the convergence of those two things.

So what does all of this mean? What this report illustrates is that even with the steps private industry has taken to lower insulin costs—steps that are good, that many of us in Congress pressed them to do. But it is still voluntary, and, by the way, they could be rescinded at any time.

And even with the steps more than 20 States have taken to institute State-level insulin copay caps and even with our success in lowering out-of-pocket insulin costs for Medicaid beneficiaries, there are still millions of Americans and communities across our country that are being left behind. They live in these insulin deserts concentrated in the South and the Southeast, but you see them all over the country. They are being left behind.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, in 2019, uninsured people with diabetes spent close to \$1,000 on insulin alone. If you are poor and you are uninsured, that number is unaffordable. We know that number includes the 246,000 insured Americans who use insulin every year, and we know that number rises to more than 540,000 Americans when we include those who experience a lapse in coverage.

But even when we look past the uninsured, we know that when we include those Americans with private insurance, the total number of Americans who are left vulnerable to potential spikes in insulin prices jumps to some 2.75 million Americans.

Here is the thing: Insulin should not be expensive. It is a 100-year-old drug. When it was invented, the patent was sold for \$1. It certainly shouldn't be unaffordable.

For the first time, this analysis, which my office releases today, paints a clear picture of who is needlessly suffering and whom we will leave behind if we do not pass my \$35 cap for the insured and the uninsured.

We already know what happens when people can't afford their insulin. We know that one in four diabetics—listen—ration their insulin. In the United States of America, people are rationing insulin, getting insulin from friends who have relatives who have passed away. I spent time with a young woman in my State named Lacey, who is a graduate student, was meeting people on Facebook meetup groups and then meeting them in dimly lit parking lots at the local Chick-fil-A to get insulin in the United States of America, a drug, invented 100 years ago, sold for \$1.

That is not right. But not only is it not right, it is not smart. It is bad fiscal policy. We know that every year Federal and State government spending on hospitalizations related to complications from diabetes totals more than \$11 billion. That is more money