

years under President Trump, we stopped allowing legal migration into the United States, as we had in previous years, so fewer and fewer of these immigrant workers who are available to take on jobs that Americans are not waiting in line to fill.

Behind the swinging doors of most of the restaurants and at some of the hotels in the city of Chicago were undocumented workers filling jobs which no one on the other side of that door would be interested in. So when we don't have a legal system to allow migration to come to this country and to fill the jobs, this is what happens.

Yesterday, I had a meeting with the Illinois Farm Bureau. I meet with them every year. There were about a dozen farmers from all across my State. I know politically who they are. They are great people. They are not necessarily of my political party or my political faith. But they all said the same thing: Senator, we need workers on our farms. Dairy farms, livestock operations, orchards—farms that need workers every single day, and they don't have them.

They said: Don't tell us that we ought to go into town and get the kids in high school to be our next generation of workers. They are just not interested, and they are not filling the jobs.

And if we don't fill these jobs, these conservative, politically, farmers are going to find their farming operations paying a heavy price for it.

Why in the world can't we acknowledge the obvious? The obvious is that, if we have an orderly process to screen people to come work into the United States from various countries, we can stop seeing the onslaught of thousands coming to our border. We have already seen this happening in specific instances through the Department of Homeland Security. We ought to be enhancing it and increasing it.

I joined Senator SCHATZ last week when it came to this issue of child exploitation. He introduced a bill that would significantly expand and strengthen penalties for companies violating child labor laws.

Let the word go out as clearly as it can from the floor of the U.S. Senate: If you have a business and you are exploiting children, you are in trouble. You are breaking the law, and you are going to pay a price for it. It is just not acceptable. So don't use the excuse that you didn't know. Find out.

It would also apply these penalties to independent contractors. That is really important because some employers have managed to exploit children by hiring them through staffing agencies in an effort to avoid fines. Our bill would end this despicable practice.

When a company hires little kids to work on a fast-paced assembly line, where these kids can be injured and even have their lives endangered, or when a company hires children to debone chickens or inhale toxic chemicals in an auto factory, a small fine

and a slap on the wrist just won't do. We need to impose serious penalties on these companies so they will never hire exploited children ever again. That is what this bill wants to do.

Importantly, the investigation from the New York Times illustrates that the humanitarian crisis in this country is rooted in the failure of this broken immigration system. From migrant children to farm workers, to families living under the threat of deportation, there are millions of people living in the shadows in this country and being exploited right under our noses.

For those who entered the United States and are allowed to legally stay until their hearing date, there is a loophole in the law which makes life for them, in a legal way, almost impossible. Many of these people, though legally in the United States waiting for their asylum hearing, cannot legally work in the United States, depending on their circumstances, for 6 months to a year. What are they supposed to do? They want to work. There are jobs that need to be filled. We should find a way to do this in an orderly fashion.

The Times reporting made it clear that unaccompanied migrant children are extremely vulnerable to exploitation. That just stands to reason. Our Federal Agencies have to do more to protect them.

Finally, I want to acknowledge a broader truth about the State of our economy. It is no secret that employers throughout the country are struggling to find workers in Illinois, New Mexico—everywhere. There are 11 million job openings in America and not nearly enough workers to fill them.

It is disturbing that some Republican State lawmakers have suggested loosening the child labor laws to fill these openings. To them, I suggest they read that New York Times piece and imagine if it was your child or grandchild. Do we want kids skipping school to sit in a factory for 12 hours sewing socks or shivering in an industrial freezer? Is that any way to care for kids, whoever they may be, or to prepare the next generation of leaders in our country—the doctors, the educators, the citizens? Of course not.

The fact is, the quickest and most sensible way to address the labor shortage in our country is to fix the broken immigration system. Let's stop dancing around it. Let's face the music. We need to give undocumented immigrants living in the shadows a chance to be legal, and we should increase the number of working-age immigrants in this country by establishing new, thoughtful pathways for workers to legally enter America. We should pair this effort with new funding to bring order to the border. That is a priority. I share it with our Republican colleagues who talk about that almost exclusively.

The fact that American companies are turning to children to address our Nation's labor shortage is a national disgrace. We bear responsibility right here in the U.S. Senate. We were elect-

ed to solve problems just like this. How many years have we been sitting back and saying the immigration system is broken; we have to change the laws? I will tell you: More than 30 years.

Employers are counting on us to fix the immigration laws from both parties so workers can enter the markets in a legal and safe way. Unless Congress finally comes together to reform immigration in a bipartisan manner, these human rights abuses and embarrassment to our Nation will continue. What are we waiting for? Let's get it done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I just want to say that along with all of my colleagues, my thoughts and prayers are with Leader McCONNELL this morning, with his family, with his team.

Along with our colleagues, I look forward to his speedy return to the U.S. Senate.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, later today, the President of the United States will release his budget. We haven't seen the details of it yet so I am not prepared. I will have more to say about that next week when I have an opportunity to drill down.

But I think what we do know about it—and I can predict this because it is pretty easy to predict that the President's budget will include a lot more spending, a lot more taxing and that after the last 2 years here where, through a budget reconciliation process, the President and the Democrats here in Congress passed almost another \$3 trillion in spending and taxing and debt outside of the normal appropriations process at a time when revenue—last year's revenue—was at a 20-year high. In fact, the revenue coming to the Federal Government in the last fiscal year, as a percentage of our entire economy, was higher than it has been with three exceptions in history. One was in the late nineties at the end of the dot-com bubble and two times in World War II.

It is a record level of revenue as a percentage of GDP, and yet the President in his budget is going to propose a whole lot more spending and a whole lot more taxing and a whole lot more government—expanding, growing government.

That is what we expect his budget to do, and like I said, I will have more to say about that next week.

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 734 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled rollcall vote: Senator LEE for up to 5 minutes, Senator CORNYN for up to 15 minutes, and Senator WYDEN for up to 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.
I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES L. BUCKLEY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, today we celebrate the 100th birthday of a true hero of the U.S. Senate, former Senator James Buckley.

Born in 1923, James L. Buckley was raised in rural Connecticut. He went to college at Yale and graduated from Yale with a degree in English.

After enlisting in the Navy, he served in World War II, where he fought in battles of Leyte, Lingayen Gulf, and Okinawa. Senator Buckley was discharged in 1946 with the rank of lieutenant and received his law degree from Yale in 1949.

After working for a number of years in the private sector, James was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1970 as the candidate of New York's Conservative Party, becoming the only candidate in the history of that State to win a major party election, running against both a Republican and a Democrat. In fact, Senator Buckley was the first and only third-party candidate to be elected to the U.S. Senate in the 20th century.

During his tenure, he championed many conservative causes, but in particular, he was a pioneer in the early pro-life movement following the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973. Senator Buckley proposed and fought for a human life amendment, which would have recognized embryos as persons for purposes of that term's use in the 14th Amendment. Along with the late Senator Jesse Helms, Buckley was also a key player in passing the Hyde amendment, named after the late Henry Hyde, which prevents taxpayer dollars from funding elective abortions.

Challenging the orthodoxy of his day, Republican Senator Buckley, was also one of the Senate's first true environmental conservationists. "Nixon established the EPA in 1970," he said, but he added, "I actually proposed it during my '68 campaign." He is responsible for major revisions to the Clean Air Act, which passed in 1977.

James Buckley would later serve as an Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance in the Reagan administration in 1981, and then from 1982 to 1985, he served as president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which was a contributing force in defeating the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Buckley used radio to deliver raw, fact-based news and messages to millions stuck behind the Iron Curtain.

Then in 1985, President Reagan nominated Buckley to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The Senate confirmed him. Once confirmed to this position, Buckley became the only American to have served in a major position in all three branches of the Federal Government—as a U.S. Senator, as Under Sec-

retary of State, and then as a judge sitting on the DC Circuit. He retired in 2000.

My own interactions with James Buckley have helped me understand why he remains a hero to this day, not just in the Senate but really throughout the United States. I invited him to address the Senate Republican conference at our steering lunch just a few years ago, in which he provided observations that were timely, relevant, compelling, and delivered with incredible enthusiasm.

On each occasion when I have met Senator Buckley, he has always struck me as someone who is friendly, who is kind, who is thoughtful, considerate, and deeply loves his country and is willing to work hard to make it a better place.

Today, Mr. Buckley is the oldest living former U.S. Senator, and to this day, he remains an advocate for constitutional government, for federalism, separation of powers, and for conservatism at large.

In his 2015 book, "Saving Congress from Itself: Emancipating the States & Empowering Their People," Mr. Buckley wrote:

Congress's current dysfunction is rooted in its assumption over the years of more responsibilities than it can handle. Its members now live a treadmill existence that no longer allows them time to study, learn, and think things through. Instead, they substitute political reflex for thought.

The Senate would serve America well by heeding Mr. Buckley's words.

James Buckley's commitment to service, whether on the battlefield, in these Halls of Congress, or in the courtroom, is a reminder of the power, joy, and honor of being an American.

On this his 100th birthday, the Senate recognizes and pays tribute to a former colleague, Senator James L. Buckley, and his important legacy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

FENTANYL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the overdose epidemic is ravaging communities all across this country and leaving a trail of death and destruction. The latest data shows we lost nearly 107,000 Americans last year alone. The majority of those deaths were attributed to fentanyl, a synthetic opioid made from precursors shipped from China, mainly, to Mexico, where they are then manufactured. Fentanyl alone is killing 70,000 Americans a year.

On average, we are talking about more than 190 people dying each day due to fentanyl. That is more people than a commercial 737 airliner can hold. So imagine the public outrage if, day after day, commercial airliners fell out of the sky, killing everyone aboard. Well, you can imagine what the reaction would be. Social media would erupt. People would protest. Our constituents wouldn't just ask us to intervene; they would demand it.

Unfortunately—and this is a mystery to me—the fentanyl epidemic and the

drug overdose deaths we have seen in the last year don't get the same sort of response. It is as though our threshold for outrage now is so high that even the death of 107,000 Americans would not achieve that threshold.

We know this epidemic does not discriminate. It kills people of all ages and backgrounds from major cities and small towns all across America. But one of the most alarming trends we see is the appalling trend of fentanyl-related deaths among teenagers. These teens frequently think they are buying something else, such as Percocet or OxyContin or Xanax, and unknowingly they end up with a counterfeit pill contaminated with a deadly dose of fentanyl.

This is the case for students in Hays County, which is just southwest of Austin, where I live. Since last summer, the Hays Consolidated Independent School District has lost five students to fentanyl poisoning.

In October, I had the chance to meet with the parents of one of those students, Shannon McConville, who lost her 17-year-old son Kevin to fentanyl poisoning. She told me that Kevin was full of promise, a talented person, an artist. After graduating, he wanted to join the Navy and become an underwater welder. But, sadly, Kevin was never able to realize his dream. He died just a few weeks before the beginning of his senior year.

A couple of weeks ago, I traveled to Hays County to speak with more families who have lost their children to fentanyl poisoning, as well as law enforcement personnel, school officials, and medical professionals, trying to figure out what do we need to do.

I saw Shannon and her husband Darren, as well as the parents of another young victim, 15-year-old Noah Rodriguez. Noah's parents, Brandon and Janel, told me that Noah was a genuine, kind young man and something of a jokester. He was an athlete, a devoted friend, and a big brother to his three siblings, the youngest of whom was only 2 weeks old when Noah died.

Despite their profound loss, these parents and countless others are committed to raising awareness. You can imagine the courage it takes to overcome your grief and pain to try to share your story with others so that others might live.

I had the opportunity to learn about the Fighting Fentanyl public awareness campaign in Hays County, as well as the work being done by school leaders and law enforcement. We all acknowledged that there is no single action that will end this epidemic. We can't just focus on prevention or treatment or drug diversion; a successful strategy will involve all three of those. We need buy-in from leaders at every level of government, as well as healthcare providers, schools, non-profits, law enforcement, and, of course, the general public, just like the approach we are seeing in Hays County. This has to be an all-in effort.